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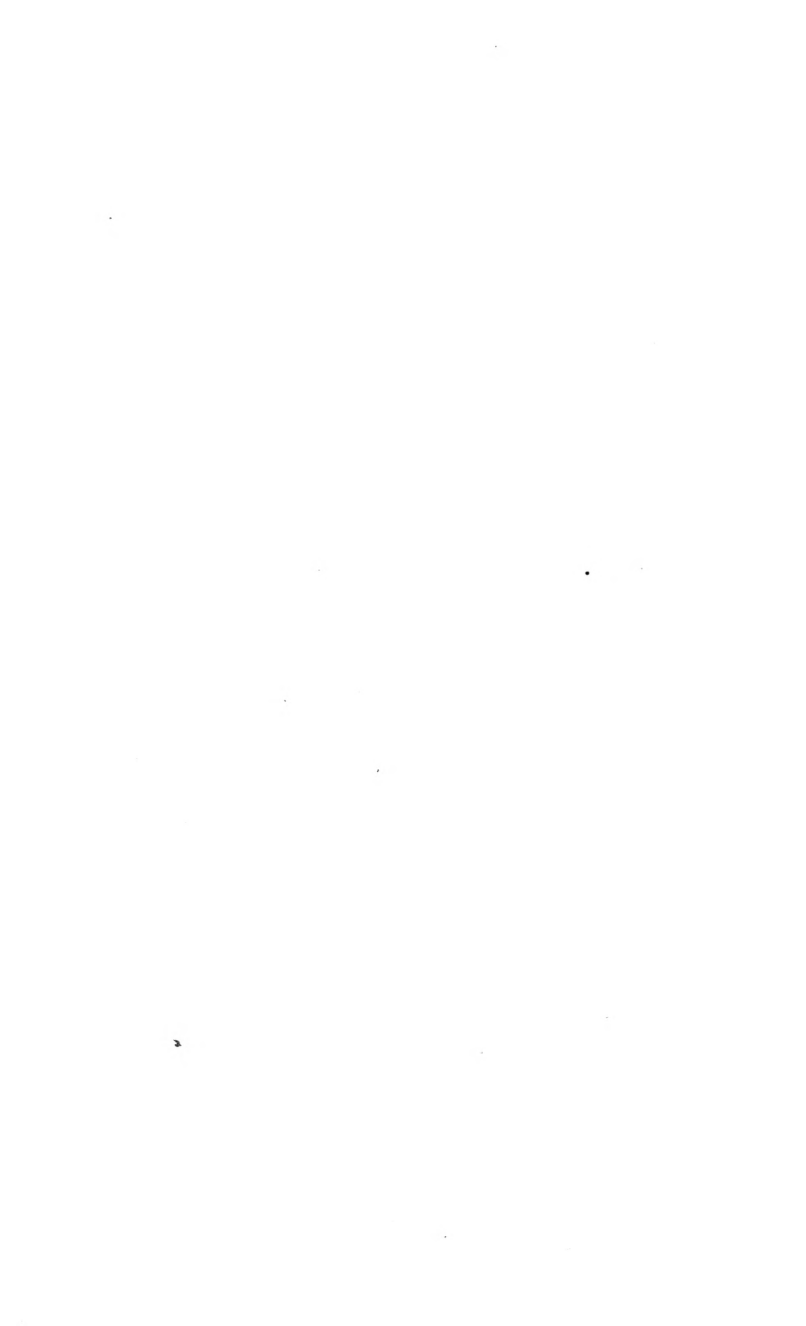
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# ABSOLUTE RELIGION.

A VIEW OF THE ABSOLUTE RELIGION, BASED ON PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES AND THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE.

BY  
THOMAS C. UPHAM, D.D., LL.D.

AUTHOR OF

“LIFE AND RELIGIOUS OPINIONS OF MADAME DE GUYON,”  
“A SYSTEM OF MENTAL PHILOSOPHY,” “THE  
INTERIOR OR HIDDEN LIFE,” ETC., ETC.



NEW YORK:  
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS,  
FOURTH AVE. & TWENTY-THIRD STREET.  
1873.

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## TO THE READER.

This Volume, entitled the Absolute Religion, comprises some of the unpublished writings of THOMAS C. UPHAM, deceased. An amanuensis had been engaged to copy his manuscripts, written with pencil, the day preceding an attack of paralysis, May 20th, 1871. This paralysis, causing blindness of one eye, and general debility, rendered him unable to give any farther attention to the work. A second attack of paralysis, as he was rising from his bed on the morning of March 10th, 1872, terminated his life April 2d 1872, six o'clock a. m., at the age of seventy three years. During these three weeks of prostration he was unable to articulate distinctly. The only connected sentence clearly understood is this: "*My spirit is with God.*"

Several chapters of the work were left partly written, and of other chapters, only the headings and leading thoughts remain. The fact that the author did not complete the work, must be received as an apology for any lack of completeness, in the outline, arrangement and finish of the work. The aim of the author seems to be to unfold and to harmonize as far as may be, religious views and opinions, by explaining them on the basis of a sound

philosophy, in the hope that some minds might be benefited by such a philosophical statement. The aim is a great one. And the philosophic and christian man who loves to see God in providence, and God in man, and religion a *reasonable service*, will appreciate this effort of one who made the study of man in his mental powers and capacities, the one great study of his life; and whose highest aim, in every practical way, was to benefit by word and deed his brother man.

The responsibility of issuing such a work, which the author did not complete, and which he did not himself revise, is only balanced by the desire that good may be accomplished however imperfect the work.

The following sentences are an extract from his preface to "Divine Union" a work published by him in 1857, and are appropriate here.

"In writing this work I have no private or party interests to subserve, but only wish to do, what I may seem, in the providence of God called to do, for that cause of Christ, of God, and humanity, which is dearer to me than anything else. And this is a consolation which always attends me,—the full belief that the truth will live and do the good appropriate to it, and that all error will and must die."

PHŒBE LORD UPHAM.

New York, *May*, 1873.

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# ABSOLUTE RELIGION.

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## CHAPTER I.

*The Absolute Religion considered in connection with the doctrines of the Bible, especially the teachings of Christ.*

I. It is not difficult for the reflecting mind to see, in the currents of thought which characterize the present period, a tendency to bring into notice, and to give emphasis to what is called the Absolute Religion. Many persons, who would not willingly be regarded as irreligious, have expressed a desire for a religion founded upon the exercise of reason and upon philosophical principles, and not exclusively or chiefly upon authority. The utterance which is heard in this direction, is every day growing louder and more imperative. It is the expression of the views and feelings of persons whose sincerity cannot well be doubted; and who, at least, have a claim upon our respect for the intellectual

ability which they have often manifested. It is an utterance, therefore, whether addressed to us as Christians, or merely as men of thought and philosophic inquiry, which cannot wisely be allowed to go unheeded.

2. The first inquiry which claims our attention, is, What are we to understand by the Absolute Religion? It is perhaps proper to say, that the answer to this question will be likely to develop itself more fully and satisfactorily in the course of the discussions which are to follow. And yet a few words on the subject may properly be said here. In the first place it may be remarked in general terms and without going minutely into reasons, that the Absolute Religion is that religion which, harmonizing with the truths and requisitions of God on the one hand, and with the nature of man as related to God on the other, is necessarily as wide in its extent and its application as humanity itself;—a religion which neither limited by geographical boundaries, nor dependent for its existence on civil and political enactments, is the inheritance of all men equally, whatever their name or place or condition, by virtue of their common nature. In other words, it is a religion which is universal.

In the second place, it is that religion which finding its subjective expression in ideas rather than



in sensations, and in those ideas which are fundamental in themselves and in their relations, vindicates its claim to Absoluteness, because it is unchangeable; and is therefore the religion, not only of all men and all nations but of all time and all ages. That religion, which is found to be merely an incident of a nation's or people's history, and which passes away with the transition of the temporary circumstances on which it is founded, fails to present any just claim to this character of immutableness and universality. The Absolute Religion is something very different from this. Founded in the nature and constitution of things, but harmonizing with the thought and sustained by the power of the highest Intelligence in the universe, and being revealed to human apprehension by means of fundamental and universal ideas, which speak inwardly and intuitionally and with a voice of authority, it is necessarily a religion which exists everywhere, and exists forever. No antagonisms of the changeable and the finite, no chance nor change, which mars the face of human affairs, nor hardness of heart, nor slowness of belief, can triumph over the truth and supremacy which are its basis.

3. Characterized by universality in its extent and application, and by permanency in duration, it has also this distinctive and paramount feature, that it carries with it a binding and controlling obligation upon

the thoughts, feelings and actions of all men and of all moral beings, by a virtue or power which is lodged in itself, and not by means or in virtue of any power, authority or command outside of itself. It may be aided by such outside influences but is not necessarily dependent upon them. Its authority is its own ; its word is law. It may not be out of place to make the explanatory remark here, that there is a great difference between a thing considered in its own nature, and its announcement or revelation. The thing or object in question presents itself in one aspect ; the announcement of it in another. For instance, the announcement of the Absolute Religion may have occurred at a particular period or in a particular country, in the era of Moses, or in the era of Christ, at Sinai or at Jerusalem, at Rome or Athens, or in other periods and in other countries ; but the thing itself, the religious truth, involved by a sort of eternal generation in the great facts of the universe, has no time or place, no beginning or end.

4. Such, in general terms is the Absolute Religion. This religion has had its interpreters in all ages of the world ; men who, with different degrees of mental illumination, have attempted to give expression to the great religious thought, written in the hieroglyphics of universal nature ;—Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Confucius, Zoroaster, Sakya-

Mouni, and many others, who have seen something of the great interior light, which is destined in the progress of its rising to illuminate all lands, and to harmonize all moral and religious separations. I allude to these men who seem to me to have been to some extent the subjects of a divine guidance, in no lightness of spirit, but with a sincere reverence and gratitude. Each in his degree and place, and in reference to his age and country, may be regarded as having a divine mission, and as being in some important sense the minister of God. Nevertheless there came in the fullness of time a Man who was greater than these. If I have studied him aright in what has been left us of his life and doctrines, the great teacher of the Absolute Religion, and standing far above all others in the measurement of his insight, is Jesus of Nazareth. The highest and most reliable expression of the Absolute Religion is found as it seems to me in his wonderful words.

5. The object of the present work, undertaken with much mistrust of myself but in the hope that it will be found to harmonize with the truth, is not only to announce some of the leading doctrines of the Absolute Religion, but to show their identity with the doctrines of Christ. The religion of Christ, which is only another name for the principles involved in the teachings of Christ, is the Absolute Reli-

gion ; because having incarnated itself in Christ and thus shown its divine beauty in the human form, it henceforth belongs to man, not perhaps in the temporary and changing incidents of his history, but to man in his essential and universal nature, and therefore is the religion of humanity. The religion of Christ is the Absolute Religion because, though it may be said in its personal applications to grow up and to put forth the buds and flowers of feeling, the rich and beautiful experiences of emotions and affections, it nevertheless has its root in the deepest thought, and is both grounded in, and harmonizes with, unchangeable intuitions. The religion of Christ is the Absolute Religion, though man is its object, and is also, in the exercise of his powers of perception and reasoning, the appointed and necessary instrument of its development, yet being founded in the nature and constitution of things, and thus being beyond measurements of time, it synchronizes with God himself in its origin and continuance, and goes step by step with the divine authority in the assertion of its universal empire.

6. I am aware, that the high claims now put forth in favor of the religion of Christ, considered in its relation to the absolute truth, are not always allowed by that class of thinkers and inquirers to whom allusion was made in the beginning of the chapter.

And what is more, they are not always, and perhaps not generally insisted on by those who are distinctively and truly known as Christians. Not unfrequently the Christian says, as if conscious of his inability to stand firm in the great battle of thought, and willing to find the first refuge that presents itself, that the religion of Christ, standing on a basis peculiar to itself, may be regarded as above and beyond reason. I confess that I hesitate in the acceptance of such expressions. So far from this being the correct view, there is a sense undoubtedly, in which it may be affirmed without presumption, that there is nothing above reason ; neither God nor the creatures of God ; neither men nor angels ; neither finite nor Infinite. If it be admitted that God exists, it is still true, that he is not available to us as an existence, and is not known to us as an existence, and his existence cannot be logically affirmed and accepted, except through the instrumentality of perception and reasoning. If indeed by reason be meant that sad semblance of reason, which by its own action is separated from, and is not enlightened and aided by contact with the everlasting truth ; in other words, that form of reason or semblance of reason, which in being separated from the great Source and Guide of all our faculties is perverted by ignorance, prejudice, and passion, then the matter pre-

sents itself in another aspect, and is entitled to another answer. But reason in the true sense, reason in the greatness of its intuitional, as well as its relational and inductive movement, reason such as God is able to incarnate inspirationally in the thought and intellect of man, has nothing above it. True reason is God's highest thought; it holds a position which it cannot change; it sustains an office which it cannot abnegate; and the whole universe is not only dependent upon it for its revelation as an object of knowledge, but in all its coming progress accepts its aid, and marches in harmony with it.

7.—Let it be understood furthermore, that we have no controversy with much of that which is known in the history of human knowledge under the name of philosophy. The philosophers have had their time of affirmation; and undoubtedly they have said instructive things on a great variety of subjects. They have felt at liberty to speak with boldness on the subject now before us; and sometimes with a smile of incredulity and even of opposition on their lips, as if it were a thing impossible, that the peasant of Nazareth, the man who was crucified, could hold up a light in the presence of the world's philosophic thought and culture. Nevertheless the child of the humble Judean mother made the attempt. We read that when he was only twelve

years of age, the inspiration from the heavens was so strong upon him and his heart was so full, that he entered into this great controversy. And even then his understanding and answers were matters of astonishment. But the hand of the mother, who was chosen to bring him within the sphere of humanity, withdrew him from the contest. Her heart had prophetic intimations of the future; but the time had not yet come. He dwelt in Nazareth, and with his heart open to the influx of the truth, he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." And when in the maturity of manhood he came again into the field, his opponents met him with all the appliances and aids of human learning and wisdom; but ignorant of that divine philosophy which is baptized from the 'heavens, and therefore greatly disordered and defeated in the argument, they stopped the discussion by nailing Him to the Cross. But there is something in the man of truth which can never die. He passed on. In the language of the Scriptures, he went up on high. And philosophy, not understanding the things which are seen by faith and not by sight, looked here and there but could not find Him.

The teacher of Nazareth, dead but living, no longer a child but clothed with heavenly manhood, and who teaches by means of inspirations and influ-

ences wrought in the great school of the human heart, still claims his right to be heard. He is still a teacher of the Absolute Religion.

8.—It remains to be added, which I think will naturally occur to the reader, that the doctrine of the Absolute Religion pertains to essentials and not to the mere incidents of things; to the principles rather than the form; and not so much to institutions and ceremonies, as to that which underlies them.

It deals with those things, as we have already seen, which from their nature bear the stamp of permanency; things which *are* because they cannot fail to be; things which exist because non-existence is an impossibility; whereas ceremonies, outward forms, institutions which have beginnings, changes and end, and mere outward arrangements and incidents of any kind, which are the result of specific and positive enactment, are temporary and unsettled in their nature and are short in their duration. And therefore, it will not be surprising, if there are many things which will not be noticed in what follows; and simply because they fall out of the natural line of our remarks, and receive their appropriate attention in other connections and with other methods of treatment.

9.—The work which I have undertaken is de-



signed to be pacific in its spirit, and is not necessarily controversial. It does not at all follow, because a writer deals with a controverted subject, that his discussion of such a subject must necessarily be harsh and controversial in its spirit or aspect. In what I have to say, I shall make but little reference to names and persons, and parties. I deal with principles rather than with men. And it is not beyond my hope that the truth will be found, and that charity will be unbroken.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Personality of God.*

I.—God exists. The existence of God is a doctrine of the Absolute Religion. It is true there are said to be Atheists. Perhaps there may be individuals, not very many in number, to whom that name of error and sadness may apply. As long as great perversions of the human mind are possible, varying from the numerous forms of temporary disturbance to partial or total insanity, it is not unphilosophical to suppose that atheism, in the case of a few individuals is a possibility. But I know not that there are atheistic communities or peoples. Humanity, into which we are to search for the development of principles, is represented by masses. The masses of mankind, as they are found associated in large societies and communities, have never rejected the idea of a God. No historian, from the days of Herodotus and Thucydides, has furnished us the records of an

atheistic nation. We are justified therefore in taking the position, that the idea of a God belongs to humanity. As a product of intellectualism, it finds its origin in part in processes of reasoning founded on the perceptions, but has a still closer alliance with the intuitions; and the Being whom it reveals commands by a law of our nature, the reverential and loving homage of the heart. So clearly is the doctrine of God's existence inscribed upon the works of outward nature, as they are interpreted by the human intellect, so strongly is this doctrine affirmed by the interior convictions and intuitions, and so necessary is it in response to the yearnings of the human heart, that I cannot feel the necessity of entering into argument in relation to it. I take it for granted.

2.—But there is a matter, connected with the divine existence, which cannot well be omitted, and which is of great importance. I refer to the doctrine of the Personality of God. Various circumstances have brought this question into prominence, and justify giving attention to it. Within a few years no small number of writers of acknowledged learning and ability have greatly disturbed the traditional belief as well as the religious hopes and consolations of a large portion of the Christian world, by affirming and attempting to prove the imperson-

ality of the Divine Being. In accordance with our plan of inquiry we shall endeavor to show, that the Personality of God is taught by the absolute method; and that the teachings of the Absolute Religion, in this particular as well as in others of a fundamentally religious nature, are in harmony with the Christian doctrine.

3.—It cannot well be doubted, that the personality of God is one of the doctrines contained in the teachings of Christ. It is difficult to see how he could address God as his Father, and in terms implying the greatest veneration and love, without believing in the Personality of God.

When, in the trials and sorrows of the Cross, he prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do;" and when in the final agony of his spirit he said, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," it cannot well be supposed that he believed he was praying to an abstraction, or to a spiritual generalization, or a great undefined principle of life, instead of a percipient Being, who in the mental or spiritual sense had ears to hear, and a heart to feel. We cannot doubt, that the careful readers of the New Testament, in view of what is there said having a bearing upon the subject now before us, fully and earnestly accept the idea, as the only one which can be reasonably entertained, that

Jesus believed in the divine personality. This wonderful Being, of whom we shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter, had a heart that worshipped. His intellectual powers, which are sometimes overshadowed and concealed by the manifestations of his great goodness, revealed and identified the object of his worship; and his loving heart, which added emotion to perception, accepted the revelation and yielded its homage. But affirm that God is not a personal being, only an underlying principle or causative force which permeates all existences and develops itself in all the forms of existence, without the intelligence and responsibility which are implied in personality and only by means of fixed and inexorable law, and from that moment it is intuitionally evident, that there is no revelation of an object of worship because no such object exists. And worship itself, which is so obviously one of the leading characteristics of the inward life of Christ, necessarily ceases, because there is no object to which it can attach itself.

4.—But philosophy, or something which goes under that great though often perverted name, has in these later times taken a different view. Those who are acquainted with the speculations and suggestions on this subject, associated, more or less distinctly with the names of Helvetius, Diderot, Con-

dorcet, D'Alembert, Hume, Gibbon, Fichte, Hegel, Comte, Herbert Spencer, Mills, Strauss, Feuerbach and others, know well how confidently God has been announced as a principle of activity and causation, but without the recognized attribute of a person; in other words as a great spiritual or psychical energy, pervading all things that exist, and holding a fixed and necessary relation to results, but without a distinct and available responsibility, and without even knowing or having any interest in knowing what the results of its own activity shall be. It is painful to know how widely such speculations have affected the thoughts and feelings of men. But this doctrine of God, which analyzed to its results is practically the annihilation of God, is a very different thing from the simple, sublime, and truly philosophic idea of God, which is justly understood as holding a place in the doctrines of Christ.

The God of the Bible, from the earliest to the latest portion of its announcements is a personal God. All that is said of God in that great treasury of thought, including the personal teachings of Christ, with all its affirmations of his eternity and universality, recognizes and emphasizes the great and essential fact of his personality.

And we cannot hesitate in saying, that a true philosophy, when applied to the doctrines of reli-

gion, in other words that the Absolute Religion, or Religion developed in the highest and truest human thought and feeling, is on the side of the biblical teachings.

5.—And let us now look at the subject in a little different aspect, with a view as briefly as possible, to bring it to the test of facts and reason. Before we can either affirm or deny the personality of God, we must first make personality itself, separate from the being to whom it attaches and of whom it is predicated, the subject of our thought. It is at this point that we detect what seems to us the beginning of a great error.

Personality is not merely a name ; nor is it merely an idea. In order to know fully what it is, we must go back from the name to the idea ; and from the idea or thought to the fact or truth which the idea represents. The name is merely an aid to the thought ; an auxiliary or help in the use of the thought. The thought or idea of personality, which arises necessarily in the mind under the appropriate circumstances of its origin, is justly regarded as a simple or elementary idea ; and as such it may be admitted that it is not susceptible of that logical process which is known as a definition. And yet not being what Mr. Locke would call an illusive or chimerical idea, but one harmonizing with the truth

of things, it involves and affirms to our interior convictions and belief the fact or verity of the thing to which it relates. And hence, in connection with the necessary laws of mental action, we have a basis, and we cannot get it in any other way, for affirming the fact of personality. We say for instance in relation to ourselves and say it without hesitation that we are personal beings. And when we thus come to personality itself, in distinction from the idea of it; when we reach the verity or reality of the fact in distinction from its intellectual representation, if it should happen that definitions in the usual logical form fail to make it more clearly known, on account of its interior and elementary nature, it is still both clear in itself as a matter of internal and intuitional revelation, and we can also obtain to some extent additional knowledge of what it is by the indirect process of indicating what it is not.

For instance, personality, in distinction from the idea or intellectual representation of personality, and considered as a fact or verity actually existing and of which it can be affirmed that it is, is not identical with existence, nor is it identical with knowledge, nor with power, nor with activity, nor with expansion. It may have its important relations with any or all of them; but it requires to be kept distinct, both in its idea through which it is represented to



us, and also in its fact or realization. A Being, separate in the mere fact of existence from other beings, who has actually powers of perception and affection, and who can not only know and judge and feel, but has the volitional power which can carry his judgments and feelings to their appropriate issues, has necessarily a personality, whether his susceptibilities of knowledge be greater or less, or whether the mere extent or expansion of his existence be greater or less, or whether he comes within the limits of our comprehension or not. The convictions of the human mind, arising by their own necessary laws of being, require us in such a case to affirm the fact or realization of personality, and enable us to say without any misgivings, that we have before us a personal being. We have not merely the idea of personality, which is a matter of interior or subjective experience and nothing more; but we have before us the fact of personality, in its outward or objective realization.

6.—With this view of the matter before us, and on such fundamental principles, we proceed to affirm that God is a personal being. The doctrine that God is an impersonal being, probably owes its origin in part to a mistake in the philosophical elements involved in the doctrine of personality, and in part to the fact, that God is without limits. As

we have been in the habit of ascribing personality to beings who, in having form, are subject to the limitations of form, we easily fall into the habit of associating personality with such limitations, and at last are apt to adopt the conclusion, that where there are no limits, no well-defined boundaries of existence constituting a form, there can be no personality. Now it must be admitted, that in the extent or expansion of his being, God is without limits; but it does not at all follow that God, because he transcends the limitations of the human senses, and is not the subject of material measurement or any other measurement, is therefore not a personal God. The question of personality does not turn upon mere extent or expansion of being, whether physically or even psychically considered, but rather upon the traits or characteristics of being. In considering the subject of God's personality, it is a proper inquiry, whether he possesses intelligence which is cognizant of the fact of his own existence and power; whether he has the capability of knowing and affirming the fixed relation of himself, both in perception and action, to that interior law of rectitude which is also a part of his being; whether he possesses a volitional power correspondent to the powers of perception and the claims of moral obligation? It is in the answer to such questions as

these, that we find the basis of personality considered as a fact or realization. And if the answer is in the affirmative, then God most evidently possesses all the requisites of personality, and stands forth before the universe, not merely as a blind and unintelligent principle of movement, but as a personal God, capable of intelligent design and action, endowed with responsibility both to himself and to all beings that are dependent on him, and entitled, in the case of those who are dependent, to obedience and homage.

7.—And it is proper to say here, as an indirect confirmation of our position, that humanity demands a God who can thus be recognized and worshipped. The instinct of reverence and homage, which evidently pervades the human heart, so much so that it has found its place as an attribute of humanity in all lands and all ages, requires, and cannot be satisfied with anything short of a personal God. In the view of the great masses of men, to deny the personality of God, is, to all practical purposes and results, much the same, as we have already intimated as to deny the existence of God. So that we run no hazard in saying, that a personal God is one of the great religious necessities of humanity. Religion is the interior and domestic tie, which makes the united family of the finite and the Infinite.

And without a Being, who is not only supreme in his attributes, but who is approachable, and can be addressed and confided in, on the basis furnished by a deific personality, the human race is necessarily left in the condition of a bewildered and sorrowing orphanage.

8.—And we may add that the opposite doctrine that which denies God's personality, seems to us to be full of danger in other respects. It is not only the abnegation of religion, but of practical morality. The doctrine of impersonality, admitting that it sometimes comes before us with learned and imposing pretensions, will be found, if allowed to go unquestioned, to be attended not only with the rupture of God and man, but of man and his fellow-man. It is a doctrine which not only strikes boldly at the religious intuitions of the great heart of humanity, but is an inlet, through its want of practical power, to hostility, fraud, cruelty, and all varieties of crime. No theory of practical morals has ever been constructed on the basis of the impersonality of God, which is available against the mighty evils that continually imperil man's social condition. The audacity of wrong and crime is not frightened by an abstraction. Nor is it much afraid of a positive principle of life, which has no self-regulated thought and volition. If it were possible for impersonality to

leave us a God at all, which it is not, it would be a God with no eyes to see, and no ears to hear, and no hands to handle, and no head to think, and no heart to feel, and no will to execute ;—a God, if any one should object to the material form of the expressions, with nothing which our spiritual eyes could see, or our spiritual ears could hear, or our hearts' necessities could appeal to ;—a God, in any light in which it is possible to consider him, without a voice to cheer us in our efforts to do right, and without a hand to help us against the dangers which would certainly assail and overwhelm us.

## CHAPTER III.

### *God as Life.*

I.—In subjecting the doctrines of Religion to the estimate of the Absolute, and in thus bringing them to the test of fundamental reason, so that the religious announcement or doctrine, whatever it may be, shall be found identical with the eternal truth or otherwise, it will be necessary to say something of life as an ultimate and necessary principle, and to affirm and verify its identity with God. Every one knows how common a thing it is to speak of God, not only as great and independent in himself, but as sustaining a causative relation, and as being the primal source and living principle or life of all things. But God could not be the source or life of other things without having life in himself. God is Life.

And the question naturally arises in the inquiring mind what Life is? In answering this question, it is admitted that we may not be able, in consequence of its ultimate and primary position, to say what life is, *in itself considered*: but it will aid much in giving

clearness to our conceptions, if we proceed to give concisely but distinctly some of its marks or characteristics.

I.—One of the marks or characteristics of Life, in its primary or ultimate sense, in distinction from anything of a subordinate or secondary nature which may sometimes bear that name, is, that it is without beginning. If the Life, meaning by the term what may be conveniently designated as the true or essential Life, could not be said to exist without a beginning, then it would be true, that there was a time, (namely, the time antecedent to its beginning,) when it had no existence: a doctrine, which would leave the universe for unnumbered ages without any life-giving principle. It is hardly necessary to say that this is a view which is inadmissible. And besides, if there was a time when the Essential Life did not exist, and afterwards a time when it began to exist, then, inasmuch as not having existed at first it could not have created itself, it must have been brought into being by another Life antecedent to it in existence. And if there was another principle of Life antecedent to it in existence, which was without beginning and had also by means of its higher and broader nature the power of developing existence in other forms, then that antecedent life was, and is, the Essential Life. Therefore it is reasonable to say

that one of the marks or characteristics of Life, in the true and higher sense of that term, is, that it is *without beginning*.

2.—Another mark or characteristic of Life, in the higher or essential sense, is, that it is eternal. Eternity, which has reference to termination as well as commencement, and excludes both, is without beginning and also without end. The Essential Life is eternal. And it is so because it is without beginning. That which exists without *beginning* to exist, has the reason or ground of existence in itself; and, therefore, having life in itself and *of* itself, there is no reason why it should die. The fact of existence, with no reason of existence but what is found in itself, obviously involves the idea of eternity of existence. Being what it is, and with adequate reasons for thus being, and without any dependence for its existence on any thing outside of itself, it necessarily *continues* to be what it is. Continuance is the opposite of cessation. The Essential Life, therefore is eternal.

3.—Another and third characteristic of the great living principle which we are considering, is that it is universal. If the principle of Life is limited, then, place the limitation wherever you may, the great universe of things, in comparison with which the restricted or limited universe is as nothing, is



beyond this limit; reaching out in all directions in immensity which is boundless; and this infinitely wider or true universe is a universe without life, which is inconceivable. The fixed and necessary conceptions of the human intellect require life, wherever there is a capacity of life. A universe without life is nothing more or less than universal death. The doctrine of a universe without life is just as contradictory to the conceptions of the intuitive or suggestional intellect of man, (that department of our nature which gives us all our primary or elementary ideas,) as would be the doctrine of a universe without the attendant conceptions and facts of space and time. It is on such grounds, stated as briefly as possible, that we are justified in the assertion, that the Essential Life is universal.

4.—A fourth mark or characteristic is, that it is a life which in its own interior nature is without change. Changes spring out of it, since it is that essential unity of existence out of which comes all variety. But in itself it is unchangeable. And it is so, because it is eternal and universal. Being eternal, it cannot limit itself in time; and being universal, it cannot limit itself in place. And being thus commensurate with all place and time, meeting the wants of every moment of time and of every condition of things, a change in its own nature, whatever

may be true of change in its varied manifestations, becomes an impossibility. It is life now; and it is life always. And it is the same life, the same in its nature and extent, to-day, yesterday, and forever.

5.—Another characteristic of the Essential Life is, that it never ceases in its action. Activity is a part of its nature; it is a principle, which ever goes out of its subject to its object, and finds the necessary nourishment of its own life in the good it does to another. To cease to act, therefore, would be to cease to live. It is true, that it changes its modes of action; and this change of mode in action may be regarded as furnishing the compensation of rest; but still, there is properly speaking, no cessation of activity. And accordingly, in being a perpetual life, it is also a perpetual development. Always one, and yet exhaustless and countless in its diversity; the endless out-going of the central infinite in the multiplied and constantly varied manifestations of the finite.

6.—It is, then, a life which is endless, boundless, changeless, ceaseless; the source of all other life, because it is itself the true life; and the source also in an important sense of all knowledge, because knowledge is inseparable from Life in its highest

form ; and yet, Life in its own nature, in many respects, is necessarily and forever unknown.

And now comes a remarkable fact. Such characteristics as have now been described, will apply equally well to God, and to God only. The characteristics of Life are equally the characteristics of God. And they justify us in saying, that God has the true life in himself; that God is not only the great causative and living principle of all things, but more concisely and yet truly, that God is Life.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *Identity of Life and Love.*

I.—But there is something additional, notwithstanding the possible limitations of our knowledge in some important respects, which may help us to a more interior view of the nature of Life. There is something within the limits of human experience, which allies us to the great Source from which we come, and which may be appealed to in these inquiries. The Essential Life, in recognizing itself in its causative and sustaining form as existing in humanity, and in being thus brought in some degree within the sphere of human comprehension, and made the subject of human analysis, reveals itself as *Love*. So that in view of the evidences that attend it, we may venture to lay down the proposition, that Love and Life are essentially the same: a proposition so wide in its sweep and so fruitful in its consequences that, while its evidences compel the acquiescence and homage of the intellect, its

tendencies and results, when rightly understood, fill the heart with joy.

2.—In prosecuting the inquiries of this chapter, we derive an argument in support of the identity of Life and Love, in the first place, from the Divine Nature itself. And such an argument, harmonizing with the Absolute methods of thought, brings our conclusions, so far as they have a religious aspect at all, within the limits of the Absolute Religion. God is Life: God is Love.

In being inseparable from all existences, in being the central causative principle of all existences, and in harmonizing with all existences, there is no possible motive or reason why the Divine Life should not be interested, (the relative position and responsibilities of all being taken into account,) in seeking the good, the happiness, and the perfection of all. Its motive of action cannot turn back upon itself and seek a causation prior to that which is already first, because, being infinite itself, it cannot ascend a higher height, or sound a deeper depth, than it has in its own nature. And thus standing central, and at the same time without limitation, and consequently having no power outside of itself to excite its fears, or to limit its responsibilities, what strength of thought or ingenuity of conception can suggest a motive in the Infinite Mind, which is

adverse to the universal good. In other words, the Life of God, in its substance and essentiality, is, and must be, a Life of Love.

3.—And now let us look at the subject in another aspect. Love, in distinction from the counterfeits of love; we mean that divine love, which “casts out fear,” and which pursues the good of its object for the sake of the good and not for the sake of reward; such love has all the marks or characteristics which have already been ascribed to the Essential Life. It was said of Essential Life that *it has no beginning*. The same can be said of Love. Looking at love psychologically, and in one of its most distinguishing aspects, it may be described as simply benevolent desire, or the desire of good. And like every other desire, it involves in its very nature and as a part of its nature, a tendency to activity and to practical results. It is essentially a motive power. Now take the universe as the theatre of inquiry, and say whether Love, considered as a motive power, has or can have, admits or can admit, of any active and causative power *antecedent to itself*. Looking at the question psychologically, it seems to us that only three suppositions are possible in the case; *first*, indifference, which is not life, but the negation of life; *second*, the desire of evil, which, if it be admitted as the primal activity, would annihilate God, and

enthroned Satan ; and *third*, the desire of good, which is only another name for Love.

Now apply this analysis to God. If God exists at all, he exists as Essential Life. As essential life, He is essential activity ; and that, too, without a beginning of such activity. Forever, and as a part of his nature, He must have had in himself a motivity a principle of action. That principle of activity, could not have been indifference ; for that would be a contradiction in terms. It could not be the desire of evil, for that would constitute a satanic Infinite. On the only remaining supposition, it must have been the desire of good or love. Love therefore, is, and, from the nature of the case, must be, the constitutive activity of the universe. And being central in the infinite nature, we may say of it as we say of God, it is without beginning ; and, therefore it is, and must be to that extent, the same with the Essential Life of things.

4.—And again, looking at the subject a little further, we need not hesitate to say, that the circumstances and intuitions which necessitate the affirmation, that Love is without beginning, involve also the additional affirmation, that Love is without ending, in other words, it is eternal. And as it has no beginning, and no ending, and thus covers all time ; so, looking at it in another aspect, and by means of

other processes of thought, such as will easily suggest themselves, we are under the necessity of affirming further that the principle under consideration is a principle *without limitation*; a principle surmounting the boundaries which might be supposed to stop its progress, and reaching to every place and every object within the realms of actual or possible existence. And this great principle, without beginning and without end, reaching to all objects and living in all events, universal by the same necessities which compel the fact of its eternity, is thus made to stand forth with the same attributes and the same features as the Essential Life. So that we are justified in saying that Life is Love, and Love is Life. And God, who is the embodiment of life, is the embodiment of love; and is what He is, whether He is called God or Life, because He is Love.

5.—These views are the views of the Absolute Religion; views which involve the unchangeable facts and relations of things, and have the sanction of the highest reason; and if God had not taught them in the Scriptures, we should still be held accountable by the light that is within. But the religion of enlightened reason and the religion of the Bible are one; thorough and candid inquiries, enlightened by the spirit of humility and faith, will not fail to harmonize them. And hence we open the Bible,



and find that wonderful expression, repeated and emphasized in its essential meaning in a variety of forms, "God is LOVE." This great truth, upon which hinges the destiny of the universe, seems to have developed itself especially in the bosom of the apostle John. Without going through long processes of reasoning and possibly without any training in such processes, he nevertheless had the grand intuitions of the heart, and uttered affirmations, which God in the soul had taught him. Plato, the first of Grecian philosophers, could affirm that God "geometrizes," and he uttered a truth, corresponding in depth and comprehension to this wonderful saying of the humble and loving disciple.

6.—The doctrine that Love is identical with Life, brings the subject of the Essential Life within the sphere of human cognitions. It is true that Love, considered as Life, operates in all space and all time; but it is also true that it does this, without being identical with either. So that it can be said, in expressions which imperfectly convey the idea, that it is the life of space without being space, the life of time without being time; in other words, a principle and not an expansion, an elemental activity, and not an outward, material measurement. And hence arises both the fact and the possibility of its incarnation. The Essential Life, whether called Life or

Love, is individual as well as universal ; dwelling in God, and dwelling more or less, in all the creatures of God who are born into his image. And since the day when Christ walked in the valley of Nazareth, and wept in the garden of Gethsemane, it can be said that the life of God dwells in the soul of man, and the problem of the Infinite, so far as its most essential element is concerned, is brought within the field of human consciousness, and is made the subject of human affirmation. The holy man, whoever and wherever he may be, walks in life ;—the same divine and essential life which dwells in the bosom of the Infinite. The life of the follower of Christ is the same in its essence with the life of Christ. There is a philosophical and substantial foundation for that wonderful but most true assertion of the apostle Paul, “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” The essential life of Christ was LOVE ;—the cross of Calvary was only its necessary resultant, and its divine symbol. The cross is Love : and in that view of the interior and subjective nature of the cross, it stands as a bright and perpetual reality in the heart of every Christian.

## CHAPTER V.

### *God as Unity and Duality.*

1.—Having given in the preceding chapters some of the marks or characteristics of Life, and shown its identity with Love; and having seen that God is Life in the highest sense of the term, or what may conveniently be named Essential Life; in other words, that the fact of his existence is a problem of necessity, that Life is in Him by essence or being, that He cannot be otherwise than what He is, and is without beginning and without end; and having seen also that God, notwithstanding the objections that have been so freely made in these later times, is a Personality, and is susceptible of being recognized and approached as such; we are now prepared to go a step further, and to say in the light both of the Absolute Religion and the Scriptures, that God, the great fact and mystery of the universe, is at the same moment and by the necessities of existence, Unity, Duality, and Trinity.

2.—It may be said, however, that neither of

these great expressions standing alone, pregnant as they are with a deep and divine meaning, can convey to us the full idea of that wonderful being whom we call God. But taken in connection with each other and with Personality as the basis of their application, they open views of the Infinite, which the exploration of ages would not fully satisfy. We shall treat of them in the order in which they have been named.

Of the first affirmation, namely, the Unity of the divine Nature, we shall have but little comparatively to say, because it is a subject on which much has been ably written, and is one which to thinking and philosophic minds is but little short of self-evident. The argument on the subject is commonly and very justly drawn from the evidences of oneness of design in the multiplied objects of creation.

3.—There is a foundation for the argument from creation, because creation implies the fact of a creator, and because, looking at these objects in the light of their logical relation, creation does not contain anything which did not antecedently exist in the ideas of the creating Mind, so that creation, existing in the universe of objects around us, may justly be regarded as the out-going, the reflex, or if it be preferred, the shadows of the Infinite. And accordingly what God is in the eternal principles of his

nature, including his Unity, is written not merely in the messages of Prophets and Apostles, but in his out-goings, in the emanations of Himself which exist in the things that are made, in the great robe of created forms and life which hangs as a garment around the brightness of his essential being. And there, as we read in accordance with the laws of our mental beings the multiplied facts of emanated or created existence, which are expressions of the oneness of thought and plan that lie hidden in the Source or Centre from which they come, our convictions become harmonized and consolidated in a particular direction; and at last it is impossible for us to doubt the Unity of that great Creative Centre. We cannot dwell, nor do we feel it to be necessary, upon the specific processes of thought by which this is done. Nevertheless, UNITY is the first word in the divine alphabet; and Nature, speaking in her silent voices, and writing her record in the book of the Absolute Religion, harmonizes with the Scriptures in saying, God is ONE God.

4.—But this is not the only or the final word in the great facts of God's existence. We proceed therefore to say, without however, confidently expecting an equal unanimity of opinion in regard to it, that the Divine Nature is dual, or two-fold, at the same time that it is one. This great mystery in the

nature of the Divine Being is rendered possible by the great fact of Personality, which has this peculiarity, that, while it necessarily implies and includes existence, it may be regarded as something more than existence, because it is a fixed and discriminated modification of existence. The unity is in the existence ; the duality which attaches to the same existence, and can never yield its claim to it, reveals itself in that real and indestructible modification of existence—that elemental fact of the universe, not easily explained, but which can never be ignored,—called Personality. It is upon this basis that the Absolute Religion, which cannot interpret itself independently of existing facts, harmonizes with the Scriptures in breaking up the desolateness of Unity and proclaiming the two-foldness or duality of the Divine Nature. And if we will but open our eyes, so significant are the facts that have relation to it, we cannot fail to see at least some evidences of it.

5.—Some of the facts upon which our conclusions are founded are these: In every form or kind of existence which comes fully within the limits of human knowledge, we find that each form, while it is discriminated from every other form, reveals within the prescribed limits of its own existence the wonderful combination of unity of nature with a two-

foldness or duality in the constitution of that nature. Take our common humanity as an example. No one can well deny that humanity is one in nature or being, while at the same time, without abrogating in any degree its unity and identity of nature, it is dualistic in personality. Man is not woman and woman is not man, and yet neither man nor woman is out of the limits of humanity. They stand revealed, to the comprehension of all true and candid judgment, forever one in the essential identicalness of being or nature, and yet forever discriminated by facts and relations which make them two in one. And our argument is, that God, in revealing this great fact in everything that is made, has revealed, in connection with the primal and essential unity in his own existence, the additional fact of duality. In other words, God is both Fatherhood and Motherhood.

To the mind impelled by the laws of its own being, that intuitionally accepts the great fact of Causation, and can read the inherent nature of the cause in the facts that flow from it, this, I think, is the inevitable conclusion. And from the eternal Fatherhood and Motherhood, furnishing, in their co-existent and co-operative duality, the only conceivable basis of such a result, all things proceed.

6.—But is there anything in the Scriptures, any-

thing in the common and generally accepted forms of religious thought and feeling which harmonizes with this view? It may, perhaps, be admitted that the Scriptures are not very full or very explicit on this subject, and yet there are some things that favor what has been said. It is worthy of notice, that in the very earliest part of the Bible there are expressions which clearly intimate a plurality, not, indeed, in the essential nature, but in the personalities of the Godhead. The Hebrew word ELOHIM, which often occurs as the name of the Supreme Being, and which is translated God, is in the plural form. In the account which is given in the first, third, and eleventh chapters of Genesis of God's early doings, he is represented as conversing with another, and in such a way as to convey the idea of more than one divine personality. It is a part of this early history that God made man in his own image; and yet it seems to be obvious from what follows that the man who was thus created contained in himself a combination of male and female elements, which either constituted, or was destined subsequently to constitute, a duality of persons. And it may be remarked in this connection that the intermingling of the plural pronouns *us* and *our* with the singular pronouns *he* and *his*, when God himself is the subject of discourse, as in Genesis i. : 26, 27, may be regarded as natural or



at least explainable, on the supposition of a plurality of persons, but not otherwise.

7.—In the book of Proverbs, the authorship of which is generally, and probably with justice, ascribed to Solomon, the second Personality, as it is sometimes called by writers, or that personality which indicates the maternal element and power of the Godhead, is understood by many commentators, especially those of a deeply intuitive and devout cast of mind, to be announced under the name of Wisdom, called in the Greek Septuagint translation, SOPHIA. “Wisdom,” or the “Divine Sophia,” is represented in the eighth chapter of the book, as lifting up her voice, as standing in the top of high places, as crying aloud at the entrance of the city gates. The character of the language is so remarkable in some parts of the chapter, that it is certainly difficult to explain it on the ground merely of figurative forms of expression. “By me,” says Wisdom, “kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.” And again, in language which reminds one of what is said of the Wisdom or Logos in John’s gospel, “The Lord possessed me in the *beginning* of his ways, before the works of old.” And again, “There I was by him as one brought up with him ;

and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." Prov. 8: 15, 16, 23, 30.

I am aware that different and somewhat conflicting interpretations have been given by learned men to this portion of Proverbs. The reader who wishes to go into a minute examination of it, which our limits and the pressure of numerous topics will not permit us to do, will find valuable aids in the 15th volume of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, in a very able and exhaustive article, in support of the position that Wisdom in these passages is a divine Personality, by Professor Barrows, of Andover.

We find evidence also, that the doctrine of a duality in the Godhead, and of a Wisdom or Maternal principle, existed widely among the Jews, from various passages in that portion of the Jewish writings which are regarded by the Protestants as apocryphal. In the apocryphal book, entitled the *Wisdom of Solomon*, written about one hundred years before Christ, and in the Greek language, the *SOPHIA* or Wisdom is repeatedly introduced, and in such a way as to indicate personality. In the 9th chapter, 4th verse, it is said, "Give me the *SOPHIA* [or Wisdom] *which sitteth by thy throne.*" At the ninth verse, she is represented as being present with God when he made the world. And I think it is worthy of notice, that in the 1st and 2d verses of the 9th chapter, So-

phia or Wisdom is used as a parallel expression, and as synonymous with Logos. It is the same in the 12th verse of the 16th chapter. Similar passages, and which have been understood, to some extent, as indicating a Motherhood or maternal personality in the Divine Nature, are found also in the apocryphal book, entitled, the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach.

9.—In the Jewish CABALA, or traditional scriptural commentary, which began to be collected some years before the coming of Christ, there are evidences of such a belief. Mrs. Child, in a work entitled “The Progress of Religious Ideas,” has made reference to this fact in a passage near the commencement of her second volume. “According to the cabalistic doctrine,” she says, “God was pure, uncreated light, existing by the necessity of its own nature, filling the immensity of space, and containing within itself the principle of life and motion. The souls of all beings were portions of Him, and had existed in Him. All forms of being were merely manifestations of his eternal, indwelling ideas. The Wisdom of the Eternal they supposed to be a feminine deity, whom they called SOPHIA.”

10.—The most satisfactory announcement, however, on this deeply interesting subject, is that which occurs in the generally recognized Scriptures; and

is to be found in the first chapter of John's Gospel. To understand its full force, we must keep in mind, what I think a careful and critical examination will fully justify, the identity of the Logos and the *Sophia*. "In the beginning was the Logos or Word; and the Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God." In other words; God, the great positive principle of the universe, the divine Personality, which is characterized especially by the attributes of power and causation, existed in the beginning, and as the antecedent of all created things. But He had a companion; He did not exist alone. The Word or *Logos*, the Wisdom or *SOPHIA*, different expressions for the same principle of Eternal Life, was *with* Him. And the Logos was God; not only *with* God, but *was* God.

II.—An Infinite Love, existing as a positive personality, implies and requires, as the complement to its own nature, a correspondent existence, receptive of whatever it is able to communicate; in other words, an Infinite Beloved. On no other supposition can we understand how the wants of its affectional nature, for we cannot suppose that God is destitute of such a nature, can be met. The personality of the infinite Love, which is characterized by the attributes of causation and power, would fail in the great purposes of being, and thus would essentially destroy

itself, if—speaking after the imperfect manner of men—it were not enfolded in the arms of the Eternal Wisdom, the *Logos*, the *Sophia*. Such, in the somewhat mystic words of the Apostle John, words liable, perhaps, to be misunderstood or perverted, but nevertheless significant of a truth of heavenly beauty, is the announcement of the infinite Pater-  
nity and the Infinite Motherhood.

Undoubtedly the language of John, like everything else that takes the imperfect form of words, is susceptible of criticism. We are aware there are those who are of opinion that the expressions he employs can be explained on the ground that the *Logos* is the name of an attribute merely, and not of a personality. But it must be admitted, I think, especially when all the facts brought to notice in the various passages are carefully compared, that such an explanation is not the most natural and obvious one.

12.—The thought, which finds its expression in the fact of celestial maternity, makes its appearance in other quarters. The word *Logos*, as applicable to God, and used in a way to indicate, in the opinion of many, a divine personality, is found in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, a learned Jew, who wrote a number of works in Greek previous to the time of John. According to a statement to be

found in the Critical Greek Testament of Dr. Alford, Philo identifies the *Logos* with the *Sophia*, using the terms as convertible: a circumstance of a good deal of interest in connection with the history of the use of these terms. It is worthy of remark, also, that the *Logos*, as the Eternal Reason, and spoken of in such a way as to imply, if not directly affirm, personality, has a place in the writings of Plato. It is not necessary to suppose, however, that John, who leaned on Jesus' bosom, and learned sympathetically, as well as in other forms of instruction, the great truths that had their lodgement there, derived his views, as some have conjectured, from either Plato or Philo. He had other and higher sources of knowledge. Nor is it necessary to suppose with Dr. Adam Clarke on the other hand, although there are some facts which look in that direction, that Plato derived his knowledge on this subject, to whatever extent it may have existed, either directly or indirectly from the Jews. There is reason to believe that many of the leading philosophers of Greece, including Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras and Zeno in the number, were true and earnest seekers after moral and religious truth. And it is true of all men in all ages of the world—not an accident but an eternal principle—that they who seek in simplicity and sincerity of spirit shall not fail to find

Scholars well understand, and perhaps more fully so at the present time than at any antecedent period, that there are many thoughts and suggestions in the doctrines and writings of Socrates and Plato, in particular, which harmonize well with the doctrines of the Scriptures. The same infinite Mind, which has never ignored its children in any country or in any age, may have been the source of knowledge in both cases.

13.—The doctrine under consideration makes its appearance from time to time subsequently to the time of Christ and his immediate successors. It is found for instance, in the writings of the learned Valentinus, who lived in the second century, a Jew by birth, but educated in Alexandria, and subsequently resident in Rome. He regarded the Supreme Being, in the first or earliest aspect in which he presents himself, as a great Primal Essence, a sort of unfathomable Abyss of Existence, an immeasurable ocean of life. His vast primal Existence either gradually develops itself, or manifests itself connaturally and from the beginning, as Acons or Powers, which, as they were far removed according to Neander, “from abstract notional attributes,” were probably regarded by Valentinus in the light of Personalities. And these appear to be represented as complements or correspondences to each

other, namely, as Positive or Causative on the one hand, and as Receptive on the other. He speaks of the Acon SOPHIA, or the Eternal Wisdom, as unfolding itself, though at first weakly and imperfectly, as the designing or contriving mind of the universe; in other words the fashioning or *artistic* power. It at last incarnates itself in Christ, who in his human nature is the highest finite out-birth; the beginning or Elder Brother of a great family, who may be expected to inherit the truth and purity which, in his human nature, were manifested in him. The doctrine of Valentinus is undoubtedly in many respects complex and obscure; and these few sentences which give the most favorable aspect, necessarily impart a very imperfect idea of it. But all that it is important here to know is, that it recognizes in the Divine Nature the fact of innate or connatural powers and personalities, which may be regarded as distinct and self-conscious in their manifestations, though having a common basis of existence, and also as being correspondent and complementary as Positive and Receptive, as Fatherhood and Motherhood.\*

14.—Other writers, among whom Heracleon and Barsanides may be particularly named, who lived

\* See Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church. Vol. I. Art. on Valentine and his School.



subsequently to Valentinus, may be regarded as sympathizing with him, and as being essentially of the same school of religious thought. Not unfrequently they apply the term *Sophia*, or Wisdom (the term adopted by all these writers from the Greek version of the striking passage in the book of Proverbs, which has already been named), in such a way, and in such connected epithets, as not only to indicate the fact of personality, but that divine and eternal relation of Fatherhood and Motherhood to which our attention in this chapter is particularly directed. The doctrine is found in Clement of Alexandria, who also lived subsequently to Valentinus, and whose views of religious truth were in other respects somewhat different.

15.—In coming down to later times we find intimations of the doctrine under consideration in the writings possessing far more depth and value than is commonly supposed, of the Mystics and Quietists. Suso, one of the truly devout and learned German Mystics of the fourteenth century wrote a work which he entitled “The Book of Eternal Wisdom.” Suso recognized the common doctrine on the subject, that this living and personal principle, the divine SOPHIA of the Greek mode of expression and the “La Sagesse Eternelle” as he calls it in the French, the eternal LOGOS or Wisdom, that dwelt with God

and was God, bowed itself to the sphere of our erring humanity, and became incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth. And he expressly teaches, near the close of the first chapter, that we have a knowledge in its higher or pre-existent state by means of the knowledge which we have of Christ in his lower or incarnate nature. WISDOM speaks, "If thou wouldst contemplate me," she says "in my ineffable Divinity, thou must gain a knowledge of me in my suffering humanity," a declaration which contains volumes of true knowledge. It is difficult to read the work to which we have referred, without recognizing in it the deep conviction on the part of the writer, of a Personality in the Divine Nature, of the same essentiality of being, *with* God and *of* God, and yet entitled to be characterized by that attribute of Motherhood, without which the infinite Fatherhood, dear as it is, becomes a misnomer and a nullity. Suso lived in the fifteenth century. At an earlier period in the twelfth century, Richard of the Abbey of St. Victor in Paris used expressions which involve the same doctrine.

16. At a later period Jacob Boehmen, a Mystic, though in some respects differing from the school of Suso and Tauler recognized the doctrine of the Divine Motherhood. We can make nothing else of his frequent mention of the "Virgin SOPHIA," whom he

describes in various passages as the "Divine Wisdom," as "Eternal," and as a "Living Essentiality." If we understand him rightly, it was the Sophia, the Wisdom or Maternal ESSENTIA or Personality of the Godhead, which incarnated itself in Christ, and which caused him, in a mother's Spirit though in a male form, to endure his great sufferings in behalf of a world which was to be born into a saved and regenerated life *of* him and *through* him. Not unfrequently the language of Christ, when it is allowed to enter and to leave its true impress on the interiors of the soul, has the sound and import of a mother's language: "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem," he exclaims with true maternal feeling, "how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"—Matt. 23: 37. The language which he utters on the cross is the very language of a loving mother, who is willing to suffer and even die for her erring children, if she can thereby bring them back to their father's house and to truth. "Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do.*"

17. A few centuries ago, a sect came into existence in Holland and England, who took the name of Familists, or Family of Love. Some years later, there appeared in England a sect whose views were similar in some leading respects to those of the Fam-

ilists, who took the name of Philadelphians. In some of the writings which originated in these religious movements, we find evidence of the same tendency to recognize the Maternal Principle as a true and distinct Personality in the Godhead. One of these works is entitled "The Great Crisis," published anonymously, but generally ascribed to a pious and learned man by the name of Roach. References to the subject which we have been considering, will be found in "The Great Crisis," on pages 93, 94, and 95. Roach, as is common with all these writers, speaks of the Motherhood of the Infinite, under the name of the "Virgin Sophia." His language, in the pages referred to and in other places, is somewhat obscure, as if he hesitated to give a clear announcement to views which would be likely to meet with much opposition; but on a careful examination of them, there seems to be no doubt as to his meaning. On page 93 we find the following passage: "That the doctrine of the SOPHIA, or Wisdom of God, as represented in the *Virgin nature or Female property*, is no new thing, will appear from what Solomon has written so peculiarly of her, and from Christ's own expressions, Luke 7: 35." The passage in Luke is this: "But Wisdom is justified of all her children." Wisdom here, as Roach understands it and explains it in a brief remark, is the Eternal Mother. And

then, speaking of the doctrine farther, he immediately adds, "Nor has it been without peculiar regard in the writings, also, of the ancient Fathers, though by them more generally applied to the Divine Wisdom as derivative in the Son (a meaning which is good and true in its place). But the sense of the Primitive Church, as taking it in the *superior* sense also, [namely as applicable to the Sophia or Pre-existent Christ] appears from that noted passage of Tertullian *versus* Hermogenem, cap. iv." This passage, which Roach understands as sustaining his views, he quotes and comments upon.

18.—As we approach nearer our own times, we find the same view taken. It differs, it will be noticed, from the generally received view chiefly in going a step farther and indicating, though of course very imperfectly, the nature of the relations existing. The doctrine that the "second person of the Trinity as it is frequently denominated by writers, sustains a relation which may properly be expressed by the term Motherhood, is recognized in the views and writings of the sect of the United Society of Believers commonly called Shakers. In the "Summary View," so called, which is published under the authority of the Society, and contains a brief exposition of their doctrines, it is said, p. 219, speaking of Ann Lee, that the image and likeness of the *Eternal*

*Mother* was formed in her as the first-born daughter. And again it is said on the same page, that the "human tabernacle of Ann Lee," meaning her earthly body, "was but flesh and blood like those of all other women; but it was a chosen vessel, occupied as an instrument by the Spirit of Christ;" that is to say, by the same pure and celestial Spirit which dwelt in Christ. "It is this Spirit," it is afterward said, "which is the image and likeness of the *Eternal Mother*." At page 217 it is remarked in relation to Christ, it was "necessary that the human tabernacle of Jesus should be created by the immediate operation of the Eternal Father and Mother."

19.—The doctrine, that the Divine Nature is dual in its personalities, and that this duality implies and includes the fact of a divine maternity, is adopted and advocated by the sect known as Bible Communists. The leading doctrines of this people are found in a work entitled the *Berean*; a work which is characterized by acuteness of thought and reasoning, and by no small share of biblical learning.

"We believe," says the author of this work in his Preface, in the Duality of the Godhead; and that Duality, in our view, is imaged in the twofold personality of the first man, who was made male and female, Gen. 1: 27. The doctrine is brought out more fully in the chapter on the Divine

Nature. On page 87 are the following expressions :  
“ For our part, instead of having any repugnance against the idea that God is a bi-personal Being [that is, one in essential nature, but distinct and correlative in dual personalities] we find all our natural prepossessions in its favor. We are quite willing that the indications of the created universe should be true ; that *woman*, as well as man, should have her archetype in the primary sphere of existence ; that the Receptive as well as the Active principle, subordination as well as power, should have its representative in the Godhead. And we believe that an unsophisticated child would much prefer the family idea of a dual head over all, a *Father and Mother* of the universe, to the conception of a solitary God.”

20.—We will only add further, that the Catholic Church is often regarded, with how much reason we will not undertake to say, as embodying the idea of the Motherhood element which exists in the Infinite, in its recognition of the holy or deific nature of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and in the high honors, and even worship, which it is understood to render to her. In the paintings of the great masters, which often adorn the Catholic churches, and particularly the Cathedrals, the admiring and tearful eye of the worshipper often rests with the deepest reverence and hope upon that benign countenance,

which becomes to the eye of faith the imperfect and yet beautiful symbol of the great and overshadowing Maternity, which exists innate and glorious in the Godhead.

21.—Such appears to be the new and dawning thought of the world on this important subject; at first but dimly appearing in the Scriptures; but in accordance with the promise of the great Teacher, who said, “when the Spirit of truth is come he will guide you into all truth,” revealed at last with clearer and ever-increasing distinctness by the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God, or Spirit of universal truth and love, finding its way into and operating intelligently and effectively in the hearts of humble and sincere men; and thus unfolding in these latter days the great and eternal facts which harmonize with and which sustain the progress of humanity.

It is with interest therefore, in opening the volumes of a remarkable man, the late Theodore Parker, who accepted the doctrines of the Absolute Religion while he demurred vigorously to some of the positions of dogmatic theology, that we find him not only announcing God as the primal, unific, and causative principle of things, but also defending the truth, hardly less essential and important, of the Personality of God, and announcing still further,



with a boldness and clearness indicative of the strength of his convictions, the duality of the Divine Nature as being Motherhood as well as Fatherhood.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *The Son of God.*

1.—The duality of the Divine Existence, involving the fact of Fatherhood and Motherhood, necessitates that further unfoldment of being, which is implied in, and is not inappropriately expressed by, the word Trinity. Around this grand and historic word, which alternately attracts and repels by the greatness of the mystery involved in it, the world's thought and the world's controversy have for ages revolved. As it is not our object, however, to discuss religious truths in the precisions of their established dogmatic forms, but rather as they present themselves in their necessary facts and relations to the enlightened view of the whole human mind, we leave the Trinity, as one of the generally accepted methods of expression, to complete and verify itself by its own logical processes, and in its own time and way.

2.—But before proceeding further, I think it will be necessary briefly to say something of a personal

nature, in order to a proper understanding of my own position, and as explanatory in part of my own tendencies of thought. I hope the reader will bear with me and sympathize, when I say that I am a believer in, and a lover of the biblical Scriptures. I frankly and joyfully acknowledge, that I have found in them not only an enlightening, but I trust something of a positive and renovating power. At the same time I am obliged to say further, that under the influence of inward suggestions, which I will not stop to explain and define, I have thought it right and felt it a duty, to compare the moral and religious revelations embodied in the Bible with the moral and religious thought of different ages and nations. I wished to ascertain in this way, and with the aid of the histories of philosophical opinions, the relation of the Scriptures to the moral wants and the enlightenment of universal humanity. And in the fulfilment of these desires, I have not only examined the Scriptures to some extent in the original languages, but have trodden the soil of Palestine, which may be regarded as a living commentary; and have verified, or attempted to verify, so far as illustration and verification can now come from those sources, the Scriptural affirmations in the birth-place of their origin;—in Nazareth and Bethlehem, on the banks of the Jordan, in the sacred

places of Jerusalem, in the terrible deserts and on the rocky summits of Sinai. And not only this: I have read, as many others have done, the truth of the declarations of the Bible in the direct as well as the comparative history of nations, and in the records of my own heart. And therefore, without forgetting the intelligence and the conclusions of others, I frankly affirm that the Bible is no fable to me. I have no hesitancy in saying, that in my view, subject to the condition of a candid and wise interpretation, the Bible is the affirmation of the highest intelligence, and is the eternal "Word of God."

3.—But there is another view, which it would be unwise and unphilosophical to omit. I remember also, that God is not only the God of the Bible, but the God of all nature, and of all history, and of all things. And so much so that He cannot be separated without the denial of the essential elements of his nature from any thing and every thing which exists: but on the contrary is found to be and cannot possibly be otherwise than universal, unchangeable, and eternal in all that He is, in all that He does, and in all that He utters. And it is, therefore, I believe, that the word of God in his Revealed Religion, known as the Bible or Scriptures, and the word of God in the Absolute Religion, when in-

terpreted in the true and divine light of things, are and must be the same. It is possible that men may fail to harmonize the two but the harmony exists.

4.—It is well known that theologians, looking perhaps with the theologic eye, have found a Trinity in the Bible. We do not say that they have always understood or expressed it rightly; or that their views, often divergent from each other, are always entitled to assent. Nevertheless it is the general testimony of their writings and creeds that they have succeeded in finding it there; at least in the essential nature of the thing. And such is my own belief. And it is not surprising to me that God, whose wisdom always adapts itself in its exercise to the existing state of things, communicated this great truth, in the early periods of the world, in the dogmatic form and simply as a doctrine and not as a philosophy. As thus stated, and standing by itself alone, it is not free from obscurity; and there is a class of minds which do not readily accept it. But the God of the Bible is the God of universal nature. And it is not strange that in these latter days, with all the enlightenment of arts and letters and of moral and religious progress, some of the obscurities of the Bible are explained and reconciled by the light of the Absolute Religion.

5.—To the thoughtful mind it is a natural suggestion, that the duality of the Divine Existence, written everywhere in the book of nature, necessitates a Trinity. The train of thought in the case is essentially this. It is not only true, as the apostle Paul teaches us, but it is a truth which harmonizes with the nature and position of man who reasons constantly from effects to causes, that we learn the things of God from the things that exist. In other words, the effect in the principles and methods of its being, is antecedently in the cause. And what do we find in the effect? In the first place it presents itself as a duality. But it does not stop there. We always find that the out-birth of that which in the order of nature goes before, supplementing and carrying out the fact of duality, in other words the added fact which constitutes the Trinity, everywhere manifests itself in the objects of the world around us. Everywhere there is a duality of existence, resulting in a reproduction which constitutes a trinity. But the things which exist, and which necessarily carry with them the evidence of the highest wisdom, are but the reflex or the mirror of the great First Cause from which they came. The cause holds the effect in its arms and stamps its image upon it. And thus the duality which in the objects of nature around us always implies and ne-

cessitates the fact of a Trinity, reveals in the light of the relation of effects and causes, the antecedent but correspondent fact, not only of the duality but also of the tri-unity of the Infinite.

6.—If we are right therefore in the view which we take, we must supplement the eternal Fatherhood and Motherhood by the eternal Son. The eternal Son, or the Son “eternally proceeding,” as it is sometimes theologically expressed, is the great and unceasing out-birth of the Divine Duality. That which being *in* God, is necessarily in its appropriate time born *out of* God, is the Son of God. But the Son of God is a wide and mighty form of expression which, in order to embrace the whole truth included in it, may be presented to our notice, *first*, generically or in its most general form; and *second*, specifically or in relation to that remarkable manifestation of the divine in the human, (undoubtedly the most remarkable fact in human or any other history) which is known as both Son of God and Son of Man.

7.—Generically, or considered in the whole of its extent, the trinal out-birth, otherwise called the Son of God, without which the eternal Fatherhood and Motherhood could have neither name nor power nor meaning, is the whole of creation from its lowest to its highest form. Spoken of in terms suggested by the analogy of the human form, which in some

respects may be regarded as the physical similitude and outward portraiture of God, the myriads of existences which form the lowest stratas or divisions of beings, constitute the FEET; the highest developments and classifications of existence constitute the head; and the intermediate grades, all in their appropriate places and fulfilling their appropriate offices, make out and manifest the completeness and beauty of this boundless and unceasing out-birth or generation of positive and separate life.

8.—So that not an insect that floats in the air, nor a fish that swims in the sea, nor a bird that sings in the forests, nor a wild beast that roams on the mountains; not one is or by any possibility can be shut out and excluded from the meaning and the fact of the divine Sonship, considered in this generic or universal sense. Under that significant and glorious name in its generic and widest import are included all possible forms and degrees of being, whatever may be their distinctive character, which sustain the relation of effect or createdness to the great Causative Centre which lies hidden in what may be called the Dual Infinite. And this Sonship of universal existence, though it undoubtedly sustains the relation of effect to cause, is nevertheless so closely and indissolubly interwoven with the Eternal source from which it springs, that it may, in a



proximate but most important sense, be said of it, that it is without beginning and without end; that no time in its specific measurement is allowed to mark its commencement and that no time, unless the same can be said of God himself, can announce the hour of its termination. It is what theologians, with a just and significant expression, have sometimes called it, the *eternal* Sonship, or a Sonship in eternal procession. In other words, in the two-fold bosom of the Dual Infinite there exists a Sonship, which identical in nature but discriminated in personality, converts two-foldness into tri-foldness, duality into trinity, and of which it can be said in its objective manifestation it is always being born, and in the mystery of its subjective existence it is always in the bosom of its eternal birthplace and always in readiness to be born.

9.—All living nature then in all the variety of its forms, being only the out-birth of that which has existed interiorly and subjectively from eternity, is the mighty procession of form, feeling and activity which, in virtue of its birth-place, constitutes the Son of God. And in this vast complexity of Sonship, including all possible degrees and forms and methods of being, there is not a living thing that is forgotten, not one that is not overshadowed by the

divine Love. All sheep and oxen, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, and the young lions of the forest, and the fishes of the sea, and the birds of the air, as they could not be born and exist without God, have a right to be called the children of God. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God," "thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," "thou givest them their meat in due season,"—it is such expressions as these which show the loving heart of the Infinite.

And little does that man know of the greatness and boundlessness of God's universal love whose heart is not touched with the deepest sympathy for everything that exists, no matter what it is or where it is. If we are one with God we are one in all we can do to contribute to the happiness of everything God has made.

10.—But again and specifically the Sonship, which constitutes and completes the divine Unity, not only in Duality but in Trinity, so that we can speak of the oneness of Eternal Life in the three-foldness of Personality and relations, the One in Three and the Three in one, is found in *Man*. Not man however, in the first form of life, not the self-centred and limited Adamic man, (a subject on which we shall have something explanatory to say in another

place;) but man with the experience of the *second* or higher birth, which expands the self-centred into the universal-centred and God-like form of life; man standing at the head and as the comprehension and the perfection of all lower existences; man who cannot separate his own life and happiness from the life and happiness of all other beings, man in his glorious Christhood. This is Sonship in the specific and higher sense; the fulfilment of the prayer and hope of the long expectant ages; the culmination of humanity in the Son of the virgin Mother.

II.—I stand with awe in the presence of this great out-birth. The true man was born: the effulgent model and ante-type of the incoming, heavenly humanity; and becoming the dwelling-place of God, he embodied the glory of divinity in the humbleness of the human form; and in virtue of that which was within Him, took the name in the specific and more glorious sense of the term of the Son of God. I shall be pardoned for saying it is my earnest prayer, that I may understand more and more this great advent known specifically as the divine Son. I do not believe that a true philosophy has any sympathy with that perversity of spiritual perception which turns coldly away from this divine brightness. The expression which better than any other meets my thoughts, and which in the comprehension of its

meaning reveals the evidence of its divine origin is, "God manifest in the flesh." Being not only made in the similitude of man, but being the possessor of a man's nature, we do not find him as he is historically represented, exempt from human weaknesses and trials, temptations and sorrows. In what sense therefore, is it possible to speak of him as the manifestation of God? This is a great question. With a view to the better understanding of it, we leave the subject here until we shall have considered in the next chapter the necessity and possibility of a divine manifestation.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *Necessity and Possibility of a Divine Manifestation.*

1.—Religion, considered in its essential nature, and in the aspect of its great and final result, is and must be harmony with God. Reason as we may upon the subject, it will be found in the end, that it cannot be anything greater, nor anything less, nor anything different from this. But harmony, admitting there is a slight difference in the import of the terms, necessarily implies union; and indeed might properly be defined as the completion or perfection of union; and in the case of intelligent and moral beings, it is hardly necessary to say that it is and must be *conscious* union.

2.—And now we proceed to say further, that there cannot be a conscious union, especially one which rises to the eminent degree which entitles it to be called harmony, without a knowledge of God. In other words, in order to this result of harmony which is the substance of religion, God must make himself known, must manifest himself. To be con-

sciously united with God and yet without a knowledge of God is a contradiction in terms, and is a moral impossibility. And further, if God is not to be manifested in such a way as to make himself known, what is the object of his existence? Why should he exist at all? The manifestation of God therefore, in some important respect, so that we can speak of him intelligently and give him both thought and affection, may be regarded as a *NECESSITY*.

3.—So far as this, the Absolute philosophy expresses itself with confidence. And the human heart, that which in man feels rather than thinks, but which embodies truth in the instincts of feeling, confirms the decision. But here comes a difficulty. Granting that it is necessary in the decisions of the human intellect, granting that it is necessary to meet the conscious wants of human feeling, is it a thing which is possible? Is it possible for the Infinite to manifest itself understandingly to the finite? Or taking the converse proposition, is it possible for the finite, in the limitation of its powers, to comprehend that which is without limits? In the view of sound reason it seems to be necessary to answer these questions in the negative. But it appears to have escaped very much the thoughts and knowledge of men, that infinity is not God but only the mode or manner of his existence, namely, the extent or

degree of his existence; and that we may know God in the essentiality of his nature, in that which constitutes the primal and deific substance of his being, although it may be true, and is true, that we cannot know Him on account of the limitations of our powers in the fullness of his extent or degree. In other words, if we cannot know God in his degree or measurement, we may still know him, which is of far greater importance, in his truth or essence.

4.—But let us look a little further. If infinity is not God but only the degree or extent of his existence, the question still remains,—what are we to understand by God, and what is it which constitutes the primality and essence of his being? Do we or can we find Him in the true and higher sense in his attributes? Let us reflect a moment on this important question. Take the attribute of knowledge, even when it is considered in the degree or extent of infinitude, and is properly denominated Omniscience, does it make or constitute God? Sound reason will also be compelled to answer here in the negative. And again, God is a being of power. But does the attribute of power, even when joined in its extent with infinitude and denominated Omnipotence, any more than the attribute of omniscience make or constitute God? And here also we are compelled to answer, that such cannot possibly

be the case. The word attribute itself, which men agree in using as applicable to and as descriptive in part of omniscience and omnipotence, implies that in the order of nature there is and must be a principle back of these, a living and pre-eminent primality which will call knowledge and power into action and give them and all other attributes their appropriate direction and issues. And this principle which, as we have already seen in a former chapter, is the essential and eternal life of the divine existence, and in fact constitutes that existence, is LOVE. And this interior principle which constitutes the essential nature of God and to which are appended the attributes that operate as the instruments of its decrees, involves in itself and as a part of its own nature, an ultimate motive power which is the basis of the activity of the universe. If it were otherwise, in other words if there were a destitution and absence of such motive power, constituting a state of things which could properly be described by the word *indifference*, then of course all the existing wonderful activities would cease, and God would be practically annihilated. And again, if this interior principle of which we speak were not indifference but a practical or motive evil principle, then, instead of God we should have and it could not be otherwise, an infinite Satan. But the Absolute philoso-



phy affirms as well as the Bible and in confirmation of the Bible, not merely that God exists but that *God is Love*. And hence it will be found, and all exhaustive and ultimate researches will prove it to be so, that every exercise of his omniscience and omnipotence or other attributes is dictated by beneficence.

5.—The manifestation of himself therefore, which it was necessary for God to make, and which the wants of an erring and suffering humanity required, and which the Absolute Religion aiming as it does at the establishment of universal harmony imperatively demands, was the manifestation of himself in his essential nature as *Love*.

The manifestation of the auxiliary incidents or attributes of the Divine Nature, such as knowledge and power, and especially with the weight and expansion of infinitude attached to them, when standing alone and without a manifestation of that interior and essential life which holds them in its hand and guides them to beneficent issues, was calculated to frighten and destroy and not to save humanity. But in what way could that deeper and more interior manifestation of God as *Love*, which alone could bring adjustment and peace and hope to men be made?

The question which now presents itself was, in some important sense, the great problem of the

ages. And in the first place all enlightened philosophy will agree that it was necessary that it should be made within the sphere of humanity. In other words, it was necessary that it should be made in such a way that man with the limited faculties which he possesses and with precisely such faculties in kind as he possesses, should be able to behold, study and comprehend it.

6.—But something more is necessary than this general statement. Shall we find the manifestation of God in his true and essential nature, as some heathen nations have foolishly thought, in the lower forms of creation, in birds and reptiles, and even in inanimate things? That such an idea should have existed is indeed an evidence of the wants and cravings of the human heart; and perhaps it would be unphilosophical to deny that there is an element of truth in it, inasmuch as there is something of God in all the creatures of God, however low they may be in the scale of being. But the darkened belief which accepts the manifestation of God in such inferior things, a belief to which the Apostle Paul so feelingly and pointedly alludes, cannot contribute to man's elevation; but on the contrary, as appears from the records of heathen nations, tends greatly to hold him fast in hopelessness and debasement. Nor on the other hand, would a manifestation made

in the form of beings above the sphere of humanity, through forms and faculties not commensurable with and susceptible of being interpreted by anything given to man, have been of any more avail. It might not have tended to debase, but it is not obvious that it could have tended to elevate, because, being above the reach of the human faculties, it could not be understood.

There is left, therefore, only the method which infinite wisdom adopted, that of the incarnation of the divine in the human form; the incarnation of the Son of God;—“*God manifest in the flesh.*”

7.—And this is a method of manifestation, which does not merely excite our admiration and gratitude; but which, far more than any other that is possible to be suggested, satisfies our reason. If God is Love, the manifestation would necessarily be in that method which would best secure the results at which love aims. God, therefore, with a condescension which of itself intimates his true nature, took upon himself humanity in order that he might be comprehended by humanity; and that, if he could not be measured in his infinitude, nor be understood in the truth and essentiality of his nature through the incidents of knowledge and power alone, he might be understood by submitting to be nailed to the Cross in that which was and is the essential

principle of his life; a principle which gives direction to knowledge and power, and which stamps its value on infinitude.

8.—But in the realization of this great event, although through the teachings of types and prophecies they had long looked for something of this kind, men seem to have been greatly perplexed in one particular. In consequence of the associations which they had been accustomed to attach to rank and station, they expected that the descending God, whose advent the earlier ages had predicted, would make his appearance with all the pomp and circumstance at least which belong to the highest human station. They looked for a king in the human and historic sense of the term. But that was not God's plan. In his view human existence, aside from the incidents of rank and station, embodies the evidence of the highest wisdom and goodness. Man, who was made in the image of God, man in his simple humanity, unadorned with the incidents which give a fictitious splendor, without a sceptre and without a crown, was the fitting instrumentality in which God was to make himself known. And therefore "God manifest in the flesh," was God manifest in man;—man low in worldly station, with nothing calculated to arrest attention; but poor, untitled, friendless, and unknown. He chose humanity and

not rank; the thing and not the incidents of the thing; humanity, as it were, in its nakedness; and thus forever gave a sanction and elevation to man as man.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Christ as the Fulfilment of the Law.*

I.—Keeping in mind that we are examining things, or at least attempting to do so, in their principles or philosophical bases, we proceed now to another subject. It is hardly necessary to say that the thought of the Christian world has always been directed with peculiar earnestness to the various events which constitute the life and death of Jesus Christ. His death, as well as the antecedent events of his personal history, has a significancy which will not be likely to be exhausted while there are souls to be saved. The life of Christ, including its closing scenes, is often spoken of and regarded as a “fulfilment of the law.” Christ himself foreseeing the probable termination of his life and its relation as a whole to all antecedent facts and events, refers to the subject, Matt. 5: 17, 18—“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one

tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." In a passage of the prophet Isaiah, ch. 42: 21, which is generally understood to apply to Christ, it is said "he will magnify the law and make it honorable." It is often said that we are to look for the fulfilment of the law in the death of Christ on the Cross. And yet, when brought to the test of a philosophical examination, the death of Christ considered in itself and separate from that which is the basis or foundation of it, might justly be regarded as coming short of such fulfilment. The death of Christ in its physical aspects was much like any other death; the experience of physical disorganization and suffering,—probably very great suffering,—resulting in the separation of the body and the spirit. Nevertheless, it is in the death of Christ that we find the key to his character; that which interprets the meaning of his antecedent acts; that which consolidates and perfects his life; that which makes him in a true sense, when we get at that which underlies his death, the world's Saviour.

2.—In speaking of Christ, in the events and incidents of his life and death as the fulfilment of the law, it is necessary to understand what meaning and what limitations we shall attach to Law itself. And here we are met by the fact that there are a great multitude of laws in the universe. Go where we

will, we meet with this great regulative influence. There is nothing high enough or low enough, no boundaries of time or space, which are beyond the cognizance and the authority of Law. The philosophic interpreters of their own and the world's thought on this subject, Cicero, Grotius, Vattel, Hooker, Montesquieu, and others, agree in the great doctrine of the universality of Law. And what is also of great importance, there are different kinds of law; laws which are mental and moral as well as physical; laws which give stability to thought and guidance to virtue, as well as those more obvious laws which sustain and develop material beauty and strength.

3.—The law which Jesus fulfilled, coming under the general class of mental or spiritual, is the law fundamental to all others; the Primal law, because it stands first in time as well as first in importance; the law, without which God would cease to be God; that great law of which we have spoken in a former chapter, which binds the higher to the lower, the stronger to the weaker, and we may add, the good to the evil, in the exercise of all the possibilities of benevolence, which are involved in the fact of a higher position and a greater wealth of resources. In comparison with this law which is known in the Scriptures as the law of *Love*, all other laws sink



into insignificance. It is the basis Law of the universe; and Christ came not merely to announce it as a principle but to fulfil it as a fact, in order that men seeing with their own eyes that *Love* is ready to pour out its heart-blood for the good of others, might understand and know, as they otherwise could not do, the moral basis on which the universe stands.

4.—The law of love when carried out to its appropriate issues, constitutes as we have already had occasion to show, the central life-principle of God himself. Love is life and wherever it exists, whether in the Infinite or the finite, it can always be said, to the full extent of that existence and with a fulness and truth which the world but imperfectly understands, that God is there. And Christ therefore, in taking upon himself humanity and in fulfilling the law in this lower sphere, may be said to have brought God down to earth. In being lifted upon the Cross and nailed there in the sight of the world, and yet in his agony uttering that sublime prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," he revealed the truth and greatness of God's life in his own dying but immortal life; and opening the way and the hope of salvation, plucked humanity from its sorrows and its ruins, and gave everlasting life to men.

5.—And here, speaking as we now do, of the great divine law, that law of Love which is the basis of all things that exist, it is necessary to keep in mind the discriminations and relations of ideas, and to separate things which are apt to be confounded. Law and Life, which latter is only another name for Love, are inseparable rather than identical. Law when rightly estimated, is the eternal announcement indicating the constitutive form and the mode of action ; Love, inseparably connected but not identical, is the correspondent realization which operates within the truths and harmonies of law. Law, standing as the interpreter and the voice of the universe, is the requisition ; Love is the experience and the fulfilment of that which is required. In the natural or logical order, law is the antecedent ; but being an antecedence of ideas and not of life, of regulative form rather than of positive and affirmative existence, it is necessary that Love, which is the power that gives it vitality, should come and convert it into a practical principle which renovates and perfects all things.

6.—And now it seems to me to be philosophically true, in other words a doctrine of the Absolute Religion, that the Law, though eternal as God and unchangeable as God, and speaking with a divine and universal voice, cannot save us, without that Christ-

life or Love-life, which the Law requires, and which is the Law's fulfilment. To recognize the law, which is an intellectual act, is important; to feel the justness of its requisitions in the conscience is important also as a preliminary preparation; but to stop in the recognition and the conscientious conviction, without the possession of the living principle which it requires, is necessarily to die. And Christ, therefore, who embodied this living principle and who in his essential nature is and ever will be *Love*, is the realization or fulfilment of the Law.

On these principles man cannot be saved, if salvation is an inward life, by a mere command, by a mere authoritative declaration. Salvation, which is the kingdom of God within us, does not come in that way. The destiny of man, a destiny which will always be fulfilled if it is not prevented by his own personal opposition, is to enter into everlasting life by becoming a partaker of that life.

7.—Undoubtedly there are many things mistaken for life which are not life. Repentance is not life. It implies a conviction for sin, but if it stops there it is not life. Forgiveness to the extent of entire pardon for all our past sins is not necessarily to be regarded as life. It implies an exemption from the suffering which was originally due to the sins which are blotted out; but it is not necessarily a principle

of life. Happiness may be expected to be a result of life, an incident which is naturally attendant upon it, but it is difficult, on any analysis which may be made of it, to affirm that, in itself considered, it is the living and life-giving principle of the soul. We enter into life, and the principle of life becomes the soul's new birth when in the language of Scripture we die upon the Cross ; in other words, when by means of inward crucifixion we die to self in all cases where self-hood becomes selfishness ; and when we begin to live for the good of others, not only the good of all mankind but of all existences. In other words using the terms in the sense in which God may be supposed to understand them, we live when we love. Love is life. And anything within us which is at variance with love is, to that extent, the absence and the negation of life.

8.—In Christ this life was completed. In Him the living and life-giving principle of his being, that which constituted Him the Son of God, was *holy love*. So that in Him the law of the universe, that law which requires us to love God and in loving Him to love all that He loves, was fulfilled.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *The Second or New Birth.*

I.—The doctrine of the regeneration, otherwise known as the doctrine of the New or Second Birth, is clearly an announcement of the Scriptures; and though especially exposed to doubt and cavil is not without the acceptance and supports of observation and philosophical analysis. It is the language of the great Teacher; “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”—John 3: 3. “Therefore, if any man be in Christ,” says the Apostle Paul, “he is a new creature.” Looking at the subject analytically and philosophically and as a part of the Absolute Religion, the fact of a New or Second Birth admitting the fact or existence of such a birth, necessarily implies the existence of an antecedent birth, which may properly be spoken of in the remarks which we now propose to offer on the First birth. And this First Birth is to be understood as identical with the *natural* birth or the *Adamic* birth as theologians fre-

quently name it and which the Scriptures sometimes speak of as the birth of "the flesh."

2.—And this birth or first form of life is naturally the first object of our attention. As the Infinite or Absolute of Existence which is the same as God or Creator, is the beginning or source of things, and as there is nothing which does not come from that Infinite source, therefore it follows that the first or natural birth of man is and must be from the Infinite to the finite. But the finite from the moment of its birth out of the Infinite, being from that time a distinct personality, is *itself* and not another; is the personal and responsible *creature* and not the Creator; has its own recognized and definite sphere of existence in distinction from that of other created beings; an existence which is not only discriminated from that of other beings but is really and consciously its *own*. The statement itself, too plain to need the refinements of argument, may justly be regarded as carrying its own evidence.

And this is not all. From the moment that created man first knows himself as an existence in the finite and as a distinct personality, it is obviously and necessarily a law of his being that he seeks and finds *his centre in himself*. As at first he knows himself and only himself, he certainly could not be expected in the beginning of his existence and with

a knowledge limited to himself to seek and find a centre out of himself. And accordingly it is true in philosophy and is confirmed by observation, that turning inwardly and acting from his own centre he thinks for himself, feels for himself, wills for himself, and primarily and in the first instance draws all his hope from himself. He cannot properly be said to be *self-made*; but being made he cannot in the first instance be otherwise than self-centred. And hence it is said in the Scriptures, and in reference to the limitations that necessarily attend him, that the first man is born of the earth, earthy: in other words, with the nature and limitations which are necessarily attendant on created existences. And again, in the words of Christ himself, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." As much as to say, that the finite is born into what it is, namely its own restricted and imperfect nature. This is the first birth, the first form of life; and it is not easy to see how it could be otherwise than it is.

3.—It is not surprising therefore, that Christ in the conversation with Nicodemus, to which we have referred, spoke not only of the first or "flesh" birth, but also in the same sentence of a second or spirit birth. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And then he added, "marvel not that I said unto you,

*ye must be born again.*” Expressions which if closely examined imply not only the fact but a moral necessity for it. And now, having stated what philosophy affirms in relation to the first birth, the question comes up, what is the moral necessity or philosophy of the second birth. Stated in a general way, the second birth is a birth back from the finite to the Infinite; from the life of the creature to the life of the Creator; a birth which is both based upon the personality of the first birth as its antecedent condition, and which takes place without the loss of such personality. In the first birth God may be said to make or constitute the finite, giving it the freedom and independence of a personal existence; and yet without spiritually incarnating Himself in it as an indwelling principle of that life. This last could not be done in consequence of the inviolability of its freedom, without a consenting action on the part of the creature. In the second birth, the finite in the exercise of its moral freedom, which is an essential element in its personality, has accepted God in the central intimacy of its nature as its living and governing principle. So that the human or “earthly,” as the Scriptures call it, without ceasing to be human or earthly, but by renouncing its own centre as the source of life, and taking God as its centre, does by its own choice and in a true and



high sense become divine. And thus God himself, in the case of all those, who by being born with the second birth are born in the image of the "Elder Brother," who stands before us as the true pattern and illustration of the new inward life, may be said to the extent in which they bear that image, to be truly made manifest in the flesh.

Such was God's plan from the beginning; such the thought of Infinite Wisdom. It never could have been the intention of God, who is essential goodness, in establishing the finite personality to separate it permanently from the infinite or universal personality, and thus raise up an endless antagonism to himself. So that his object, and in the light of the Absolute Religion, it is the only course He can take, is to establish man first in the limited personal life of the first birth, and then, by means of the great facts involved in the second birth, and in harmony with man's own personal recognitions and acceptance, to make him one with the universal or divine personal life.

4.—So that the doctrine of the second birth, which man in his first or Adamic life does not easily understand, and indeed according to the apostle Paul does not understand at all in the true sense, is no fiction, no mistake; but on the contrary is a great truth in philosophy, and a great realization in expe-

rience. But the question may perhaps be asked, whether there is really so much difference between the two forms of life as to justify the application of distinctive terms; and whether the second form of life is anything more or otherwise than a progression and very high degree of the first or natural life. In answering this question, which will be likely to arise in some minds, we remark that the great fact of personality in both cases is the same; so that the same person is the subject of both forms of experience without prejudice to his individualism; and if he were at any time to reach spiritually the position of an angel, it would not at all perplex the matter of his personal identity. And furthermore, it may be admitted, and is undoubtedly true, that there is a foundation for the Doctrine of progression; but the doctrine of progression implies, I suppose, that there is an end toward which we progress; an object which the soul is consciously in pursuit of. And if we have a right understanding of the matter, the end or object may be, and in fact must be, distinguished from the successive and progressive steps which are prerequisite to it. There are many things in these successive steps, which are called and which may justly be regarded as facts of religious experience, and which in consequence of the real interest and value attaching to them, are sometimes errone-

ously mistaken for the second Birth in the true and higher sense of the phrase ; but in point of fact they are merely steps or incidents in the way and not the end or termination of the way. A soul new-born is not a process, but a thing *done* ; not a doing or *being* done, but a fact accomplished, a definite result and definitely and consciously realized ; and one it may be added, in which God and angels take an interest and in which all heaven rejoices.

5.—And in my apprehension, whatever may be true of progression either before or after the second birth, and whatever may be true of continued and unbroken personality, there is a line of distinction between the first and second form of life, between the old Adamic life and the new Christ life, considered simply as forms of life, which is not only marked and clear, but in point of fact the two things are so distinct, the one never going beyond the finite, and the other bound up in the golden links of the Infinite, that they are incommensurable with each other, and in the essence of their nature forever stand apart. But this is a matter of so much importance that I propose to occupy another chapter with a contrasted view in some particulars of the two forms of life, in the hope to vindicate and make clear these positions.

## CHAPTER X.

### *Relation of the First to the Second Birth.*

1.—It might be supposed from what has been said in the preceding chapter, that the first form of life, to which so large a portion of theological attention has from time to time been directed, is either in its nature essentially evil, or at least must be regarded as of no practical position and value in the development of man's spiritual history. Such a view in either of the aspects which have been intimated, would be a great mistake. The argument on one of the points is clear. It cannot be said on any just philosophical grounds that God creates sin. The eternal truth rejects any such affirmation. And therefore man's first birth, at the moment of its origin, has and must have the character of innocency. But this is not the whole statement in the case. Standing alone in the relative incompleteness of its incipient condition, but naturally preferring, in the consciousness of its freedom and power to make its own way and to do its own acts in the universe of

things, it necessarily finds itself at a very early period, and perhaps in its very first acts, exposed to the greatest hazards. Its innocence is no certain pledge of its security. Its innocence involving the fact of its freedom becomes the natural, perhaps the inevitable precursor of its sin.

2.—The view of the Scriptures on this subject is supposed to be familiar to all. The Absolute Religion, or religion as founded on philosophical observation and analysis, harmonizes with it. And in the support of this last assertion, which carries with it consequences which involve the interests of humanity, let us delay a little and examine the subject in its details.

We first see man coming from the creating hand of God. He stands before us as the Adamic man, erect, self-centred and free. No child of Satan; but a child of the living God, and constituted in a very important sense in the image of God. And it is the fact that he is thus constituted, being as really existent and free in the human sphere as God is in the infinite or divine sphere, which makes his danger. He stands sublime in his independence. He occupies an eminence above all other created things. His joy is as great as the greatness of his position. But can he stand alone? That is the question. With all the independence and power which he act-

ually possesses, is it true that he either is or can be morally secure amid a universe of existences and relations, no rights or claims of which are ever allowed to be violated?

3.—It is unquestionable that man knew well both the fact and the nature of the power and the freedom which God had given him. God had not only given them to him; but with the gift had given also, without which they would have been valueless, the consciousness which recognized them as his own. But is it necessary to add there was one thing which he did not know? He had no adequate comprehension, and in consequence of the necessary limitation and finiteness of his powers it was impossible that he should have, of the infinitude of obligations that rested upon him. And still less, standing firmly in the sphere of his independence and trusting in the newborn joy of his own strength alone, was he able to fulfil these obligations. To accept the aid which the divine benevolence offered him had the appearance of giving up his independence. His independence seemed to be, as it really was, the glory of his nature. To part with it even in the smallest degree and under any circumstances, was striking a blow at the essence of his life. Blinded by the splendor of the gifts which had been imparted to him, he virtually asked God who had made him in

this grand incipient completeness, to stand aside and let him alone.

How could he being a man be otherwise than he was ; or how, being situated as he was, could he do otherwise than he did? The law which required him to fulfil every duty,—a law as limitless in its applications as the infinitude of existing facts and relations,—was upon him ; and it could not be otherwise. And undertaking in his ignorance to fulfil it in his own strength,—a strength which was not strong enough to renounce itself under such circumstances,—he necessarily failed and fell.

4.—Such are the essential facts which present themselves to our observation as we theoretically and practically study the history of the human race ; and which are more or less clearly revealed in the facts and incidents of the biblical narrative. Man fell. The weight of his own glory inseparable from the inviolability of his personal and responsible existence, combined as it was with the position in which he was necessarily placed, bore him down. It was of the nature of a moral necessity ; but it was not without the signatures of divine goodness and wisdom. His fall as it is denominated, great and terrible as it was, carried with it the noblest testimony which could possibly be given of the high and glorious nature of the gifts which had been im-

parted. A testimony so striking and decisive that the universe, which is interested in all that pertains to man and which cannot live upon doubts, could not afford to be without it. It was necessary in order to establish a basis for the ever-growing development and harmonies of the universe, in order to build the pillars of the future in eternal strength, not only that man should be free, but that he should be known to be free. The fall of man settles it forever, that the manhood which his Creator gave him was a divine reality and not a pretentious semblance.

5.—When in my early life I read in some of the old Puritan theologians that there was wisdom and glory in the fall of man and that great good had resulted from it, I failed to see the truth of their declarations. And if in the sense of my comparative ignorance, I had not the strength entirely to reject their statements, I certainly had not the ability to comprehend them. I reserved them as I have done in many other instances, for further meditation. And my thought to-day, subject to the corrections of any higher wisdom, is, that they were right in the substance of their meaning, though imperfect and liable to lead to error in their expression of it. The fall of man was and is a good, because it was and is the only testimony which can settle, beyond the



reach of doubt and cavil, the question of the completeness of his moral nature in the matter of his moral liberty.

The history of six thousand years with its record of deceptions and cruelties, of suspicions, calumnies and hatreds, with its usurping tyrannies and bloody wars, and not without the bright inheritance of virtuous purposes and noble deeds, leaves no room to doubt, that man in the greatness of his nature was created with the capacity to discriminate between right and wrong and to do either good or evil. But this decisive testimony which removes all doubt, could not have been reached with anything short of the multitude of sad and guilty facts which are involved in it.

6.—We pass now to another view. It can be said of the first form of life that it is not only not evil in its nature, but that it sustains relations and secures results of the greatest importance. Its greatness and glory, with all its admitted liabilities to error and transgression, are evident from this, that without the first birth the second birth, with all the hopes and honors which attach to it would have been an impossibility. The later or heavenly birth, it is true, is born of heavenly influences flowing down to it from heavenly sources and elevating the soul to its new position; but these influences gain

no admittance and of course exert no power until the soul, with the key of its inalienable freedom, opens the door for their entrance and accepts them as its own. God undoubtedly is to be regarded as a party in this great work; he cannot be separated from the divine influences which have been mentioned; and without Him nothing is done effectually. But there are moral as well as physical impossibilities; and God cannot do that which is impossible to be done. It is impossible for God to bestow upon men the attributes of freedom and power in sincerity, and yet at the same time to destroy, or to interfere with and perplex their appropriate position and action. If there is anything which may be regarded as fully settled, either in sound philosophy or in any generally accepted theology, it is the position, that the gift of moral freedom implies and necessitates the impossibility of its violation. So that the first or oldest birth, whether regarded as pure and innocent at the period of its origin, or with some inherent taint of evil as some suppose, or what seems to be and what we think must be the truth in the case, with innocence attended with a liability to evil, by an arrangement which, growing out of the nature of things, could not be otherwise than it is, places the crown as the result of its history and experience upon the head and heart of the

second birth. And in this sense at least, Adam, in the line and the destinies of humanity, becomes as the Scriptures represent him, the progenitor of Christ; Adam falls that Christ may rise; the Adamic man perishes that the Christ or Christian man, made strong by the element of a new life may come and take his place and may live forever.

7.—But proceeding a step further, we next inquire what is the true and interior nature of this remarkable work. There is a remark of St. Augustine which indicates what this nature is, "*Amores duo duas civitates fecerunt.*" Two loves have made two cities; the one Babylon, the other Jerusalem; the one a city of discord and unrighteousness, the other a city of harmony and rectitude. Looking at the matter philosophically, it is not necessary to deny that these two loves are the same in their individual nature; and are only discriminated and separated by the diversity in their applications and objects. If man had not been created with the love of himself, would he have possessed the measurement, by which he was required to estimate his love to his neighbor? We read repeatedly in the writings of Paul, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And in other places, in expressions of still broader and higher import, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thy-

self;" identifying the love of God, so far as its nature is concerned, with the love of our neighbor, and in that way as it seems to me, identifying the love of our Maker, in respect to its nature at least, with the love of man.

It is true that the love of God is greatly higher than that of our neighbor, because while the love of our neighbor extends to and embraces humanity, the love of God reaching far above and far below, includes the love of all existences. As President Edwards in one of the most remarkable of his works expresses it, it is the "love of being in general;" in other words, love of everything which exists and is susceptible of being loved. And yet it seems to us it cannot well be doubted, in the light of a candid and careful analysis, that the love of God is the same in its essential nature with the love of our neighbor, which in its kind or nature is the same with that of ourselves. So that the love of God, looking at the matter either in the light of the Scriptures or of the highest reason, is the expansion of the love of ourselves, which in the lower or comparative sense is the infinitely small, to what in the higher or absolute sense is the infinitely great; in other words, from a sphere of action which is measured by individualism, to a sphere of action whose universality places it beyond the possibility of meas-

urement. And this statement, in harmony with what was intimated in a former passage, involves the comparative measurement of the first and second birth, and makes them, in the matter of extent or degree, incommensurable.

8.—Upon this subject, the greatness of the second Birth, we have no language which can well express our feelings. Perhaps we ought to say again, and still more explicitly, that we understand by the second Birth something more than the ordinary forms, valuable as they are, of transitional religious experience. A man may be greatly exercised in religious experiences, and indeed it is often the case, without his being able to say in the higher and true sense that he is born of God. The second birth is the soul found in the image of God, not merely in the matter of moral freedom but of universal love; the soul expanded from the consideration of self alone to the regard and love of every other being; the out-growth and the divine consummation of the soul's antecedent and preparatory history. It gains a position in which, harmonizing with God, God becomes its teacher; and in which, going hand in hand with its great Creator, it henceforth marches onward forever to learn, forever to love, and forever to enjoy.

9.—But the question still remains, where does

this heavenly love come from, and under what conditions does it come. We answer, it is the gift of God ; perhaps it would be better to say, it is the *in-flowing* of God. The latter term implies that it comes by the necessities of law ; the former, that it depends on the uncontrolled decisions of volition. If we are right in the views we entertain, it is a part of God's nature, without which he would be something less than God, to flow out or communicate himself, in the attributes of truth and good, to all beings that are capable of receiving and are willing to receive. He chooses to do this, because his nature never allows him to choose otherwise ; and thus the choice which, without the nature, would be giving, being sustained and sanctified by the nature, becomes an in-flowing. If God is *Love*, which the Scriptures as well as philosophy affirm him to be, there can be no difficulty here.

But there is still something remaining. This great and desirable result, which has the heart of the Infinite in its favor, depends nevertheless upon man ; at least in this particular, that this in-flowing from the divine heights can never reach him, can never become the baptism of the soul and the soul's regeneration, without his own consent. It is when he can truly say "not my will but thine be done," that his consent is fully given. God could not make

him in the true greatness of his nature, and did not make him, without giving him this mighty prerogative.

10.—And now, let us look a moment in another direction; and what do we see? The second birth in any other way, or on any other conditions, becomes an impossibility. Is it possible for God to raise man to that high position, with the opposition of his own will standing against it? And more than this, take away the freedom of the will, which is the completing or consummating element in man's nature, and there is nothing to be raised. It is true that freedom of the will does not constitute the whole of man; but it is also true that man is not and cannot be constituted as man without it. The new birth, which implies that the soul is not and cannot be a machine, the new-birth which is in the highest sense a grand moral, spiritual and responsible realization, could never have had a place without the antecedents of man's first birth of freedom and personality. The statement is an argument; and the argument is conviction. And therefore it is we say, look at man as he is, and call him man or devil, inasmuch as a name cannot alter the fact; and it is impossible not to bow with reverence in the presence of human nature, which, with all its liabilities

to evil, still holds in its hand the possibilities of heavenly and eternal life.

11.—And now, taking our position on such grounds, is it out of place to utter a few words in favor of our common humanity, even in those forms which have the sad aspect of degradation and sorrow? Is there one so low that he wholly loses the dignity of his nature, and lies below the notice of a sympathizing tear? The Adamic man, even in the degradation of his fall, holds in his hand the key of universal good. Go with me to yonder prison, which contains within its iron bars, and shuts out from the light of day, the thief and the drunkard, the robber and the murderer; and in those countenances of sorrow and of crime, canst thou not see something which speaks to thee of a common brotherhood, something which inspires in thy saddened bosom sentiments of forgiveness and hope? I speak for myself, but I am confident, that I find in the emotions of my own heart the common thought and feeling of our common humanity.

And if these sentiments are the out-birth of a sound philosophy in relation to our initiative or Adamic humanity, they cannot fail to inspire feelings of reverence and love for that great Book in which it is said, "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and



on the *unjust*." And where we read, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And where it is said again, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." And again, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

## CHAPTER XI.

### *Relation of Moral Evil to Freedom, and its Remedy.*

1.—It is implied in the fact of forgiveness, to which reference was made at the close of the last chapter, in connection with the forgiving and loving principles involved in the mystery of the Cross, that there is something which needs to be forgiven; in other words, that man has gone astray and sinned. This fact brings up the inquiry, upon which there has been from time to time so much discussion, of the origin of moral evil. The view of the Absolute Religion, which is also the doctrine of the Scriptures when properly interpreted and understood, is that moral evil in its various forms and degrees is necessarily incidental to the facts which are involved in the constitution of man's nature. In other words, the liability to sin is a necessary result of the great faculties and capabilities, which are man's inheritance.

2.—It is the Scriptural statement that man was created in the "image of God." A statement which

is entitled on grounds of observation and reason to be accepted in its essential meaning, although it requires to be modified in its import by the consideration that man is finite and the Creator infinite. But with this modification kept in view, which implies that the likeness in the creation exists in the outlines and essential nature of being, rather than in the amount or degree of being, it still remains, that man was created in the divine image, in the first place, perceptively; in other words, in the possession of those powers which are employed in the acquisition of knowledge. And if the limitation, to which we have referred, excludes the attribute of omniscience, it accepts both the possibility and the fact of such a degree of knowledge as is appropriate to a finite being. Secondly, man was created in the image of God sentimentively; that is to say, he was created with that distinct and more interior department of our mental nature which is sometimes appropriately expressed by the term sensibilities; and which, in being the sphere of the sentiments, originates feeling in its various forms of emotions, desires and feelings of obligation, in distinction from mere perceptive acts. And thirdly, he was created with the power or faculty of the will; that great and controlling department of the mind, where we are to look for the foundations, or at least the

necessary conditions, of personality and accountability. In all these important respects there can be no hesitation in saying that man was created in the image of God. And as a resultant of these attributes of being, and as a necessary fulfilment of the statement that he was born in the divine image, he was created *self-centred*; a being not only endued with living power, but created in the possession of absolute moral freedom within the sphere of his personal existence and activity.

3.—So that if we rightly conceive of the principles of his birth, man was created a child of God, with a reality of freedom and of personal responsibility in his own finite sphere, analogous to that of God himself in his infinite sphere. The attribute of volitional and moral freedom, with that practical self-reliance which grows out of it, makes the self-centred position complete. So that man, being what he is and created as he is, is necessarily born a self-hood; and that self-hood, claiming on the ground of moral freedom a likeness and relationship with the self-hood of God, is not more a necessary condition or form of his life, than it is the foundation of his greatness and glory. And accordingly, though as man he is an out-birth from God and is necessarily inferior to God, he stands within his own sphere of life, and in virtue of the psychical and moral gifts

which have been imparted to him, essentially a deific being; and is truly and emphatically born in the image of God and made a son of God. And that which, more than anything else, although none of his other mental attributes could be dispensed with, gives him this high place, and that which establishes him as one born in the image of God, and makes him a true child of God, is his inviolable freedom.

4.—In being an out-birth from the Infinite, man is not on that account infinite himself, but on the contrary is characterized, and necessarily so, by finiteness. An infinite out-birth, if it could be a thing conceivable, would be essentially a contradiction in terms. A creation or out-birth, which could be characterized as infinite, would not be an out-birth, but an identity. So that man, in the primal principles and facts of his creation, is born as he is and was, because he could not be born otherwise; made in the image of God, and therefore in an important sense deific, but not infinite. But here comes an incident of his history which is worthy of notice. The law and the facts of his being are such, that while they constitute the necessity and the glory of his existence, they draw the lines of separation, and place him, in the first instance, not only in the isolation of self-hood, but for a time at least in practical antagonism with everything else. He stands

up in the conscious greatness of his individualism, which is only another name for his self-hood; and in the power and in the just pride of self-affirmation, his first utterance is necessarily an interrogation of the universe. He says, I am a man; let no one touch me; let no one violate the sphere of my activity; let no one attempt to control me. That proud voice which in affirming itself and ascertaining its own position, interrogates and warns all others, sounds through all heights and all depths, and proclaims the birth of a deific son. God himself stands aside, as it were, in deep reverence and love of his own mighty work; and will not, and in fact cannot, without a self-contradiction, act adversely in the violation, in any degree whatever, of that divine attribute of freedom which He has given never to be recalled.

5.—But, although God had given man freedom, there was another thing which he did not and could not give. He did not and could not give him the right to violate the position and the rights of any other being which exists, whether great or small. All beings have their position and rights as distinctly marked and as clearly inviolable as are those of man. So that, although man was born into the position of self-hood with all its possibilities and responsibilities, yet the great law of the universe, which God

himself could not abrogate or alter, requires him to exercise that self-hood in all its tendencies and acts, in harmony with the rights and the highest good of all others. The soul in its self-hood, with the freedom and power of its self-hood, and yet without the knowledge which might enable it to act in harmony with the rights and claims of all other beings, is the soul in its first birth; the soul, in the language sometimes employed by theologians, in its Adamic life. And it is here, in this position of the soul, great and wonderful as it is, that we find the possibility and the practical beginnings of moral evil. It acts, because it has the freedom and the power to act; and is determined to act, because it is justly in love with its freedom and power; but in its blindness it is constantly doing wrong, because in breaking the law to which even freedom is bound to submit, it violates the harmonies of the universe. But all these sins and errors, originating in blindness of mind, are forgiven and blotted out in the principles and experiences of the Cross, as we have already explained them. And the soul, prepared by what it has passed through and impressed with a new and deeper sense of the divine wisdom, is born into that higher and better position which is not inappropriately called the *second* birth.

6.—We can perhaps illustrate these views and

make them clearer by calling to mind that the state of things which we have just now described, is essentially, and almost precisely, what we daily see in little children. Their freedom, without which in their sad stupidity, they would be but little better than mere blocks of stone or wood, sparkles in their eyes, sounds in their voice, and is a living activity in their hands and feet. And this very freedom, without which they would cease to be true children, constitutes the parents' highest joy. The parents look upon the exuberance of their bliss in their runnings to and fro, and in their thousand experimental activities, with an ecstasy of pleasure; regarding it as the presage of the reality and the fruits of manhood and womanhood. And yet the first thing they do, is to place this incipient freedom, which is the seed of moral life and without which moral life is an impossibility, under law. They tell their children not to do this thing and not to do that thing; and the child, overrunning with gladness in the possession of his personality, seldom fails in some of the particulars which are placed under prohibition, to go contrary to the orders of the loving parents. And the consequence is, that they not only go astray, but they suffer for it; and there is no restoration for them and no happiness for them until they are willing to place themselves under parental direction, or



what is the same thing, to place their wills under the wills of their parents.

7.—This analogous illustration helps us to understand man's position in relation to God. The child who disobeys suffers; and the human race in its disobedience to God suffers; but the love of the parent comes to the rescue of the child; and so the love of God, incarnated and manifested in Christ, comes to the rescue of the race; and in both cases promptly, sincerely, and so far as the possibilities of the case will allow, effectually. All that is wanting on the part of man is those dispositions, including the penitent recognition of his sin, which will secure obedience. The great law of the universe which requires a regard for the rights and happiness of all possible existences, is an imperative one. It is a law so clear that it needs no proof except what it carries in itself in the fact of its own intuitional affirmation. And yet it is a law which cannot by any possibility be obeyed, except in one way; namely, by placing the human will in the keeping of the Divine will. And this, it cannot well be doubted, was the interior meaning and object of the law of Paradise, namely, to adjust permanently the relation of the human and the Divine will in order to man's guidance and good.

8.—But the question may suggest itself here whether this is not a hard case for man; endowed

as he is with freedom, and yet in the exercise of that freedom without which he would cease to be a man, doomed to errors which bring him into condemnation and suffering. It might perhaps be regarded so if this were the termination of his history, and if there were no escape from a position so unlooked for and so sad. But the Fall, as it is theologically expressed, or that series of events in which freedom in its early and irrepressible love of itself, took the position of disobedience to law and thus became rebellion, though a terrible evil in itself, is incidentally a gain in its results. And the reason of this is found in what has already been intimated in relation to the love and goodness of God. Man sins and suffers; but he is not deserted. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Great words, uttered by an ancient Prophet in the solitary mountains of Judea; but which belong to all lands and nations. And what then, having done all that he consistently could do by instruction or in other ways, to prevent the fall, shall he do now that the fall has become a reality? Revealing himself in the divine analogy of his works, he teaches us that He does just what the true earthly parent does; only in a higher degree and with unspeakably greater re-

sults. In the first place, so great is his love that he allows them to suffer, or perhaps better he cannot help their suffering, because sin and suffering necessarily go together. He lets them suffer so long as they remain in disobedience, because there is no other way. The ways of God are not accidents, but wisdoms; not the uncertainties and the variations of time, but the permanencies of eternity.

9.—It is possible that some will say here, if freedom is necessary to the realization and the constitution of their manhood, then the surrender of the will to God is practically giving up the great characteristic of humanity, and is in fact the withdrawal and the annihilation of the great essential element which makes man what he is. It was perhaps this fear in part, in man's incipient and Adamic condition, which led him into the disobedience of rejecting the divine command. But it was only a fear, and not a verity. God never proposed, and never can propose, without violence to the most glorious truths and sympathies of his nature, to violate man's freedom, or to destroy it, or injure it in any way or degree, under any circumstances or in any place; either in the incipient Adamic humanity or in the perfected Christ humanity; in heaven, earth, or hell; in time or in eternity. All that He proposes, and all that He asks, in view of the creative and sustaining relation-

ships of his eternal Fatherhood, is, that He may be allowed to exercise his parental interest and care, by guiding or helping to guide man in those cases, (and this is true of all cases of voluntary action,) which, in consequence of their infinitely varied relations, are in many essential respects beyond the reach and judgment of a finite mind. Cases where, if he is not guided by a Mind that understands this infinity of remote facts and relations, his fall becomes a moral necessity. It is the surrender of the will under these circumstances and to this extent, which God demands in virtue of his paternal necessities; and its refusal on the part of man is, and must be his certain and necessary ruin. But such a surrender of the will as this is not the destruction of the will, and is not the destruction of humanity; but on the contrary is the perfection of the will's action by harmonizing it with the truth, and is the human will harmonizing with the will of God in the divine marriage of a common thought and purpose; and instead of being the destruction, is the preservation and the perfection of humanity.

10.—The doctrine of the Fall then understood in its principles, stands before us not merely in the literal statements of the Scripture narrative, but as one of the great problems of philosophy, which the truth vindicates and accepts. And it may be ac-

cepted as a moral axiom, that whatever harmonizes with the truth will be found all for the best. It was best that man should be created as a self-centred existence or self-hood, with the freedom appropriate to it. It was best that he should demonstrate to himself and the universe, that he had a self-consciousness, a positive sphere of action, a personal responsibility, a divine freedom; and thereby vindicate his deific descent. It was best that God should leave him to the possibilities of the Fall, and that he should fall if in his freedom he chose to do so; not only for the reason which has been intimated, that he might be assured and all others might be assured of these great attributes of his nature; but that the love of God might be summoned to meet the exigency of his unhappy disobedience and overthrow. It was best that he should suffer the sorrows that are always born of sin, that in the greatness of his anguish he might cry out for help. It was best that the miseries which in the Fall flow out of the First Birth, should lead to the blood-bought inheritance of the Second Birth; that self-hood renouncing its personal and selfish limitations, should grow up into universal-hood; that an in-dwelling Adam should be exchanged for an in-dwelling Christ; and the Life that perishes for the Life that lives forever.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *The Divine Purposes.*

I.—The doctrine of the Divine Purposes, to some extent in the more general form of Providential arrangements, but especially when regarded as including the doctrines of Decrees and Election, and any and all results which rest specifically upon the decisions of the Divine will, has met with serious objections in the minds of many. And yet it cannot well be doubted, that the analogies of nature and the suggestions and arguments of a broad and reflective philosophy will be likely to discover an important and perhaps an indispensable truth in that direction. Our views will of course be based upon the accepted idea of the existence of God. And reasoning upon this basis, it must not be forgotten, that the facts of the universe, whatever they may be, embody the wisdom of the Great Mind of the universe; and the wisdom of the great superintending Mind cannot possibly be separated from his goodness.

And the first question which arises is, what has He done? In other words, what are the results of his mental decisions? We shall all agree I suppose, that we find the answer to this question in what we everywhere behold around us. Looking especially at man, who is commonly regarded as the greatest of His works, we find the condition of things so existing, which implies that they are so originated and so arranged, that there are innumerable diversities of rich and poor, of learned and ignorant, of those who are bowed in sickness and affliction, and those who are in prosperity, of men in palaces and men in dungeons, of men honored by virtues and men degraded by crimes. It may even be said that there are no two situations and no two characters which are precisely alike.

2.—Now it must be admitted that this state of things is not at variance with the thought and purpose of the great controlling Mind, who is at the head of all things. He has done it; and in the exercise of the highest wisdom, he intended to do it. It harmonizes with his idea of what is for the best; it constitutes a part of the divine plan—a plan which may safely appeal to the highest human reason for its acceptance and approval. It is possible that those who hold adverse or unfavorable positions, those who pine on beds of sickness or

look out upon the bright world through the grates of a prison, may not always clearly see the evidences of wisdom or even of justice. But when we look away from individual cases which considered alone might perplex the judgment, and contemplate creation as a great system, in which the highest wisdom as well as the highest benevolence is called upon to develop itself, I think we cannot fail to approve of and to accept the wisdom of that grand creative idea, which harmonizes the central unity of things with the greatest possible diversities. In other words we find the leading principle of a philosophic answer to the objections that are made to the great doctrine of unity and diversity. Look abroad upon outward nature. And can it be affirmed that it is less beautiful or less wisely ordered, because it is not an unvaried and level expanse, but is diversified by rocks, valleys and mountains? And what would humanity be, where would be the interest attached to it, if everything were reduced to a dead level, without diversities of thought, without varieties of action, without the hills and valleys and rocky and rugged places of comparative situation, with all poor and none rich, or all rich and none poor: so that a man would find it impossible to be interested in the welfare of his neighbor, and still less to do him good. Such a state of things, like a dead level in



the material world, would answer perhaps for a day or an hour, but would soon become a profitless and hopeless stupidity.

3.—And now, when we attempt to look more carefully into the origin of things or rather into the causes of things, not merely the beginning but the intelligent cause which makes their beginning, we are obliged to say, since we have nothing else to say, that the causative principle of this state of things is God himself. And we mean by this, that God stands at the head not only of creation but of the diversities of creation; not only of existence but of all the modifications and varieties of existence. God makes the sunshine, and God makes the storm. The springtime and the harvest; the summer and the winter are the Lord's: God made the mountains: the hills and the valleys also are the works of his hand. The rivers and the fountains are his: and he makes mighty seas and oceans. The universe in some important sense, is the reflex of himself; and its infinite diversities are the expression of the wisdom and the boundless resources which are hidden in the infinitude of his nature. And this causative relation which makes him the responsible head of all things, extends to things intellectual and moral as well as physical; to man as well as to outward nature; to every incident of his being and every

form of his activity. In the theological and dogmatic form of expression, to which we are now directing attention, it is a matter of purpose and decree. God sustains not merely a permissive, but a positive and authoritative relation. He has "decreed" the facts of existence, he has "elected" the course of individuals and empires.

4.—And all this, notwithstanding it seems to sound harshly, we can admit and affirm, when the matter is stated in its full extent and placed in its proper relations. Let it not be forgotten that in the universality of this grand "decree" and in the discriminations of that authoritative process which "elects" one vessel to "honor and another to dishonor," he embraces as a part of his scheme the fact of man's moral freedom and its inviolability; the immutable distinction of right and wrong; the relation of wrong to punishment and of punishment to wrong; the principle of growth by means of exertion and trial; the mighty compensations of time, which as time cannot be separated from eternity are known only to himself; the adjustment of diversities which are seen, with harmonies that are necessarily unseen, except by minds that can embrace all facts and all relations; that though some fall and some rise, yet there "is not a sparrow that falleth to the ground without his notice," that though he

saw his own Son nailed to the cross, yet he placed upon his head the crown which shall shine through the eternity of ages;—let these and many other things be remembered and taken into account in the consideration of this great subject. All that a proper regard for the truth requires is, that the proper breadth may be given to the problem; that it may be considered in its universality and in the measureless extent of its possibilities. And whether it be called “divine purpose,” or “decree,” or “election” or by any other name, it holds a truth, when properly discriminated and set in its true light, which philosophy accepts, and practical religion has never been able to dispense with.

5.—But if we must accept moral freedom at the same time that we accept divine supremacy, the question arises,—By what process can they be harmonized with each other? Where are the philosophic methods which can reconcile what either is, or at least has the appearance of being, a positive contradiction? If we take the ground that they are really contradictions, we must of course admit that they cannot be reconciled. But in point of fact there are, and can be no contradictions in the universe of God. A contradiction in the thoughts or acts of God, or in anything which makes a part of his created universe, necessarily implies an imperfection in his char-

acter entirely at variance with the accepted ideas of the completeness of his knowledge and wisdom. Collect and collate the facts that are presented to notice around us, facts mental as well as material; facts which pertain to the spiritual sphere of things as well as those which belong to the outward and tangible; and go further and establish all theories and systems which legitimately flow from them; and it is true of one and all of them that they do and must harmonize.

We do not say, nor would it be proper to say, that their harmony is always perceived; which is a very different thing. But the harmony exists, whether it be perceived or not. As the facts in their vast multitude overleap all known limitations, it is not possible that the human mind, in its acknowledged finiteness, should understand and adjust them all, either in themselves as objective facts or in their subjective relations. And this state of things lays the foundation for the exercise of belief existing in matters beyond the reach of the senses and even of consciousness. A true philosophy, one which includes God as well as man, embraces and affirms the doctrine of faith. And what we cannot understand as a matter of direct perception, we are still justified, on appropriate occasions, in having faith beyond the limit of the revelation of the un-

derstanding. And hence I think we may see a true philosophical spirit in a remark of Mr. Locke, where he says;—"I own freely to you the weakness of my understanding, that, though it be unquestionable that there is omnipotence and omniscience in God our Maker, and though I cannot have a clearer perception of anything than that I am free, yet I cannot make [meaning undoubtedly that he could not explain and clear up in all respects how it should be so,] freedom in man consistent with omnipotence and omniscience in God, *though I am as fully persuaded of both as of any truth I most firmly assent to*; and therefore I have long since given up the consideration of that question, resolving all into this short conclusion, that if it be possible for God to make a free agent, then man is free, though I see not the way of it."

6.—Humanity needs a God who is a reality and not a pretence. I think that man had rather be under a tyrant than under a liberty which is without law, or under an authority which gives no protection. God, who is neither the weakness of a semblance nor the cruelty of an injustice, is the protector of the weak and the avenger of the injured. He is no tyrant; but we recognize both wisdom and justice when we say he is God.

There are moral evidences as well as intellectual;

evidences which are based upon human action. If the positive authority of God culminating in results which lead intelligent men to speak of his decrees, elections, and sovereign purposes, is not merely a dogmatism but a truth, it will be found to be strongly sustained as such by the practical results in the lives and acts of those who receive it. And undoubtedly the evidence from this source is such as to arrest attention. Among the men in all ages of the world who have been distinguished for firmness of purpose and endurance of trial, there have been a large number who have adopted these views of God. Such were the Waldenses, whose touching story will be remembered as long as the lofty cliffs shall stand, from which in the support of their opinions, they were thrown headlong and dashed to pieces.

Such were the Covenanters of Scotland, whose great theme was the sovereignty of God, and who in their trials and sufferings carried to the extreme of human endurance, could bless the hand that "doeth all things well."

Such were the Jansenists who, in adopting the Augustinian method of religious thought, including the Protestant doctrine of Justification by Faith, took a position which exposed them to misrepresentation and to the greatest trials. The great

names of Pascal, Arnauld and others among them, renowned alike for genius and piety, could not save them from fearful persecutions which have made their history memorable in the annals of human sorrow.

Such were the Pilgrims and Puritans of New England, whose instructive history is repeated by their descendants, not only on account of its strange and romantic incidents and its great civil and political results, but as an illustration of the greatness of human strength when it rests believingly on the strength and purpose of an Almighty Arm.

7.—It is true then, that God decides our destiny. And he does so, because all truth, all justice, and all good, look to him for the approbation of his wisdom, and for the support of his strength. Either God rules or what is called fatality rules. But the Absolute Religion which is the highest declaration of philosophy, rejects the unsatisfactory dogma of fatalism, as a dishonor to truth and a crucifixion to humanity. But in rejecting fatalism, it does not reject the doctrine of the divine supremacy. Men cannot afford to part with the great Calvinistic idea which has become a part of human history; but they will do well to surround it with accessories which save it from exaggerations and which present it in the true light

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *Universality of Religious Thought.*

I.—If there is a foundation for the doctrine of an Absolute Religion, then we shall find intimations and evidences of moral and religious thought in all lands; and though separately considered they may bear the marks of imperfection and weakness, yet they will be found harmonizing in one general tendency, and contributing to one great result. Before the time of Moses there were men,—Enoch, Abraham and Noah may be mentioned as examples,—who were inwardly taught, and who communicated valuable religious truth to others.

The respect and even reverential homage shown by Abraham to Melchisedek, in relation to whom it was said, he was without father or mother, in other words, without genealogical or historical record, may be regarded as incidentally revealing the fact of a religious character and position. The Absolute Religion, abstractly considered, has its foundation in the nature and relation of things; but the



truths contained in it find their practical realization and their expression in the thoughts, lives, and history of individuals. Melchisedek was one of these persons. The Egyptians had a religious system. And it is not unreasonable to suppose that Moses may have received some important religious ideas from this remarkable people, among whom he was brought up and educated. The authorship of the first five books of the Bible is ascribed to Moses; but a careful examination of the first part of Genesis in the original Hebrew shows, in the view of many learned men, that he made use of and incorporated into his work certain historical documents written by other persons of an earlier date; but who they were or to what land belonging, is now unknown.

2.—The labors of the learned are greatly perplexed in ascertaining who was Job, and to what land or people he belonged. But the intuitions of the readers of his wonderful poem can affirm boldly, in default of the records of personal history, that, though unknown and mysterious as Melchisedek, he was nevertheless a man of thought, of vast poetic imagination, and filled with inspirational teachings coming from above. In the latter days of the Hebrew commonwealth, and greatly separated in certain particulars of belief and practice from the great mass of the Jewish people, whole sects made their

appearance, who may be described as seekers after divine knowledge and as truly inspirational. The history of the Essenes and Therapeutæ, as it is given apparently from living and reliable sources, by Philo and Josephus, reveals facts of moral and religious insight and culture which are explainable only on the ground that the Living Principle of the universe, moved by the necessity involved in the universality of His great loving nature, has imparted to many solitary and praying hearts, whose religious position has not been generally recognized, some preparatory portions of the truths of the everlasting Gospel. At a still later period in history, in the Neo-Platonic school of Alexandria, which pursued its investigations to a considerable extent outside of the pale of Christianity, there are thoughts and aspirations, which remind one of the sublime meditations, and the deep spiritual experiences of the Almarics and Dinantos of the middle ages, with all the light and development they had received from the teachings of the New Testament.

3.—It was in those ancient days and in periods exceedingly remote, and in another part of the world, that other teachers, under the blooming shade of Indian forests, and among them the mysterious Sakya-Mouni, made their appearance. Millions have been influenced by the teachings of this

remarkable man. A prince, with all that wealth and political position could contribute to his personal happiness, and yet so deeply impressed with the wants and miseries of men, that he retired into the most solitary places, and aided by the preparation of many years of abstinence and prayer, came forth a humble and beneficent teacher of practical principles, which the more enlightened piety of the present age is compelled to respect. And so, in like manner God had mercy on the Persians and the Chinese; and in order that there might not be need of another deluge and of other fires of Sodom and Gomorrah, kindled the light of truth, feeble though it may have been, in the bosoms of Zoroaster and Confucius. The connection of the Persians with the Hebrews, which was in part owing to a harmony of religious thought, is a matter of great interest. The second Temple was built under Persian authority and with Persian aid. In Persia where the religious ideas in relation to God, approximated to those of the Hebrews, the opinion was widely prevalent that a great religious teacher and deliverer was to come. And at the appointed period the "Wise Men" as they are called, who were probably persons belonging to the select and honored class of Persian Magi, came from that distant land to do homage to the child of Bethlehem.

4.—If we look in other directions we find the same remarkable fact, that everywhere great moral and religious truths more or less clearly make their appearance. Of those who received something of this heavenly illumination among other peoples and in other times, is it too much to say that Homer, a great reality, although a man as much unknown as Melchisedek and Job, was reached by some scattered rays. Let the man of deep moral intuition read the works of that prince of poets, particularly the *Odyssey*, not to settle points of geography or primitive history, but to learn the facts and methods of human action and the principles which lay at its foundation; and he will meet with moral problems, and with moral and spiritual suggestions, the origin of which can find an explanation only in such views as have now been presented. It is said of Plato, that he visited Egypt and studied at Heliopolis; and the remains of ancient art reveal to the astonished eye of the modern traveller, that the City of the Sun may have had attractions even for such a mind as Plato's; but those who have deeply pondered the import of his writings, will be slow to believe that the teachings of Egyptian priests wholly superseded the higher and better teachings, which fall in mercy everywhere from the universal presence and the universal operation of the great

Living Principle. And we may speak of Socrates, the light of Athens, whose scientific and moral doctrines were illustrated by the genius of Plato; the memory of whose sufferings and death for the truth, is not recalled even in these late days without the greatest sympathy and sorrow. The doctrine of the Grecian dramatists, particularly Æschylus, is, that evil deeds are followed by retribution; and that Jupiter, whom they regarded as the highest ruling power in human affairs, distributes to every one according to the good or evil character which attaches to his doing,—a reality so great, that its freedom can never be touched by arbitrary power, and which holds in its own hand the height and the degradation of its measureless destiny. It may justly be asserted, that man with all his liabilities to a morally evil course, is worthy of a high degree of reverential respect, and is always an object of the deepest interest so long as he holds in his bosom the possibilities and seed of immortality. Whatever may be said of his actually sinning or of his liability to sin, it is still true that he is a child of God, born in the image of God. Nor is it inconsistent with this great truth that he was, is, and necessarily must be subjected to law. It cannot be otherwise. And especially is he subjected to that wide-reaching and

eternal law which God himself cannot modify or repeal without a violation of his own moral nature, that so far as he comes in contact with them, he must respect the position and practically and fully recognize the rights and claims of any and all beings and things in the universe. This law, which carries with it the sanctions of happiness or suffering, resolves itself into another equally clear to our intuitional convictions, that inasmuch as it can be fulfilled only in one way, he must place himself in the keeping of the Infinite Mind; and by a second and grander birth be *born*, or if it be preferred, be intellectually and affectionally expanded out of the limitations and necessary imperfections of self-hood, so that seeing with God's eye and feeling with God's heart and acting in God's will, who is both the originating and the conservative force of the universe, he can become the child of God in the higher and eternal sense. So that the new or second birth which changes man's centre from the one to the all, and from man to God, so far from being the opprobrium of theology, is its culmination and its crown of honor. And if it is inconsistent with that mistaken and pretended philosophy, which makes man a materialism and death an eternal sleep, is not inconsistent with philosophy of a higher and diviner origin.

5.—And again what controversies have existed, what mental battles have been fought, over the supposed and alleged contradictions of the Trinity. But the difficulty was, that humanity, struggling out of the depths of the sensuous and limited, had not reached that higher position, where it could recognize the mighty and world-renovating truth of the Motherhood of God.

And if under the biblical name of *Wisdom* or the *Word*, hidden somewhat for wise purposes until the fulness of time, there is an eternal Motherhood as well as eternal Fatherhood, then it is no offence to the highest reason to assert, that there is and must be either actually or potentially, in *posse* or in *esse*, an eternal Son. And in that Sonship linked to the Infinite by a divine affiliation, happy will it be if we too, in the expansion and completion of the second Birth, shall find ourselves included.

6.—Other things might be mentioned. The doctrine of salvation by faith for instance, on the basis that salvation in its essential nature is a mental state and not a locality, so far from being a pretentious mystery and theological figment, has its foundation in well ascertained mental principles. Salvation in its true sense is impossible in any other way. And if it be asked how it was possible that Christ and his unlettered followers, the most of

whom had no especial advantages of education, became so richly gifted in philosophical verities, I answer that the philosophy of the human mind was first hidden in the Infinite Mind, and that the simplicity and truth of their hearts fitted them as nothing else can fit men, to become apt and successful disciples in the inward teachings of the eternal God.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### *Harmony of Religious Opinions.*

1.—The Absolute Religion, so far as it can be established and accepted, necessarily tends to the harmony of opinions. We do not forget, however, in view of the actually existing constitution of the human mind, that absolute harmony of opinion on all subjects is an impossibility. Differences of opinion exist as the unavoidable result of differences in mental structure, and of the different positions and aspects in which objects of inquiry are presented for consideration. And such differences, which have their foundation in the wisdom that regulates all things, are one of the sources of the activity and happiness of life. Nevertheless, when controverted subjects are examined beyond the region of facts to the region of principles, and when principles are recognized by the highest reason, it may justly be anticipated that harmony of views, in such cases and to such extent, will exist.

2.—A controversy of long duration has existed

in relation to man's character at the time of his birth. The controversy involves a variety of questions; and particularly whether man at the time of his birth is a depraved or an innocent being; and if his character be that of purity or innocence, in what way are we to explain the acknowledged fact of great moral evils existing in the world. If we have given a true exposition of the Absolute view, of which we must leave others to judge, we have seen how the various apparently contradictory views in relation to human depravity may be reconciled. And this certainly, when we remember how much time has been spent on the subject and how much bad feeling engendered, is a great gain.

3.—And so in regard to the atonement, as it is theologically, and as it seems to me very properly, termed. Atonement in its etymological sense means reconciliation and union with God; and philosophy declares, that this could not take place without the forgiveness of sin, as antecedent to the removal of that moral antagonism which necessarily exists between a sinning and a sinless being. It will perhaps be said, that the difficulty is not so much with the thing as with the way or manner in which it is accomplished, namely, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus. But when it is remembered, that the blood cannot be separated from the divine, liv-

ing, and eternal principle which is the life of the blood, and without which the blood would not have efficacy, it can hardly fail to relieve thoughtful and conscientious minds. Many, encouraged by this interior and deeper but necessary view, have hastened to yield their hearts and lives to the mighty and regenerating influences of the great principle,—the principle which both creates and saves—that finds its manifestation in the Cross. And then it is to be remembered further, that words in certain aspects of them are things, and often in their control over the human mind, are very powerful things.

In the case of many persons the long use of certain expressions in relation to the blood of Christ, (words which have a providential and wise relation to the first or sensuous development of man's nature,) make it very difficult for them after a time to make the distinction which has just now been referred to. Nevertheless, the ultimate philosophy requires the distinction to be made, and at the same time points out the relation and unites and harmonizes the two. And the Scriptures, when rightly interpreted and when searched to their foundations, are not antagonistical, but harmonize, in this case as in all others, with a right philosophy.

4.—Again, the doctrine of the first and second birth and their relation to each other, (a matter

which has caused much perplexity,) not only harmonizes with the statements of the Scriptures and with outward facts; but considered, as it truly is, as a great mental and moral problem, vindicates its claims to the highest wisdom. It makes man, not a machine merely, moving no one knows how in the iron tracks of a dead materialism, but a grand and active reality in the universe, even in his first condition of self-hood and of self-asserting independence.

5.—Rome, too, had her teachers; Numa, the founder of institutions and laws; Camillus who announced the great truth, which Christianity has verified, "*adversæ res admonuerunt religionum;*" Cato, who did right, "not to be seen to do it, but because he could not help doing it;" Cicero, the eloquent and intuitional expounder of philosophical problems; Seneca, who resisted the corruptions of a degenerate age; and among the long list of those who announced the truth and struggled against error, that wonderful bard of Mantua, whose beautiful and sublime utterances were, in some sense, the Gospel of his time and country. And all this is in accordance with what the Apostle Paul has said of the Gentiles, that they are a law unto themselves, and show the works of the law written in their hearts; in other words, that God has made to all men everywhere an inward moral revelation. It is

not surprising, therefore, that Sir James Mackintosh, one of the eminent statesmen and philosophers of modern times, says, in a learned discourse on the Law of Nature and Nations, that “lawgivers and statesmen, but above all, moralists and political philosophers, may plainly discover, in all the useful and beautiful variety of governments and institutions, and under all the fantastic multitude of usages and rites which have prevailed among men, the same fundamental, comprehensive truths, the sacred master principles, which are the guardians of human society, recognized and revered, with few and slight exceptions, *by every nation upon earth.*” A view which was anticipated, and which is sustained by a multitude of facts and quotations, in the profound volumes of Montesquieu and Grotius.

6.—It is thus we remember, with deep gratitude, what God has done for the nations in the earliest times; how He has borne with their sins, and has always given them that kind and degree of instruction which was best suited to their situation. No nation ever has been, or ever can be wholly forgotten. The God of the Hebrews, although in some respects with less intimate relations, was nevertheless the God of Greece and Rome. And history abundantly shows, that the historical development of those remarkable nations, including literature as

well as arms, and art as well as power, was precisely adjusted, in time and circumstances, to the Hebrew development. And when in the fulness of time the Star of Bethlehem arose, which otherwise would have shone only over the waters of Galilee and the hills of Judea, it became the guiding light and the illumination of the world, through the aiding influences of Greek and Roman civilization.

7.—This subject, of which we have thus given a short and imperfect outline, is well worthy of the attention of the Christian scholar. It is a subject which can never be thoroughly mastered, except by those who combine the learning of human schools with a religious nature and deep religious experience. Learning, religion and philosophy must go hand in hand in its development. It may require the destruction or the re-adjustment of nations; but Christ as God incarnate in the great principles which he taught and illustrated, and which are recognized and affirmed by the highest reason, will at last ascend the height of his position and exercise his universal dominion.

President Edwards, in his truly great work on the History of Redemption, is right in giving us to understand that God, as the living principle of the ages, and especially in the great fact of his Incarnation, is the key-note to the philosophy of history,

God's life knows no cessation of activity; and his wisdom and benevolence will always turn that activity in the right direction. The car of the universe is not floating at random; but under the Master's hand is always tending to one great issue.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### *Optimism.*

1.—God rules. God is good. And He rules in such a way that goodness can never be excluded. In the end when events are connected both with causes and results, all will be found for the best. And this, expressed in few and simple terms, is what is known historically as Optimism,—a doctrine which not only has its foundation in the Absolute Truth, but which is practically of so much importance that it is well entitled to careful consideration.

2.—The subject may be argued and illustrated from various points of view. It may be said perhaps by some in a simple sentence, that if God is supreme, and if at the same time his existence is characterized by perfect goodness, the optimistic result, which is identical with the greatest possible good, necessarily follows. There cannot possibly be any other. All things are and must be for the best. This is a short argument, it is true, but it is



of a nature to excite thought and perhaps to carry weight and conviction. During a long life I have not been exempt from the trials which are the common allotment of men; but I became early a disciple in the optimistic school; and the bitter tears I have sometimes shed have not prevented me from saying most heartily and sincerely, *all is well*. And I hope it will not be considered thoughtless or presumptuous to add, that those who are not able to say this, and in whom the words do not express an inwrought personal conviction, have yet something of great practical value to learn.

In saying that *all is for the best*, it is well to consider a moment how much is included in it. All truth, all falsehood, all joy, all sorrow, all kindness, all enmity, all reward, all punishment, all glory, all shame, and whatever else enters in to make up the moral constitution of the universe, when properly understood in its principle and its results, and when properly adjusted each to the other, contributes in one way or another to the universal harmony, and could not be left out without a loss to the universal and highest happiness. And when this great announcement is fully and sincerely received on scriptural and philosophical principles, as the teaching alike of the uttered scriptural Word and of the Absolute psychical reason, then the heart and the head,

both in their fears of danger and their experiences of grief, find a pillow on which they can rest securely and rest forever.

3.—It will be asked is sin for the best? In answering this question we are first required to answer another which naturally precedes it, namely,—What is the best constitution of the universe? Is it one which excludes the possibility of all moral and responsible life, or one which admits and requires such moral responsibility? If in answering this question, we accept the great fact of a moral and responsible nature with all that is naturally involved in it, we necessarily accept wrong or crime or sin as a possibility, and may reasonably expect that it will sometime have an existence. The analysis of the operations of the human mind shows, that the idea of right implies and necessitates that of wrong; that the idea of virtue in like manner implies and necessitates that of vice; so that it can always be said of the man who does right, that he might have done wrong; and of the man who treads the path of virtue, that it was possible for him to have gone in the opposite direction. And therefore, if the existence of right implies the possible existence of wrong, if there can be no virtue without the possibility of its opposite, if the extinction of crime in the sense of its being an impossible thing involves the destruc-

tion of all moral good, then I think we cannot hesitate in saying, that those various evils which go under the name of wrong, crime, vice, and the like, taking into view their indirect relations and results, must be accepted as parts of the universal plan and are all for the best. So that sin itself, hateful as it is, may be regarded in the light of a true philosophy as a necessary result of the moral universe, and as throwing light upon the character of God. What idea should we have of the holiness of God, himself, if sin were an impossibility and therefore a thing unknowable; and if we could not aid our conceptions by saying not merely that God is holy, but that in being holy He hates sin?

4.—And looking at the matter in another aspect, we must not forget, that man considered in relation to certain ends which are before him and as reaching upward to such ends, is a developing or progressive, and not a fixed and stationary being. And it is generally conceded that all progress, in reaching its highest results, involves the fact of exercise, practice, struggles, obstacles to be met, and obstacles to be vanquished. Such are the laws of being, that growth and inactivity are incompatible ideas. It is involved in the mere fact of living, that we must do battle in the great contest of life. Christ himself assures us, that in the world we shall

have tribulation, and the Apostle Paul exhorts us to fight the good fight of faith. But if moral evil is excluded from the universe, then all such views are out of place, and have no meaning. There is no contest, because there is nothing to contend with; and there is no growth, because there is none of that spiritual wrestling, without which growth is unknown. And therefore we say again, that Optimism has a philosophical as well as scriptural foundation, and that in the conflicts and trials of life, including moral evils and moral conflicts, *all is for the best*.

5.—But supposing, says one, that moral evil, in the contest which its existence necessarily implies, should gain the victory, what is our situation then; and what becomes of the optimistic utterance. And here it may be said, if we take the question in the widest sense, that it involves what may be called an impossible supposition. It is the affirmation of all thought and all philosophy, the doctrine of all the suggested or inspirational Scriptures of all ages and all nations, the dying word of those who drink hemlock, and perish in the flames, and bleed upon the cross, the martyred teachers and guides of humanity, that goodness taken in its widest sense, bears in its bosom the seed of immortality and can never be overthrown; that it conquers now, and

conquers forever. Let that word stand ; humanity will never part with it.

6.—But when we look at the contest, not in its general aspect, but as we find it commenced and progressing in individual cases, we must confess that the battle sometimes goes against us. But we are at liberty to add that it does so for a good reason ; that it does so because we violate the laws of victory, and therefore we can still hold to the great truth we are considering. And the reason to which we refer is the fact, never to be forgotten, that God is a reality and holds a position which can never be set aside. Not an impersonal God, who is rhetorically great but practically nothing. Not a fatalistic God—a God who is bound in chains and fetters ; nor an heathen idol God, who has as little intelligence and power as the wood and stone of which he is fashioned ; but a God, who clothes his infinitude with a personal oversight and responsibility, who takes an interest in all the things He has made and especially in his own children, whom He is fashioning by the process of trial into the perfection and brightness of his own image. He has all strength, and He is always ready to render all needed assistance. But while standing at our side and always ready with his aid, He will not and cannot violate and destroy our position as his intelligent and responsible

children, by violating our moral freedom. If we reject his aid it necessarily follows that in some cases, and I think in all, sin will have dominion over us; but on the other hand if we accept it and trust in it, though our strength may be small, we never fail to conquer. And in either case, whether we rise with God or fall without Him, when we look carefully at the principles involved, we can still say, *it is all for the best.*

And thus it is that in these and all other things the Absolute Religion, in aid of Revealed Religion, stands ready, by processes of intelligent thought and reason, to show that all the constituents of the moral universe, when all facts, relations and issues are reached, hold their position, not as an error or an accident, but as the out-giving of the highest wisdom, and as necessary elements in a system which is stamped with perfection.

7.—But the question is sometimes asked, whether this view does not make God the author of sin; in other words, whether all moral evils of whatever nature may not be laid directly and exclusively to his account? The fact supposed to be involved in such inquiries, is as far as possible from the truth. It is true that God cannot establish a moral universe in which the highest and most glorious results may be realized without admitting the

possibility of sin. But it is also true, both on philosophic and scriptural principles, and also as shown by the history of his dealings with the world, that God takes all possible measures short of a violation of man's freedom, which cannot be violated without man's ceasing to be a man, to instruct man, to protect him against evils and to guide him to truth and to good. So far from being the author of sin, God shows himself both by his nature and his works to be the enemy of sin; and also looking at the subject in another aspect, that he is the friend of all good or holiness, and the assertion that God is the author of sin in the sense in which the suggestion is evidently made, is not only an error but a wrong, a contempt of the highest goodness as well as a dishonor to unchangeable truth.

8.—The greatest of all moral teachers and philosophers, I mean Christ himself, in a few wonderful words, has announced the great truth which forms the subject of this chapter. "*It must needs be,*" he says, "that offences come; but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh." In other words, the principles of the moral universe, being a "*needs be,*" are necessities. They exist, not by an arbitrary command which would be consistent with the idea that there was a time when they had no existence, but because the "*needs be*" was in them; and exist

therefore beyond time and beyond space, and with eternity for their changeless home. There is no wisdom back of them or above them which can originate or alter and improve, or make them in any way otherwise than they are. And yet it is further implied in this remarkable passage, that these necessities by which sin comes into the world, in point of fact and in the view of those who have a true interior insight, will be found consistent with personal responsibility and with the punishment of evil-doers.

Nevertheless we are willing to admit that on this great subject there may be and there probably are difficulties which a finite mind cannot easily solve. And to a mind that is in a right position, this admission excites no surprise and causes no sorrow, because it is one of those things which God himself cannot remedy, unless He can unite things which are contradictory and incompatible in their nature, and make the finite identical with the Infinite.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### *The Objective and Subjective in Religion.*

I.—It is sometimes thought that the Objective or outward in religion, and the Subjective or inward, are not only antagonistical, but are mutually exclusive and destructive of each other. This I suppose to be a mistake. They are neither destructive of each other, nor are they necessarily antagonistical; but on the contrary, are essentially harmonious, although it may sometimes be true, in consequence of diversity of relations, that they are antagonistical in appearance.

The question of the Objective and the Subjective in religion, is prominently and specifically the question, stated in simpler terms, is God without us or within us? Our answer is, that God is every where; but not in the same sense, nor with the same efficacy, nor with the same results. And these differences depend not merely upon the facts of the divine nature, but partly upon other related facts, incidents and experiences. Accordingly it may be

said as a truth, that irreligion necessitates objectivity ; because, from the very fact of being what it is, it closes the heart and excludes the divine entrance. The irreligious or Adamic man, or man under the influence of inordinate self-hood, and with the spiritual eye almost closed with the Adamic incrustations, can see only the objective or outward God. But under the more favorable influences of Christianity and with a wider and truer vision for which he ought to be grateful, he sees Him under a human form, elevated to the position of a throne and swaying a sceptre. But He sits there nevertheless, whatever the degree of his elevation or glory, as an objective or outward God. But God as thus presented, is not to be regarded as wanting in reality ; nor as a reality not accordant with the facts of a sound philosophy. The true God is universal ; but the Adamic eye, or the eye which sees only from the stand-point of its own personal interests, can see God only under the law of its own perceptivity ; and locates Him and circumscribes Him with the limitations, which are reflected from its own nature. And thus it is that the sinner sees God outwardly, because the fact of sinfulness is a decree of banishment, and it is a logical sequence of such a sight, that he not only sees, but fears and trembles.

2.—It should be remembered however, that God

objective is not a different God, but differently seen ; not located and limited in his distant place by his essential nature, but because He will not enter the selfish heart ; and the selfish heart, therefore, can only see Him in the distance. But it is better, far better, that He should thus be seen, than not seen at all. It is the beginning of a new thought ; it is the incipency of searching and often terrible convictions ; it is the opening and revelation in the soul of that which makes an unbelieving Felix tremble.

3.—Such is the God of the sinner, a God true to the relations under which the sinner sees him ; seen at a distance, because He *is* distant ; seen in exclusion, because He *is* excluded ; seen in anger, because it is right and just that He should be angry. But under the appliances of new truths and such influences as God can exercise consistently with the sinner's freedom, and especially in connection with his mediatorial manifestations, He begins to present himself in accordance with the sinner's altered mental position and wants, in the attributes of forgiveness, mercy and love. He expands to the mental vision just in proportion as the mental vision enlarges itself to perceive. And in this expansion by the laws of spiritual insight, He comes nearer and nearer, till at last instead of being excluded and kept at a distance, He begins to enter and take up

his abode in the soul itself, and to find his locality, not as a God afar off, but as a real dweller in the sacred and spiritual home of holy thoughts and holy dispositions. It is in harmony with the doctrine of these statements, that the late Dr. Payson, of Maine, in speaking of his personal experience, says, "the Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as He approached." And when God has thus changed his position from God outward in the heavens to God inward in the Spirit, we have a rational and to some extent satisfactory explanation of the expression 'God *subjective*';—in other words, a God interior, a God in psychical possession, a God dwelling in the soul.

There is therefore, a foundation for the terms Objective and Subjective in religion, although they sound somewhat crude and inharmonious to an Anglo-Saxon ear; and they are terms which have a real and substantial significancy; word-symbols of great and essential religious facts, though not facts which are realized at the same period in the mind's history; and which are harmonized with each other by the adjustment of additional facts and additional relations.

4.—There is an incidental topic which seems to merit a brief notice. The statement is found in

certain philosophical speculations, though sometimes appearing merely in the form of a suggestion, that the subjective experience, when carried to its highest results, requires and necessitates the "identification of the subject and object, of the worshipper and the worshipped;" in other words, that man in becoming sanctified, or as it is sometimes expressed "*divinized*" through the presence and reigning power of the Holy Ghost, ceases to be man. But this view, which would readily be accepted in the doctrines of Pantheism, has the aspect, to say the least, of being a hasty and erroneous generalization; leading to injurious and fatal results. It is the confounding of identity of nature with identity of forms, attributes and relations. The sunbeam is not the same with the sun; the drop of water is not the same with the ocean; the morning zephyr is not the same thing with the wild, sweeping whirlwind. Everywhere, in all the realms of nature, we find the same essentiality of nature, combined with differences of manifestation and relations, which divide that essential oneness, that divinely central and inseparable brotherhood, into distinct and beautiful and permanent individualisms. Paul did not cease to be Paul, because he asserted and asserted truly, that Christ lived in him. The possession of a divine nature, which is the duty and the

privilege of every one, does not make him a Deity ; which, notwithstanding the ingenious speculations of the ancient Hindoos, or of the Neo-Platonic Alexandrine schools, or of their more modern followers, seems to the truly Christian mind, not only adverse to the Scriptures, but both a philosophical and physical impossibility. Let it be understood and remembered, that diversity of life is as much a truth of the universe as essentiality of life ; and angels, and all holy beings who may reach that high stature and glory of existence, will be angels still. Absorption into God, as a permanent and universal result, would be the cessation and death of God himself ; whose very element and essentiality of life, is its tendency to out-flowing and manifested communication.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *Unitics and Diversities.*

I.—It is not to be supposed, that all diversities are disunities. On the contrary, unity in diversity, a central and life-giving principle with variations in manifestation, is a great philosophical announcement; and justly regarded as one among the most interesting which have been propounded for consideration. There are many rivers, but they flow to one ocean; many planets, but one central sun; many nerves, but having their source in the central brain; many pulsations, but they come from one heart. Everywhere, but oftentimes with comparative subordinations and in separate cycles of existence and movement, we find this great fact of a central unity, with its out-going but correlated diversities. Writers on æsthetics, for instance, teach us, that amid all the varieties of outward form and beauty, which manifest themselves in the different schools of architecture and painting, there are certain common principles which underlie them all;

and which secures in different and distant ages and countries, the permanency of their power over the human mind. Applying the great principle before us to our moral and religious nature, and with the object of briefly noticing its connection with a living Christianity, and also some of its bearings on nations, we proceed now to remark, that there may be diversities which characterize the intellectual action, and which attach especially to that part of the mind; but which, nevertheless, will be found to be consistent with a high degree of unity in the more interior and affectional nature. In other words, there may be differences and conflicts of the intellect combined with unity of the heart.

2.—The statement just made seems to us to be justified by a correct knowledge of our mental constitution. It is generally conceded, that our comparative views or knowledge of things, are determined in part by the comparative strength of our intellectual powers; and in part also by the stand point or intellectual position, in which we happen to be when those powers are exercised. In regard to most objects of knowledge, especially objects of outward knowledge, it is well understood that every one, saying nothing of the amount or specific character of his perceptive power, holds a position different in some respects from every other person; and



that this circumstance alone, without taking the interior causes of differences into account, must necessarily lay the foundation of very different results. If two men, for instance, placed in quite different positions, are looking at a building of varied architectural proportions and beauty, it is found impossible for them, even if they have the same powers of perception, to take the same view. To each of the two, the view which he takes is a true one, considered relatively to the extent of his own faculties and the position from which he exercises them; but it is more or less different from that of the other. Such is the intellectual law in the case.

3.—Upon this general basis of the laws of knowledge, without going into more specific statements and limitations, which a full discussion might call for, we propose to make a few practical remarks. And the first is, that there is a philosophical as well as a Scriptural foundation for the great idea, which awaits a wider development than it has hitherto known of *Christian unity*. It is important to us as Christians, aiming at the highest results of Christianity, to understand and remember, that the principle, which applies in so many other cases, has a specific application to ourselves; and that intellectual differences, in being to some extent a necessity,

do not and cannot in themselves considered, and to the extent at least of their necessary existence, furnish a justifiable obstacle to love. Indeed, looking at the matter philosophically, have we not some reason for saying that differences are the foundation of love? If we were all formed alike, and looked alike and were alike in all other respects, the many would be merged in one; everything would be identical; and the fact of loving would cease because there would be no opportunity of loving. But without pressing this point, let us remember that God, in the most true and important sense, loves all beings and seeks the good of all, notwithstanding the amazing diversities which exist. And if God thus throws the arms of his affections around those, who are constituted with intellectual differences and who, by the necessities of their position, exercise these differences in different ways and with different results, then those, who are born into the true and full life of God, and who love as God loves, may be expected to have power to surmount these differences also, and to harmonize the conflicts and antagonisms of thought by means of the more interior unities of affection. And hence it is, that the Apostle Paul, in connection with that unity of heart which binds the soul to Christ and which consolidates the great Christian brotherhood into the same unity

of life, argues with a sublimity of thought as sound in philosophy as it is true in religion, that the outward distinctions of bond and free, of Greek and Jew, of male and female, of circumcision and uncircumcision, of Barbarian and Scythian, all involving more or less the intellectual and incidental differences of thought and culture and practical life, are merged and lost sight of in that grand and essential unity. Gal. iii: 28. Coloss. iii: 11. And hence it happened, after the great day of Pentecost, that Parthians and Medes and Elamites and Phrygians and Egyptians and Lybians and Cretans and Arabians, all uttering the discordancies of different languages, and all modified intellectually by great differences of thought, and by the training of their different situations, were nevertheless in their more interior nature baptized into one spirit.

And hence it happens also, as we learn from time to time, that modern missionaries in heathen lands, meeting together in the presence of great necessities which swell within them the tide of the soul's Essential Life, find its increasing waves of holy love mounting upward and upward, and thus overflowing and sweeping away the divisive impulses of the intellect and the conventional lines of sectarian separation.

4.—Again, the doctrine of unity in diversity,

when understood in the principles which lie at its foundation, helps us in the matter of forgiveness and *of love to our enemies*. When persons are pressed on the subject of an inward holy life, and the example of the Elder Brother is set before them as an example to be followed in all respects, they frequently stumble at the requisition to love their enemies, and to do good to those who have done injury to themselves. But let them do what they ought to do, and be at once what Christ would have them to be; and they will not fail to see the truth and beauty of this great command. If, under the influences of the living truth, they boldly and fully follow Christ in the inward regeneration, it may always be said that their enemies smite them because they do not understand them. In other words, acting from the sphere of the intellect, and beholding things from the lower plane which constitutes their stand-point, they aim their blows at the creations of their own imagination. In their darkened vision, perverted by their own selfishness, or by the discordancies of a necessitated position, they mistake ministering angels who come with messages of love, for powers and principalities of evil who threaten them with harm. The Roman soldiers who thrust their spears at the "man of sorrows," did not know the truth and purity and

benevolence of Him whose blood they sought. And hence his glorious nature was both prompted by benevolence, and, in recognizing the laws of man's mental constitution, harmonized with the philosophical truth of things, loyal alike and unchangeable to the justice of truth and the divinity of goodness, when He uttered that memorable saying: "Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do.*"

5.—And we may remark further, looking at the subject in its political and national relations, that we find in the principles which have been laid down, a philosophical foundation for the great political doctrine so long and warmly contested, of a *toleration of opinions, considered as a political and constitutional right.* The human mind, if we have been correct in our positions, is so constituted and so situated in the circumstances of its action, that oftentimes it necessarily takes different views. If it so happens, therefore, at any time and under any circumstances, that we cannot make our neighbors understand things as we understand them, either through our incapacity to communicate or their incapacity to receive, we must calmly bear with it. They are not, on the ground of such incapacity, to be the subjects of sneers, of sarcasm, of unfeeling rebuke, of imprisonments, of tortures, of social os-

tracism, or of anything inconsistent with the forbearance and charity which such a state of things obviously requires. When men, therefore, fought for the toleration of religious opinions in the English Revolution of 1640 and in the American Revolution of 1776, and in other memorable historical periods, they fought for a great necessity of their nature. And accordingly it is well to understand and practically insist, that this great principle of toleration is not merely a truth of the sword which bloody battles have established, and which other battles might unsettle and abrogate; but a truth of the highest reason, and of perpetual obligation.

6.—And again, the principle under consideration has a connection with what has been called by a modern but expressive term, *the “solidarity” of nations*. Whatever diversities may exist among nations politically or otherwise, the law of the universe which philosophers have denominated Unity in Diversity, which lies back of all diversities, and which in this particular case touches nations, because it touches individuals, requires that they must march in harmony with the unifying centre. Diversified as they may be by monarchies or senates, or by other civil and political variations, all nations have a “solidarity” or community of life, because a nation is a unified or consolidated man, and because all men who

go to make the national or consolidated existence, are born alike in the image of God; and not only have certain inalienable rights, as Jefferson's great declaration has affirmed, but are the subjects of *inalienable obligations, and are bound together by inalienable ties*. When the Roman audience loudly applauded the great sentiment, "*Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto,*" their hearts vibrated to the pulsations of that common life, which under all its separations makes humanity one. Such is the foundation of the great law of solidarity, which, while it recognizes diversities, subordinates them to itself as the great central principle. It is under the promptings and influence of this beneficent principle, that nations, as if by a common impulse, are struggling to realize a community of interests in all cases where it is possible, and by all means which render it possible; such as a common system of weights and measures, a common coinage, a common postal system, the ocean telegraph, the removal of the passport system, the extinction of what remains of feudalism, the recognition of the rights of different races notwithstanding the diversities of color, the expansion of nationalities in harmony with the aspirations of a common name and history, the extension of the ballot, the revision of the doctrines of naturalization, international exhibitions of the arts, the settle-

ment of national difficulties by means of Congresses of nations, the introduction of the principle of Arbitration into treaties, together with the hope ultimately, of a permanent international Congress and a Court of nations, and also of a universal language.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *View of the Doctrine of Sacrifices.*

The doctrine of the ancient Sacrifices reveals to us one of the forms in which God contends against satan, in which the life of good strives against the life of evil. God's great redemption plan has been to restore men from the life of self, in which they were destroying themselves to the universal brotherhood. In their inordinate self-hood they seized everything they could lay their hands upon, and held it all with the firmest possible grasp; the fruits of the earth, the herds of the fields, doves, oxen, sheep, goats, camels. And they held everything they could thus get, not for the good of the object, but for their own good—not to communicate but to appropriate it. They made everything a sacrifice, a holocaust, a great burnt offering to their own lusts. With a view to break in upon the principality and dominion of selfishness, God commanded them, in the destruction which they made and were determined to make of all fruits and animals, that they should

not appropriate everything to themselves, but offer a part to God. On God's part it was merely a form of proceeding. Under the form of an offering to God, it was really an offering for their own good.

In this way they made a beginning in that great lesson, which all must learn if they would be saved. They were taught, that this partial sacrifice was the antetype or forerunner of something which was to come. They were yet to learn the nature of a true sacrifice—its extent, its possibility, its necessity. In its full extent, a true sacrifice is not the giving up of a part or the withholding of a part, but the sacrifice of all.

This is a thing possible to be done, otherwise it would not be required to be done. Luke 14: 26. God incarnated himself as man, in order that he might illustrate in a way which all could understand, the nature, the extent, and the possibility of that sacrifice, which it is necessary for man to make in order to become a holy man.

The true Christ sacrifice is a *perpetual* sacrifice. It is a law which proceeds from God, that the higher or more advanced existences give up themselves to the service and good of others who are lower. The death of Christ on the cross for the good of men was not merely an isolated fact, but the announcement and the verification of an universal and permanent

principle. And this principle is, that the Christ-sacrifice, which is holy love in its essential and celestial uses, *never* ceases; and that redemption *never* ends.

The divine brotherhood and sisterhood of Christ scattered up and down in the earth, and who in these last days are being gathered together out of all tongues and tribes and kindreds of men, and out of all separate forms and beliefs, still suffer to some extent in the garden of Gethsemane or upon the Cross. The inheritors of Christ's nature, it is a matter of course that they are and must be, the inheritors of Christ's sufferings, so far as they come in contact with evil, and so far as in the prosecution of this conflict, they are called upon to labor and endure. The Apostle Paul, in speaking of himself, uses these expressions, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake which is the church." Coloss. 1 : 24. The Apostle Peter, in his first general Epistle, calls upon the followers of Christ to "rejoice, inasmuch as they are partakers of Christ's sufferings."

The Christ-spirit is always antagonistic to the unprogressive and selfish spirit, and therefore always labors, always endures, always suffers, yet always rejoices, always triumphs. Its triumph is an eternal

triumph, because holy love is infinite in its resources, and selfishness is not ;—at the same time it must be said, that the contest in which it is engaged is a never-ending contest ; because in a moral universe, which is also necessarily a free universe, the series of the second or perfected births, in which the imperfect and evil give place to the good and perfect, considered as a part of the divine order, and as a necessary step in progressional development, is as much a permanent fact and truth as the truth of the divine existence.

When we reach the true interior sense of the Scriptures, we get at true unchangeable principles. Christ saves us by his blood ; his blood is his life, and he who gives up his life gives all. And it is thus that we can understand the doctrine of grace, in distinction from the doctrine of merit by works. We are saved by Christ, in other words we are saved by grace or love, which is Christ's positive or essential nature, and this not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. The merit is in Love—and not in ourselves.

But the question still remains,—how did Christ's sacrifice save sinners? The common answer is, that he magnified the law and made it honorable. And what is the law? In general and somewhat abstract terms it is, that we shall love God with all our heart ; and our neighbor as ourselves. In other

words we are to do good ; the higher are to watch over the lower ; the strong are to sustain the weak ; those who have knowledge are to enlighten the ignorant ; we must and shall bestow upon others in proportion as we receive. *This* was the law which Christ divinely illustrated and magnified. He not only announced the law as Moses had done before ; but more than Moses did, he fulfilled it. He gave up his life from an earnest and sincere desire to do good to all because he himself was Love. Truly the great Law of Love was honored.

9.—The universe, so far as it exhibits itself in the personalities and forms of things, in distinction from the *Esse* or essential being of things, is not a completion but a development ;—an infinite progression. It goes on continually from one step or plane of advancement to another. If it should stop in its progress it would necessarily fall into extinction. In ceasing to progress, it would become limited ; it would have a boundary of existence ; it would no longer be exhaustless in its resources ; and therefore, as it would be a necessity that its life would feed upon itself, it would rapidly waste its possessions. Progress, therefore, continued progress may be regarded as a necessity. To stand still is to perish.

10.—And further it seems to be evident and is

generally conceded, that progress involves the idea both of successions in time and of successions in degree; one thing going before and another coming after; one being below and another, which is the antecedent in time, being higher, sphere above sphere, and these spheres again having their distinct higher and lower circles or mansions; human natures, spiritual or angelic natures, seraphic or super-angelic natures; existences of names unknown with their appropriate surroundings, progressively and endlessly developing in the direction of the Infinite, and yet never reaching and never becoming identical with the Infinite.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *Growth of the Idea of God.*

1.—It is difficult to exaggerate the importance which is to be attached to a correct idea of God, considered as the embodiment and the personality of the essential living element. If our views on other points should be found to be correct but should prove incorrect here, the error would be likely to vitiate and weaken everything else.

2.—And the reason is, that men will almost necessarily fashion themselves, in their principles and in their practice, into the image of God, as that image exists in their minds. Accordingly in adopting a false conception of God, if they thus substitute to themselves as an object of love and imitation, an unholy or satanic being instead of the true God, it will be found, that in their highest aspirations and efforts, they will only aim and labor to make themselves evil and satanic, instead of aspiring to a truly holy or divine nature. If for instance, the God of a people is Moloch,—a conception of God which

authorizes and requires extreme cruelty—it will be found that the people, assimilating themselves to their conception of what is divine, will adopt and perpetuate the infamous cruelties, whatever they may be which their god approves.

The account of systems of worship, and of the various and numerous gods, which men have adored in various ages of the world and in different places, constitute a deeply interesting but most painful chapter in human history. The early portions of biblical history abound in facts and allusions to which we now refer. The Scriptures make frequent mention of the idolatrous worship of the nations, that originally inhabited Palestine and the countries in its vicinity. Moloch was a god of the Canaanites and the Phœnicians. References are made to the worship of this cruel deity in Jeremiah, 7; 31, 32; 19: 6-14; in Isaiah 30: 33, and also in the second book of Kings, 23: 10. Baal also, so often mentioned in the Bible, was one of the deities of the Phœnicians and was worshipped especially at Tyre. Human sacrifices were sometimes offered to this god; but less frequently than to Moloch. Baal-Peor was a god or goddess of the Moabites. Another of the Moabitish deities is mentioned in the Scriptures under the name of Chemosh, Numb. 21: 29, Jer. 48: 7, 13. The calf which is mentioned in



Exodus 32 : 4, 5, and the two calves erected by Jeroboam in the cities of Dan and Bethel, were evidently made in imitation of the Egyptian deities, the Apis worshipped at Memphis and the Muevis at Heliopolis. In some parts of Egypt, the region in the neighborhood of the ancient Sycopolis, the wolf was an object of worship. The northern nations of Europe, those in particular inhabiting the region of the modern Denmark and Sweden, formed their idea of God by the deification of the warrior. Their highest ideal of man was the man of violence and of blood ; and the being, that was conceived by them as filling most completely this ideal, by violence and bloodshed, was their God. His name was Odin. His residence was in the city of Misgard. His palace was Valhalla. Odin was the god of battles. The souls of heroes who had fallen in battle, ascended to the highest places in the celestial city;—renewing around the halls of Valhalla the pleasures of mimic war, and drinking the Scandinavian nectar, from vessels formed from the skulls of their enemies. The adventures of Odin are found in the *Odda* and *Voluopa*. The sword of Odin and the great hammer of Thor, may be accepted as the appropriate symbols of the early northern deity;—the creation of imbruted intellects and ferocious hearts, and which reacted upon its own source, and in its turn

consolidated and established revenge and inhumanity.

The question now returns, what is God? What is the idea which we may properly and truly attach to Him? And we remark in the first place, that the God whom the holy heart loves is not a limited or human form,—such as the human mind in its weakness is apt to frame and adopt;—a form seated somewhere high in the heavens, occupying some elevated chair of state, and holding in his hand the sceptre or sword of authority. This undoubtedly, is an improvement of that low and demoralizing belief, which finds him embodied in the lowest of the brute animals, or which locates him in an idol made of wood or stone; although it is still a conception of God, which differs from this very low one, more in *degree* than in *nature*. Such a limited and formal conception of God—no matter how dignified and venerable the mental image under which he is represented—is at variance with the letter and the spirit of the Bible; and compared with the true conception of the Infinite Mind, is low, materialistic, and unsatisfying.

3.—The God whom the holy soul loves, is not the mere abstract idea of God. For although we may and do form such an abstract idea, yet it should be remembered, that the object for which the idea

stands, is not a mere abstraction like the idea which represents it, but is something positive and real. Nor can we in consequence of our limited and finite nature, love God even as an infinite positive Being, unless we at the same time make him present in his works, and love him and worship him in his works.

The true God is God present, living, operating or in a word *incarnate*, in the universe of things; not identical with it, but wrapping the universality of created existences about Him as the clothing of his life, and embodying himself most distinctly and fully, in that which has the greatest receptivity of the Divine; and therefore becoming more and more fully incarnated in man, in proportion as he progresses in the divine life, and can say, *Christ is within me*.

Now with such a God and thus received, it is easy to see, what a change must soon take place in the affairs of the world. If man could in any way be led fully to believe, that his brother man is a manifestation of God, that the Divine is in him and hovers over him and around him,—always to some extent and always endeavoring to incarnate itself *more and more*,—would it be possible for him to treat his fellow-man as he has done; to cast him into dungeons, to tear him with pincers, to burn him in the flames, to smite him and crush him in bloody

wars? Would it be in his thought and his nature, thus to smite and destroy man, as the history of the world shows that he has done, if he could be led to the truth of the divine locality, and understood, that God could and would not be separated from man? Truly recognizing God as existent in humanity, would it be possible for him to hold his brother man in slavery or to maltreat him and injure him in any way whatever? And reverencing God also in woman, could he make her the slave of all servile drudgeries, brutalizing her body through the brutalization of the intellect and the heart, and through long ages, as he has done, causing her to droop her head in sadness and to shed tears of blood? It is obvious what great and glorious results would follow from the adoption of a true idea of God, not only concerning man and woman, but also concerning the beast of the field and the fowls of the air.

## CHAPTER XX.

### *Of the Satisfaction of Divine Justice.*

1.—Christ suffers and dies for sinners. A substitute for transgressors is found in the crucified Son of Mary. Divine Justice is satisfied. The atonement is made. Such are the expressions which are often heard in the creeds and teachings of the existing churches. Similar expressions are found in the Bible. “He is wounded for our transgressions; he is bruised for our iniquities.” “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.” The true and interior meaning of such expressions, the meaning which is adapted to that higher development of the human race which exists at the present time,—may be supposed to be as follows.

2.—When we say that Christ suffered on the Cross, or suffered in any way, we make the inquiry in connection with such expressions, as we are constantly making the inquiry in other connections, Who and what is Christ? Christ is not merely an outward form, not merely a physical organization;

but a living principle, a spiritual Essentiality or Divine Love; *Christ not only was but is*. The Christ-spirit—we do not say every man who bears outwardly the name of Christ,—but the Christ-spirit, the Essential Christ, does everything and suffers everything which can be justly done and suffered for transgressors. This is right. And nothing short of this is right. The Christ-spirit compared with any and every other principle of life, is the spirit of all knowledge, of all truth, of all joy, all glory. Freed from the disturbing and blinding influences of self, it sees where the sinner does not see; it knows where the sinner does not know. It has strength where the transgressor is weak. It has heaven in its present and its future, with the knowledge, that the sinner has no heritage of happiness, either now or hereafter if he continues in his sins. It is right therefore that the Essential Christ should suffer. It was right that he should suffer upon the Cross. It is right that he should suffer now.

4.—Divine Justice, the divine perception of the absolute right, requires that the true people of God should sympathize with, should act and should more or less suffer, for the good of sinners. Divine Justice is not satisfied, and cannot be satisfied, till this divine ransom of toil and suffering,—without which the Christ-spirit would fail to be the Christ-spirit,—

is fully paid. The child of God who is not willing to act and suffer for God's cause, by doing good to others who stand in need of his labors, cannot claim to be the child of God. And therefore it may be truly said, that Divine Justice in such a case is not satisfied. When Christ died justice was satisfied. He did that which it was right or just for him to do.

5.—At this point it is possible, that a simple illustration may aid us in understanding the subject. A person for instance is a physiologist. Through the good providence of God which has watched over him and instructed him, he has been made acquainted with the mechanism and laws of the human constitution; and understands perfectly what injurious and destructive results follow from intemperance in eating and drinking. I think that such a man is bound, in other words, that "divine justice" requires him to communicate such information to his brother man for his good; although it may cost him time, labor, opposition, rebuke, persecution. And when he has done his duty in this respect, then and not till then divine justice is satisfied.

If Christ, with all his knowledge and love, with his deep insight into the causes and consequences of sin, had failed to stand up as a teacher, or had failed to verify his teachings by patient endurance and suffering even unto death, he could not have

said, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." John 17: 4. And it was in this way, that Christ or the Essential Love Life satisfied, what the divine or perfect justice required. A very different sort of satisfaction and nearly the reverse of what it is generally supposed to be.

6.—Now all who are Christ's people, just so far as they are like Christ, possess the true Christ nature which is love, and are called to proclaim the truth, although this necessarily brings them into antagonism with error, which involves in the course of the conflict, more or less of trial and suffering. It is a great truth, therefore a permanent truth, if God's people under any circumstances fail to labor and suffer for the good of transgressors up to the light which is given them, the divine justice fails to be satisfied. The cross therefore, namely, labor and suffering for the good of others, becomes a permanent fact, a divine and unchangeable necessity under a government of which God who is Love is the great Centre.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### *The Doctrine of a Judgment affirmed by Absolute Religion.*

1.—It is undoubtedly a doctrine of Christianity, and is the accepted opinion of the sects or denominations which exist under the name of Christians, that man both in his actions and character is susceptible of being judged; and that such judgment will certainly come upon him. And such, in the grand harmony of Christian truth with the highest human intelligence, is the affirmation of the Absolute Religion.

2.—And first we will consider the subject in respect to individuals. We find evidence that men individually, that every man no matter what may be his situation, is properly the subject of a judicial process, and cannot by any possibility escape being ultimately brought to judgment, in the great fact that he is created with a judge in his own bosom. Conscience considered in connection with the intellect,

which furnishes the facts upon which its decisions are founded, constitutes a tribunal which exists in perpetual session; and out of its own interior and wonderful resources, consummates the verdict which it gives of a good or evil action, of a good or evil life, with a correspondent reward on the one hand, or a correspondent punishment on the other. Sometimes the reward or punishment is realized in outward good or outward sorrow, in the deprivation of external comforts or in the enrichment of external gifts; but whether this be the case or not, the recompenses of the soul in one form or the other, the joys or sorrows of conscience can never fail.

3.—And this is so because it cannot be other wise. If holiness or justice is a part of God's nature,—and without this God ceases to be God,—then it is impossible for him to create a being, with the voluntary and intelligent capacities of good and evil, without at the same time making him responsible for such good and evil. Man is judged because the tribunal exists in himself; and the tribunal exists there, because God in making man could not become a contradiction to himself; and could not act in violation or neglect of the eternal and essential principles which lie hidden in his own divine nature.

4.—And let us look further, at the practical re-

sults. If man were not liable to be brought to judgment, and were not restrained and regulated in his conduct by the knowledge of this liability, what conflict and wrong and fraud and oppression would be likely to follow! In such a state of things, where everything would be regulated by power independent of justice, existence itself would cease to be a blessing.

Looking at the subject in whatever way we will, the voice of eternal reason giving itself utterance in the Absolute Religion, agrees with Revealed Religion in the fact, that the book of the judgment is, and from the nature of the case must be opened; that the sentence is and must be executed; that under the figurative expressions of the Scriptures, as well as under the dogmatic formulas of religious creeds, there lies a great and unchangeable verity which cannot be unheeded.

5.—And it remains to be added that men are not only judged in their individual capacity, but they necessarily take their share of the judgment which falls upon all corporate bodies and associations and communities, of which they are members. The life of such associations and communities is made up of individual life; the responsibility of such complex bodies, formed for ends which involve moral results, is the aggregate of individual responsibilities; and

the reward which attends the associated good-doing, and the punishment which follows the associated evil-doing, reach all the individuals.

And therefore it may be said as a philosophical affirmation, and it is found to be true as a matter of fact, that families and neighborhoods are judged, that towns and cities are judged, that all business corporations are judged, that nations are judged, that worlds are judged. And thus it will be found, that the great and overshadowing fact of judgment extends to everything which is capable of being judged; although it is true, that it necessarily varies in the form which it puts on, and in its degree, with the great variety of things, and the modification and character of things to which it applies; but taking place under the adjustments of a Being who never errs, the judgment always is just.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### *The Doctrine of Heaven and Hell.*

I.—It is a fact worthy of consideration because it involves principles that have a permanent foundation, that all religions have their heaven and hell. The Absolute Religion which, though really first in time, comes latest in the historical succession of religions, and which tries to expound those that have gone before it and to adjust them to each other, teaches that heaven and hell are facts of mental experience, in other words are *states of the mind*, rather than localities. It is true that the Absolute Religion, in taking this important position, does not necessarily deny locality as something which is predicable of such facts of experience. And it does not do this, for the simple and sufficient reason, that locality is a necessary incident of finiteness; and that it is impossible to have an idea of finite beings, without having an idea of the place which they occupy. But the Absolute doctrine though it does not by any

means exclude the consideration of locality or place, is understood to deal primarily and chiefly with the intrinsic or essential nature, rather than with the forms and incidents of things.

2.—It is not easy to give definitions which will be satisfactory to all. But perhaps it will be sufficient to say, that Heaven in its essential nature, is that state of inward experience which excludes doubt and sorrow, and which is the subject of all that happiness, which results from a harmony with the immutable law of right, including as the necessary result of such harmony, the approbation of God, and full and happy communion with him.

It is not necessary to assert, however, that this is the best statement which is possible to be made of the absolute or essential heaven. It is sufficient to know, that the statement embracing essentially these ideas cannot vary greatly from these terms.

3.—And now we proceed to say, that the doctrine under consideration results necessarily from the fact, that the subjects or inhabitants of the state called Heaven, are spiritual or mental beings. It is very true, and it is one of the results of the additional fact that they are finite beings, that they are clothed in bodily or material forms; but there is a great difference between the clothing or forms of things, and the substance or essence of things. It cannot be

said that men in their intrinsic nature are material, nor can it be said that the laws which govern them are material, but the facts, laws and experiences pertaining to the essential man, in a word anything and everything which goes to constitute the interior man in distinction from the outward man, is wholly of a spiritual nature. For instance, man in his physical or material nature has an outward form and outward organs; and in the possession and exercise of such organs, he does, and suffers, and enjoys those things, which are appropriate to such an organization; but it is hardly necessary to say, that in his mental or spiritual nature it is very different. His internal action, in distinction from his outward or physical action, is the activity of a spiritual nature; and he does, and suffers, and enjoys those things, which are appropriate to spirit.

4.—We cannot delay in order to go into particulars to any great extent. One or two illustrations will answer. Man for instance has a conscience. By means of conscience, using the term in the more general sense as indicating the whole moral nature, he discriminates between right and wrong. And when he acts in accordance with the right, he is happy; and when he does wrong he suffers. Man also has affectional susceptibilities, including the great and controlling power in his spiritual nature

which enables him to love; and in the exercise of this benevolent principle, which always operates in the direction of good to others, he finds an ample and rich reward in his own nature. His failure to exercise it, on the contrary, and the indulgence without adequate cause of hostile feelings, is attended, according to a wise law of being, with a correspondent unhappiness to himself. So that happiness resulting from conformity with spiritual laws, constitutes heaven; and unhappiness resulting from a violation of these laws constitutes hell. The same general principles which apply to the one apply to the other.

5.—And this is not all. It can be said also and in such a way that contradiction cannot easily have a place, that there is a fixed and necessary discrimination between them; a gulf of separation, excavated by differences of nature which can never be filled up; so that in their interior and distinctive nature heaven can never become hell, and hell can never become heaven. Philosophers tell us that there is an immutable distinction between right and wrong; right in its essential nature can never become wrong, and wrong can never become right. But in studying the relations of ultimate ideas and facts, we shall find that right and wrong are in a very important sense the foundations of heaven and hell; that they



are the essential basis upon which heaven and hell are erected; and that the affirmation of an immutable distinction and separation between them, is virtually an affirmation of a like distinction and separation of that which grows out of them.

And if it should be affirmed at this point, that these statements have reference rather to identity than to duration, and that the existence and the distinctive difference of both may be conceded, without involving the fact of their unchangeable *permanency*, then it remains to be added further, that, inasmuch as it is impossible to conceive of a moral universe where right and wrong are not, so it is impossible to conceive of such an universe where heaven and hell are not. So that on philosophical principles, heaven and hell are not more immutable and distinctive in their nature, than they are unchangeable and eternal in their duration. And accordingly it is not enough to affirm the naked fact of the existence of heaven and hell; but the truth in its absolute form requires us to affirm also, that there is an eternal heaven and an eternal hell.

6.—The Absolute Religion affirms also, although it may be conceded that it is not a matter which is equal in importance, the locality of heaven and hell. Heaven and hell in their essential nature exist in beings; and in beings of whom it can be said that

they have perceptions, emotions and conscience; in beings, who are not simply existences but personalities. But it is a primary conception or thought of the human mind, that such beings and indeed any beings, of whom it can be said that they are finite and not infinite, have and must have limitations, boundaries, outlines, form, which in fact constitute one of the essential differences between the finite and the Infinite, and which necessarily carry with them the idea of locality or place. Affirm of any being or thing, that it has outline and form, and you necessarily imply and affirm of it, that it must be and is in one place rather than another; in other words, that it has place; and that place or locality can no more be separated from it than outline or form can be separated from it.

Furthermore it is well known that philosophical thinkers often speak of *the fitness of things*. And in such a sense that they not only accept of it as a speculative truth, but fully believe in it and reason from it as an available and important basis of argument, in ascertaining and adjusting the position of one thing considered in relation to another. And the Absolute Religion, in harmony with this view, utters as one of its truths, that it is not agreeable to the fitness of things, in other words that it is not an appropriate, well adjusted, and fitting thing, that

heaven and hell should be thought to be without law, and should move their locality at random, and should be here and there and anywhere and everywhere, without regard to the relative situation, and the rights and claims, and progress, and histories of other beings and other localities; and thus disturb, if it were a possible thing, the unchangeable harmonies of the universe. And therefore it can be said for this and for other reasons, especially in view of the great law of attraction, which compels the association and permanent neighborhood of those who have likeness of character, that heaven and hell have not only a locality but a fixed and ascertainable locality, so that no one in the future life will have any difficulty in knowing his own place.

7.—And still further, the Absolute Religion affirms, in accordance with the expressions that are found in the revealed or written religions, that heaven and hell have their walls and gates, their trees of life, their golden harps, and their flaming fires; with the liberty however, of substituting in a proper manner the inward meaning for the outward letter, and the great substance for the metaphorical shadow. The walls and gates, divested of their metaphorical import, are the ideas, truths, or laws of life, which attach to finite existences in every situation, and which indicate the boundaries or limits

which they cannot pass. Not walls or gates in the material sense, not something visible and tangible which has been fashioned and set up by human hands or any other finite agency; but they are not the less real on that account; and may be said to possess even greater strength and permanency. They cannot be broken through as material walls can, or undermined, or over-leaped, or worn out; but they stand forever. And in like manner the tree of life, and the waters of life, and the golden harps, and the flaming fires, if they do not express like walls and gates, the limitations of position and action, will be found on a proper interpretation, to imply and to express certain forms of inward experience both good and evil. There are joys and griefs of the spirit as well as physical joys and griefs; joys and griefs which do not depend upon positive and arbitrary enactments, but which necessarily result from the practical relation of our lives to the laws of right and wrong, and without which heaven and hell could have no existence.

8.—And lastly the Absolute Religion, speaking alike in all lands and all languages and all intellects, not only announces the existence of heaven and hell, and with the seal of eternity upon them, but proclaims with equal distinctness to the doer of good and evil, that there is no possible escape from

them. They are not only facts but inheritances ; not only existences but are capable of being peopled and dwelt in. Such is the nature and fixed relation of things, that it can be said in terms which admit of no uncertainty, that the sinner is necessarily a sufferer ; and that the doer of good is necessarily happy, and that neither the one nor the other, neither the good man nor the sinner, can fly from the heaven or hell that is appropriate to him any more than he can fly from himself. The man who is excluded from the kingdom of love, and has his home and kingdom in himself, who in making self his centre is cast out of the *All* and is shut up in the one, who is sunk from the liberty of God into the slavery of the creature, is in the truth and essence of Hell, whatever may be said of his locality. Hell therefore is a state of mind. And accordingly the Absolute Religion has no controversy with the doctrine of Hell, whether found in the Christian Scriptures or anywhere else, because Hell when properly explained, is perceived to be, not a material Tophet or Gehenna, but a fact of the universal consciousness ; and what is more, it is an accepted problem of the primary or universal philosophy. Nor has it any controversy with the doctrine of the locality of Hell ; because locality, when ideas are subjected to a suitable analysis, is a necessary incident to all

finite beings ; and the locality which constitutes the place of Hell's subjects, necessarily constitutes the locality of Hell itself.

The Absolute Religion accepts Hell just as it accepts Heaven, and it accepts both of them, not only because they are matters of observation and consciousness, but because the unchangeable affirmation of philosophy proclaim the necessity of their being. And it accepts the locality of Heaven (a locality but not necessarily a fixed locality,) for the same reason that it accepts the locality of Hell.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *Of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, or the Sin which cannot be forgiven.*

I.—The doctrine of forgiveness of sin cannot be understood in all its aspects, without some specific reference to the doctrine of sin itself. The Scriptures recognize two kinds of sin. And accordingly as forgiveness has relation to sin, it modifies itself in accordance with the nature of the sin to be forgiven;—taking effect in some cases and not in others. The first of the two forms of sin to which reference has been made, is sometimes called in the Scriptures the “sin of ignorance.” Much account is made of this sin in the code of Moses. See Levit. 4: 2–13, Numb. 15: 24–30. This form of sin, which is that of which the Apostle Paul was especially guilty, 1st Tim. 1: 13, and to which he refers in his address to the Athenians on Mars Hill, Acts 17: 30, results in part from the imperfection of man’s finite condition. His experience is limited. His knowledge is neces-

sarily small in the beginning. He advances amid many obstacles and drawbacks. And without knowing precisely what he does, and without the specific intention of doing evil, he oftentimes does those things which are injurious either to himself or others. This is that "time of ignorance which God winks at." God does not exact from the weaknesses and imperfections of man's childhood, that which he may properly exact from his advanced maturity.

2.—The second form of sin is a sin of knowledge, and therefore of deliberate intention. It is the sin of those, who either know or who might know if they would employ their faculties to that purpose, what sin is. It is, therefore, the sin of the heart; and has in it that element of pride and obstinacy which is the essence of blasphemy. The person who commits it is described in the book of Numbers, as the man who "doeth aught *presumptuously*;" and therefore in distinction from the sin of ignorance, it might properly be denominated the sin of presumption. It is the sin of Goliath of Gath, who *defied* the armies of the living God, and of all that unbelieving, proud and violent class of men, whom the Philistines represent; although it undoubtedly and very often exists in different degrees of openness and boldness. It is the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, who deliber-



ately withheld from God what they knew belonged to Him. It is the sin of Judas who, standing for years in the clearness of the light of the Son of God, did yet betray Him. It is the sin in some degree at least, of all men, and of every man at all times and in every age of the world, who does not cheerfully and fully act up to the light within him.

3.—The distinction between these kinds or forms of sin is often made, with greater or less degree of distinctness, in writers on the history of Philosophic Opinions, on Natural Law, and on Moral Philosophy ;—not excluding some philosophic writers among the early Greeks and Romans. In Latin writers the sin of ignorance or any form of sin, which indicated weakness and imperfection, rather than deliberate evil intention, was denominated *culpa* or was expressed by some other equivalent term, while the deliberate or “presumptuous” sin was denominated *crimen*.

4.—Now keeping in mind this fundamental distinction in the forms of transgression, and connecting it with forgiveness, which implies in its higher and celestial sense not only overlooking a wrong, and passing it by, but also loving harmonization, we are prepared to add that the sin of ignorance can be forgiven. It is a sin of the head rather than of the heart ; and not only can be forgiven, but ought

to be and must be forgiven by all who are the true children of God. But the sin which is described in the Bible as the "sin of presumption," cannot be forgiven in that higher and true sense which has been mentioned, because it is both a sin of knowledge and a sin of the heart. It is deliberate, self-confident and defiant; and therefore cannot be forgiven inasmuch as it rejects forgiveness. The sin of those who crucified Christ, great as it was, could be forgiven. Some of them undoubtedly thought, as Paul in his persecutions of the church, that they were doing God's service. Christ prayed "Father, forgive them *for they know not what they do.*" But he says nothing about forgiveness of the sin of Judas, who cannot be supposed to have sinned in ignorance, but to have known well that he was sacrificing a good and holy man from a purely selfish consideration.

5.—With these explanations we are enabled perhaps better to understand the statement in Matthew 12: 31. "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven Him. But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this

world, neither in the world to come." In this passage, which harmonizes with what has already been said of the sin of ignorance, and the sin of presumption, we have two forms of sin brought together and placed side by side, namely the sin against the Son of man and the sin against the Holy Ghost; and they are so far essentially distinct from each other, that one can be forgiven, the other cannot. To speak against the Son of Man, as we understand it, is to speak against or controvert on the ground of imperfect knowledge, the doctrine of a Personal Christ:—for instance, the predictions which have relation to Him, the facts of his incarnation, the varied incidents of his history and other things. It is obvious, that this is a sin which is consistent with a degree of sincerity; and which in being sincere, is likely to work itself out into the truth. It is a sin therefore which can be forgiven. But the sin against the Holy Ghost, that deliberate form of it which is expressed in the Greek word translated *blasphemy*, which is sin against the Internal or Essential Christ in distinction from the outward or personal Christ, cannot be forgiven.

6.—There appears to be, and there undoubtedly is, a great philosophical principle involved in the statement which Christ makes; as in point of fact it

will generally be found that such biblical facts and statements everywhere involve principles.

The Bible viewed beneath the surface of its facts, and in the light of an interior spiritual interpretation, is a book of principles. And the principle here is this. Errors of judgment, mistakes arising from unintentional ignorance, even unholy affections arising from mere misapprehension and every thing of that kind may be forgiven. But the sin against the Holy Ghost in its essence is selfishness, and is deliberate and persistent. The Holy Ghost, whatever may be said of his manifestations or his Personality, is God in his nature. And union therefore on the part of God, with those who sin against the Holy Ghost, is an impossibility, because it would be the union of things which at the same time are divided against each other—of love and selfishness, of God and satan. And forgiveness therefore, which always involves the fact of union, when it exists in its highest and truest sense, is necessarily excluded under such circumstances.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### *Prayer in its Relation to the Absolute Religion.*

1.—Prayer, in its analysis and its foundation, necessarily involves the fact of the existence and the presence of two personalities—of God who is prayed to and of man who prays. Prayer in utterance is not merely and exclusively petitionary; but includes both supplication and adoration. The basis of these two forms, or that which entitles them to an uttered existence, is found in the character of the being who is prayed to. God can always give what we ask for; and his character, perfect in all its attributes, is worthy of the highest adoration. So far as this, we have a basis of fact and thought which is unchangeable, and which to this extent evidently brings the doctrine of Prayer within the limits of the Absolute Religion.

2.—As we advance further, however, we are obliged to admit, that the common doctrine on the subject of prayer may be regarded as somewhat at

fault. The doctrine to which we refer is, that God is necessarily unimpressible, or as the theologians commonly express it, that he is *impassive*; in other words, that though he hears he cannot be moved, and that in the possession of all knowledge, he is nevertheless without emotions and affections, because his plans being founded in infinite wisdom are fixed and inflexible, and his emotions and affections, which have their antecedence and basis in the facts of existence, are necessarily as fixed and "impassive" as his immovable plans. We do not deny that this is a view, which, properly understood and under proper limitations, embraces an important truth. But when not accepted with these conditions, it cannot be regarded as the whole truth, and perhaps it would be correct to say, that it is a serious and injurious perversion of the truth. It should be kept in mind that man is not a mere idealism or fiction in the world of existences; but in a true and substantial sense of the term a reality. Next to God, because he is in a true and especial sense the child of God, he is the great fact of the universe; vast in powers, complicated and yet wisely adjusted in the methods of mental action, and eternal in his duration.

3.—And further it is a necessity, that God's existence being without limitations, should correspond

to, embrace, and harmonize with all other existences. Man cannot pray without God's hearing his prayer; and he cannot offer a prayer, so far as the element of desire is a part of it, without God's answering; although the way or method of answering is not always perceived. Such a prayer being a fact in his existence, it is necessarily a fact known: and being a fact and being known as a fact, it cannot by any possibility be disregarded. God is moved by it.

4.—But can it not be said, that God himself by his own interior operation made the prayer. Such is sometimes the doctrine. And yet, even if something can be said in favor of that view, can it not be said with far greater truth, that God made man, and that in the exercise of the powers and responsibilities God had given him, man made the prayer? God and man, though standing in the closest relationship, are not identical. It is a mistaken and erroneous philosophy which asserts it. Man from the moment of his creation became a part of the universe; as we have already said, not a fiction or pretence or mere semblance of being, but a reality; not a thing made to be ignored; not a thing made to be dashed to pieces; not a mere plaything to be laughed at, contemned, trifled with and thrown aside at will. God does not work in that way. God is a serious being and very far from

being a thoughtless trifle; and when he does a thing he does it seriously and in wisdom, and he does it for permanency; and all his dealings with man are stamped and sealed with justice. Remember therefore that man is really and truly man; and when he prays at all, his prayer is and must be a prayer and nothing else; and God hears because the ear of his knowledge is infinite and cannot be shut; and God answers the prayer by corresponding to it in wisdom and goodness, because the love of his heart is infinite, and it is not possible for him to ignore or to trample on the desires of the children whom he has made. It is thus and cannot be otherwise.

But this is not argument, perhaps some will say. And this in a certain sense may be true. But if it is not argument in the ordinary sense, it is something higher than argument; it is both the intuition of the intellect and the affirmation of the heart. And now it is to be remembered that we are speaking of prayer, and not of the mere appearance or pretence of prayer.

We have already said that prayer necessarily involves two things, first the Being who is prayed to; second the being who prays. And we may add also, prayer involves a desire of the object which calls forth the prayer, and faith in God as the giver of that



for which we ask. And it is hardly necessary to add that there must be sincerity in all. And now, looking at the matter in the light of the Absolute Religion, in the light of the highest reason, which is the intuitional reason, how is it possible in the nature of things that God can be insensible to, and take no cognizance of a sincere desire? Let those who think so, go back to first principles, and find out if possible what God is.

But remember also that prayer has *faith* in it. But faith in God as the answerer of prayer in his own good time and way and wisdom, which is confessedly implied and involved in faith, is wholly incompatible with the idea that God is an *impassive* being, and is not moved by our supplications.

5.—But how can it be possible, says one, that God who is Infinite should be moved by the finite? I ask in return, how is it possible that God who is Infinite should not be moved by the finite? The Infinity of God, who is not only an infinity of knowledge but an infinity of feeling, implies and requires that all the facts of the finite should be known, and also that all the feelings which are appropriate to this knowledge should be actually experienced. It cannot be otherwise. The failure to experience all the feelings which are appropriate to all existing facts, would imply and would establish an imperfection

in his character. To accept God in the infinitude of knowledge, and to curtail Him in the infinitude of feeling, is to mutilate Him in one of his most essential attributes and to make him unworthy of reverence. If He knows a thing and feeling is truly appropriate to that thing, then it follows that feeling is a necessity. And hence it is not merely as a dogmatic declaration, but as a requisition of the Absolute of things, that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice, and that he will not allow the husbandman to “muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.” And does He not care for man, as well as for oxen and the birds of the air? Does He number the hairs of our heads, and have no respect for the petitions of the heart? Does he not pity man’s sorrows and hear his cries and honor his faith?

When men know God only by the intellect, they may be at a loss on these questions; but when they know him by the comprehension of the heart, they know what the answer is, and there can be no other.

The plain language of Scripture therefore, and the doctrine commonly received, that God is a hearer and answerer of prayer, that He takes an interest in all our wants and does not fail to respond to them, is a doctrine also of the Absolute Religion. And every friend and advocate of the Absolute Religion may know assuredly, first by reason and secondly

by experience if he will make the experiment, that when he prays to God, God will hear him. The true parent loves to have his children ask for what they want. And so of God, He could not listen to the petition, if he did not love to answer it. The two things would be incompatible. The outward expression of that which is within, is a necessity. It is true that this expression in its modes is very various. There is verbal expression; there is the expression of the countenance, there is the expression of action. The fullest expression of joy or of sorrow is generally found to require the combination of all these. In point of fact, man wants and he receives; he has needs and he has supplies. The existence of wants necessitates prayer; it may exist merely in the form of desire, or it may go further and embody itself in expression: but in either case, it is prayer.

It may perhaps be said, that God who is omniscient knows our wants; and there is no necessity of expression. But expression takes place of itself, and is a necessary attendant of want; and it is doubtful, whether the want could possibly be supplied without an expression in some of its forms.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### *Relation of Faith to Salvation.*

1.—It is one of the doctrines of the Christian religion, as those doctrines are accepted and expounded by the great mass of its professors, that salvation is by means of faith. “He that *believeth* shall be saved.” “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” These and numerous other sayings and passages express or imply this fixed relation between salvation considered as a result, and faith as a means leading to that result. The doctrine of salvation by faith is not only an affirmation of the Scriptures; but when carefully looked into, will be found to harmonize with the philosophy of the mind, and is entitled to be received as an affirmation of enlightened reason. And if so, the doctrine which is announced in the Scriptures, and the doctrine of the Absolute Religion on the subject, are not at variance; but the former is accepted and illustrated by the latter.

2.—In saying, however, that salvation is by

means of faith, and that the doctrine of salvation considered as thus originated, is in harmony with the requisitions of reason and sound philosophy, it is necessary to inquire, in the first place, what we are to understand by salvation. We read in the wonderful prayer, recorded in the latter part of John's Gospel; "Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they *all may be one*, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Union with God,—a state or condition of mind extending to the most interior depths of our nature, in which the human affections and the human will are fully harmonized, and made one with the heart and will of the Infinite,—was Christ's prayer for his people. A prayer uttered in circumstances which show that he understood the union which he prayed for, as not only indicating the highest and noblest of all possible inward or psychical processes, but as including the highest possible good. And this, setting aside what may be said, and to some extent rightly and profitably said, of a local heaven, which may be regarded as only an incident of salvation and not identical with its essential nature, is our definition of it, namely, UNION WITH GOD; a state of the soul; a heart, wherever it may be found, and whether in earth or in heaven,

throbbing in all its pulsations, in harmony with the divine heart, in unity of thought, in unity of feeling and purpose, and in unity of life. Such is salvation; and he who is the subject of this experience is saved.

3.—Salvation as thus defined is and must be by faith. It is well known that the doctrine or philosophy of faith, in itself considered, implies and requires an object to which faith attaches itself. In every case where there is an exercise of faith, there is and must be something which is believed in. To believe and yet with nothing believed in, is an absurdity in the philosophy of the operations of the mind, analogous to a contradiction in mathematics. And accordingly the first experience in the series of mental conditions, which constitute the great fact of unity with God, is belief or faith in the existence of God. We must believe that God is. It requires no argument to show, that without such belief as this, the mental experience, called union with God, becomes in the mental sense, which is the only true and essential sense, an impossibility.

4.—Again, we must believe not only in the existence of God but in his rectitude; in other words that he will do what will be right towards us; that he will dispense and withhold, that he will guide and sustain us, or at times leave us without percep-

tible guidance and without perceptible support, and do anything and everything else, always and under all circumstances in accordance with what is right. And the reason is this, the human mind is so constituted, that it naturally and necessarily forms the idea of rectitude or right. And not only this, on any subject on which it is properly enlightened, it may be said always to approve the right and to love it; and on the other hand always to disapprove the wrong, and to have feelings of aversion towards it. It is impossible, therefore, that man should enter into a state of harmony or union with God, without having faith in the divine rectitude. God is mind, and man in his essential nature is mind; and with man's innate convictions and feelings in relation to rectitude, and without a full belief in God's rectitude, the true basis of harmony is wanting, and union with God under such circumstances cannot possibly exist. And therefore salvation fails.

5.—And this is not all. In order to reach the salvation which is involved in a unity with the divine life, it is further necessary to believe that God accepts us, loves us, protects us, and is and will be a friend and father to us. This is one of the highest and most important acts of faith. But such are the laws and the generation of thought, that it is logically and mentally impossible for us to do this, unless

we renounce evil in ourselves, or in the Scripture expression repent of sin. The harmony of ideas requires this. No man ever did or ever can believe in God as a friend and father to himself personally, and in the sense of an acceptance of himself into the relation of unity of life, so long as he is inwardly conscious of doing things wilfully, which God disapproves and forbids. It is intuitionally evident to the man who is in the habit of meditating mental problems, that the states of mind,—namely, an inward consciousness of deliberately sinning against God, and a belief at the same time that God accepts, approves, and loves us and unites himself with us,—are not only antagonistic, but are mutually exclusive and destructive of each other. In other words, to believe that God unites himself with us, when we are inwardly and mentally conscious of hostility to him, is to believe in contradictions. Belief, therefore, must not only exist in reference to its appropriate object, namely, a God who is not only righteous, but is recognized as righteous by ourselves ; but in taking a direction which will receive him into the intimacies of living and personal friendship, it must be a faith which will antecedently demand and will secure, as it gradually struggles into existence, all those conditions of repentance and spiritual renovation which render such a great result possible.



6.—Such are some of the relations and applications of faith in the matter of salvation. They are worthy of serious attention, and in their application involve some of the most important acts of the soul. They are not only Scriptural announcements, and entitled to acceptance on the ground of the source from which they come ; but are in harmony with the laws of the mind, and commend themselves to any reasonable philosophy.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### *Divine Influences.*

I.—The doctrine of Divine Influences, in other words that men are susceptible of being inwardly taught and guided by the Spirit of God, and that such teaching and guidance is a part of the spiritual and religious economy of the Universe, is a doctrine not only historically illustrated and confirmed in the ancient books of many nations, but is agreeable to the highest thought and reasonings of men, and therefore properly takes its place among the doctrines of the Absolute Religion. Setting aside for the present the historical argument, which may be regarded as highly confirmatory, and looking at the subject in the light of intuition and reasoning alone, we may remark, in the first place, that the doctrine of divine influences flows naturally and necessarily from the fact, which we suppose now to be recognized and established, of the existence of God. God exists. And his existence as God makes Him the source of existence to all other beings. And it is

certainly reasonable to say, that his position as the source of being, entitles Him to the control, and not only gives the right but imposes the duty of control, over the beings He has created. He makes them what they are ; and it would not be possible for Him because it would not be right and just, to relieve himself from all responsibility in relation to them. And responsibility cannot be separated from any degree of guidance and control, which is necessary to meet the claims that the existing responsibility imposes. In a word God creates and therefore He rules. On this point when it is properly explained, there can hardly be a difference of opinion.

2.—When we come to the subject of the kind or manner of the control which he is entitled to exercise, and which it is his duty to exercise, there may possibly be ground for some differences of thought. We may say however in general terms, that the manner of this control must be determined by a consideration of the nature and relations of the beings respectively, who govern on the one hand, or are governed on the other. God is a spirit ; and man in his essential nature is a spirit also ; and having by means of our personal consciousness gained some knowledge of our own spiritual nature, we are assisted by that knowledge to some extent, in gaining a knowledge of the spiritual nature of God. And in

affirming the doctrine of Divine Influences, the doctrine of God operating upon man, and of man, in his mental nature accepting and responding to the divine influence, we are aided in meeting the problems involved in the subject, by a knowledge, that it is mind operating upon mind, and by a just consideration and application of known mental laws.

3.—And accordingly we proceed to say, that the exercise of divine influence is not the application of material force, nor anything strictly analogous to material force, which would obviously be inconsistent with the nature of mind ; but, so far as we can perceive, such divine influence is, and can be, only the application of that mental force which is lodged in *motives*. God influences by setting motives before us. If difficulties are to be surmounted, he sets before us motives which are fitted to increase our courage ; if threatening dangers are in our way, he sets before us motives which are adapted to excite our fears ; and in the vast field of human purpose and action, he is at no loss for appropriate suggestions and appliances suited to every possible occasion.

It is proper to make the remark at this point, that God, in operating upon man by means of motives, never violates his freedom. Man is not merely an existence but a moral and accountable being ;

and freedom, placed beyond the reach of violation, is one of the attributes which constitutes him a man.

4.—It is not necessary for us, however, to pursue the subject largely in this direction. The great topic before us, that of the absolute and unchangeable religion and what is included in it, renders it more important to affirm the fact than the manner of the fact; to say what *is* rather than *how* it is. In saying, therefore, that there are and must be Divine Influences, God operating upon man and man the subject of the divine operation, we say that which is affirmed by human experience. And human experience, considered in the different aspects in which it presents itself, includes the testimony both of feeling and reason. Eternal and unchangeable truth, when existing within the sphere of humanity and having relation to humanity, is always verified by human intuition. Intuitional reason affirms the influences of God. The existence of such divine influence is not identical with its affirmation; but the affirmation is the out-birth and the revelation of the existence. And it may further be said, that the affirmation brings the great fact within the range of one of the forms of human experience; and enables us to recognize it, to speak of it, and to rejoice in it.

5.—And this is not all. The existence of Divine Influence upon the mind is verified also by that form of experience which we call *feeling*. How common it is for men to say, with considerable variety of expression, that God is near them or that He impresses them or that he is within them. Men affirm the thing, not merely because it is intuitively perceived, on the ground that it is because it cannot be otherwise, but because they *feel* it to be so. The emotions or sentiments have a voice as well as the perceptions; and although the utterance is different in form, it is the same in meaning. The history of the churches, the history of individuals, the testimony which is given by persons in all situations, from the highest to the lowest, is in harmony with this statement, that divine influences are experienced and recognized in the inward feeling.

6.—In a recently published work on Mental Philosophy, I have referred to the doctrine of divine influences in the following terms; with the introduction of which here, I leave the subject, which is one of great practical importance to the reflections of the reader.

The susceptibility of inspiration from higher sources is not merely, as some may perhaps suppose, a theological dogmatism, but is one of the great and

precious facts of humanity. God never ignores the sublime truth of his universal Fatherhood, and has never released his connection with any of the tribes of men. He utters his voice everywhere. Homer, Plato, Euripides, Cicero, Livy and Plutarch, as well as the long record of those whose inspirational history has given lustre and power to the unequalled pages of the Bible, have recognized the fact, that man in the weaknesses and ignorance incidental to his finite nature, is susceptible of strength and guidance from the Infinite.

But these results are reached through law. The conditions of inspirational receptivity, at least those which are leading and indispensable, are three. First, Faith in this great fact, that there is thus an open door of communication between God and man ; second, a sincere desire that God, who never violates our freedom, will by means of his inspirational influences come into communication with us ; and third, a freedom from all biases and prejudices of self-will, —in other words, unselfishness. Under such circumstances, the human mind in virtue of the unchangeable laws of its being, is susceptible of being reached, instructed, and guided. Nothing is more important to man than such guidance. And the mental susceptibility (not exclusively, but much

more than some other of our mental powers,) which is open to divine influences, and which turns to catch the inspirational suggestions of God, is the Intuitional power.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### *Explanation of existing practical Methods of Teaching.*

1.—If the Christian religion, it will be said by some, has thus a philosophical basis and is in fact the absolute and eternal religion, why should it not in the first instance, and always, be presented in that light, instead of being presented and pressed upon men in the way in which it commonly is. In other words, admitting that the Gospel is a philosophy, in the sense of having a philosophical and permanent foundation, it is objected, that it is not proclaimed and preached as a philosophy. And it is intimated and urged in relation to the method of teaching it, that it ought to be otherwise than it is.

2.—The answer to this objection is this. There is a great difference between philosophy, whether it be the philosophy of religion or any other form of philosophy, in itself considered, and in the essentialness of its own nature, and the mode or manner of teaching such philosophy to those who have hith-

erto not received it. The truth is always the same ; and philosophy, when we discriminate between the semblance and the substance, can never be a variation from the truth ; but the capacity of receiving the truth in all its length and breadth is not always the same. There is a great difference in this respect ; and the method of teaching, if it be a true and available method, will have relation not only to the thing taught, but to the present condition and the capacity of receiving on the part of those to whom instruction is to be communicated. The geometries of Euclid and Legendre and the physical philosophy of Newton, at least in its mathematical principles, are the eternal truth ; they stand the same from age to age ; but the method of teaching, including the times and manner of teaching, is not identical with the thing taught ; and it is well known, that we do not teach geometries and other forms of the higher mathematics to children, because there are other things more fitted to their yet weak and undeveloped capacity, and which may be considered as preparatory to the reception of the higher and more abstruse forms of truth.

3.—And somewhat in accordance with this view, the preacher who has God for his guide in the instructions he gives, will first address men in accordance with the facts in the case, namely, as being in

the first form of life, or that form which we have denominated self-hood, and as being the subjects of all those errors and sins, which must necessarily result from a continuance of that form of life, to the rejection of the light and truth of a higher form of life. In other words, the first object of the true preacher, taking men as he finds them, in the possession not only of an outward written law, but of a law written upon the heart and yet living in the violation of that law, will be to convince them of sin. And having secured this, the second object, otherwise they would be left in the condition of misery which always results from a consciousness of sin, will be to disclose to them the possibility and the method of forgiveness. And therefore he points the sinner to Jesus; in other words to God "manifest in the flesh;" to God brought within the limits of humanity and revealed in his essential nature, and earnestly desiring the return of sinners to Himself.

4.—But this view of God revealed to man in the infinitude of his love, of God clothed in humanity and in humanity suffering upon the Cross, will be of no avail (such are the laws of the mind that it is not possible that it should be of any avail,) without faith or belief. And hence it is, that the preacher of the Gospel who is divinely guided, having first

pressed the fact of sin, is led now to press with equal earnestness the matter of faith. If the sinner fully believes in God as a God of forgiveness and love, which he is enabled to do only by directing his thoughts to the great and wonderful facts, which make up the history of the incarnation and the Cross, then the misery attendant upon his transgression passes away; and so far as forgiveness is concerned, he becomes reconciled to God.

5.—And then, without undertaking to narrate minutely all the steps in the process, the question arises in the mind of the reconciled offender, how is it possible for me to be kept in the right path in the future. And accordingly the preacher, pursuing the true logical method by harmonizing his instructions with the condition and wants and receptivity of the sinner, reminds him again of the universality of the law,—a law not only extending to all existences, but necessary and eternal and universal in its obligations,—and teaches him, that its claims can be met only in one way, namely, by placing his freedom and power of will,—not annulling them but freely placing them, in the keeping and guidance of the divine will; and thus virtually and practically, and yet with no loss of his own personality and freedom, making himself one with God.

6.—It is only when the mind is brought to this

position that it learns, (and it learns it then from its own inward experience,) that the Christian religion, as full of wisdom as it is of mercy and love, is the true and the only Absolute Religion.

And it may be added here, that it is important for various reasons to remember, that the path of religious knowledge, when it aims at the foundation of things, is in this direction, and can be found nowhere else. Obey and learn. Be ye followers of Christ, that ye may know the truths of Christ. Open thine eye to the light, that thou mayest see the things that the light reveals. When the soul has experimentally gone through with the spiritual processes, which the unchangeable truth requires, it will be found that this experimental knowledge will reveal and establish, beyond the power of any argument antecedent to such experience, not only the truth itself, but the immovable rock of its eternal foundation.

7.—Go on, then, preachers of the Gospel and all who labor for the extension of the truth, surrounded as you are by those who are in ways of darkness and error, and proclaim to them their sin in order that they may be convinced of sin. Proclaim to them repentance, which includes not only a knowledge of sin, but sorrow for sin, and a change from sin. And as all sin, whatever its specific form, is, in its rela-

tions and ultimate results, a sin against God; proclaim God, not in the first instance in the universality and incomprehensibility of his existence, but God "manifested in Christ" and thus brought into the intimacy of human relations, as ready and willing to forgive. Proclaim not only the fact and freeness of this great forgiveness, but also and with all the holy earnestness which is appropriate to your divine ministry, the fact of simple faith, as the only possible means by which such forgiveness can be practically recognized and made available as a principle of renovation to the soul. Proclaim and show the necessity of the constant presence and indwelling of the Spirit of God. Proclaim the absolute surrender of the human will to the divine will, as necessary to continuous and universal obedience and to the removal of all obstacles to the operation of God's spirit. Proclaim union with God, even as Christ and God are one, as the great practical and unchangeable result of divine teachings when fully received and realized.

And thus shall it be seen and known, when the soul has ascended as it were after the manner of Jacob's ladder by successive steps, to the mount of angelic vision, that the great plan of salvation which annihilates sin by a love that has its expression in letters of blood, and which attracts and consolidates

human freedom with the harmonies of the universal will, is not a mere dogmatism, but ascending far beyond and above the contingencies of time and place, is absolute, universal and eternal.

II

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### *Contrasted Views of the Selfish and Essential Life.*

The world is man, or rather is humanity. And man is not a man except in virtue of possessing in himself what may be called a motive power. Such a power,—such an innate motivity,—is a necessity, (that is to say, a necessary or indispensable condition) of the existence of all intelligent and active beings. This is undoubtedly one of the affirmations of man's intuitive intellect,—of the mind in its suggestive or spontaneous action; an affirmation which utters itself in all men's hearts, and which therefore carries with it an universal consent. And so far philosophy harmonizes with religion. Man lives because he has power to live; and the nature of his life will be according to the nature of that power.

If we look at man's history from this point of view, we shall get a glimpse of the outlines of successive dispensations. In what is often called his natural state, man finds that internal and impulsive energy which constitutes the soul's life,—or at least



this is generally and almost universally the case,—in the attractions of sensual pleasure, in the obstinacies of pride, in the aspirations of ambition, in the hostilities of revenge, and in the ever-grasping desire of possession and accumulation. He is born into the finite ;—and his first idea is, (and it could not well be otherwise,) to live in the finite ;—that is to say, to live for himself. He is his own world. In that world he lives ; and from it he lives ; and his object is not to diminish it by imparting to others, but on the contrary, though at the expense of jealousy and strife, to increase and strengthen it by adding whatever he can. And as society cannot be separated from the units which compose it, therefore the man individual is the precise representative, the type or form, of the man social. And therefore the leading characteristic of the first dispensation is SELFISM. And *selfism* is necessarily antagonism. He who lives to himself, does not live to others ; and not living to others as he lives to himself, and for himself, he is necessarily separated from them in a greater or less degree, and becomes antagonistical. Everywhere there is distrust, jealousy, pride, anger, lust, revenge, cruelty, and every evil thing which imagination can conceive. This is man's first development, the first historical fact which the early records of every nation and peo-

ple distinctly declare. This is what is read in the histories of the savage tribes of North America.\*

This is what is read, if we look deeply into the motives of the actors, in the Homeric poems, and in the historical fragments and the traditions, as we find them in Niebuhr, which give us a view of the early states of Italy. This is the sad and humiliating story, which I have myself seen and read, as it has stood through long generations, sculptured in the walls of the enduring temples of Thebes. Such is the historical truth that has been dug up also from the buried cities of the Tigris and the Euphrates.

The nations which existed antecedent to the time of Moses, and in the regions through which he led the Hebrews, are illustrations of this statement ; —the Amalekites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and also the cities, tribes, and states which inhabited Palestine, and the Philistine country, and the ancient Phœnicia.

This first dispensation, which we will here call the dispensation of selfism, was modified, in the course of time and in some respects elevated, by a high civilization. It was the result of selfishness,

\* Numberless volumes might be referred to. Perhaps there is none more terribly instructive than the recently published *Life of Beckwith*.

directing its agriculture and its commerce to the one great object of accumulation, that it should acquire wealth. And wealth in its turn brought leisure, luxury, a false refinement, and the polite arts. But nothing was altered in its essential nature. Selfishness was at the root. Selfishness was at the heart. Selfishness was everywhere. Refinement and art threw around it some semblance of beauty; but it was only the beauty of the sculptured monument, which conceals the death and corruption beneath it. Thus Tyre and Sidon, and Nineveh and Babylon, and Memphis and Thebes, and Athens and Rome, with all their wealth and arts, were essentially under the same condemnation with the corrupt and degraded cities and nations which had perished before them.

There are and can be only two essential or real dispensations, having a definite and fixed character;—that which has its centre and its power of life in the individual or the limited, and that which has its centre in God or the universal. The dispensation of external law, which is incidental to the first, is not an essential, but an accessory dispensation;—which, however, has its place, its history, and its value. Although in the progressive development of existences, it was necessary that the attribute of freedom should be given to man,—a real and not merely

an apparent freedom,—yet the Divine Goodness could not allow, and the rights of freedom could not justly claim, that it should be permitted to men to do injury to others. In other words, although their freedom involved the fact or rather the possibility of their doing injustice, yet it would be right in God, and would be incumbent upon Him, to restrict all such unjust tendencies by a dispensation of law and of the penalties of law. Now the freedom of selfishness is the freedom of destruction.

And the world, with freedom for its opportunity and selfishness for its motive power, became a great slaughter-house,—an *Aceldama*,—so much so that a dispensation of external law, marking in many cases the precise boundaries between right and wrong, became a great necessity. The same love which granted freedom, imposed law; in order that freedom might not degenerate into license and ruin. And hence came that marked fact in the world's history,—the legal or Sinai dispensation;—a dispensation which is not antagonistical to freedom, but only to freedom degenerating into license. The central expression of law, in its restriction of man's destructive selfishness, was at Mount Sinai. External law is always terrible, because it is always antagonistical. It stands with a drawn sword;—it holds in its hand a flame of fire. And therefore the place

and the circumstances of its announcement were well adapted to what was announced;—to a people who were prepared for it by experience and instruction, and who were selected as the medium through which it was to be communicated to others;—in a “waste howling wilderness,” their tents spread upon the sand, with rocks and mountains rising all around them; amid blackness, and storms, and thunder. Simultaneously and sympathetically, throughout the world, as we may well suppose, (for God’s heart is one heart, and God’s people are one people, and what he does for one he does for all,) the law engraven distinctly on the Sinai tables, was engraven also, (with various degrees perhaps of distinctness, corresponding to their privileges and lights) upon the tables of the human soul. The universe is a whole—the head inseparable from the foot,—and nothing which is great and essential can take place in one heart, without reaching and affecting sympathetically all the others. The thunder of Sinai echoed through the world; because it was the voice of that God who is the life of humanity. Everywhere by means of an increased light opened in the conscience, and by means of moral teachers raised up in different lands, were the sentiments of justice developed in opposition to selfishness; and the prevalence of violence and cruelty was in a degree checked. And

hence it is said by the apostle Paul, that the heathen to whom the Sinai law was not in the first instance expressly communicated, but who nevertheless received something of its substance, by means of those interior and magnetic currents which everywhere connect man with humanity, were “a law to themselves, which show the work (or working) of the law written upon their hearts.”

But the same Apostle,—a man who had both great natural and great inspired light, says in another place, that the law “makes nothing perfect.” And the reason is, because the law is not a life but a restriction ; not a power but a chain. It makes nothing perfect, though it may be true that it shuts up and limits the downward progress of imperfection. The law, however, may be of great value, because if it does not give life, it may yet prevent ruin. And if the legal dispensation is incidental to the first or selfish dispensation, it is also transitional to the last dispensation or the dispensation of universal love. And hence, it is that the same Apostle says, that the law, which is the same as the legal dispensation, is the schoolmaster, which brings us to Christ. And there is great truth in this, even when examined by the light of mere human reason. The pervertedly natural or selfish man sees things from the light of his own selfish centre. His desire

to include everything in himself is so strong, that it seems to him to be right. He is, as the Scriptures represent him, *blind*. And God in his goodness has placed him under law, that he might not destroy himself, and that he might not destroy others. But this is not all. The same law which preserves him in his blindness from these injurious results, is also a teacher. It puts him in a new and effective school. It opens the eyes of his understanding. It is by means of the external law, operating through the inward law of the conscience, that he sees where he is, and what he has done, and where he is going. Under the law he is still a selfish man; but he is a restrained or regulated selfish man. The legal dispensation is transitional, it gives light; it is mixed in its results; it is a necessity; but still it is true, as the Apostle says, that it completes nothing; it "makes nothing perfect." The light or knowledge which it gives is the revelation of the utter deformity and insufficiency of the first or selfish dispensation. It also gives light in the other direction, by indicating though imperfectly, the character of that other dispensation which is to take its place.

Let us look again at the expression of Paul, that the law or legal dispensation is a schoolmaster or teacher, which is to bring us to Christ. And here the first question is, who is Christ, or what is

Christ? To the ancient patriarchs and prophets Christ was the man who was to come. To the disciples and apostles at a later period, Christ was the man who did come. To those who close their eye to the form in order to be more receptive of the substance, Christ is not alone the Christ-man but the Christ-spirit. And the Christ-spirit embodied in one word is love. It seeks not the good of one merely, but of all.

To seek the outward Christ is well, but to stop there is not well. The kingdom of God is within you. I speak from my own experience. I wanted Christ in the form. I wished to take him by the hand, and like the unbelieving Thomas of earlier days, to see the prints of the nails and to thrust my hand into his side. But he would not thus be seen by me. But I hear a voice, and it says, "here I am;" and it says again, "I am He." It is thine inward eye that shall see me; thine inward ear that shall hear me.

And I said, Lord, how can this be. And he answered it was thus I told my disciples, "I am with you always even to the end of the world." No longer look for me in the outward form, and thou shalt find me in the inward spirit. The form is limited, and belongs to one. The spirit is universal, and belongs to all. I am not with one of my disci-



ples only, but with all ;—and in all places and in all time, I yet live and am still a channel of the truth to all who are ready to receive it. Ye are the recipients ; I am the giver of that which ye receive. Ye are the form ; I am the substance. The forms are many ; but the substance is one. If I were present in a personal form, as I was once, and continued to be present in such a form, I should be limited, and should be present to one or at most to a few. In my earthly form I was intimate with my twelve disciples, and with Lazarus and with Mary and Martha, and a few women from Galilee. But now I belong to humanity. Oh my Father, all mine are thine ; and thine are mine. Oh men, ye are the form ; I am the substance. If ye need me and seek me in the form ; then seek me and find me in yourself.

It is thus we reach the great distinction between the first or legal dispensation and the second dispensation, the incarnation of Christ, or, in other words of that love which is the fulfilling of the Law. The time is hastening, when the true Christ-spirit will become incarnated in multitudes who will walk the earth ; each a John, a Mary, each bearing his own name, and filling his own place, but each a member of that holy family of which Jesus Christ the Son of Mary and the Son of God is the Elder Brother.

When the impersonal Christ is born into the world in the fulness of his nature, the rights and sacredness of woman who is the virgin mother will be understood and acknowledged. The incipient sign having relation to woman's position has already been given. Without woman, without the aid of the sympathies which are connatural to her affectionate nature, He could not and cannot be born into the world. Born of woman once he is born of woman forever. The truth of Christ dying for us without the other great truth of Christ living in us, leaves man out of the sphere of the Divine Unity, and in a state of perpetual orphanage.

In giving utterance to the truths and principles which are now inspired within us, and which indicate our present position and purposes, we lay no bonds upon the future;—we do not attempt with audacious hands to steady the divine Ark by placing chains upon the endless unfoldings of unlimited Intelligence and Love;—but on the contrary think it important to proclaim distinctly, and as a thing which involves man's highest happiness, that we believe in light added to light, in truth added to truth, appropriate to each added moment of time, to each added variation of circumstances, and to each ascending step in the soul's unlimited progressional being.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### *Mediatorialism as a universal and practical Principle.*

1.—In the posthumous work of Frederic Second of Prussia, entitled, “The History of my own Times,” is the following passage. After stating that Locke and Bayle had in part loosened and torn asunder the bandages of error, he adds: “Other sages also have appeared; such as Fontenelle and Voltaire in France; the celebrated Thomasius in Germany; Hobbes, Collins, Shaftesbury, and Bolingbroke in England. These great men and their disciples *have given religion a mortal blow.*” Such, in the time of Frederic the Great, as he is commonly designated, was the opinion of many. And indeed it is the opinion of many to this day, that philosophy is antagonistical to religion; that religion is destitute of a philosophic basis; and that its great and saving truths are likely to be unsettled and overthrown by the repeated and heavy assaults which philosophy makes upon them. So far from accepting such an opinion, we cannot doubt that

philosophic inquiries, conducted with patience and candor, will ultimately show a very different result; and that philosophy, in the completion and just exercise of its own accepted cognitive methods, will be found standing strongly in the explanation and defence of religion, and not in antagonism to it. If it is admitted that religion, in being subjected to a philosophical analysis, is not explainable by the speculations of Hobbes and Condillac and of others of the so-called Materialistic School, some of whom are mentioned by the Prussian king; and if its problems are beyond the mastery of Fichte and Schelling and Hegel of a later day, and others who are their disciples or opposers, yet in the progress of time and in the necessary combination of the Sensuous and Super-sensuous philosophical Schools, and with the added light which is gently breaking from above in the profound teachings of Christ in the soul, the depths of religion, except so far as they are necessarily beyond the reach of finite faculties, will at last be fathomed, and its mysteries explained and made clear.

2.—The subject of this chapter is Mediatorialism; a subject which cannot be mentioned without at once leading our thoughts to Christ as the embodiment of the mediatorial principle. Mediatorialism is the name of the principle; Mediator is the name

of the person or being mediating. And as mediatorship can exist practically and personally, only on the basis of a mediatorial principle or truth antecedently existing, the whole subject comes within the sphere and the recognitions of philosophy. In other words it is a part of the Absolute Religion.

It is conceded to the claims of philosophy, that one of its functions is to deal with principles, in distinction from forms and manifestations; including the relation of principles, whatever they may be, to their results. Philosophy, in the higher and diviner sense, which is the only true sense, so far from being at war with the massive and truly glorious dogmatisms of Christianity, shows the divinity of the wisdom which gives them their dogmatic form and place; and also defends them in the eternity and necessity of their subjective foundations.

3.—This subject presents itself in various aspects. Mediatorialism in its results is giving. To give, implies gifts in possession and as there is but one original source or fountain of such gifts, to give is primarily and eminently the prerogative of God. To give, inasmuch as God would not be God without giving, is an eternal Truth; the spirit of giving is the eternal Life; and mediatorialism, which is based upon the fact of innumerable diversities involving innumerable wants, is the WAY, by means

of which the Life carries the Truth into effect. It is in this sense that Christ is called the Way, as well as the Truth and the Life. Standing in the relation of God "manifested in the flesh" or the God-man, and thus harmonizing mentally and physically with the attributes of the race, he stands in the position of the distributive channel of the measureless infinitudes of God into the finite measurements of all subordinate existences. Mediatorialism is an unalterable law. The Cross as a principle and mediatorialism as a principle, though the latter may be regarded as logically subsequent in time, and in some sense subordinate in position, are connected together in close and inseparable relationship as means and end. The goods of the universe, which exist necessarily in God as their source or fountain are, by the law of the Cross, to be distributed, and to manifest themselves in their appropriate forms and results, in all degrees of existence from the highest to the lowest.

4.—There are some things which are ultimate, and one is, that the infinitudes of God could not by any conceivable possibility find their way into the possession of finite beings, except by methods which recognize and harmonize with the fact of their finiteness. But the way from one to the other is founded in the nature of things, and is one of the

products of "eternal generation;" grand, mysterious, intuitionally as well as scripturally revealed, and banishing forever all those doubts which would separate God from his children. God the Absolute and God manifested in the finite form, and manifested in part for this very purpose, are mediatorially united in Christ, and in a way so wonderful, that He lays one hand on the great Infinitude of existence, and with the other touches the poorest and lowest of human beings; and brings them into each other's presence; and linking the last with the first, and the highest with the lowest, harmonizes the diversities of the universe.

5.—What was true of Christ, with the limitations which naturally suggest themselves in connection with his special position and character, is true of his people. As was said of Christ, so it can be said of the true follower of Christ, "virtue goes out of him." On the supposition that the true Life power is in him, which is of course involved in the fact of his being a true Christian, it will always be found, that he is a channel, a method of communication, a mediatorial gateway; and that he is so, not by a temporary and arbitrary arrangement, but by the constitution of things and the divine necessities of the case. So that men cannot look upon him without being blessed with the divine light which beams

from his countenance ; and they cannot talk with him without feeling almost sensibly the divinely inspirational weight of his words.

6.—There is one attribute of the mediatorial principle, which is worthy of special notice ; it is the attribute or law of increase. The intuitional inspirations of Christ have announced this law in remarkable words ; not the less striking perhaps, because they are negative as well as affirmative in the form : “ He that hath, to him shall be given ; and from him that hath not, shall be taken even that which he hath.” He who is not a true subject of mediatorial life, in not accepting the great law of instrumentality in goodness, cannot grow ; but is deprived of the gifts, whatever they may be, which he already has. And the law of increase corresponds to this result ; the increase in the power or capacity of the principle itself being greater or less, in proportion to the beneficial results attending its own practical exercise. He who does good, and every time that he exercises goodness, and in the degree that he does good, grows in the power of doing good, so that the benevolent activity of the soul is practically and resultingly the growth of the soul.

7.—How delightful is the thought, that it is our privilege not only to *be* mediators, but to *grow* as



mediators; not only to be channels of good to others, but by a fixed and ultimate law to become wider and deeper as channels; not merely to be the little rivulets that flow on with small results, but to swell into mighty rivers that nourish cities and nations, and float the commerce of the world.

8.—Such is the brief outline of the doctrine of mediatorship when, without any disrespect to the value of the dogmatical expression, it is subjected, in accordance with the progressive demands of the age, to the inquiries of analytic thought and reason. And we do not see that anything is lost by it. The mediatorial principle is a permanent and universal one; existing everywhere and under all possible varieties of circumstance.

9.—Humanity, in the consciousness of its great needs, calls for the announcement of spiritual truths, which shall be practically carried out. Mediatorialism is one of them. What the world wants to-day, and what, with its "Macedonian cry," it calls for to-day, is mediators; men who are trained in the self-denying school of the great mediatorial captain and leader; men who, by the internal law of their being, are mediatorially alive. What but this great resource, can solve among other things the terrible social problems, which press upon our suffering race? The heart trembles when, going below the surface

of things, it everywhere beholds the social and moral volcano on which our present selfish society stands. The millions in our cities who are suffering in poverty and wrong and crime, are restlessly demanding the day of their redemption. There is no peace, but in justice. No justice but in the law of the Cross, which is practically useless, unless it is mediatorially complemented and carried out. Mediatorialism is Christ in action. The contest may be long and severe, but the benevolent principle of mediatorship, which, in receiving good only to communicate it, hears all groans and wipes all tears, will gently draw out the deep and smouldering fires which lie around and beneath us, and prevent the threatening convulsions.

10.—One of the results of the great principle of mediatorship is, that it associates us with angels. The mediatorial principle, in being a principle and not merely an event or incident, is not only eternal but universal. It is the law of men; it is also the angelic law; and is not more the true life of the earth than it is of the heavens. Angels, and all beings in the heavenly spheres, are the embodiments of mediatorial activity. The scriptures affirm it; and if they did not, it could not be otherwise. It is of these high and holy beings it is said, that they are “all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for

them, who shall be heirs of salvation." So that it can be said in a true interior sense that, in becoming mediatorial, and in thus falling into the line of harmony with all good and useful activities whether above or below us, "ye are come unto Mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels."

## CHAPTER XXX.

### *Explanation of Terms regarding the Essential Life.*

TRUE love which is known in the writings of the devout Mystics and Quietists under the denomination of Pure Love, is the love of existence. In other words it is of the nature of true or pure love, and is that which constitutes what it is, to attach itself, not to the form of things, but to the essences of things. And what is perhaps equally important in the discrimination of its nature, it loves independently of forms or modes of existence; it seeks truly and earnestly the happiness of whatever is capable of happiness, whatever may be its character or the form of its existence.

In the separation of that primary existence, which we denominate being from all its incidents and diversities of form and character, such being, in its essential nature, necessarily presents itself as a *unit*. And hence it is in loving the unit or oneness of being, we virtually and truly love all being.

And accordingly it can be said, when man is born not transitionally, or in part, but in the true birth, he is then a "partaker of the Divine Nature." He is in God, and God in him. Man must necessarily retain his individuality for the reason that the *finite* cannot be the Infinite. It is individualism, or finite personality living, breathing and acting in God. Let us illustrate the subject a little further in connection with a common remark, namely, that everything has its sphere of life. Trees and plants have their spheres. The lower animals have their sphere. And this remark is true of men, as it is of everything else. Man has his sphere. The will of man's perceptions and motives is necessarily bounded, in the first instance, by the limited will of his position. In his individual capacity he acts in his individual sphere. But the truth and perfection of his action is realized, when his action as an individual and in his own sphere harmonizes with the truth, the motives and the holiness of the Universal Sphere, of which God is the centre. It is then that his sight becomes clear; he sees with God's eye, he hears with God's ear.

These views help us to explain certain expressions, which are found from time to time in writers. In the experience, for instance, of the state of Pure Love, the individual, who is the subject of this high

and transforming experience, may be said, in a certain sense, to be merged and mingled in that which is out of himself, and even to become "extinct" and "lost" in God. Expressions of this kind, and among others the term "self-annihilation," are found not unfrequently in the writings of some devout Catholics; nor are they wholly unknown in Protestant religious literature. But in using such terms, which are spiritually and profoundly significant, the literal meaning must be somewhat modified. It is not meant to be said of the person to whom such terms are applied, that he is extinct or lost, in the absolute sense of the expressions and in the matter of distinct personality. He is not lost, is not "annihilated," in the fact of that actual self-consciousness, which constitutes him a distinct and responsible existence; but only in separateness of interests and hopes; in those reflex acts which turn the mind too much upon our own joys and purposes; in everything which makes us forgetful of the wants and happiness of others, by incidentally seeking ourselves. Such an one, retaining his personality but expanding it without limitation, knows enough of himself as an individual to know that he is not his own, that his soul has become a living fountain which takes its rise from God, and flows out to all the boundless variety of existences. Names, sect, rank,

party, color, become indistinct, and are comparatively lost in the one idea of Universal Brotherhood.

10.—The man “born again” and fully completed in the second birth, is not only humanitarian in the highest sense of that term, but is the holy or divine man. The man humanitarian is something more than the man individual. And the man divine is something more than the man humanitarian. The difference at each gradation not only exists as a difference, but it is great. Such a man, in the wide and resistless movement of the divine Spirit within him, not only transcends the restricted bounds of individualism, not only passes beyond the limits of kindred and country, but beyond those of humanity itself; and embraces not only the brotherhood of man but all existences, both those above him and those below him. Nothing but the boundlessness of existence, which is ever developing itself, nothing but the boundlessness of benevolence, which is ever pouring happiness into existences, nothing but the Infinite of creation and the Infinite of love, nothing but God himself in the widest and noblest sense of that glorious term, can meet and satisfy his measureless sympathies.

Holy Love, in being a perpetual life, is also a perpetual development;—it never ceases its action. To cease to act, would be to cease to live. It is

not to be supposed, therefore, that God will love, for some definite length of time, which shall be the completion of some marked period or epoch ;—for instance, till the supposed destruction of the world by fire, or till the hypothetical day of the final Judgment,—and then having separated the wicked from the righteous will cease to love them. He loves them, and from the nature of the case, he *must* continue to love them. There is not a sinner in Hades or Hell, (which however is only another name for the darkness and discordancy of the lowest sphere of spiritual existences,) who is not sought after, and watched over. This is the great and glorious truth, which makes all heaven ring with joy, that God is God forever, and that He is Love forever ; although it may not follow, and it does not necessarily follow, that this love, unceasing though it be, will be accepted and be made available in the case of all those towards whom it is directed. That is one of the things which is to be left ; because it is one of the things which takes hold of the Eternal and the Infinite. If Love is absolute and unchangeable, freedom also, as an attribute of moral beings, is absolute and unchangeable. God himself, who in being the absolute truth, can never fail to respect the absolute truth, and will never coerce a sinner into heaven ; for that would only be placing him in



a deeper Hell. This would be a violation of fixed and unchangeable truths and relations. It would be an impossibility.

But in some other place, this amazing subject should be explained more fully;—with appropriate facts, arguments, and illustrations. Moral facts and relations are just as fixed and unchangeable as mathematical facts and relations. What we wish to say now is, that Love which is Life, under no contingencies whatever will ever cease to act. And although there is a great gulf between heaven and hell, it is true that “Christ, who preached to the spirits in prison,” has mighty moral power by means of moral suggestions, and that place may be changed by change of character. It is thus that Truth and goodness are reconciled; but curiosity stands rebuked. It is a mark of a godlike finite mind to leave much to the Infinite mind without inquiry.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### *Evidences of the Existence of the Essential Life.*

1.—How shall it be known by others, or how shall we determine for ourselves, whether this element of a true and everlasting life is in us or not?—an inquiry so important, that it has called forth at various times such thoughtful works as that of Shepard of Cambridge on the Parable of the Virgins, Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of man*, and President Edwards' *Treatise on the Religious Affections*. The great Teacher, who had the life in Himself, and who is the source of life to others, gives the answer to the question before us, in those simple but significant words: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

2.—The mind of Christ, speaking after the manner of men, was not only constituted with a highly poetic tendency, as some modern critics have justly acknowledged, but was eminently thoughtful, and was by no means destitute of a philosophical element. And He gives one of the best evidences of this trait of character, and that he knew especially

how to deal with mental questions, in generally communicating his great doctrines, not in abstract statements, but in familiar illustrations, adapted to the mental development of those around him. Acquainted as he was with the most interior relation of things, he does not say to the multitude whom he addresses, "Every effect has its cause," or something of that kind; but says, in kindly sympathy with the feeble intellectualism of his uneducated hearers, "Men do not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles." A beautiful illustration, setting clearly forth the great philosophical principle, that the character of the effect, whether good or evil, is necessarily, and by a law of being, a revelation of the nature of its cause. In knowing the results, we know the causative principle; in knowing the fruits, we know the vital force from which they spring. We feel at liberty therefore to affirm, that the good man, being what he is, does not do good from self-interested calculations; but on the principle involved in Christ's illustration of the tree and its fruits, does good because he cannot do otherwise; it being the law of a truly good and holy nature to do good. Such a man is in the true life: and may be said in a high and sacred sense to be a living man. "He that hath the Son," says the Apostle John, "hath life, and he that hath not the

Son of God, hath not life." The living man is like a star, which shines because it is a star; is like a fountain, which flows because it is a fountain; is like a flower, which gives out its fragrance because it is a flower; is like a tree, which bears fruit because it is a tree. In other words a living man in the higher sense of the term, is, by the necessities of his nature a man of out-goings, of activities, of fruits or works; having the practical working and manifestation of his earthly career hung round with the flowers and the fruits of beneficence.

3.—Such is the answer of Christ to the question before us; and it is an answer which will bear the most thoughtful consideration. But it will perhaps be suggested here, that the evidence which is thus furnished, it being objective or outward, is evidence to others only, and not to the man himself. But it is to be remembered that, while the fruits are outward, the causative principle is inward. And in the correlation of things, felt and accepted in the universal intuitions of men, they go together. The outward fruits, it is true, are matters of outward observation; but the outward fruits reveal the fact of the inward principle, which stands as the source or the motive of action, and then adjusting our affirmations, not to the outward results, but the inward cause, we say at once on the basis of mental knowl-

edge, that the cause, revealed in the man's own breast, comes within the sphere of *consciousness*. The man therefore who is really in the outward truth, in the matter of good fruits or good doing, will know himself also to be in the inward or essential truth, because his consciousness cannot testify to a falsehood. It is in accordance with this view, that it is said in the first Epistle of John of the believer in Christ, that he "hath the witness in himself." And the Apostle Paul also, in the Epistle to the Romans asserts, that "the Spirit itself," who always harmonizes with the truth, "beareth witness with our spirit;" in other words, concurrently testifies, in such ways as are known to himself, to the affirmation of our own consciousness, "that we are the children of God."

Such is the evidence in the case. The principles involved in it are scriptural, and at the same time are in accordance with human reason. They bear at least the seal and signature of the great Master. Practical good doing, involving as it does the "inward witness," is the true test of the life of God in the soul.

But it is proper to add at this point, that the activity, resulting in good doing or good fruits, is not always in the same method or form, but is susceptible of many diversities. It is apparently a fixed

and permanent principle in the constitution of things, that every thing which exists finds somewhere its correspondent or counterpart ; and accordingly that which is good, will be found to be supplemented with occasions of good ; and that which is evil, finds itself surrounded with occasions of evil, so that every living principle, attracting around its own vitalizing centre the occasions and opportunities of its exercise, forms as it were a habitation for itself to dwell in. And yet it is true that the habitation, the surrounding framework and dwelling-place of occasions, is not always specifically the same ; but in the multitude of its facts and incidents, notwithstanding its fixed relations to its central attracting element, is exceedingly diversified. Nor is there any rule which can definitely ascertain and specify beforehand, what the precise nature of that diversity will be ; in other words, in what particular way each one will act out his inward life in its correspondent good or evil ; for it is one of those things, which, in taking hold of the immeasurable infinitude of facts and relations, necessarily lies hidden in the depths of infinite wisdom.

4.—While therefore it is necessary for each one to be good in order to fulfill his highest obligations, and to secure the highest happiness, it is not possible for any one to say beforehand, precisely in what

way this goodness will manifest itself. And if we cannot beforehand lay down the law for ourselves in this matter, so, also, we cannot always accept the law or rule of action from the opinion or dictates of others, who may be supposed to be equally ignorant. But having the life of goodness as something central and essential, we shall not direct its outflowing by means of arbitrary calculations and adjustments; shall not do this or that, shall not go in this or that direction in our own wills; but shall rather find ourselves the quiet and almost unconscious subjects of its divine tendency, to move, and move only in God's time, in God's way, and in God's degree. And the result is, as God directs us and not man, and with all the knowledge which God alone possesses, that there are very numerous diversities; and such as could not be safely originated or directed by mere human wisdom. Hence it is that one good man will be a preacher at home; another, with the same essential life in his soul, will be a missionary to the heathen. One, taking the direction of outward activity, will cry aloud and spare not, like Luther or Whitfield; and another, by an interior leading equally divine, will worship God, after the manner of Penn or George Fox, in the temple of inward stillness. And such diversities, all springing from the same essen-

tial unity, will be all and equally pleasing to God. In all probability, there was much speculation in the earlier ages about that solitary and mysterious man, Thomas à Kempis; and many perhaps thought he was an unprofitable Christian; but God, nevertheless, had a work for him to do, and was working in him; and at last the fruitage of his solitary meditations appeared in that well known and eminently spiritual work, the *Imitation of Christ*, on which the hungry souls of successive generations have fed.

7.—And similar diversities of result will appear in things which are regarded as secular; but which, in a true state of society, will be brought more fully and distinctly within the sphere of religion. The mathematical sciences, and those sciences which involve more or less a mathematical calculation as their basis, are often placed in the popular estimation, outside of the religious sphere; at least in a great degree. And it is oftentimes plainly hinted, perhaps on account of their supposed closer connection with the head than the heart, that the mathematician and the philosopher in their solitary studies, might be more profitably employed in a prayer meeting. This may sometimes be the case. But it is no presumption to say, as a general principle, that the religious character of a man's work does not so much depend upon the place where he is, as upon his in-



spiration; does not turn so much upon the thing which he does, as upon the question whether God calls him to do it, and whether he acts from a true inward life. We do not find it stated of Sir Isaac Newton that he appeared much in public, especially on occasions of a religious nature; and yet, remembering that God acts through a diversity of gifts and methods, we can not easily think of him in his silent and protracted inquiries, pursued for objects which he felt to be connected with the progress of the human race, without almost consciously feeling, that the Spirit of God was with him, and was the true inspiration of his profound thoughts. His reply, when asked by some one in what way he arrived at his discoveries, was, that he “kept the subject constantly before him, and *waited* till the first dawning opened, slowly, by little and little, into a full and clear light.”

This is a statement of a condition of mind, attended as it was in the case of Newton with great unselfishness, simplicity, and lowliness of spirit, which is eminently favorable to the presence and operations of the Spirit of God. And so of many other cases. A great Continent, for instance, was to be discovered; lands and forests and mighty rivers, long hidden in darkness were to be brought to light; and therefore it was that God, who had inspired great thoughts and aspirations in the mind of Columbus

thoughts and aspirations correspondent to the work to be done, did not send him to the convent of La Rabida to affiliate with the monks, and to become a member there, and to occupy his life in the prayers and services of a monastery; but clothed him in the garb of a sailor, and sending him with his frail vessels from the port of Palos, required the fulfillment of his mission on the stormy waves of the ocean—a mission, secular as it was in its outward aspects, which had a close connection with God's providential plans, and with Christ's reign upon earth.

8.—And so it is and ought to be everywhere. The diversities of practical religion are commensurate with the diversities of practical life. Everything, which is fitting to be done, is fitting to be religiously done; and furthermore, it cannot by any possibility be done fittingly, unless it is done religiously. Religion is necessary in the pulpit and the prayer-meeting; and it is equally necessary in directing the plough of the husbandman, and in working with the tool of the mechanic. The hard hand of the sailor needs it, and the head of the philosopher cannot do without it. And there is a sense also, in which the beautiful saying of Milton may be accepted as a religious truth:

They also serve, who only stand and wait.

9.—The tree is known by its fruits. And the evidence of a truly divine life, as Christ still more specifically teaches us, is found in *good* fruits. They may be diversified in form and flavor and other respects, but they must be good. And accordingly the question still remains to be answered: If the existence of a true inward life is known not from fruit alone, but from the additional and essential incident of their goodness, in what way or by what signs shall we ascertain the fact of such goodness? The answer to this vital inquiry is to be found, not in the doubtful or the diluted doctrines of human philosophy, but in the soul-searching precepts and principles of Christ. Who can read the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospel and Epistles of John, the 13th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and other like portions of the New Testament, especially with the commentary of the acts and doings of Christ himself, without a full conviction, that the fruitage which grew in the heart and life of Christ, is destined to be born, and is required to be born, in the hearts and lives of his followers? We answer therefore in general terms, and without going fully into this particular topic at present, that a life of good fruits, ascertained and known to be such, is, and must be a true Christ life. And some of the marks or characteristics of the life of Christ in the

soul, if we rightly understand the Scriptures which have been referred to, are, first, it is necessarily antagonistical to evil; second, it ultimately and always conquers in its contest with evil; third, it carries on its victorious contest not with "carnal weapons," but on entirely new principles. It conquers jealousy, not by becoming jealous itself, but by being without jealousy. It conquers envy, not by being envious itself, but by being without envy. It conquers pride and ambition, not by seeking the high places of earthly power, but by taking a low place, and by becoming the servant of all. It conquers hatred, not by hating and smiting in return, but by pity and love. It conquers reviling and cursing, not by utterances, which are like them in bitterness, but by patience, and by kind words and blessings. It bleeds and dies upon the cross, but it bursts the bars of the tomb, and ascends to heaven. Its armory is found in the essentiality and the mighty energy of its own life of Love; and it is entitled to its place of victor, not only by the skill and power of Love as the true and mighty "sword of the Spirit," but by the unchangeable truth and the celestial ascendancy of its position.

Standing in the pure and high places, and in the power of God himself, it looks down with calmness upon the various forms of personal hostility, to

which it is oftentimes subject. It is true that under such circumstances of ingratitude, opposition, and hostility, love is very apt to take the form of pity; but love, in being pity adopts a modification of its action, without ceasing to be love.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### *The Essential Life Reaches to all Existences.*

The Essential Life, though limited in its sphere of action, is the same in man as it is in God. It may bear different names ; it may be called Life, or Essential Life, or Eternal Life, or God's Life, or the Life of God in the soul of man, or Love, or Pure Love, or Holy Love, or Perfect Love, or Holiness, or the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, or the Christ Spirit, or the Inward Christ, or Christ in the Soul, whatever may be the designation it bears, it is always the same in the essentiality of its nature ; the same in the beginning, the same now, and forever. It follows from this, that the soul, which is born into this true and essential life, a life which sees with the spirit, and which hears and understands with the heart, will tenderly recognize the presence and activity of this divinity of life, and will love it, *in all things that exist*. Hence it is, that Christ in the Soul, which is one of the beautiful names it bears, loves inanimate nature, loves trees and flowers.

“ Behold the lilies of the field ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Christ in the soul saw that glory. The outward eye, resting merely upon outward manifestations, saw only the outward forms ; saw the color and the flowing outline ; but Christ in the soul, which instinctively recognizes its own nature under all diversities, saw the Christ principle at work in the flower ; the eternal goodness and wisdom shining in the interior of the flower ; and its glory was greater than the glory of Solomon. God, who takes care of trees and flowers, takes care also and in a special sense of animals ; and a recognition of the rights of the lower animals and a true sympathy and love for them, is a part of the inward experience of those who have God in the soul. If any are disposed to regard such experiences as of little value in themselves, or as unauthorized by the Scriptures, let them turn to the 104th Psalm, that grand outburst of God’s love for animals ; and read there the feelings of the great throbbing Heart of the Universe, who planted the cedars of Lebanon for the nest of birds, the fir-tree for the house of the stork, and who spread the great ocean, not merely for navigators’ ships and the anchors and cables of commerce, but for the play-ground of the leviathan, and for

creeping things innumerable both small and great. To the heart that inwardly understands and digests this wonderful poem, this great hymn of love, every sphere of life is, and must be sacred.

There was a remarkable man who lived in Italy in the twelfth century; a man so gifted in intellect and so devout in heart, and so abundant in labors, that he has left his impress on succeeding ages. It is related of this man, St. Francis of Assisi, that to him all nature was full of God; and that his religious consciousness, grounded in and quickened by the inward realizations of celestial love, was so expanded that it embraced every thing, animate and inanimate, men and animals. He believed, as all those who are in the same degree of celestial love are always likely to believe, that all the departments of nature were designed to be connected by a community of life; that the broken bonds which once united them are waiting for a restoration; that man, with faith enough and love enough, shall once more control the winds and waves; and that the lower animals, like the dove of Noah, and the ravens of Elijah, and the lions of the den of the Chaldean prophet, shall sympathize with his sorrows, and administer to his necessities. Our doctrine is supported abundantly by the Scriptures, as we believe, that there is something beyond the brotherhood of



humanity, namely, the brotherhood of life ; something beyond the love of humanity, the wider and deeper love *of everything that exists*. And we appeal in support of it, to the personal history and the recorded convictions of many devout men in all ages. And we may go further and say, that the instincts of the human race, and the sympathies and aspirations of all great minds, especially those that kindle with the divine elements of poetic life, all point in the same direction. The poems of the early Greeks and Romans are full of this tendency. The poems of Cowper and Burns, of Wordsworth and Shakespeare, furnish us examples and proofs. The poem of Burns on the Wounded Hare was not a sentimental or hypocritical expression of grief ; but had its birth in the heart, and was as deeply true to nature in one direction, as the sublime stanzas to Mary in Heaven are in another. Men and animals, sundered and rendered antagonistical, are nevertheless one family. And when the Life of God in the soul becomes on a wide scale, the inheritance of a regenerated humanity, then all the lower forms of created nature, recognizing at once the relation of superiority and inferiority, will take their position in subordination ; and as there will be everywhere a correlation and reciprocity, not only of forces but of interests, the facts of subordination on

the one hand and of supremacy on the other will constitute the elements of permanent and universal harmony. Then the lion and the lamb will lie down together; conflicts will cease, and the brotherhood of humanity will be supplemented and co-ordinated with the brotherhood of existence.

The man who does not recognize the handiwork of God in the lower animals, and does not sympathize with God in his regard for them, does not bear in his bosom the highest elements of thought, of inspiration, and character. Strike from the human mind this noble tendency, and how many poems, and paintings, and sculptures are lost. Take from the beautifully sympathetic heart of Rosa Bonheur her love of animals, and her immortal pencil falls to the ground. We cannot spare the birds, nor the dogs, nor the horses, nor the fishes that swim in the sea. Why is it that the stranger, ascending the summit of the Capitoline Hill in Rome, and beholding the wonderful equestrian statue which ancient art has erected there, finds his eye and his admiring thought directed as much to the majestic and inspiring attitude of the horse, as to that of the imperial Cæsar who bestrides him? I saw the dust of Wellington carried to its tomb, and in the long procession composed of the eminent men of England, a place was reverently left for the horse of the con-

queror; and as he walked alone, amid the sound of melancholy trumpets, he divided the sympathy of the multitude with their sorrows for his fallen master. The horse of Alexander, the Macedonian conqueror, has his place in history; and the historic record, recognizing the ties of higher and lower forms of existence, has narrated in more than one instance, the affection and devotedness of the faithful dog; and statuary has erected monuments to his memory.

Allow me to close with an incident, which made a strong impression upon me. A few years ago I read in the newspapers that a little girl in the town of Hingham, in Massachusetts, had tamed the fishes in a small lake near her father's residence. I came to the little girl's home, which was near the small lake or pond. Knocking at the door, and making such apology as I was able for a visit so early, I remarked to the mother, that I had come for the purpose of seeing the fishes, over which her little daughter was said to have obtained a remarkable control. Readily accepting my explanations, she pointed to a place on the brink of the water, and said that her daughter would soon come down there. I had not stood there long before a little girl, apparently anxious not to detain me, came running down. Seating herself on a rock near the shore, she called

aloud to the fishes; calling them sometimes by the names of their tribes, and sometimes by particular names which she had given them. There was one, a large one in which she was particularly interested, which she called Cato. But Cato either did not hear her, or was not in a hurry to come. She made an apology for the fishes, saying that it was earlier than she had been in the habit of calling them, and that they had not yet left their places of slumber. But repeating still more loudly the invitation of her sweet voice, they soon began to make their appearance. The smaller ones came first, and then the larger ones of many varieties; and at last Cato, who was a sort of king and counsellor in this finny congregation, came among them. Delighted with this renewed visit of their virgin queen, although they seemed to be conscious it was rather early in the morning, they thrust their heads above the water; and she fed them from her hand. And I fed them also.

Observing something peculiar at a little distance in the water, I was surprised to see two turtles making their way towards her. Her voice of affection had penetrated beneath their dark hard shells. And I noticed that they came with great effort and zeal; as if afraid of being too late at this festival of love. One of them, as soon as they reached the

shore, scrambled out of the water, and climbed upon the rock beside her, and she fed them both. I shall not easily forget this interesting scene ; this little episode of millenial humanity.

THE MAIDEN FISH-TAMER.

Oh maiden of the woods and wave,  
With footsteps in the morning dew !  
From oozy bed and watery cave,  
The tenants of the lake who drew,  
Thy voice of love the mystery knew,  
Which makes old bards and prophets true.

They tell us of that better day,  
When love shall rule the world again ;  
When crime and fraud shall pass away,  
And beast and bird shall dwell with men ,  
When seas shall marry with the land,  
And fishes kiss a maiden's hand.

The iron age has done its best  
With trump and sword and warriors slain ;  
But could not tame the eagle's nest,  
Nor lead the lion by the mane ;  
With all its strength and all its woe,  
There was an art it did not know.

'Twas fitting, that a maid like thee,  
In childhood's bright and happy hour,  
Should teach the world the mystery,  
That white-rob'd innocence has power ;  
That love the victory can gain,  
Which is not won by millions slain.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### *The Power of the Essential or True Life.*

Our principal object in this chapter is the consideration of the Power of the true life, not in its philosophy but in its practical results; not in its highest and primal manifestations, which in some degree transcend human insight, but in its subordinate manifestations, and particularly as it is manifested in men. The methods in which it manifests itself are very various. In the case of the Christian orator, for instance, it will sometimes, under the inspiration of essential life, speak in terms of rich and glowing eloquence, matching and more than matching the standards of the world's great masters; but not less frequently its words are few and simple; perhaps an apothegm or a parable, but coming from the well-spring of the life, they touch the hearts of the people, and open the fountains of living salvation. And what is remarkable, it is sometimes the case, that the absolute silence of the man of God

will have more effect than the noisy declamation of the man who is without God. Power goes out of him as it went out of Jesus. If it speaks in the mighty words of Paul and Apollos, it speaks also in the silence of a loving John, when he leans his head on a brother's bosom. What more effective and touching eloquence than that of the Son of Man, when, in the midst of a stormy and cruel tribunal, he "uttered not a word;" and the Roman governor, struck with this sublime disregard of the precedents of a worldly life, "marveled greatly." And there are some specific modifications of the great variety of its forms, which are worthy of notice. One of the most remarkable things pertaining to the Power of the Life, is, that it manifests itself often, not by the antagonism of the same forces, as when we meet evil with evil and return blow for blow, as when sword clashes with sword and cannon rebounds to cannon; but conquers the violence that attacks it, by the resistance and antagonism of what is found in the opposite. The stormy cloud is melted by the sunbeam; the lion is tamed and led captive by the lamb; and the little child plays, with its life and beauty unharmed, on the cockatrice's den. In all this there is a deep philosophy, which transcends the conceptions of a heart, that knows no higher

school than that of a self-hood which excludes the living God.

And now we will say further, coming more within the practical sphere of the subject, that the Power of the Life, that form of power which pierces and breaks the stony hearts of men, and is blessed of God in the great matter of renovating and purifying their perverted natures, is not found greatly, if at all, in mere intellectualism. Many facts are a confirmation of this. There are preachers who have eminently the gifts of perception and reasoning, but have little influence with the masses. Even if at certain times their reasonings harmonize with the truth they produce, and can produce but little effect, so long as the soul from which they come, is felt by the hearers to contradict in experience, what their reasonings affirm and try to prove as a principle. Again, the element of vitalizing power is not found in every form of mere emotionality; we refer particularly to what may be called æsthetic emotionality. There are preachers, and other profess edly religious teachers, who add to intellectual powers a cultivated taste, and adorn their reasoning with the arts of rhetoric. Their sermons, considered as the exercises of intellect or the imagination, enlist the curiosity of men and please their fancy, but have little living power. There was a Ger-



man preacher of the 14th century—we refer to the justly celebrated John Tauler of Cologne, who stood unmatched in learning and in intellectual and æsthetic eloquence, but he had little power and influence, at least in a way which satisfied his conviction of what ought to be the result, until he was led into the way of truth and life, by a poor, uncultured man of the people, whom as one of the weak and despised things of the world, God had chosen and made the instrument of this mighty influence. The few unlearned men, who went forth from Jerusalem in the beginning of the Christian era, were not allowed to go until they were endued with power from on high. They were commanded by Christ, “that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father,” which was understood in its fulfillment to be the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And then it was added: “Ye shall receive *power* after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” Endowed with this great gift, this small band of early laborers and martyrs, without the prestige of position or scholarship, went forth to the mighty work which was appointed them; and though the strife was long, and in many cases crowned with great suffering and death, they were found more than a match for the proud philosophers, the arts, and the institutions of that trying time.

That power is the same now that it was then; that divine power is now as it always has been, the reserved force and inspiration of the world's progress and salvation; but it lies hidden in the life. The life is God in the soul; and the power of God always goes with it.

There comes in connection with these remarks, the remembrance of a man, whose life of love and self-sacrificing labors strengthens and illustrates them. I remember him well. He lived and labored in the early part of this century in the State of Maine—a man without the advantages of a public education, but who had but one thought, one feeling, that of the glory of God and the salvation of men—the Oberlin of the American woods. He wandered through the forests; he crossed lakes and rivers; he went from house to house among the poor and ignorant, in summer's heat and winter's snows; he preached in barns and school-houses, and in the remote, rude dwellings of the woods, and wherever he could find people who were ready to hear; fulfilling more than half a century of labors, up to the very limit of human faith and human endurance. Such was our loved and venerated Father Sewall. God was with him in power.

I was once connected with a church of great intelligence and not wanting in piety; some of whose

members have held high political positions, and others have been distinguished for attainments in science ; but of all the members of this truly leading and useful church, the one who was thought to exert the most religious influence, and is to this day perhaps exerting the most influence, through the account which is published of her life, was a poor negro woman, who in her childhood was a slave. She dwelt alone. During a period of eighteen years, she supported herself by washing and ironing for the students in the neighboring college. And judged by all outward measurements and incidents, and as the world commonly judges, nothing could have been lower in prestige, or lower in position. But her heart was the dwelling-place of Christ. Her great familiarity with the Bible, the spirit of prayer which seemed always to be present with her, her gentle and wise words of discreet and thoughtful encouragement, her peace which flowed like a river, her sublime and forgiving charity which never failed—these beautiful and great results of a living principle in the soul, made her known and felt as a mighty power of God for many years. She was spoken of both in the Church and in the community around, under the name of “Happy Phebe ;” and the interesting tract, published by the American Tract Society, giving some account of her character and labors,

still preserves her precious memory, and perpetuates the power of her holy life.

One instance more, which illustrates in a peculiar manner the resources of God in raising up instruments for his purposes, where human wisdom would not be likely to look for them. I once knew a poor woman. In early life we were near neighbors. Time passed on; and she heard of the slave, his toils, his sufferings, and his terrible bondage, continued for centuries. It moved her heart to the very foundations of her being; and the world called her insane. Being at a certain time in the city of Boston, where through the aid of a near relative she had found an humble abode, and touched by the remembrance of early days as well as by Christian sympathy, I sought the place of her residence. It was a Sabbath day, and to my astonishment I found the street opposite to her house filled with people, listening respectfully and earnestly; and from an upper window, this poor woman, the world's outcast, uttering terrible truths, with the burning energy of the words of the ancient prophets. I listened with the multitude; and when she had concluded, I went to her room, and seated by her side we talked of the slave, whose sorrows had become her own soul's sorrows; and we talked also of our early days,

and of the joys and sorrows of our little neighborhood.

And in the conversation I had painful evidence that her mind was shaken; and that there was to some extent, a foundation for what had been said of her insanity. In leaving her my heart was strangely and profoundly affected. I said to myself, how wonderful are the mysteries of Providence. To-day, with temples, rich in architectural beauty, and preachers learned in theologies and worldly science, their lips comparatively sealed on this great subject of slavery; and God, as if to put worldly wisdom to shame, has chosen a poor woman, reduced almost to beggary, without the advantages of education, and with the intellect injured and broken by sorrows, to utter His eternal truths, and to shatter the foundations of the gates of hell.

The man who has the power of God in his soul, will not feel much troubled when told that certain false philosophies, whether found in Germany, in France, in England, or in any other countries, will overthrow the religion of Christ. The world and its wisdom may leave us; and we can easily afford to part company with them; but we cannot under any circumstances, dispense with the power of the Life. Let the friends of the divine truth, who are girding on their armor for the last great conflict, re-

member that everything which appeared in Christ as the "Son of Man," and was possessed and manifested in His incarnation, is brought within the sphere of humanity, and has become humanity's eternal and mighty possession. Whatever Christ did as the "Son of Man," any other son of man can do, of whom it can be said, as the Apostle Paul said of himself, "I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." He can heal the sick, can cast out devils, can open prison doors, can tread on serpents and not be hurt, and most and mightiest of all, can become the instrument of imparting the Holy Ghost, and of healing the diseases of the mind. Therefore, we believe that God will raise up instruments when emergencies arise, and that, if the rich reject Him, He will choose the poor, and if the learned reject Him, He will take the ignorant, and if the strong reject Him, He will make friends of the weak ; and pouring into the vessels of poverty, ignorance and weakness, the mighty powers which are lodged in the bosom of essential and Eternal Life, He will triumphantly complete the work of redemption. And Christ on the throne, and Christ in the soul of man, Christ in heaven and Christ on earth, shall hold the sceptre of dominion and shall reign forever and ever.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### *Locality of God and the Divine Moment—Personal Experience.*

At a certain time, in the course of my inward personal history, I found myself in a state of inward desolation, such as I had seldom and perhaps never experienced before. God seemed to be hidden from my view. Christ as a distinct object of conception was withdrawn. I found nothing of that familiar and delightful access to the great Source of Life, whether denominated God or Christ, to which I had been accustomed. The beautiful ministry, or what seemed to be such, of angelic and spiritual presences had departed. And in addition to this, there seemed to be a weakening and disruption of the ties which bound me to many of my earthly friends. Both inwardly and outwardly my condition was one of vacuity and deprivation, which apparently wanted nothing to its completeness. It reminded me of what I had once known in the deserts of Sinai, where, standing on the tops of the highest moun-

tains, I beheld around me nothing but the rugged cliffs; no tree, no flower, no running brook, no singing bird.

Finding myself in this arid and painful condition of things, which perhaps for the sake of convenience may be denominated, in the language of the old mystics, the "spiritual wilderness," I remained for a time in a sort of amazement: unable to understand its nature or its meaning. At last arousing from the inactivity and confusion of spirit which naturally attended it, I ventured in my supplications to ask the Lord, what was the cause of these unlooked-for experiences, and what the instruction which He wished me to derive from them; for I knew, although He was hidden in great and unprecedented mystery, He must be somewhere, where He could listen to the sound of my voice. For a time no responsive utterance came; neither to the outward ear where I did not look for it; nor to the interior of the soul, where I had often heard it, in suggestions and inspirations which left no doubt of the divinity of their origin.

After such a time as seemed to be necessary to impress me fully with the fact of this great desolation, and also to train my heart to the unwavering acceptance of it, as a condition of things which had its significancy and its results, and to dwell quietly



like a child at home amid its clouds and darkness, I received from time to time, and through those interior sources which the Holy Spirit knows how to open and employ, such intimations and teachings as became afterwards of great spiritual value to myself, and perhaps also to others, although I am aware that inward experiences are very various, and that it is best to let God do with us just what He pleases.

In the first place, it was vividly recalled to mind, as a part of the inward teaching of those trying but instructive days, that, in consequence of the finite nature of the human mind, all things and all events are and must be made known, not by one broad and all-embracing perceptivity, but in successive moments of time. God knows all things simultaneously; but it requires I think not much argument to show, inasmuch as the statement carries with it its own evidence, that the finite mind, bounded by the limit of its own finiteness, can know only by a gradual uplifting of the veil of the future, and in these successive moments. And it was made clear also, in the course of these inward teachings, that this view, in consequence of the relations existing among them, had reference to place as well as to time; and that neither successions in place, nor successions in events, nor changes of any kind, could

take place and be made the subjects of knowledge in any other way. And hence came an additional teaching, based upon these general views, that we are to find the true locality of God, not in any imagined distant heavens where I had been in the habit of looking for Him, and thus localizing Him by my own will or choice, but that we must rather recognize Him, as already present by the very necessities of his nature, in everything which exists or takes place within the sphere of our knowledge; and that knowledge comes to us under the successive revelations of successive moments. In other words, the present moment, more than all others and above all others, is the divine moment; and that the state of things, which is then made present to us, whether it be in the form of places or objects, or persons or events, constitutes to us the only true and available locality of the Divine Nature. We must meet God there, or meet Him nowhere. It is therefore a great and glorious truth, that the principle of the Universe, which we sometimes call the Divine Life of the Universe, is *HERE* and *NOW*; that in the moment which now is, and nowhere else, the great Life and Spirit of all things, always the same and yet always changing, meets us face to face, in every man that we meet; in every flower; in every tree and plant and insect and animal; in

every joy and sorrow ; in all good and all evil ; in all clouds and all sunshine ; in all blessings and all curses ; in all angels and all devils ; in all virtues and all crimes. So that it will always be found, if we are out of position with the present moment, either in the posture of our feelings or the error of our acts, we lose something of God, by losing something of that knowledge which the present moment brings.

And again, there was this additional and most important teaching : The recognition of God in the divine moment is, in the first instance and necessarily, the recognition of Him as an objective or outward God. But this outward manifestation of God, or better, perhaps, this recognition of Him as having a fixed and present relation to the thing or event of the moment, calls forth the God subjective or the God in our own souls. The God sincerely recognized without, and the God actually existing within,—using expressions which are adapted to man's imperfect methods of thought,—may be regarded as always correlative and correspondent to each other. And accordingly, if the event or fact which the present moment reveals to us is one of kindness, it calls forth in our own souls the divine element of gratitude ; if the event be one of sorrow, it calls forth, in correspondence with the outward

occasion, the spiritual graces of submission and patience; if the thing or event be of the nature of a persecution, it is corresponded to by feelings of forbearance and forgiveness. The result of this complex occasion, characterized by the objective on the one side and by the subjective on the other, is, that God outward is revealed through outward facts, and that God in the soul is revealed through inward feelings.

Meeting together under a providential arrangement, which has respect equally to both, they furnish reciprocally the conditions and incitements of development and action. So that the instruction revealed during the period of this singular and trying experience, when compared and adjusted in all its parts, seems to have been this—with a heart devoted to God and full of God, no longer seek Him in the heavens above or the earth beneath, or in the things under the earth, nor in any locality which has the effect to restrict his name and limit his existence, but recognize Him as the great fact of the universe, separate from no place or part, but revealed in all places and in all things and events, *moment by moment*. And as eternity alone will exhaust this momentary revelation, which has sometimes been called the ETERNAL NOW, thou shalt thus find God ever present and ever new; and

thy soul shall adore Him and feed upon Him in the things and events which each new moment brings; and thou shalt never be absent from Him and He shall never be absent from thee.

Let us take an illustration: It happens as we are walking the streets, that we unexpectedly meet with a man who approaches us with words and deeds of violence. He meets us in the present moment and at no other. It is a necessity that God comes with him; because God, by the necessities of existence, resides in him physically, inasmuch as He made him and sustains him. And if, in consequence of the moral freedom which divine goodness has made his inalienable birthright, it is not possible for God to be in him as the originator of his violence and injustice, He is, nevertheless, present in his providences. In other words, He is present in the arrangement and issue of events, which at that particular moment, in distinction from any other moment and any other circumstances, presents the man before us. He practically brings him into our presence with all the evidences of his rebellion and wickedness; the man is where he is because God directs him to be there; and He does it, in all probability, in order that this wicked man may *HERE* and *NOW*, under the overshadowings of the divine moment, be judged and condemned; and that, if it

be possible, he may be made anew and saved. And this last is done, and possibly it is the special and great object which God had in view in his providences, first, by the manifestation of God in our own consciousness in feelings of which He is the author, and also by outward signs and words expressive of the inward feelings, given forth by the divine power within us in the divine moment. So that we stand up in the presence of this or any other form of wickedness, and we stand there in a great divine purpose, in the outward manifestation of the inward Christ, or if any one prefers it, of the inward Christ spirit, in patience and forbearance, in meekness and pity, with kind words for words of violence, and with love for hatred. And thus looking for God, finding Him, not thousands of miles off in place and thousands of years hence in time, but as He is revealed in the correlated and correspondent facts and incidents of each successive moment, we shall know experimentally that He becomes now, and that, in the continuous application and issue of this great principle, He becomes always, a presence and a power, a source of goodness to ourselves and of goodness to others, and with a recognized dwelling-place, which has its center in our own hearts and its circumference in the objects and events, including their necessary relations, which the present moment

reveals. Such to finite beings is the true locality of God. Previously to this time and the instructions of this experience, I had intellectually learned and known this great principle and law of the divine presence. But in consequence of the unfavorable influence of early habits of thought and feeling, it became necessary to restore both the vividness of the inward conviction, and to readjust and intensify it as a rule of life. And it was for this, so far as I was led to understand it, that I was led into the desert. And it was thus, that losing God in one direction, I found Him in another; and have learned, that, if I am faithful to these instructions, and will not get out of His way as He confronts me in the mighty march of time and events, I can nevermore lose Him.

In connection with what has been said, we stop at this point to make a remark in relation to interior solitude, and what is known in experimental writers of the earliest ages as inward aridness or vastation. Such a state is not without its benefits. In ancient Egypt, amid its wealth and intellectual advancement, the Hebrews learned much; they became masters, like the people among whom they dwelt, of arts and letters, of which their own recorded history is a proof; but the arts they learned and the knowledge they acquired, were worldly arts

and worldly knowledge. In the terrible desert, through which they were led when they came out of Egypt, they obtained knowledge of a different kind, knowledge of a higher aspect and character, and far more valuable. Accordingly in reading their travels through the desert, we feel that we are reading, if we are interiorly enlightened, the travels of the human heart; that we are becoming acquainted with the mighty pilgrimage of the soul; its liability to error, its temptations, its sorrows, its progress in knowledge and goodness; and also the divine relations which exist between the lawgiver and those under the law, and the difference between the life moulded by obedience to law and the disordered and ruined life which is the result of its violation. The Hebrews learned as much and probably much more, certainly much more that was valuable, during their pilgrimage of forty years in the desert, than during their four hundred years of residence among the most enlightened people which the world had ever seen. Can we not say then that the voice of wisdom found an utterance in the wilderness? And so in the solitudes and deserts of the spirit, when interiorly we are led away from the land of flowers to the rude habitations of the sands and rocks, the land where smiles are exotics and joy is a stranger, there remains to us, nevertheless, much of inward



compensation. It is not without a great purpose, that our bruised and bleeding feet are smitten upon the rocks. The voice of wisdom is heard in the desolate wilderness of the soul. Such is the teaching of national history. Such is the testimony, also, of the deeply interior men of all ages; of Moses and Elijah; of Christ, when led into the wilderness to be tempted of satan; of John the Baptist, whose rugged nature found a congeniality with desolation within and desolation without; of St. Jerome, and of Augustine, as recorded in his confessions; of Tauler, the philosopher, mystic, and revivalist of the middle ages; of St. John of the Cross, one of the great explorers of the spiritual wilderness; of John Bunyan, the outward and inward sufferer and great traveller in interior lands; of George Fox and William Penn; of many of the leaders and followers in the Protestant Reformation; of the early Methodists and Puritans; of all in all nations and of all names, who have neither the power nor the inclination to go to heaven on "flowery beds of ease."

But returning from the method of learning to the things which have been taught, we proceed further to say, that one of the marked things of this form of experience, which we will characterize now as *LIVING BY THE MOMENT*, is, that it is infinitely varied. Change, which is evidently incidental to the

great fact of growth or progression, is one of the great necessities of existence. It is moreover one of those things, which in any true philosophy of the universe, will be found to lie at the foundation of the great problem of what constitutes the highest amount of human happiness, and in what way such happiness shall be realized. Meeting God in the moment of God, which is necessarily the present moment, we shall meet Him always the same but always new; always unchanged in his essence, but changing always in his incidents. The divine moment, lifting as it emerges into being the veil that rests upon forms and places and actions and events, opens that little eyelid of eternity, and reveals God, not in a perpetual identity of manifestation which would tire our perception and annul our growth, but in all possible varieties. He stands before us sometimes in the storm and sometimes in the sunshine; sometimes in the waste howling wilderness, and sometimes in the field of flowers; in the palace and the prison, in friendship and enmity; in joy and sorrow. And thus He is always revealing, step by step, in harmony with the nature and extent of our own capacities, the infinitudes of existence; and always affording new elements of knowledge, new tests of strength, and new foundations and appliances of growth and happiness.

And it may further be remarked as something worthy of notice, and as closely connected with what has just been said, that those who live in the divine moment are relieved in a great degree from the perplexity of conjectures and calculations, and cannot be said, in the usual sense of the terms, to have plans of action. It is certain that they do not have any, in the unconditioned or absolute sense. Being in harmony inwardly and outwardly with the facts of the present moment, it is the law of their condition, that they shall do the work which it is given them to do. Under the mastery of the present, they see the objects that are now before them; they obey the orders which are now given; and accomplish what now is, and nothing else.

It is impossible that the man who lives thus should have any plans which are exclusively his own; any plans which are separate from the purpose and the will of God. He cannot be in harmony with the present moment without being in harmony with the will of God, as manifested in the present moment; and the divine will, thus manifested, necessarily constitutes the condition to which all his actions and plans of action are subordinated. So that it can justly be said in this view of things, that the mind of the Infinite is substituted for his own, and that God plans for him. Submitting his

own wisdom to the higher wisdom which is from above, he can say in the spirit of Christ, whose plan of action was established in eternity and was unchangeable, that he "comes to do the will of the Father who sent him."

And hence it is that one great sign of the practical recognition of the "divine moment" and of our finding God's habitation in it, is constant calmness and peace of mind. Events and things come with the moment; but God comes with them too. And He comes, written all over with the divinity of wisdom and the glory of the promises. So that if He comes in the sunshine, we find rest and joy; and if He comes in the storm, we know He is King of the storms, and our hearts are not troubled. God himself, though possessing a heart filled with the tenderest feelings, is, nevertheless, an everlasting tranquillity; and when we enter into His holy tabernacle, his great movable tent, which is travelling here and there under the shifting footsteps of moment added to moment, our souls necessarily enter into the tabernacle of rest.

And let it be added here, that the doctrine of living by the moment suggests one of the preparatory conditions, and furnishes in part, a philosophical explanation of the great doctrine of inward inspiration. Inspiration, looking at the fact of the

thing as well as the etymology of the term, is the in-breathing or the in-flowing of the Infinite into the finite. And if we stand in the openings of the present moment, with all the length and breadth of our faculties unselfishly adjusted to what it reveals, we are in the best condition to receive what God is always ready to communicate. So that there is not merely a dogmatical affirmation, which is to be believed solely because it is affirmed, but an interior and divine philosophy in those suggestive and spiritual words of Jesus: "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."

Each moment of time is one of the successive and separate letters of the alphabet, which go to make up the great book of eternity. And eternity being the sum of all moments, and therefore the residence or locality of God in the higher sense, we are thus learning the letters of that book in which will be written out all truths of the Infinite, and all truths and destinies for ourselves. To lose a moment by being out of harmony with the facts and requisitions of the moment, is to lose a letter out of the great book, and thus to lose something of its

infinite and eternal meanings. It was thus that God taught me while I was in the spiritual wilderness. I was thus enabled to see, and perhaps more clearly than others will be likely to do, who have not passed through the same inward history, why He shut the old gateways and vistas of spiritual knowledge, which were suited to the beginnings of inward experience, and required me to meet with Him and to dwell with Him in the **ETERNAL NOW**. It was one of the lessons of the desert; but the desert, I mean the spiritual desert, is one of the school-houses of the soul. And as soon as I had learned the lesson, which it seems to have been the object of the school of the desert to teach, the cloud was gradually lifted; the sunshine came down upon the rocks; the sands and pebbles grew up into flowers; I found the shepherd sitting beside the still waters; and I came up out of the entanglements of the wilderness into a firmer position and a clearer light than I had ever known before.

THE END.













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