**BROOKS BY THE TRAVELLER'S WAY - ADDRESSES BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**09. HOW MUCH MORE! by JOHN H. JOWETT**

*"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"*

*Matthew 7:11*

"How much more." These words express a mode of reasoning enjoined and commended in the Christian Scriptures. We are permitted to begin on the plane of the human, and reason upward to the Divine; on the plane of the material, and reason to the spiritual; on the plane of the temporary, and reason to the Eternal. We are to exercise the powers of observation in the common ways of life. We are to interrogate the common heart, and find there the elements of our thinking, and with these elements we may then begin to shape our conception of the Divine. "If ye then ... how much more your Father." We are to search among ourselves for alphabetic hints and suggestions, and with these we may partially determine the ways and the thoughts of the Eternal mind. We are permitted to move about in our homes, and through the many rooms of our large earthly house, gathering rudimentary hints from which we may form our conceptions of the gracious and glorious personality of God. "Look about you," the word seems to say, "and you will find in the familiarities of your home life, and the commonplaces in the world about you, the elements of right thinking concerning the Divine." "If ye then ... how much more your Father."

**I. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts, how much more shall your Father!"**

I am counselled to go into the family circle with the purpose of discovering some hints about God. I am told that in the arrangements and government of a typical home, I shall obtain glimpses of the divine fatherhood. Let me exercise this privilege. I will go into a home and exercise my powers of observation. What do I observe? I notice the presence of a pervading affection, but I am impressed by the mysteriousness of its working. I notice that affection has an extensive wardrobe. It does not always appear in the same dress. It enshrines itself in very varied guises, sometimes attractive, sometimes apparently forbidding, but through all the different vestures the one affection persists. There is one breath in the organ, but there are many notes. One breath can express itself in bewildering plenitude of sounds. I wonder to be told that behind the variety a pervading unity is sustained. The breath now issues in tones of thunder; now it warbles in bird song; now it expresses itself in clarion-call, like a bugle peal, summoning troops to muster; and again in a sweet persuasiveness, like the soft wooing of a lover. "But all these worketh that one and selfsame breath." So is it with affection in the home. It expresses itself in many guises and tones, now severely, now gently, now in tones of persuasion, and again with the imperative of a commander. If I remain in the home for any lengthy period, I can observe the affection assuming almost the variety of the seasons. Now it is sharp and severe like the winter. Now it is soft and gentle like the spring. Now it is ardent, and overflowing with sunny cheer like the summer. And now it is mellow, full, and yet restrained like the autumn. This is one of the primary characteristics which I observe in the home life, that affection reveals itself through many different conditions, but behind the varied conditions it remains invariable and constant.

I notice, further, in the home life that the wishes of the children do not always determine the gifts of the parents. I observe that affection frequently expresses itself in apparent antagonism to the one beloved. The wish of the child is not the law of the home. The law of the home is determined by the judgment of the parents. Your sick child asked for a cake, you gave her medicine. Is this affection? The child asked for a fish, and you gave her a scorpion; but only to the child does it appear a scorpion; in reality you have given the child the only possible food. The child had unwittingly asked for a scorpion, and affection revealed itself in apparent antagonism to the child's desire.

Now take the step in reasoning commended by the Scriptures. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven." If these things pervade the common home life, if affection sometimes denies, and sometimes restrains, and sometimes expresses itself in severity, "how much more" will the all-wise affection be constrained to act in apparent antagonism to our own blind and petty desires. Our Father will give "good things." I may ask for freedom; He may increase the restraints. I may ask for the sweet, and the response may be found in intensified bitterness. I may ask for fish, and there may come an apparent scorpion. But the antagonism is apparent. The thing that comes is "good." "Thou art good, and doeth good." "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." "He satisfieth our mouth with good things."

**II. "If God so clothed the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more shall He clothe you, O ye of little faith."**

I am to take a blade of grass, and contemplate it, and from the suggestions it conveys to me reason upward to a larger and truer conception of God. Have you ever gazed at a blade of grass? I don't mean have you merely glanced at it; but have you taken it up and feasted your eyes upon it until its exquisite beauty is for ever imprinted upon your soul? "Think of it well," says John Ruskin, "and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes, or good for food--stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron, burdened vine,--there be any by man so deeply loved, by God so highly graced, as that narrow point of feeble green." Contemplate, therefore, a blade of grass. Examine the exquisite robes of a lily. Take one of the commonplaces of the ordinary field. Look long at the daisy, or the buttercup, or a sprig of moorland heather. And when your vision is possessed by the ineffable loveliness, call to mind the Scriptural reasoning, "If God so clothe the grass of the field, how much more shall He clothe you." Give to the reasoning its largest reaches. Don't confine the suggestions to merely temporal vestures. Lift it up to include the robing of the Spirit. When I turn to the Word of God, I find descriptions of most wonderful clothing. "Robes of righteousness." "Garments of Salvation." "Who are these in white robes?" "Garments of praise." These phrases describe the lovely clothing of a hallowed and perfected life. May I have my spiritual nakedness covered by their surpassing beauty? I obtain the inspiring answer from the common field. If God takes so much pains with a blade of grass, how much more will He take with one of His own children. The exquisiteness of a flower of the field gives me hope that, through the grace of God, I may one day be a flower in His kingdom. The beauty of nature shall make me confident of obtaining the beauty of holiness.

**III. "If the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of the heifer, sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ."**

The argument is just this. If certain things happened in the Old Testament, how much more will they happen in the New. If certain things happened in the uncertain twilight, how much more will they occur in the splendour of the noontide? If these gracious experiences took place at the turn of the winter, how much more will they abound amid the dazzling plenitudes of the summer glory. If this man in Old Testament times, who had never seen Christ, attained to this height, "how much more" may I, who have gazed upon the Master's face? If Moses obtained the spirit of endurance, "as seeing Him who is invisible," "how much more" may we endure, upon whose eyes has dawned all the glory of the incarnate God? If Job attained unto patience, upon whom the beauty of the Lord had not yet arisen, "how much more" shall we, who have seen the transactions of Bethlehem, Gethsemane, Calvary and Olivet? And so I go through the Old Testament, noting a saint here, and another there, and witnessing their triumphs, and I come away from the spectacle with this word upon my lips, "If these things can be achieved before the unveiling of the King, how much more may they now be accomplished when the light has come, and the glory of the Lord has arisen upon us?" If these things occurred in the day of types and shadows, what may be their power and plenitude in the day of splendid reality, when the Lord has come? If our brethren in the twilight felt the cleansing power of sacrifice and knew their sin to be forgiven, how much more shall be the wealth of our consciousness who have gazed upon the "Lamb of God," and have heard the apostolic word that "God for Christ's sake has forgiven you"?