

ious slander upon the grandeur and love of the Ruler of the universe. But, say some, is there not Scripture for it? There is Scripture for anything that man wants. There is Scripture for it just as there are assassins' knives in the ore in the mountain. Scripture is like a great forest into which you may enter and select good wood which you may pervert to the basest purposes on earth. Scripture is the most malleable thing in the universe. It is part of the education of man to learn to make the right use of it. At this point Mr. BEECHER referred to the fact that the preaching of the present day is not so much defective in its logical statements of doctrine as in the emphasis that it lays upon certain dogmas, the tendency of which is to produce a wrong impression concerning the character of the Deity. God, said he, loves the world not because Christ coaxed him into it, but because it would be foreign to his nature to do anything else. Out of infinite depths of kindness came forth this expression of love. As your mother would, in childhood, take you upon her knee and unravel your difficulties and help you out of your faults, so does the heart of God deal with humanity. God takes every human soul, not to love it when they are worth loving, but to mold them into benevolence. Now even while your heart is far from love, while yet there may be the whirl of passion in your veins, you are beloved by God. Look up, and see His smiling face! If I could have had this explained to me in youth, it would have done more to make me a Christian than the countless expostulations that constantly greeted me. Not until I was twenty-five years of age did I come fully to appreciate the beauty of this doctrine. Before that I felt myself as it were outside of a garden, assailed by the storms and tempests, while inside I was assured all was sunshine. Yet such I was informed was the condition of things that until my heart was changed God could not love me, and consequently could not enter. The side of justice and law was presented to me. These I understood had to be encountered first; then the smiles of love were to be enjoyed. But I could not see how justice was to be met until love itself was moved in my interest. Love was moved and is always moved, and is the great compromiser with law and justice. Mr. BEECHER then referred to the difficulties existing between different churches, and said that though they were undoubtedly of great service, he could not be persuaded to reject any man as a brother Christian who had the law of love written upon his heart, merely because he had not got it in the way specified by this or that Church. Colleges are useful, they are meant to instruct men, but if a man gets instruction without going there, has not the end been achieved, and what is there left to grumble about? I don't think, said he, that when I meet a man who shows by his daily walk in life, by his general goodness of heart, that the principles of Christianity are in his heart, I have any right to ask him how he came by them. He may be a Universalist, or even a Unitarian—that has nothing to do with the matter, if he is in the meaning of our text a Christian, I take him by the hand. Should a Universalist, Unitarian, or a Swedenborgian come to the Church and seek admission as members, as such I should oppose them, but as Christians, dogma apart, I should be happy to welcome them, and the more of them the better. As the Sabbath was made for man so was the Church, and so were theological dogmas, and not man for them. Benevolence is that for which orthodoxy works, and when that is achieved the end is wrought. But you say can a man be a Christian who does not believe in Christ? That is the puzzler. He cannot. But I think a man may believe in Christ who does not believe in Christ's name. Using that name in its superficial meaning means nothing. The name stands for certain qualities—love, purity, truth, faith and obedience to God. The man who believes in these and has them in his heart, is a Christian, no matter what he thinks about the name. There is many a man who believes in Christ, only he don't call it by that name; and there are many orthodox persons who are remarkably free from Christianity. The question after all is, has a man got the spirit of Christ in his heart? If he has, he is a Christian, no matter by what name called; and he is a stranger to the Savior, even if the most rigid of dogmatists, if he has not got charity out of a pure heart and a good conscience with faith unfeigned.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A CHRISTIAN

A Blow at Dogmatists and Sectarians by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

The snow-storm had the effect, yesterday morning, of so lessening the attendance at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, that seats were to be obtained with ease, in all parts of the edifice. Generally, standing room is looked upon as a luxury at the morning service. Those, however, who did venture out through the storm were amply repaid for their trouble by one of the most eloquent and liberal sermons which it has been the lot of Mr. BEECHER to preach for many months past. He took for his text the fifth verse of the fifth chapter of First Timothy:

"Now, the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned."

By way of introduction, Mr. BEECHER said: I have already spoken upon this passage defining what the end of the commandment means, namely, the creation of a spirit of benevolence, charity, love, or whatever other name your philosophy may give to the qualities implied by those names. And that it might not be supposed that the charity here implied is a mere mild sentiment, a mere well-wishing, kind of weak, or at least feeble disposition, the Apostle gives a specification of Christian charity. It is a feeling that rises, not from any casual impulse of nature, but that love which springs only from a pure heart—a heart which has been divinely developed—that is a heart in which the moral and spiritual elements predominate over the lower nature. Out from the very highest moral and spiritual sentiment of man's being must his love spring which it is the aim of the commandment to produce. We are not, however, to imagine that though the end of this spirit is to produce happiness it will always be manifested in creating pleasure. No. It seeks human enjoyment through human perfection, and, therefore, it is always allied with the spirit of justice. Love out of a pure heart—out of the noblest instincts—love that carries with it a sound conscience—this is a love that bears with it moral purity and discriminating equity. Still, it might be supposed that it was a sentiment that is exerted upon men for their present happiness; therefore, to correct that mistake, it is added with faith unfeigned. Faith is the evidence of things not seen; it is higher than the scientific side of the mind—when by science you mean the art of knowledge through the use of the senses. When we consider all that is implied in the passage in question, we see that the love here spoken of is the highest action of the human soul conceivable. The commandment here given may be, in consonance with the general teachings of the Bible, assumed to represent God's life and disposition. It is a transcript of the Divine life as well as of the Divine law. That there are many things which men are commanded to do, both by revelation and external nature, which do not equally pertain to God, cannot be denied. But that the great end of final existence is the same with God and man, we are not left to doubt. Benevolence is the end of law in heaven as well as on the earth, with God as well as with his children; it includes all, being the highest and the lowest. It is to be remembered, therefore, that now and hereafter we are and shall be under a law which is training toward one great end, the development of a superlative feeling of benevolence. The second point to be inferred from this is that the genius of creation and the genius of philosophy may be inferred to be benevolent. This does not exclude the use of forceful elements, but it does determine the purpose for which they are made, and it does determine the average course taken to be of necessity divinely benevolent; it indicates which way time is traveling, which way all philosophy is traveling. Nature, though capable of teaching much, has as yet taught us but little. It is undoubtedly susceptible of teaching far more than men have ever yet found out. Men have found out but little in respect to God from nature. We have found out how he treats the lowest form of animated existence, but nowhere do we get any hints of that benevolence in his character which is proclaimed to be his most glorious attribute by Christianity. I do not believe that the argument of Divine benevolence can be sustained in nature. Nature is full of contradiction; force in the history of the world has been stronger than right, cruelty has had more scope than kindness. Ruling love is only revealed by the Gospel. Even when looking at the great struggling masses of humanity, with their limited range of enjoyments and their constant stock of cares and troubles, it would be difficult to say that God is benevolent. It may appear different to one who, having been born amid plenty, with little to annoy and all the pleasures of life at command, but O how hard must life and Providence seem to the friendless, homeless, poverty-stricken soul! God does not act alike to all; to the animal He is force, force irresistible; to the undeveloped man He is still force with an element of kindness, but to the soul that has been born unto the light He is a friend full of kindness and benevolence. In order, therefore, to fully understand the dealing of God with humanity we must entirely abandon the heathen idea of pain, and the idea that until lately found utterance from Christian pulpits, that God had the right to impose pain for His own pleasure. Now, you cannot, by calling a being by another name, make him love suffering without representing him as malignant. No being, be he subject or sovereign, can produce misery for its own sake without being himself infernal. Many a man has offered prayers to the devil when he thought he was kneeling at the throne of God. The Christian idea of suffering is, that it is a means to an end; that the end is so desirable as to justify the means used to bring it about. The conception of God sitting, enjoying the suffering of the damned, is infernal, and enough to make men renounce their faith in Eternal goodness. It is an atroc-