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## ARTICLE IV.

## THE CHRISTIAN LAW OF SERVICE.

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THE Christian law of service is proclaimed by the Saviour: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." To the ambitious request of the mother of James and John for the highest places in his kingdom for her sons, he had replied by propounding the Christian law of service, and enforcing it with these most touching words, in which he presents his own life of sacrifice and service as the type of all Christian life. This law presents itself in two aspects: Greatness for Service; Greatness by Service.

*Greatness for service.* — Greatness does not entitle its possessor to compel the service of others, while he lives in idleness, sustained by their compelled ministrations; but it binds its possessor to render service to others. Greatness in wealth, learning, talent, position, or power of any kind, is bound to a commensurate greatness of service.

*Greatness by service.* — Service, always degrading from the selfish and heathen point of view, is itself the true greatness, and is ennobled as such by Christianity. The most complete development of the individual and his greatest consideration in society to be attained by service; no artificial ranks in Christ's kingdom, exalting men merely by position — no pygmies on Alps; but greatness by service — an aristocracy of merit. The man who best serves society is to be the man of most weight in society — a king of men by divine right.

In considering this principle as the Christian law of service, we are primarily concerned with its first aspect: Greatness for Service.

### I. The Significance of the Law.

1. The *principle* involved: Greatness carries in it the obligation to service.

Jesus refers to the contrary principle of heathen civilization: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them." This principle is, that superior power of any kind is to be used in compelling the services of inferiors; the weak must serve the strong. The position of honor is found in living idly and luxuriously on the enforced service of others. Hence despotism, wars of conquest, race-hatred and domination, slavery, the degradation of woman, characterize heathen civilization. Jesus says: "It shall not be so among you." The contrary principle must characterize the kingdom of Christ. Thus he calls our attention to the fact that in this declaration he not only propounds the Christian law of service as a law for the individual, but in it propounds the germinant principle of a new civilization. In Christian civilization the strong are to serve the weak; the nobility and blessedness of life are to be found in energetic and self-sacrificing work in rendering that service. Christianity recognizes superiority as imposing obligation to serve, and emblazons for every Christian the motto of nobility: "*No-blesse oblige.*"

This principle is set forth in the humiliation and sacrifice of Christ, the type and measure of all Christian love. It is the great law, which he exemplified, of the higher descending to the lower to lift it up; of the perfect seeking the imperfect, the richly-endowed seeking the poorly-endowed, bearing to them the gifts which they lack. It is always the shepherd going to the mountains to seek the lost sheep.

2. The *measure* of the service required is the ability to render it.

In transactions between parties having equal ability to render service, the services must be reciprocal, and the service rendered must be an equivalent for the service received. This may be called the law of reciprocity. This is the law of business exchanges. Every honest transaction in business secures an equivalent advantage to each of the parties. This implies, also, that so far as any one has the power of self-help he has no claim on the unrequited service of others.

But the world abounds in wretchedness which can neither help itself nor make compensation for the help of others, and which appeals for relief to those who are able to render it. Here we have the law of unrequited or gratuitous service—the strong must serve the weak. Human need creates a lien on the ability to relieve it: “I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise; so, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.” Every man is debtor, *as much as in him is*, to use his superior power, of whatever kind, in uncompensated service to those who need. And the greater the power to serve, the greater the proportion of this kind of service that is due—pre-eminent ability, pre-eminent service; greatness, great service. Here we reach the Christian principle of stewardship—that men hold property and all means of influence not for selfish ends, but in trust for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom and the promotion of the best interests of man.

3. The *applications* of the law are both to the choice and prosecution of business and to the use of its gains.

I shall consider first, and chiefly, the application of the law to the choice and prosecution of business. A man’s business ought to be such that the whole action of his life in its prosecution be doing good, even when he is so absorbed in its cares and processes that he does not think of doing good.

The law of Christian benevolence is ordinarily treated as if it were applicable only to the use of the gains of business.

But, if so, then we do good only occasionally and with deliberate purpose; the only scope for Christian beneficence is outside of the business, while within it all is necessarily worldly and selfish; and it is only so far as one can give away something that he can be benevolent. If a mechanic spends nine tenths of his earnings in supporting his family, and gives away one tenth, then of every ten strokes of his hammer nine are for self, and only one for God—but a dribbling of his life for doing good. But a man's business is the main work of his life. When his life ends, the great bulk of what he has done for God and man is what he has done *in* his business, not what he has done outside of it. If that business in its prosecution affords no scope for Christian largeness of heart, if it is essentially a mephitic swamp in which every breath inhales miasma, we may well cry in despair: "Who, then, can be saved?" Then it is not surprising that men should reproach God for requiring them to serve him, while compelling them to spend life in business which consists essentially in serving themselves. Business must itself be such that every stroke in its prosecution shall be a Christian service to man—so much business done, so much service to humanity rendered. Business, therefore, should be chosen and prosecuted reverently and in Christian consecration; for it is the life-work. If chosen and prosecuted only for gain, it is chosen and prosecuted in covetousness, and not in Christian love.

And yet the common opinion is, that business is to be chosen and prosecuted only to make money. This opinion has so firm a hold that the majority of men would probably be surprised at the suggestion that a man should engage in business for any other end. Even good men think that Christian benevolence is to be exercised only in the giving of their gains, not in the prosecution of their business. The only exception is the business of a Christian minister, which all admit should be prosecuted not to get gain, but to render service. It is necessary, therefore, to show that every legitimate business is in its very prosecution a service to humanity,

and ought to be chosen and prosecuted in Christian love for the purpose of rendering the service, not in covetousness for the purpose of gain. This principle is as applicable to every business as it is to that of the Christian minister.

(1) Exchanges under the law of reciprocity give scope to Christian service. You say: "If I have any of my time or earnings to spare from my business, I am willing to show Christian charity to the needy. But business is business, and must be conducted on business principles, and with it Christian charity has nothing to do." But what are business principles? The fundamental one is the law of reciprocity: "The service rendered must be equivalent to the service received." The fact that, in a business transaction, for the service rendered an equivalent is received does not take away its character as a service, nor preclude Christian love as a motive in the transaction. Every Christian is bound in love to see that in every transaction of business he renders a service equivalent to that received. When in any exchange it is the aim of one party to secure all the advantage to himself, that intent is of the essence of all oppression; for it is using a superiority of some kind to compel the service of another without rendering an equivalent. It is of the essence of all dishonesty; for it is getting possession of another's property without rendering an equivalent. The highwayman does the same, with only the difference that he is rougher in his method of making the transfer. Thus the law of reciprocity exalts every business transaction into a Christian service, and requires every man in every transaction to be as intent on the service which he renders to another as on the equivalent service which he receives. In every transaction is scope for Christian greatness of soul; and the man of business is entitled to adopt the princely motto: "Ich dien," "I serve."

Political economy, the science of business exchanges, which is founded solely on enlightened self-interest, coincides with Christian ethics in this respect. Its fundamental principle is, that every legitimate exchange is the exchange of

equivalent services; it is coming to accept the word "service" as best expressing whatever is exchanged.

(2) Legitimate business is in its prosecution a service, because it is productive, and supplies human wants. The farmer raises food for man and beast, and material for clothing. The mechanic and manufacturer fit the raw material for use. The merchant transports products, and makes them accessible to those who want them. The peoples of the world serve each other by their productive labor—the Asiatic serves the European, and the European serves the Asiatic. Over all the world men are industriously serving each other, producing what meets human wants. Thus viewed, the creation and circulation of products through the world, beneficent as the circulation of air and water, rises to the sublime. The circulation of the products of all countries, passing in white-sailed ships over the ocean, millions of wealth always in motion from mart to mart, a circulation so noiseless that the products of the other hemisphere flow daily through the streets unnoticed as the wind, and so equable and complete that you have only to step across the street and the product of any country is stored ready for your hand, and the table is daily spread with the products of every quarter of the globe—this circulation, all-pervading as the flow of blood in the body, binds all nations in the unity of a common interest and life.

Here, again, political economy concurs with Christianity. Whatever advantages in productive industry any person may have over others, it is for his interest that others should have corresponding advantages over him, and should be prospered in their industry; for thereby both the demand for his own products and the supplies for his own wants are increased. For the same reason, every nation is interested in the industrial and commercial prosperity of other nations. The old doctrine that a nation is benefited by crippling other nations is seen to be fallacious.

Thus political economy coincides with the gospel in teaching that we are members one of another, and if one member

suffers all the members suffer with it. It coincides with Christian ethics in the law that business should be prosecuted as a service to others, and not merely to get gain for self.

An inference is, that the only legitimate business for a Christian man is one which by its very prosecution renders service to society. Dramsellers, gamblers, lottery-dealers, counterfeiters, adulterators of food and medicine work every day, and the product of every day's work and of the diligence of the life-time is the multiplication of human woes. Persons engaged in business serviceable to society are entitled to gains accruing from a rise of prices, because this is incidental to a legitimate business and a compensation for incidental losses from a similar cause. But speculators, who by combination force an advance, produce no value, and render no equivalent service for their gains. They only force money from the possession of others into their own. This, therefore, is analogous to gambling, and is not a legitimate business according to the Christian law of service.

(3) A man renders service in the prosecution of his business so far as he is able to improve its methods and results. The farmer who "manures his land with brains" not only increases his own gains, but improves the art of farming, increases the productiveness of the earth, multiplies and cheapens products, and puts an addition to the comforts of life within the reach of a larger number of human beings. Every mechanical invention produces similar results.

The result is, that industry, subduing nature, developing its resources, and using its powers, and multiplying and cheapening its products, is steadily advancing human welfare; the purchasing power of labor, measured not by its money-wages, but by its power to purchase the comforts of life, increases; and, in like manner, the value of raw material, measured by its power to purchase manufactured products, increases. Thus cottagers have now comforts and luxuries which two hundred years ago the wealthiest could not buy.

The industrial movement of modern times is a distinctive



characteristic of Christian civilization. Human thought and energy is directed to the study of nature, the mastery and use of its powers, and the development of its resources for the service of man. Industrial enterprise opens a sphere for the largest knowledge, the highest talent, and the greatest energy. Thus it gives scope in this peaceful service of man to the power which in ancient times found scope only in war and selfish ambition.

(4) Every man serves society in his business so far as he ennobles it by strict integrity and a high sense of honor, by a large benevolence, and all the beauty of a Christian character. What honor, for example, has been given to manufacturing by Lawrence and Williston, to mechanical pursuits by Safford and Washburn, and to mercantile life by Budgett and Thornton. Thus the man of business is to silence the sneer that a mercantile people are necessarily mercenary; that mechanics and meanness are inseparable; that earning a living deadens noble sentiments; that men must live at leisure on the labors of others in order to realize the nobility of life.

(5) Every man's general influence in society, outside of his business, is affected by his character in his business. Light must be embodied in some sun or star or candle or burning coal, or it cannot shine. A man's business is the body of his light. If he is not a Christian in his business, he can shed no light beyond it; there is not even a candle or glowing coal to radiate it.

The second application of the Christian law of service is to the use of the gains of business.

It is unnecessary to dwell on this application; because it is the one usually urged, and urged so exclusively that the churches have fallen into the one-sided opinion that Christian benevolence consists principally in giving money. It is necessary only to say that in the use of his gains a Christian will be governed by the law of service. If he would escape covetousness, he must give habitually, in proportion to his income, and with a willing heart. The same principle

applies to the use of power and influence of every kind acquired in business.

## II. Reasons for the Christian Law of Service.

1. The first is that urged by our Saviour himself: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." I sometimes think these the most touching and eloquent of our Saviour's words. As the brightness of the Father's glory, he discloses the love of God appearing under human limitations in service and sacrifice. As the ideal man, he reveals in service and sacrifice the image of God perfected in human character.

2. The best instincts and the moral intuitions of the human soul accord with this law.

If any accident happens, and the better impulses of the heart are roused, men run to help the weak and the suffering. The strong man who calls for help is thrust aside with scorn. It is not greatness and strength which establish a claim for service; it is weakness, helplessness, suffering.

The babe comes into the house, and by its very helplessness commands the service of all. It rules the heart by its weakness. See it waking from its day-nap, the coverlid just drawn off, described as only one who was at once a mother and a poet could describe it:

"There he lies upon his back,  
The yearling creature; warm and moist with life  
To the bottom of his dimples, to the ends  
Of the lovely tumbled curls about his face.  
. . . . . Both his cheeks  
Were hot and scarlet as the first live rose;  
. . . . . The pretty baby mouth  
Shut close, as if for dreaming that it sucked;  
The little naked feet drawn up, the way  
Of nestled birdlings. Everything so soft  
And tender — to the little holdfast hands,  
Which, closing on a finger into sleep,  
Had kept the mould of it. . . . .  
The light upon his eyelids pricked them wide,  
And, staring out at us with all their blue

As half perplexed between the angelhood  
He had been away to visit in his sleep  
And our most mortal presence, gradually  
He saw his mother's face, accepting it,  
In change for heaven itself, with such a smile  
As might have well been learnt there ; never moved,  
But smiled on, in a drowse of ecstasy ;  
So happy (half with her and half with heaven)  
He could not have the trouble to be stirred,  
But smiled and lay there. Like a rose, I said.  
As red and still, indeed, as any rose,  
That blows in all the silence of its leaves,  
Content, in blowing, to fulfil its life."<sup>1</sup>

Infantile beauty, with power to command willing and loving service. But when the yearling has grown to be a great, strong boy, then, if he demands the service rendered to the babe, he is only laughed at. Thus the unperverted instincts and moral sentiments of human nature assent to the principle that the weak are entitled to the service of the strong. Whoever is growing rich and great with the belief that he is entitled to use his strength to compel the service of others, and to live only to be ministered unto, is in the family of God a sort of overgrown baby, like a stout, selfish boy, who uses the strength of youth to compel from all the family the service due only to the babe.

3. The third reason is found in the second aspect of the law — Greatness by Service.

By service a man attains his own highest intrinsic greatness ; by service he also attains the greatest weight and influence in society.

It is commonly objected that the argument from Christian love is an appeal to sentimentality, which cannot be expected to have much influence on practical men. This very objection is an expression of the hard and cold realism of the age, which measures value only by its power to satisfy material wants, which reckons success to be the acquisition of wealth by whatever means, and which makes the crowd stare in admiration at the diamonds, the equipage, and all

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, Book vi.

the gaudy ostentation of swindlers, thieves, and whoremongers, and calls that success in life.

Certainly, enlightened self-interest accords with the Christian law. But I do not appeal to it here. For what is needed is not merely a more enlightened self-interest, but the spirit of Christian love—the spirit which animated the life of Jesus our Lord—a spirit not of the world, but above it. What is needed is a new and Christian ideal of what constitutes success in life, displacing the low ideal of success by getting rich. And this our Saviour sets before us in this thought, greatness by service.

The giver is always the superior of the receiver. He that confers a favor is, so far as that particular is concerned, the superior of him who receives it. He that renders a service is, in that particular, superior to him to whom the service is rendered. The common opinion, that he who serves is the inferior, belongs to the civilization attending the reign of force, when service was rendered on compulsion. Christianity reverses this doctrine. He who needs and receives service is, in that particular, the inferior and the dependent. The condition of modern society is forcing this obvious, but forgotten fact on the attention.

The character expressed and developed in loving service is the highest and noblest type of character. Jesus reveals the divine in the human, and the human in its ideal perfection. That ideal is found in his life of service; he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. This Man of Sorrows, in "the form of a servant," is the perfect Man, in whom humanity, long smitten with spiritual death, and producing only degenerate beings, at last, touched by the divine, comes forth in absolute perfection. The first tempter promised: "Ye shall be as gods," and the promise was to be realized through self-indulgence and gratification: "She took, and did eat." It has been the mistake of the world, from that day until now, to expect to become as gods by getting and being ministered unto. The gospel gives us the same promise: "Ye shall be partakers of the divine

nature"; but it is by being, like Christ, a servant. The conception of the highest blessedness by being ministered unto is the conception of an everlasting babyhood, an everlasting need and enjoyment of the pap-spoon. The conception of greatness by ministering is the conception of manly strength and power to serve, of resources given without impoverishment. So we assent to the words of Jesus, seeing therein our highest dignity: "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord."

Christian service brings out all the energies into action, and is constantly developing the man to greatness. It is often said that among missionaries is an extraordinary number of distinguished persons. The reason cannot be that they are of a higher order of natural ability, but is rather that their work trains them to greatness. Also, by identifying them with the greatest of human enterprises, it lifts them to notice, and concentrates on them the interest of all Christians. No men so act beneath the gaze of all the world. When Mr. Snow went to Micronesia, it seemed like burying him in the obscurest corner of the world. But this faithful missionary to that handful of savages has created an interest and extended an influence throughout Christendom. He is a greater and nobler man, more widely known and influential than he could have been in any parish at home. If Paul had remained a Pharisee, he would have been a prominent man of his city, and at his death would have been forgotten. But Paul the Christian becomes the most influential man in the Roman empire, and perpetuates his influence through all ages. If Luther had remained a monk, he would have been a student, inclined to despondency, having no aim higher than to keep his own conscience in peace. But Luther the Christian is a man of burning enthusiasm, dauntless courage, heroic enterprise, broad, hearty humor—the reformer of Europe. William of Orange, at the age of twenty-seven, was a Romanist, a favorite at the court, spending his immense revenues in magnificence and luxury. But William became a Protestant, and spent his

subsequent life, with almost superhuman energy, and against innumerable difficulties, in establishing the liberty of his country and defending the faith against the powerful and bigoted monarch of Spain. All history demonstrates that greatness is by service.

Great responsibilities develop greatness. A sea-captain may be ordinarily a commonplace man; but when his ship is in danger his responsibility ennobles him; his form seems to swell to grander proportions; his attitude becomes majestic; his eye kindles; his voice deepens; his mind acts with preternatural energy. Analogous to this transitory influence of a great crisis is the constant influence of Christianity, quickening and ennobling the whole life with the consciousness of a great trust, a grand responsibility, and an urgent service.

The greatest energy in the service of self fails to develop a character so noble, a power so grand, and an influence so wide and lasting. Contrast Paul and Napoleon — both conquerors; the one by force, the other by truth and love; the one for self-aggrandizement, the other for the welfare of man. Contrast them in the imprisonment in which their lives were ended, when, isolated from all factitious splendor and support, you see the men themselves; Napoleon, though surrounded by the comforts of life, querulous, morose, weak, not self-poised and self-sustained — like a rank vine grovelling on the ground when its prop is gone; Paul, imprisoned rigorously, yet how grand his bearing, how self-poised and self-sustained, how peaceful and triumphant.

It is a condition of abiding influence that the life be identified with truth, which lives forever. The life expended on selfish ends is transient as the selfish objects it seeks, and narrow in its scope as the interest of self. Contrast the influence of Paul and Nero, of Luther and Charles V. — when they lived, the Christian seemingly so insignificant in comparison with the emperor; but in the subsequent ages the emperor fading into insignificance, the Christian brightening with increasing glory.

Thus, whether we consider intrinsic nobleness, or the duration and scope of influence, it appears that greatness is by service. The man of greatness in the church is the man who greatly serves the church. These are bishops by divine right, pre-eminent by pre-eminent service, pre-eminent as Paul was, "in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft." Such are the men by God's own anointing great in the kingdom of heaven. Such is the true ἀνάξ ἀνδρῶν, whom no revolution can dethrone.

The same thought is true of society. Society can attain its best condition only as it is governed by the law of love. The ambition which by force compels the service of inferiors which characterized ancient civilization, the greed of gain which characterizes modern civilization, must give place to the law of service before a Christian civilization can pervade the world. Obedience to this law is indispensable to produce the popular virtue and national character essential to self-government and Christian civilization.

Consider the different characters which the greed of gain and obedience to the Christian law of service respectively indicate and develop. If industry is merely for gain, it will be accepted as a drudgery, and shirked when practicable. The brightest dream of success will be realized in the acquisition of means to live luxuriously with exemption from work. But if industry is regarded as Christian service, the true man will covet the opportunity to work. Idleness will be counted a disgrace. No one's education is complete till he learns not to shrink from work as a drudgery, but to rejoice in it as a service.

If business is regarded as a service, the aim of the workman will be to do all work thoroughly, as for God. The mechanic will congratulate himself, when his day's work is done, not merely that he has received his earnings, but also that his work has been well done, and will render good service. The manufacturer will congratulate himself, not merely that he has made a profit on his contract, but

also that he has given employment to many hands, and paid them the full worth of their labor, and has turned out an article well made, which will do good service. The merchant will congratulate himself, not merely that he has made large and profitable sales, but that he has given his customers a full equivalent for their money, taking advantage of no man's ignorance, carelessness, or necessity. Thus work in every department develops a noble and generous character, inflexible in integrity, intent on rendering service to men.

But if work is only for gain, the only joy in the work done is in the gain acquired. The day-laborer works unfaithfully, and is idle, if not watched. The mechanic slights his work, and turns out articles that will not wear. The manufacturer grinds his operatives to the lowest wages which their necessity or his opportunity permits, and produces articles of inferior material and make. The trader adulterates or misrepresents his goods. The man no longer regards his employer, his workman, or his customer as a fellow-man to be served, but as a victim to be plundered, a goose to be plucked; and he plucks him as near to the life as he dares. Then he boasts how much he has made *out of him* — of the sharpness with which he cut his neighbor's property out of him without rendering an equivalent.

Work thus prosecuted strengthens the greed of gain. The man becomes rapacious. His life is a Sahara, sucking into burning sand the sunshine and the rain, but returning no green thing. He becomes unscrupulous, reckless of justice and honor. As Dr. South says, he retails heaven and salvation for pence and half-pence, and seldom sells a commodity but he sells his soul with it, like brown paper, into the bargain. He becomes mean in getting and niggardly in spending. He becomes hard, reckless of the rights and interests of others, incapable of compassion, heeding no appeal to help the wretched; diligent and energetic as an iron steam-engine at work, and as hard and heartless as it. He lives not to benefit society, but to prey upon



it — a pirate seizing prizes — a devil seeking whom he may devour.

If such a character pervades society, society is corrupt and its civilization decaying. Society becomes impotent to producè great men; its consummate flower is the smart man, keen, shrewd, and knowing; it does not produce great men, men of broad views and large hearts, whose names will be powers of beneficence forever.

In ancient civilization, families and races which had won power by the sword compelled the service of the inferiors subjected. It has been the struggle of modern times to break political tyranny, and to secure to individuals their rights. The motto of modern civilization is: "A career open to talents" — every man free to make the most of himself and for himself. But this is demonstrating itself to be but a half-truth. Society constituted on individualism perverts individual liberty into self-assertion — every one grasping all he can for himself, without care for the rights of others. Society says to the individual: "We open to you a career. Make of yourself and for yourself all that you can. But look out for yourself; for every member of society will make everything out of you that he can. But then we are Christian; if you cannot run this gauntlet, — if you break down into utter destitution, — we will send you to the poorhouse, and keep you from starving at the least possible expense to ourselves."

It has become plain to the thoughtful that this principle of individual liberty is inadequate. Under it the old principle of the domination of the strongest still creeps in; the tyranny wrested from government reappears in the social sphere; the purse is as forceful as the sword. When competition does not pay, the competitors combine to force prices above the natural level; the rich grow richer, and the poor poorer. Inequalities not only increase, but stiffen into castes; it becomes more and more difficult for the inferiors to rise by honest industry to independence. The whole tone of society becomes more and more vulgar and coarse!

grained ; bent on sordid ends, and seeking them by sordid means.

The masses that have been the less successful in this selfish competition are becoming uneasily conscious of their inferiority. But they fall back into the old error that the strong may compel the service of the weak. They have discovered that ten are stronger than one, and that by combination the many can compel the action of the few. They are lifting their solid mass to take from the individual the open career which by the conflicts of centuries he has won, and to enslave him again to society. They proclaim that rights belong to society, to the individual only duties — that he is the creature and tool of society. They proclaim the old error (exposed by Jesus) that man exists for his institutions. But however excellent the sentiments embodied in institutions, if they are constituted on the error that man exists for his institutions, they only bring back the old oppression in a new form. The re-organization thus proposed by the socialists among the labor-reformers is the old tyranny in a new form, and the worst form in which it has ever appeared. It is the organization of mediocrity, the lifting of inferiority to rule by the power of mere mass ; it restrains genius, ability, and industry from gaining more than imbecility, mediocrity, and indolence ; it closes the career to talent ; it makes human progress impossible.

The evil itself, and the greater evil of these methods of attempting to right it, can be met only by Christianity. Under the Christian law of service individual liberty and rights are respected ; a career is open to talent ; the strongest stimulus to individual enterprise and development exists ; all that has been won by the struggles of modern times is retained. Yet every right is acknowledged to have its correlative duty ; the individual is followed in his acquisition by the Christian law of service ; he accepts the obligation to choose and prosecute his business, and to use all that he attains by it, to render service to man. Higher ideals of life are created ; men live for higher ends, and seek better

things. The coarse and vulgarizing influence of the greed of gain abates, and, instead, "sweetness and light" pervade society. The tendency to inequality is arrested, and society advances towards equality, because all are engaged in productive, and therefore legitimate, business, and prosecute it as stewards of God's grace and for the service of man; and equality is ultimately realized, so far as the diversities of talent, and of diligence and skill in the use of talent and opportunity, permit. The evils growing in our civilization can be removed only by obedience to the Christian law of service. The progress of society is possible only so far as the individual members of society become freely conformed to the spirit and law of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

### III. It remains to Determine the Dividing Line between Selfishness and Christian Benevolence.

1. Worldly business is not necessarily worldliness. Money is not an evil, but a good, indispensable in every enterprise, Christian or unchristian; and it is every man's duty to strive to acquire it. It is not money, but the love of money, which Paul says is a root of all evil. It is not proof of covetousness that a man is diligent in business, rising early and working late and working hard; nor that he is frugal, and eats the bread of carefulness; nor that his business absorbs his thoughts, his interest, and his energy; nor that he rejoices in success and is grieved at failure; nor that he is successful, and rapidly accumulating property. Because forecast, diligence, concentration, and energy are essential to success in all undertakings. Thoughtlessness, negligence, indolence cannot succeed; and on them Christianity pronounces no blessing. Besides, a man's business is his life-work; and if it is worthy to be his life-work, it is worthy of the concentration on it of his thoughts, his interest, and

<sup>1</sup> The terrible history of Communism in Paris confirms the views here presented. Dr. Maudsley advances the opinion, and maintains it at considerable length, that the existing greed of gain is a cause of insanity, and also is causing a physical degeneracy of the race. — *Physiology and Pathology of the Mind*, pp. 205, 206.

his energy. A man's business is like a warfare; and he feels an interest like that of a general in planning his campaigns and marshalling his forces, and similar joy in victory and sorrow in defeat. All these are characteristics of efficiency in business, not of covetousness.

Covetousness is not merely, as commonly defined, an excessive desire of acquisition. The difference between covetousness and Christian justice and benevolence is not of degree, but of kind.

Covetousness is the desire of gain for selfish ends, and not for its uses in the service of man. If a man is doing business simply to make money, he is covetous.

When Jesus says: "Take heed and beware of covetousness," he uses a Greek word, which literally means, a grasping for more. And this is a peculiarity of covetousness; it is a desire for more, rather than a desire for much; a desire to be richer, rather than a desire to be rich. A rich man who has riches already and a poor man who never expects to be rich may be equally covetous, grasping for more. This is the wolf in the breast, always ravening and always hungry; the fire in the soul, to which every acquisition is fuel, making it burn more fiercely.

The philosophy of it is this. In the nature of man is a radical and indestructible impulse to put forth his energies in action, to push out in every direction to his utmost capacity. A man's business is the work which he has chosen for life, in which this radical impulse must find sphere and scope. The success of any enterprise gives him joy, because it is a triumph of his skill and energy, and not necessarily because it is an acquisition of gain. But the very acquisition furnishes means for further and larger enterprise, and thus stimulates the impulse to further risk and larger undertakings. So that, however large the acquisitions, the man is still driven to strive for more, with the same forecast, frugality, and energy which have hitherto insured success; and to this the power of habit is added, impelling to continued action in the same direction.

The blame here does not rest on the impulse to enterprise ; for that lies at the very root of our natures. Nor does the blame attach to the indestructibleness and insatiableness of the impulse ; for these are inherent in it as a radical impulse of nature. The impulse to action, the same grasping for more, appears in Christian beneficence. Success in one Christian work stimulates to effort in another. The soul is insatiable in its zeal to do good. It is driven to new toils and new achievements. Xavier, thinking he served God by his own sufferings, when enduring severe privations and suffering, cried : " More, Lord, more." Paul counted it all joy to take the spoiling of his goods, or whatever suffering was incidental to his missionary enterprises, and was planning a mission to Spain, ever pressing on to enlarge the sphere of his Christian enterprise. A man who in the work of his life does not find his nature crying out for more, and driving him to new work, and does not find in that " fresh fields and pastures new," is enervated ; so far his manhood is spent out of him. So profoundly is it true that a man is not to be ministered unto, but to minister ; his blessedness is not by being indulged and receiving, but by achievement.

So far as eagerness and insatiableness in the enterprises of business are the result of the natural impulse to action they are not blameworthy. The blameworthiness is that the covetous man spends his energies for himself. He may hoard his gains, or invest them in larger enterprises, or use them to gain office or power, or spend them in ostentation and luxury. But in every case it is for self, using his superiority to insure being ministered unto, not to minister to others. Thus, working only for himself, he is like a steam-engine of a thousand horse power, driven night and day to manufacture fuel to feed its own fires.

2. The law of service is not fulfilled merely by consecrating to benevolence a part, however large, of the income. The business itself and its whole income are consecrated. Christianity teaches stewardship ; we are not our own, but bought with a price ; we are stewards of the manifold grace of God.

In every action, investment, and expenditure we are to determine how we can best use the powers and possessions which God has intrusted to us for the establishment of his kingdom on earth.

3. The line between benevolence and selfishness is not to be drawn between what one expends on himself and his family and what he gives away. This line is not marked by outward acts. What you expend on yourself and your family need not be expended selfishly. It ought to be expended in Christian consecration and benevolence as really as what is given away.

It may be, and probably is, the use of money by which you most effectively benefit mankind. To take the lowest view possible, it is relieving society from the support of so many persons. The division of society into families is the best possible constitution of society, and insures the most rapid and abundant creation of wealth. It also is the best possible arrangement for the promotion of intelligence, culture, and piety. To create a happy home — one of the many happy homes which make a happy people, to create a well-ordered Christian home — one of the many which make a Christian people, is to render the greatest and best service to society. On the other hand, if in expenditure on yourself and your family you are seeking only your own gratification, only ostentation and display, only to have everything pleasant about you, only to be ministered unto, however lavish you may be, the very lavishness is but the outshining of selfishness.

4. Is a Christian justified in expending money on himself and his family beyond procuring the necessaries of life? And if so, how far may he incur expense for enjoyment and luxury, or for developing and satisfying the taste for beauty and the desires which belong to culture and refinement?

The mass of human misery is so great as to overtop all individual resources. When one thinks of himself as a debtor to all mankind, as much as in him lies, to render them service, the first impression may naturally be that he

must literally divest himself of all his goods, and reduce his personal expenses to the measure of bare necessity. This train of thought is met at once by another equally sweeping and obvious — that, if carried out, it puts a stop to civilization, and reduces us to the wigwam and the blanket. In this line of thought, different persons stop at different points. A common stopping-place has been that a Christian ought not to wear jewelry. But the same line of argument would forbid expenditures for pictures or other ornaments in the house, for a flower-garden which might be more lucrative in potatoes, for any dress more costly than the cheapest which is sufficient for warmth and decency. On this principle a parishioner of mine reached a correct conclusion, who, being informed that a savage tribe at a mission-station were beginning to wear shirts, expressed his regret that they should be subjected to the needless expense and trouble. In seeking a principle by which to answer our question, some light may be obtained by considering two marked types of civilization, expressing respectively the life of indulgence and the life of service.

The highest form in which the former of these two types can appear is the civilization of aesthetic culture and luxurious refinement — a luxuriousness that delights appreciatively in wit, literature, and art; a civilization like that of which Burke says “that vice lost half its evil by losing all its grossness” — words more epigrammatic than true. Aesthetic culture is the highest possible form of this type of civilization. The emotion of beauty is non-moral, that is, it precludes selfish desire and the consideration of uses, ends, and duty. It is never didactic, but regards the expression of things. A feast tastefully arranged is beautiful; we say it is too beautiful to be eaten. When appetite comes in, the veil of beauty drops off, and there remains only a mass of victuals. It is this non-ethical character of aesthetic emotion which makes it compatible with a life of indulgence, and aesthetic culture the highest form of that type of civilization.

The best example is the civilization of ancient Greece. "Athenian life was a sunny, unanxious, careless, pagan life; unguided by any high code of duties, unvexed by the dread of the future which should demand the discipline of self-denial; without a thought, or even a comprehension, of that purity to which the Hebrew legislation pointed with unfailing finger, and which made the central mandate in the ethics of Israel. Greek life was a life of the exchange, the academy, the circus, the bath. It was a breezy, open-air life, which guarded the body from disease and the mind from morbidity, which habituated the intelligence to delight in the subtilty of the Socratic dialectics, and which hourly placed before the sculptor consummate models of human beauty. Undisturbed by the fierce promptings of religious zeal, the mind naturally turned with sunny complacency to the worship of that beauty which was written everywhere on sky, on sea, on hillside, and the forms of men and women." To such a civilization the moral earnestness of the Hebrew scriptures would be simply incomprehensible. When preached in the gospel of Christ, it was to the Greek foolishness. The aesthetic mind of the Greek could not receive, much less originate, the idea of a kingdom of heaven on earth, of missions for the conversion of the world, or even for the propagation of moral ideas and reformations, of the indebtedness of every man to render service to mankind, and the consecration of life and all its powers and possessions to that service. All these conceptions were totally foreign to his thought; they could be received only by quickening a new life, which would unfold into a new type of civilization.

The religion possible in such a civilization must be a religion of beauty — either a pagan religion, like that of the Greeks, peopling the heavens and the earth with gods full of passionate, roystering life, and giving to every mountain, tree, and spring its nymph; or else pantheism, concerned with God only as the infinite expressing itself in all that is; never as a Lawgiver, forbidding sin and enjoining duty; much less as a Redeemer, saving men from sin and quicken-



ing them to work with him in establishing his reign of righteousness on the earth.

The most striking example of this type of character in modern times is Goethe, intent on personal culture, but hard and cold as polished marble; more interested in a controversy of the French Academy than in the French Revolution and the wars incident to it which were changing the political ideas and destiny of Europe; paying court to the conqueror of his own country so as to awaken the conqueror's contempt — a striking contrast to Fichte, who, when his course of instruction was interrupted by the invasion, dismissed his class with the inspiriting words: "Gentlemen, these lectures will be resumed in a free country."

The doctrine that the highest end of man is personal culture is a form of the error that man's blessedness is found in receiving, and not in giving, in being ministered unto, and not in ministering. It is the highest and most refined form in which the error can appear, and the civilization resulting may have great refinement and elegance; but it is incompatible with the Christian law of service; the civilization which it develops is essentially the development of selfishness, and will inevitably disclose the defects and wrongs which are inseparable from the error of which it is the development.

The other type of civilization is that in which the moral element predominates. Everything is considered in reference to its ends or uses; duty occupies the thoughts; everything is under law and subject to retribution; life is a life of service, not of indulgence. The Hebrew and the Puritan are examples.

According to this type of civilization, blessedness is possible only in the realization of moral ideas. Whoever misses this is a lost man. It considers all human interests only in relation to right and wrong; it enforces duty; it demands rights; it resists injustice and oppression; it seeks to bring the whole world into conformity with moral law; it expects

progress ; it looks on history as a panorama in which truth and right are contending with error and wrong, and advancing with brightening glory to control the world. Therefore it generates intense earnestness of purpose, contempt for ease, indulgence, and luxury, the consecration of life to the realization of moral ends.

Such a civilization is necessarily propagandist. Missions to establish moral and religious ideas are inconceivable in a civilization of indulgence, whatever its culture and aesthetic refinement ; they are essential and inevitable in a civilization in which the moral element predominates. Müller says that Buddhism teaches a purer and more complete morality than any outside of the New Testament ; and it is the only form of heathenism which has been a missionary religion. Mohammedism, borrowing from Christianity a moral element, and especially proclaiming the unity and spirituality of God in antagonism to the idolatry of corrupt Christian churches, was intensely propagandist, though by the sword, rather than by truth and love. The moral element predominated in the earlier history of the Roman republic ; and, though the Roman *virtus* is hardly worthy to be called virtue in the light of Christ's teaching, yet, as distinguishing the Roman civilization from the aesthetic refinement of Greece, it made Rome a conqueror, carrying over the Western world the Roman law. Christianity is essentially moral ; and it alone commissions preachers to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

In history this type of civilization has often been one-sided and defective. It spreads a certain gloom over society. Law supreme, universal, inexorable, broken by all ; penalty terrible and inevitable, hangs glooming and threatening over the world. Beneath its shadow pleasure is an impertinence, the interests of earthly life trivial, secular business an intrusion ; worldliness is driven out by "other-worldliness" ; the sunny cheerfulness of life fades before the intensity of the sense of duty and responsibility ; weariness of life falls on the soul ; and asceticism drives men to deserts and monas-

teries for the mortification of the flesh. The very absoluteness of the truth demands an acceptance complete and unhesitating; the very supremacy of the law demands uncompromising obedience. But the unlimited faith and uncompromising obedience of the believer pass into imperiousness in enforcing a like faith and obedience on others. The gay indifference of the aesthetic Greek to the opinions and religions of others gives place to an intense solicitude in the presence of a religion claiming to be the only and universal religion, and of a law of right which is the only and universal law. That solicitude passes into intolerance. Heresy is hunted by inquisitions, conformity is enforced by persecution, and the true faith propagated by crusades. When the progress of Christianity puts an end to these, still zeal for doctrine eats out love to persons; intolerance usurps the place of fidelity; and, in forgetfulness that persons are the proper objects of love, theological hatred, calumny, and proscription in the interest of truth are accepted as expressions of Christian zeal.

Thus this moral type of civilization puts on both a certain moroseness and a certain fierceness. Its iconoclasm comes to be directed against the joyous and beautiful because they are such, and by being such prove themselves earthly and idolatrous. And its missionary zeal becomes intolerance and cruelty.

Christian civilization belongs to that type in which the moral forces predominate. But it brings these moral forces into action in a manner peculiar to itself. It does not put foremost truth and law, but God, the Redeemer of the lost sinner; it does not put foremost zeal for truth and the sense of duty as the inspiration of the new life, but faith in God, the Redeemer of sinners, and love to God who redeems, and to man for whom Christ died. Here, then, in Christianity, is that which saves the moral type of civilization from the gloom, intolerance, and severity which so often have characterized it. The moral life, vitalized by faith and acting in

love, is no longer one-sided and defective, but complete, comprehending all that belongs to the blessedness of man.

The Christian life springs from the sense of sin and condemnation. From this the sinner is delivered when he sees God's redeeming love in Christ. In that faith the gloom of the law and of condemnation passes away; the life becomes trustful, hopeful, and joyous; the old Greek joyousness reappears, intensified and made spiritual — not now the joy of forgetfulness of God and his law, but joy which springs up, through faith in God's redeeming love, after acquaintance with God and the law has awakened the moral nature and the sense of sin. The moral type now appears, not in the inquisitor or the crusader or the ascetic, but in the Christ-like man, with all the earnestness of the inquisitor and the crusader and the ascetic, but also like a little child, living a life of simplicity, trustfulness, and joy, and, like Jesus himself, full of tender compassion and self-sacrificing love to sinners. Inspired by this faith and love, the man in whom the moral element predominates is no longer indifferent to secular interests and weary of life, no longer stern and intolerant in the consciousness only of law; but, like Christ, is sensitive to every human interest, taking children in his arms and blessing them, ministering to the sick, comforting the bereaved, helping the fallen in their efforts to rise, joyous at a wedding, teaching the principles of Christian civilization, alive to every interest of man.

The advancement of Christ's kingdom is not linear only, in the conversion of souls, but also diffusive, advancing in completeness and power. Civilization is said to multiply human wants. This is only another way of saying that it multiplies the powers and capacities of the man. To withhold satisfaction to these wants is to undo the development of the man, and to reduce him to his original infantile and savage state. Christianity must show itself the religion of civilization, competent by its vital force in a savage community to quicken progress to civilization, competent in civilization to stimulate, purify, guide, and ennoble it.

Christianity, then, is not to repress the culture, the refinement, the activity, and manifold development of man, but to vitalize and Christianize it. And thus it reacts, and accelerates its linear advancement. Christian interest in the progress of humanity, in the highest human culture, in all that pertains to human welfare, is itself a powerful recommendation of Christianity and an important influence in quickening men to a new spiritual life.

With this train of thought the true idea of the beautiful accords. Beauty is perfection — an ideal of the mind, expressed in the concrete. Goodness and truth, therefore, when manifested in finite things, are beautiful. When the expression is of that which transcends our power of conception, the emotion of the beautiful passes into the sublime. Hence the close affinity between the admiration of beauty and the awe of the sublime, and adoration. A moral movement which excludes the beautiful is defective and self-destructive; as if a tree in an effort to multiply its fruit should shake off the glory of leaf and blossom and the golden and blushing beauty of the fruit. Beauty is the bloom of truth and goodness; it is their radiance, their glow, their smile.

Therefore, within the scope of Christianity there is room for expending money, time, and talent on any work essential to the culture, development, and well-being of man. Civilization of the most intensely moral type does not exclude aesthetic culture. Its defectiveness in the Hebrew and the Puritan was the result of the incompleteness, rather than the completeness, of the moral life. It was because morality came in the awfulness of law, rather than in the freedom of Christian faith and love, and even as love, in the Puritan, concentrating attention on the conflict with wrongs and oppressions immediately urgent, so as to leave no time for the completeness of human culture.

But Christian love, when completely manifested, must bloom in beauty. When the gospel has free course, it must be glorified. The limping god of work is the one who wins and marries the goddess of beauty. The moral force which

Christianity has made a power in civilization is essentially an energy of reform and progress. As love to man, it is diffusive, and not restrictive, concerned with the interests of man, not conservative of the privileges of a class. There is, necessarily, a certain severity about it in some of its conditions. Sweeping away the tyranny and debauchery of courts and aristocracies, it cannot well avoid sweeping away with them their elegance, refinement, and aesthetic culture. But as its purifying and renovating force works out its legitimate results, it gradually diffuses through the whole people the refinement and culture once limited to a few. And this accords with prophecy: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree. And I will make the place of my feet glorious."

But, while Christian civilization is to beautify itself with aesthetic culture, no man has a right to live in luxury and self-indulgence, using his powers only for his own enjoyment. Whatever he does, he must do it in Christian service. It is right to break the alabaster box of precious ointment; but it must be broken on the Saviour's feet; and it must be the spontaneous outpouring of Christian love, not a substitute for that love, nor for Christian toil in saving men from sin. Peter, John, and Paul would not have converted the world by breaking alabaster boxes of perfume.