Clark University

Clark Digital Commons

Sermons, 1902-1904

Harvard, 1902-1904

4-15-1904

Sympathy

Earl Clement Davis

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.clarku.edu/sermons_1902_04

Recommended Citation

Davis, Earl Clement, "Sympathy" (1904). *Sermons, 1902-1904*. 6. https://commons.clarku.edu/sermons_1902_04/6

This Sermon is brought to you for free and open access by the Harvard, 1902-1904 at Clark Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sermons, 1902-1904 by an authorized administrator of Clark Digital Commons. For more information, please contact larobinson@clarku.edu.

Servious Fo (13) Subject, Sympothy, Scriftine Lest. Hebeus. 133 Remember them that are in bouch, as borined with them We are associated by tradition by hobits of throught, by hobits of life with a way of living which is collect Chiestionity. In sel the dinere form in which this way of life has fourt expension in written word and in wable life since the doys when Jesus of Trogoreth lived in Polestice, the real force and the real former for been in the spirit of it. whether we reach the story of thank, who sees in ferrer the does of great walvoble

with the spirit of his life, and by word and deed hore train = without to us the impression that he work upon them. The some spirit that was in Jesus has been trying to express itself in reed and in logs sel though the centuries of history, and is still working in the liver of wer towards the realization of all that in good and voble.

So great four been the fruits
of the spirit, some worry wrole
liver have been lived, so worry
heroic deads hare been clove,
so worry fine sover hare worke
great someficer for what is
true and wrote, as men true

trick to live their lines in the spirit in which Jerus loved his, that we have come to believe that to line a life in that spirit is the highest and worthiert sie of a lume being. Us me meet in our daily life the voble types of men and were where lives woke the world we live in a better and a fiver flace to live in, we see in them the some spirit that the feefle of Valestine sow in the lift of Jenne so long ago, the some spirit that is found in every voble life. When we see a ferson whore life seems unrotingottry and meak, and selfish, we believe that if such a ferror

evel only be made to understood the spirit of a chintin life, that the gloony discouraging left woold become rich and fuitful and boffy, In our efforts to be voble, and to delf other in being whee we try to unforce into their live the spirit of Church outy, which has hong rue like a few strawn of five fresh water through the flair you which have been wacted the living chaver of birtury. To this work of leading were with the Christies way of life, of helfing men to understond its sprint and the surfring them to comment themselves to its frincefler wony wen

of great former and volibly have clevoted themselver. to this some work in one form or another me are devoting our selver. From the corrects of our limited observation, and rather magre exferience me believe that the world needs To relige and become vital= ized by the sprint of Christianty. We are setting ourselver about this becuredown took of pusuod= ing ween to live in the sprint of Christionity.

how we are at work trying to fusework were to line their liner some kind of spirit with which we try to live ows. That is a delicate and a

difficult result to attain. a won does not easily give of old both and long established and ferlogs dealy theirhad edear, simply for the soke of aclofling the way of left which wother fointsout to him, if me are to meet with any huch of servets in inflrencing men's liver, we runt study the situal execution of our work and try to find out what kind of we are going to deal with. how I believe that the frest thing that must realize is that use we are dooling with in: divided how beings, an a watter of convenience me roughly good were into great claiser. We speak of the rich

and the four, the educated + the weelescoted, the criminols and the non-criminale, Politic= ians, ellucotors, business men, between, minister are conven: sent terms under which we grouf lange sumber of wer who here a common interest. to furforer of writing and tolking such classefications way seve a fractical furfice, but sufer it cover to living such clirtiset ever diraffear before the contect of wore with were. The wore who ugo their that hurverity is world of there various claver, has yet to leave some of the very rudiwertary facts of a real life. We way speak

in our off hand way of the crim: wire class, and group therin all were boffer at the time to be under the bon of the low, but should me buf = for to become one of the run? be ourselver, I francy that me would find them to be not mer. They have the some bofer of growth and develope: went that other were hor. The some great fairiour of life we frerent in them that we find in other feofle, the degrees of criminolity both within and without the low are so clinere that we convot down the line. When it comes to real life

in the living world, there is wo such clair of men as criminal. We may much inclinishedr, or feelofs groups of inclinichols who have one steffed the boundries of sociol and word regulation, but me con Room wothing of a criminal class for me do not life in claires, but as inclinications who come in context with each other in daily both. In the some general way we years of the educated and the uneclucoted, but if we reak out the uneshed class, we sholl find that it vouisher before one quest. We week wer where education does not run

the some or our, is a fresunting which a few four took with such fewfle will transform with a folly. I have are degrees in the quality and the quantity of echicotic, but the wholly mechanised men close not fresent himself.

no work con me for georf feoflie who word and inword classer. Showled you and I how the forth of the worst degraded being, and unclustived the causes that were a foctor in there soll resulte, I force, that we might heritate to class him away the wicked of the world, and then aren't our right to a flace away the respectable. We come

in central with were who are doing things that are wiring and selfiel and cruel. The sine of the fleet we worry but the sun of the intellect and the sine of the squit are egoodly book. The clarsefying of we according to good or tool is frecarious business. Us a witter of fort ware of un are eclicated throughly, wor we we ferfect in our lines, the are all climbing the worm: lais, some way be a little ligher of their other, but nove of we at the top. In our former, we medt with various human souls, some are selverted some are with some are good

some are not, some are noble some are wat, but the furol fort to remember is that while we are not entirely whe, yet our common founts are greater than our inclinical. istic fecularities. In the energy , chy life we meet as won to won, as some to some, and the artificial barrier of on tack and book life are obliter = are to lead men with the chieston way of bye, we must west men, but as a minister meeting a loquer, not an an echnolis were instructing the unselverted vot ar a good um seeking to somet the bod, but as

the comment won, realizing the comment which we stond, and the comment end which we are seeking to attain. Whenever the a worn is, he is a human sure, with climing formitiation and will not stored fationizing.

But in additure to meeting there feofle as won and man if me are really going to lead them me must undertond the rime workings of their notines. Humority is like great frest, If we looked down ofm it from the tof of a distort hill, it sees the itself to us in its great granden

relieved by the warying stoder and Tints of the leaves which are exposed to the view of the outside observer, but if me enter the first and wow about away the individual tues which go to woke of the fittue which we had seen from the lies tof, we find great chave, greater variety of beauty; work exquirele bits of scenery from with in thou we had ever imaginal. To Now and unclestured the real tham of a human being we must get beneath the surface, and see unto the une workings of the house sool, and ferret out the cour-

flexily of course and cleries which woher up the forces that wourish the leaves. Bolgvin ruillage doctor could see the struggling efforts of a climic soul even in the surflet of the men to whom he give his life. The keen insight of Vieter Hugo coved anolyge the trimese life of Jean Volgian whose conclouet lead him to the life of a Golley stire, But his life, when we some to know it is transformed with great beauty and strength. It token Hugin insight to revere the were life of a Fortie, who in the wicht of all the rachen and smelty of her misery and stone stee

commonch on fity and respect. Though the former of Hunthine the scarlet letter of Herter Frime is transformed with the image of the noble stuggle of an ujused sort reaching out though her ruinery often the fearer of the clinine life. In our elifute to helf such souls, we runt see into their lives, understand the conflicts of deriver and farious, of lofer and au litim. We munt find the sting flaces and build ofer them or founds: time, we must seek the make flower and stime to strengther and mend them. The importante victem of

dirifotion way become a strong from for won, though the influence of a little strength eving form from a friend for after all he is not wholly book for the very good ter which woke him a jourial confinion of his life, are also the some qualities that brief were together in their corrow later for the good life. It needs but a change of eugheric to woke him a good voble won. The much obused foliticin often needs that a slight awount of the right kind of influence office in the right way to transform him who the good citizen. The flyricin, when he is rolled

to that a ferre who is ill, very conefully studies the faither case in hand, and clirconers where the weakness is, tries to trace it to its cause, then when he for leaved see That con be leaved, he gives a medeane which wiel serve the sauce of the chieuse, will check the forgion of it, and give the notwood forces of the body offertunity to build of the the offected facts. Un work must be done with ever greater cair and frecision. teach core that comes to us must be stucked and traced both to the causes of the evil, then the sure course

must be served, and upon the foundation of the unoffected former, the fevreu of refair and whileling must be carried on. as the succes of the clotters work defends largely when his obility to diagone his weer, so will the success of our work defend very largely ufor our obility to understood the in workings of the man. to affreeiote the his fourt of nie in life.

But to broble to lead the men when we west, even through we do understand them, to be able to give them the impute to the chiertin way of life, we must be the living embodiments of the spirit that were in

Jeren. Notes count size higher then it some, neither con the influence of our words and on deeds use about their serve. The forwal negotive type of goodner which set it self uf as an exouple of abstinence, and profriety is a four apology for the story fortine, definite spirit of Jesus life "but the heart ful fertested intered loke that furnisher the great former, but the great stong floring sine, which for gothered together into one were the the little sheave of woter from the hills. In the work to which we are devoting buselver, we must toke of who

one lives the spiriture truths that please from the wormlaws of history, and from the hills of living ferror, and Shirth this great wors of truth which for become four because we have token it uf with our neigh invost him, and strufed it with our own ferwalt, me are equiffect to lead mee into the spirit of the churtin way of life. The roaning tonent which me hear one on the other sicle of the woulding does not go to swell the former and volume of our steam of influence. The truth which we have beard of but here not ferred and

Tested by the experience of our own lines, or the sympother time observation of avether life, does not become a fact of our shear of influence, and the len we have to clar with it the better we are of, The frive nalue rudich our words and our life mill torz mill be determined by the dynamic of the spirit with with we live it, It wor the spirit of Jenn life that evobled him to help the men curry when he lived, it will be the spirit of our limithot will be the source of whole former we way hor in helping were to live the Christin life!

Div. Chafel. april 15, 1904 See. Wolt Whiten Lever of Sun. P. 2/5,

Sympathy

Earl Clement Davis

April 15, 1904

Harvard University Divinity Chapel

Cambridge, MA

Scripture

Text: Hebrews 13:3

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them;"

We are associated by tradition by habits of thought, by habits of life with a way of living which is called Christianity. In all the diverse forms in which this way of life has found expression in writtne word and in noble life since the days when Jesus of Nazareth lived in Palestine, the real force and the real power has been in the spirit of it. Whether we read the story of Mark, who sees in Jesus the doer of great and noble deeds, or the story of Matthew who presents him to us as the promised messiah, or of John who sees in him the incarnation of the logos, we find there the glimpse of a great soul, the spirit of whose life so influenced itself upon the people of Palestine, that his life gave a new impulse to the religious world. We do not care much whether Jesus said this particular thing or that particular thing or not. But we do rejoice that Jesus lived his life with such devotion to the highest possibilities within himself and with such love for his fellow men, that they became infused with the spirit of his life, and by word and deed have transmitted to us the impression that he made upon them. The same spirit that was in Jesus has been trying to express itself in creed and in life all through the centuries of history, and is still working in the lives of men towards the realization of all that is good and noble.

So great have been the fruits of the spirit, so many noble lives have been lived, so many heroic deeds have been done, so many fine souls have made great sacrifices for what is true and noble, as men have tried to live their lives in the spirit in which Jesus lived his, that we have

come to believe that to live a life in that spirit is the highest and worthiest aim of a human being. As we meet in our daily life the noble types of men and women whose lives make the world a better and a finer place to live in, we see in them the same spirit that the people of Palestine saw in the life of Jesus so long ago, the same spirit that is found in every noble life. When we see a person whose life seems unsatisfactory and weak and selfish, we believe that if such a person could only be made to understand the spirit of a Christian life, that gloomy discouraging life would become rich and fruitful and lofty. In our efforts to be noble, and to help others in being noble, we try to infuse into their lives the spirit of Christianity, which has run like a stream of fine fresh water through the plain upon which have been enacted the living clamor of history. To this work of leading men into the Christian way of life, of helping men to understand its spirit and inspiring them to commit themselves to its principles many men of great power and nobility have devoted themselves. To this same work in one form or another we are devoting ourselves. From the results of limited observation, and rather meagre experience we believe that the world needs to realize and become vitalized by the spirit of Christianity. We are setting ourselves about this tremendous task of persuading men to live in the spirit of Christianity.

Now we are at work trying to persuade men to live their lives with the same kind of spirit with which we try to live ours. That is a delicate and a difficult result to attain. A man does not easily give up old habits and long established and perhaps dearly cherished ideas, simply for the sake of adopting the way of life which another points out to him. If we are to meet with any kind of results in influencing men's lives, we must study the condition of our work and try to find out what kind of men we are going to deal with.

Now I believe that the first thing that must [we] realize is that {???} we are dealing with individual human beings. As a matter of convenience we roughly group men into great classes. We speak of the rich and the poor, the educated + the uneducated, the criminals and the non-criminals. Politicians, educators, businessmen, laborers, ministers are convenient terms under which we group large numbers of

men who have a common interest. For purposes of writing and talking such classifications may serve a practical end, but when it comes to living, such distinctions disappear before the contrast of man with man. The man who thinks that humanity is made up of these various classes has yet to learn some of the very rudimentary facts of a real life. We may speak in our off hand way of the criminal class, and group therein all men who happen at the time to be under the ban of the law, but should we happen to become one of the number ourselves, I fancy that we would find them to be not so very much unlike other men. They have the same hopes of growth and development that other men have. The same great passions of life are present in them that we find in other people. The degrees of criminality both within and without the law are so diverse that we cannot draw the line. When it comes to real life in the living world, there is no such class of men as criminals. We may seek individuals, or perhaps groups of individuals who have over-stepped the boundaries of social and moral regulation, but we can know nothing of a criminal class for we do not live in classes, but as individuals who come in contact with each other in daily life. In the same general way we speak of the educated and the uneducated, but if we seek out the uneducated class, we shall find that it vanishes before our quest. We meet men whose education does not run along the same line of interests as ours, but they have collected their facts from experience and are able to use them to their own advantage. The farmer with his knowledge of the soil, and the plant life, and the stock of the {???} may not know much about the history of the ancient world, but he has the knowledge of his way of life. The laborer whose work seems so mechanical and apparently requires so little skill still has his education. Both he and the scholar may agree that his education is not broad, but to classify him among the uneducated, simply because his learning is not the same as ours, is a presumption which a few hours talk with such people will transform into a folly. There are degrees in the quality and the quantity of education, but the wholly uneducated man does not present himself.

No more can we group people into moral and immoral classes. Should you and I know the facts of the worst degraded being, and understand the causes that were a

factor in these sad results, I fancy that we might hesitate to class him among the wicked of the world, and then assert our right to a place away the respectable [sic]. We come in contact with men who are doing things that are wrong and selfish and cruel. The sins of the flesh are many but the sins of the intellect and the sins of the spirit are equally bad. The classifying of men according to good or bad is precarious business. As a matter of fact more of us are educated thoroughly, nor are we perfect in our lives. We are all climbing the mountain, some may be a little higher up than others, but none of us are at the top. In our journey, we meet with various human souls, some are educated, some are not, some are good, some are not, some are noble, some are not, but the final fact to remember is that while we are not entirely alike, yet our common points are greater than our individualistic peculiarities. In the everyday life we meet as man to man, as soul to soul, and the artificial barrier of our talk and book life are obliterated by facts. If you and I are to lead men into the Christian way of life, we must meet men, not as a minister meeting a layman, not as an educated man instructing the uneducated, not as a good man seeking to convert the bad, but as man meets man, realizing the common ground upon which we stand, and the common ends which we are seeking to attain. Whatever else a man is, his is a human soul with divine possibilities and will not stand patronizing.

But in addition to meeting these people as man and man, if we are really going to lead them, we must understand the inner workings of their natures. Humanity is like [a] great forest. If we looked down upon it from the top of a distant hill, it presents itself to us in its great grandeur relieved by the varying shades and tints of the leaves which are exposed to the view of the outside observer. But if we enter the forest and move about among the individual trees which go to make up the picture which we had seen from the hilltop, we find great charm, greater variety of beauty, more exquisite bits of scenery from within than we had ever imagined. To know and understand the real charm of a human being we must get beneath the surface, and see into the inner workings of the soul, and ferret out the complexity of causes and desires which makes up the forces that nourish the learner. Balzac's village Doctor could see the strong glowing efforts of a divine soul even in the

simplest of the men to whom he gave his life. The keen insight of Victor Hugo could analyze the inner life of Jean Valijean whose conduct lead [sic] him to the life of a galley slave. But his life, when we come to know it is transformed into great beauty and strength. It takes Hugo's insight to reveal the inner life of a Fontine, who in the midst of all the sadness and cruelty of her misery and shame still commands our pity and respect. Through the power of Hawthorne, the Scarlet Letter of Hester Prynne is transformed into the image of the noble struggle of an injured soul reaching out through her misery after the peace of divine life. In our efforts to help such souls, we must see into their lives, understand the conflicts of desires and passions, of hopes and ambition. We must find the strong places and build upon them as foundations, we must seek the weak places and strive to strengthen and mend them. The unfortunate victim of dissipation may become a strong powerful man through the influence of a little strengthening power from a friend. For, after all, he is not wholly bad for the very qualities which make him a {???} companion of his life, are also the same qualities that bind men together in their common labor for the good life. It needs but a change of emphasis to make him a good noble man. The much abused politician often needs but a slight amount of the right kind of influence applied in the right way to transform him into the good citizen. The physician, when he is called to treat a person who is ill, very carefully studies the particular case in hand, and discovers where the weakness is, tries to trace it to its cause, then when he has learned all that can be learned, he gives a medicine which will remove the cause of the disease, will check the progress of it, and give the natural forces of the body opportunity to build up the affected parts. Our work must be done with even greater care and precision. Each case that comes to us must be studied and traced back to the causes of the evil, then the cause must be removed, and upon the foundation of the unaffected {???}, the process of repair and rebuilding must be carried on. As the success of the doctor's work depends largely upon his ability to diagnose his cases, so will the success of our work depend very largely upon our ability to understand the in[ner] workings of the man to appreciate his point of view in life.

But to be able to lead the men whom we meet, even though we do understand them, to be able to give them the impulse to the Christian way of life, we must be the living embodiments of the spirit that was in Jesus. Water cannot rise higher than its source, neither can the influence of our words and our deeds rise above their source. The {???} negative type of goodness which sets itself up as an example of abstinence, and propriety is a poor apology for the strong positive, definite spirit of Jesus' life. It is not the beautiful protected inland lake that furnishes the great power, but the great strong flowing river, which has gather together into one river the little streams of water from the hills. In the work to which we are devoting ourselves, we must take up into our lives the spiritual truths that flow from the mountains of history, and form the hills of living persons, and with this great river of truth which has become {???} because we have taken it up into our very innermost lives, and {???} it with our own personality, we are equipped to lead men into the spirit of the Christian way of life. The roaring torrent which we hear over on the other side of the mountain does not go to swell the power and volume of our stream of influence. The truth which we have heard of but have not found and tested by the experience of our own lives, or the sympathetic observation of another life, does not become a part of our stream of influence, and the less we have to do with it the better we are off. The final value which our words and our life will have will be determined by the dynamic of the spirit with which we live it. It was the spirit of Jesus' life that enabled him to help the men among whom he lived, it will be the spirit of our lives that will be the source of whatever power we may have in helping men to live the Christian life.