

**THE MORE ABUNDANT LIFE:
LENTEN READINGS,
SELECTED CHIEFLY FROM
UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS**

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The More Abundant Life: Lenten Readings, Selected Chiefly from Unpublished Manuscripts by
Phillips Brooks & W. M. L. Jay

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PHILLIPS BROOKS & W. M. L. JAY

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THE MORE ABUNDANT
LIFE

LENTEN READINGS

SELECTED CHIEFLY FROM UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS
OF THE

RT. REV. PHILLIPS ^{of} BROOKS, D.D.
Late Bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts

BY W. M. L. JAY

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PREFACE.

THE observance of Lent as a season of spiritual awakening and refreshment, is steadily growing in favor with the Christian world. This crowded and complex modern life really demands a yearly period of comparative quietude, wherein the life of the soul—too often thrust aside and starved in the ordinary rush of business or pleasure—may come to the front, to be fostered and fed, and strengthened for whatever of trial or sorrow it must encounter as its days go on. Bishop Phillips Brooks, by largeness of sympathy and fineness of insight, is well fitted to guide us into this quiet, penitential season. No one is less open than he to the charge of formalism, yet no one has made a more earnest plea for the due observance of Lent than that which is chosen for the Ash-Wednesday Reading in this book. It is no narrow asceticism to which he invites us, but a "more abundant life," not of the flesh but of the spirit, to be lived in loving dependence upon the Saviour, in loving commemoration of the suffering and death

which He endured in order that all who believe on Him might have life.

The compilation, chiefly from unpublished manuscripts, has been a labor of love. I humbly hope that it may help some of us to find or keep the "way of life" through earthly Lents to the heavenly Easter.

W. M. L. JAY.

THE MORE ABUNDANT LIFE.

Ash-Wednesday.

Turn ye even unto me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful.—*JOEL*, ii., 12, 13.

When ye fast be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance. . . . That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret.—*MATT.*, vi., 16, 18.

ALL bodily discipline, all voluntary abstinence from pleasure of whatever sort, must be of value either as a symbol of something or as a means of something. This, then, is the philosophy of fasting: it expresses repentance, and it uncovers the life to God. "Come down, my pride; stand back, my passions; for I am wicked, and I wait for God to bless me"; that is what the fasting man says. You see what I mean by fasting. It is the voluntary disuse of anything innocent in itself, with a view to

spiritual culture. It does not apply to food alone. It applies to everything which a man may desire.

Let us think first about the value of fasting as a symbol. It is the characteristic of a symbolic action that it increases and nourishes the feeling to which it corresponds. Laughter is the symbol of joy, but as you laugh your laughter reacts upon the joy and heightens it. Tears are the sign of sorrow, but they feed the sorrow out of which they flow. . . .

And so it is no artificial thing, nothing unreal or unnatural, when the soul, sorry for its sins, ashamed of its poor bad life, lets its shame utter itself in signs of humiliation, and finds in quick and sure reaction the shame which it expresses deepened and strengthened through the utterance which expresses it. . . .

Then let us pass to the second value of fasting, its value directly as a means. The more we watch the lives of men, the more we see that one of the reasons why men are not occupied with great thoughts and interests is the way in which their lives are over-filled with little things. It is not that you despise the highest hopes and interests of your immortal nature that you neglect them so; it is mainly that your passions crowd so thick about you that you are entirely occupied with them. It is no untrue picture of the lives of many of us if we imag-



ine ourselves, that is, our wills, standing in the centre; and close about each central figure, about each man's self, a crowd of clamorous passions and eager lusts; while away outside of them there wait, in larger circle, the higher claimants of our time and powers—culture and truth and charity and religion, with all their train. . . . The man sometimes puts out his hand, parts and pushes aside this clamorous crowd, these physical appetites, these secular ambitions. He says to them, "Stand back; and, at least for a few moments, let me hear what culture and truth and charity and religion have to say to my soul." Then up through the emptiness that he has made by pushing these clamorers back, there pours the rich company of higher thoughts and interests, and they gather for a time around the soul which belongs to them, but from which they have been shut away. . . . There is no nobler sight anywhere than to behold a man thus quietly and resolutely put aside the lower that the higher may come in to him.

Every now and then a conscience, among the men and women who live easy, thoughtless lives, is stirred, and someone looks up anxiously, and says, "Is this wrong? Is it wicked to do this?" And when they get their answer, "No, certainly not