



UNIVERSITY
OF PITTSBURGH
LIBRARIES




DAR. RM.
BR85
C77
1878

THIS BOOK PRESENTED BY
Mr. James Veeder

Price 7/10
Nicholas Feder,

98 Pennsylvania Avenue
Allegheny, Pa.

Bought of the Author
Dec. 13, 1877.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2009 with funding from
University of Pittsburgh Library System

GATHERINGS IN BEULAH.

BEULAH—ISAIAH LXII. 4.

“After this I beheld until they were come into the land of Beulah, where the sun shineth night and day. Here, because they were weary, they betook themselves awhile to rest. And because this country was common for pilgrims, and because the orchards and vineyards that were here belonged to the King of the Celestial Country, therefore they were licensed to make bold with any of his things.”

Pilgrim's Progress, Second Part.

BY
JOSIAH COPLEY.

PITTSBURGH:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.
1878.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1877, by

JOSIAH COPLEY,

In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

Stereotyped, Printed and Bound by
STEVENSON, FOSTER & Co.
Pittsburgh.

BEULAH—A Preface.

PETER, in the benediction which he pours upon the believers to whom he wrote, and with which he closes his first epistle, exclaims: "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you!"

Here the apostle expresses in literal terms the same condition which God, by the pen of Isaiah, sets before us in the figure of a happy land—not beyond the grave, but on this side—called by two expressive terms—Hephzi-bah (my delight is in her) and Beulah (married).

"Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married"—Isaiah lxii.

With almost superhuman skill Bunyan leads his company of pilgrims through much tribulation into this land, this safe and happy condition, which the prophet, under the spirit of inspiration, sets forth in the above magnificent figure, and which Peter so eloquently describes in the words first quoted. Isaiah's Beulah, with all its grace and glory, is nothing more than the perfected, established, settled faith which the apostle prayed might be the portion, in this present life, of those to whom he wrote.

Here the great allegorist pictures his pilgrims as waiting for the summons from beyond the river to go over and enter into their everlasting rest in the Celestial City. Here, although not yet at rest, they were safe, "because (says

Bunyan,) this country was common for pilgrims, and because the orchards and vineyards that were here belonged to the King of the celestial country; therefore they were licensed to make bold with any of his things." Here they were so near to the Celestial City that pilgrims of clear, strong vision could discern its glories from afar. Yet they were only mortal men and women, with their several characteristics, excellencies and infirmities. One of them was Christiana, that faithful and loving widowed mother, a type of multitudes still found in all our churches—sweet and modest flowers in this garden which the Lord God has planted. Another, although safe in Beulah, was still known as Mr. Despondency; and his daughter, even there, did not cease to be "Much Afraid." Old Mr. Honest dwelt in Beulah for a while, and made an excellent record by adhering strictly and firmly to truth and right. There are many such in our churches to-day. When he went over he carried his honesty with him, but not as his passport; for his last words were, "Grace reigns!" One other was there, who, although a sojourner in Beulah, was still "Ready-to-halt;" while another continued to be "Feeble-minded" to the last. Standfast abode for a time in Beulah, a blessing to those around him, until he was called to make a triumphant passage across the river.

Thus in this grandest of allegories every Christian who is established, strengthened, settled in his faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ—faith of every degree from trembling hope to full assurance—may see where he stands. Many reach Beulah soon. Others, like Bunyan's Christian, have long and sore conflicts before they reach it. The lions, the fiend Apolyon, the Hill Difficulty, the Valley of Humiliation, Doubting Castle, and Giant Despair have all to be passed ere they reach it, and are made perfect, established, strengthened, settled. Many are in Beulah who are

not aware of it. They wander through the orchards and vineyards, but gather little fruit. They hear the words of the great and good Proprietor calling to them, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved;" but, with a humility which has its roots in unbelief, they are not sure that he is speaking to them. Among Bunyan's pilgrims in Beulah, Mr. Despondency would with trembling hands gather barely enough of fruit from the lowest boughs to keep him alive; while his daughter would be still more afraid. Old Mr. Honest would gather fruit for himself and others without misgiving, because he knew that it was his right to do so; while Great Heart would come among the pilgrims richly laden with fruit plucked from lofty branches—enough for himself and abundance for his friends.

It has been the happy lot of the writer, with all his weaknesses and infirmities, to have had his place in Beulah since childhood, and never to doubt that the kind and loving Proprietor was speaking to him and to all when he said, "Eat, O friends;" so for many years he has been gathering the fruits of that safe and happy land. To him the Valley of Humiliation and Beulah were often blended together, and he can testify that in that sad vale some very wholesome fruits grow; but they are only adapted to immediate and personal use. Those of Beulah, on the other hand, will keep forever. In this GATHERING, this miscellaneous volume, the reader will find some which he plucked from branches as high as he was able to reach.

The fruits which grow on the other side of the river are better still; and many who are now dwellers in Beulah will soon be there, the writer among the rest. Meanwhile, let us be glad that there is so much on this side. There is no forbidden fruit in Beulah, although there was in Eden.

J. C.

Pittsburgh, Dec., 1877.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Our Knowledge of God,.....	9
The Light of God,.....	14
Where God Dwells,.....	18
The Logos,.....	20
“ Where Art Thou ? ”.....	23
Lot,.....	26
The Marriage of Isaac,.....	35
Pharaoh and Joseph,.....	43
Jacob’s Ladder,.....	49
Jacob’s Interview with Pharaoh,.....	55
Where and When did Job Live?.....	58
Job’s Desire and Hope,.....	64
Christ as seen in Joseph,.....	66
Moses in Exile,.....	68
The Right Way,.....	72
The Great Sacrifice,.....	76
Solomon,.....	80
Elisha, Naaman and Gehazi,.....	87
The Pot of Oil,.....	93
Mission and Poverty of Christ,.....	96
Christ’s Life Work,.....	100
Christ and his Little Children,.....	105
The Measure of Love,.....	110
Christ and the Samaritan Woman,.....	114
The Blind Man receiving Sight,.....	119
“ Wherefore did’st thou Doubt ? ”.....	124
Peter Fishing for a Coin,.....	127
Character of Jesus,.....	130
Faith, True but Staggering,.....	132
Simon Peter’s Fishing Party,.....	136
Every-day Faith,.....	143
Confessing Christ,.....	148
The Last Interview,.....	151
The Denial of Peter,.....	155
“ Lovest Thou Me ? ”.....	159
Jesus as a Teacher,.....	163
John’s Gospel,.....	168
Jesus in Trouble,.....	171

Justice and Mercy,.....	174
The Marys of the New Testament,.....	176
The Affair of the Tribute Money,.....	183
How Jesus Taught Forgiveness,.....	189
“ What Lack I Yet ? ”.....	192
“ Some Fell among Thorns, ”.....	196
Our Father,.....	202
“ Arise, Shine, ”.....	205
“ Put on thy Beautiful Garments, ”.....	207
The Source of Life,.....	210
“ Empty, Swept and Garnished, ”.....	213
“ Even so, Come, Lord Jesus, ”.....	216
Evidence of Things not Seen,.....	218
The Prodigal Son—A Sermon,.....	221
Looking unto Jesus,.....	225
The Vineyard,.....	228
Knocking at the Door,.....	230
Theme for Serious Thought,.....	234
Building a House,.....	239
Thoughts on a Precious Passage,.....	242
“ They shall see God, ”.....	245
Communing with God,.....	247
The Great Philanthropist,.....	249
Other Worlds,.....	252
The Millennium,.....	255
The Minuteness of the Divine Government,.....	261
Disintegration,.....	265
The Angel and Peter,.....	268
Cornelius,.....	272
Saul of Tarsus—Paul the Apostle,.....	279
Paul and the Jailer,.....	284
The Germ of Eternal Life,.....	288
The only Sure Foundation,.....	290
The Mountains were Covered,.....	293
Salvation Completed,.....	297
The Leaven in the Meal,.....	301
The Law of Development,.....	304
Darkness and Light,.....	309
“ Shall Never Die, ”.....	314
Life and Immortality,.....	319

"Wood, Hay, Stubble,".....	323
Fruit from the Tree of Life,.....	326
Rending the Veil,.....	329
Charity,.....	332
"All Things are Yours,".....	336
What will He do with Them?.....	340
Success and Failure,.....	345
The Natural and the Supernatural,.....	348
The Personality of Satan,.....	352
Judas Iscariot,.....	357
The True and the False,.....	360
Agur's Prayer,.....	362
Socrates,.....	368
Jonah's Gourd,.....	372
Spiritual Stores,.....	376
Types,.....	378
A few Thoughts on Psalmody,.....	381
Toplady and Wesley,.....	386
Mutilating Hymns,.....	390
Use and Abuse of Sacred Song,.....	395
Rev. Joseph W. Henderson,.....	399
Albert Barnes,.....	404
Rev. John Black, D. D.,.....	407
Working Together for Good,.....	410
A Strange and Touching Scene,.....	412
How Mineral Coal was Made,.....	415
The Gloom and Glory of Human Life,.....	418
Growing Old,.....	423
"I will Trust and Not be Afraid,".....	428
Decline and Death—Moses and Paul,.....	432
Jerusalem,.....	436
Christ's Divinity, as seen in his Miracles,.....	438
Life and Death,.....	450
The Attractions of Heaven,.....	454
Deadness of Heart,.....	456
My First Communion,.....	459
Breaking to Pieces,.....	462
John Stuart Mill,.....	466
Resurrection of the Body,.....	470
Progress in the Life to Come,.....	475

GATHERINGS IN BEULAH.

Our Knowledge of God.

THERE are probably not two human beings upon earth who have precisely the same idea of the Supreme Being ; neither are there any whose conceptions are not more or less erroneous. John the Baptist uttered a great truth when he said, "No man hath seen God at any time." This means that to the natural man, with all his ability to investigate and to reason, God, in his essential nature, is altogether unknown and unknowable. Nature, so far as it lies open to the observation of man, furnishes irresistible evidence of the existence of a Supreme Power and Intelligence, and this the philosopher calls the Supreme Being or God, and out of this ocean of phenomena, both material and moral, he constructs his ideal of that Being. He is necessarily the maker of his own Deity, and the elements of the character will be, must be, gathered from natural phenomena, and will partake largely of the idiocracy of the thinker. If he is kind, benevolent and social, he will have a god who takes a warm interest in the affairs of his creatures ; but if he is cold, lofty and egotistical, as many professed thinkers are, his god will be enthroned in infinite height and ineffable repose, above the stupendous system of laws and forces which he has established, and which need no further regulation on his part. He proudly claims to know and believe in a grander God than the one of whom Jesus

speaks, where he tells us that even the fall of a sparrow is his act. Ask such a man if he believes in God, and he will tell you he does; but it is not the Lord God of the holy prophets, the One of whose person our Fellow Man, our Divine Brother, Jesus Christ, is the express image.

The highest conception which man in his own strength can form of God is not knowledge. It can rise no higher than an idea, a notion. "Behold, God is great," said Elihu, "and we know him not;" and Zophar challenges the intellectual world in words the eloquence of which cannot be surpassed: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than Hell; what canst thou know?" It is very affecting to read the sublime language of Job and the sages who gathered around him in his sore trials, where they labor to search out something of the character and the moral laws of the Great Supreme who had so mysteriously afflicted his faithful servant. They all acknowledged his immediate agency in the affairs of man. In abstract truth they seem to have been guided aright, so far as they were able to go; but some of them erred in the application of that truth to the case before them. Believers in that early day had not learned that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;" but Job, before he died, was doubtless able to say with David, "It was good for me that I was afflicted."

Can God be known at all? Let us turn again to John the Baptist. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." This great declaration covers the whole ground, and shuts us up to a single avenue through which a knowledge of God can come. In Nature we see the marks of his wisdom and power. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handi-

work," is a declaration which the highest reason accepts readily ; but this acceptance is not faith, nor does it afford the knowledge that we need. The philosopher who holds and teaches that the Supreme Being has instituted a system of inexorable laws, so perfect as not to require any direct agency on his part in their working, can accept this, and yet scoff at the doctrine of his perpetual care of his creatures as Jesus taught it.

The knowledge of God reaches us through moral, not intellectual channels ; through faith, not reason ; through a childlike obedience, not philosophic thinking. Jesus says, "If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Even the doctrines of the Gospel can only be savingly received in the heart and the understanding by a submissive and obedient spirit. Saul of Tarsus exhibited this spirit when he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He was first ready to obey, then he began to learn. This harmonizes with the promise in the twenty-fifth Psalm—"The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way;" and also with these words of Christ—"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Any real knowledge of God can only be obtained in this way. By searching man cannot find out God ; but where there is a spirit of faith and obedience God will reveal himself, so that it may be truly said that he does know him, and this knowledge is salvation. "This is life eternal," says Jesus in his prayer, "that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Then the humble sinner begins to understand what Jesus has told him of his Father in heaven ; that he is always with him to guard him from evil and to supply his wants ; that he is more willing to give good things to his children than

earthly parents are ; that he knows all about him, even to the number of his hairs. Then he is able to receive, and in some measure to comprehend the great truth that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Then he can believe what his Saviour tells him, that “God is a spirit,” and being so, is infinitely great, and incomprehensible—everywhere present—dwelling in the high and holy place, and with him also who is of a meek and contrite spirit ; and, so believing, he gladly clasps to his heart the sweetest words the beloved disciple ever uttered—“God is love.”

It is not in the power of mortal man, whatever may be his intellectual wealth, to get higher than this. He may, and it is right that he should, cast his eye and his telescope heavenward, and see how “the heavens declare the glory of God ;” but in all this he is still far below the range of inspired and revealed truth. He may descend to the earth and search all his life among its wondrous varieties, utilities, and beauties, and return richly laden ; but all he can discover in either are but the foot-prints, as it were, of the Almighty. Nature and its laws cannot tell us what relations we sustain to its Author, if any at all. Profound thinkers, who have scanned it closely and carefully, have often come to the dismal conclusion that we are but factors in the mighty sum of all things, and subject to all-embracing, inflexible, irreversible law, as impersonal as gravitation. With such a notion dominant in the mind, faith and worship are impossible, and hope can rise no higher than to the inference that, as God is wise and benevolent, it shall be well with us in a hereafter, if, indeed, there be a hereafter. So far, and no farther, can the study of Nature carry us. How deep and awful, therefore, is the darkness which Divine Revelation enlightens !

That revealed light shined upon the pathway of the earliest men. A personal, kind and merciful God made himself known, and faith was awakened in the soul. It was a dim, dawning light at first; but it was sufficient, and in it Abel worshiped acceptably and Enoch walked with God. Through successive ages and dispensations it waxed brighter and brighter until perfect day came in Jesus Christ. God, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake to the fathers by the prophets, and at last by his Son; and, speaking to us from the highest heavens, he bids us HEAR HIM.

Through the Hebrew prophets God had revealed himself as a kind and loving God, always and everywhere present, who could be securely trusted; yet was terrible in his holiness and justice. But Jesus brought him nearer still when he introduced him as "Our Father in heaven," and told us that he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; and declared that he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him; and then, "If a man love me he *will* keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Thus he established a personal relationship between the infinite God and his creature man, close, endearing, vital and unending, fraught with glorious results, the fullness of which will never be reached. By his grace he makes him pure in heart, and then promises that he shall SEE GOD. Well might the beloved apostle, after nearly a century's experience of the love of Christ, exclaim: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we

shall see him as he is." He then adds this most significant remark: "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." The faith and hope here exhibited and spoken of have active, assimilating powers, making the believer more and more like his Father and his God.

In all this the intellectual powers are kept in strict subordination to the moral powers of faith, and hope, and love, and yet they have much to do. As seen through this medium, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." But when we undertake, in intellectual pride and sufficiency, to mount "through Nature up to Nature's God," as Pope has it, we find that he dwells in darkness in which there is to us no light at all. But the Christian philosopher can look from his loftier standpoint, "the bosom of his Father and his God," down through Nature, and see its illuminated side, its beauty and harmony, and adore that tender mercy which is over all his works. In one sententious utterance Jesus gave us all that we can yet receive of the essence of Deity—"God is a spirit;" and if we would understand him aright, we cannot but feel that he forbade any further search in that direction. But in the direction which is open to us, John leads us to the summit when he says, "God is love."

The Light of God.

THAT which we call light is understood in its effects by all who have eyes to see; but in its essence it is fully comprehended by none. No one can certainly know what it is; but all know what it does. Itself invisible, it reveals to us a universe of material things, which, but for it, would be forever hid from our view. But of natural light, except as

it serves as a figure to enable us to understand the greater light which only the eyes of the soul can discern, it is not our purpose at present to speak.

In the natural creation God has been pleased to make the sun the great reservoir of light. All other lights, whether natural or artificial, are not worthy of mention in comparison. Thus is that vast and luminous orb—the source of light, and warmth, and power and life, a glorious image of its creator,—at once the most manifest, and yet the most mysterious and unsearchable object that can arrest our attention. “Truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.”

“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,” says that beloved disciple, that apostle who, probably, was privileged to occupy a place nearer to the great uncreated Source of light than was ever vouchsafed to any other mortal man. Now let us contemplate John as at one extreme of the great line of human observation, and such a man as Tyndal at the other. The one, nestling in the bosom of God, basking in his direct, unobstructed rays, looks down through the measureless vista of creation and providence, and sees all things bathed in that “True Light;” and from his high and blissful elevation sends to us, in tones as positive as they are cheering, the joyful shout, “God is Light! God is Love!” From his standpoint he sees everything moving in harmony and beauty. To him there are no shadows, clouds and darkness; for the light of God falls upon everything, making them bright and clear.

The other, from his cold, and dark, and distant standpoint, looks up through the same immeasurable vista; but he sees all things only on their shady side—clouds and darkness meet him and obstruct his vision at every step of his progress. He sees material things; but they are enshrouded in a mysterious and uncertain light. He per-

ceives that immutable and resistless laws are operating upon them; but of the origin of those laws he can only reason and speculate; and long before he reaches the grand Centre and Source of being, his power of vision is exhausted, and he can only grope his way onward through the labyrinths of reason and conjecture. He is constrained to acknowledge that what he has discovered could only exist through an almighty designing Agent; but whether that agent is a personal being, or only an all-pervading principle, he cannot tell; or whether he bears any relation to his creatures as their moral governor, he cannot discover. To him *God is darkness, and in him is no light at all.*

The pillar of cloud which accompanied the chosen people in their wanderings through the wilderness affords a striking emblem of the very thing we are discussing—the light of God, and the standpoint from which that light can be seen, and reflected back upon us, from all things by which we are surrounded. In the night preceding the passage through the Red Sea, that pillar removed from before the camp of Israel and stood behind it, directly between the pursuing Egyptians and the escaping captives. To the people of Israel, who stood in the light of God, the cloud was made luminous by reflecting that light; but to the hosts of Egypt, in whose camp God was not, “it was a cloud and darkness.” Both saw the cloud. To Israel it was luminous, because God, who was with Israel, shined upon it and made it so; to Egypt it was dark, very dark, because the light of God was not on their side of it. *The cloud was nearer to them than God was.*

Just so do all things appear different to the saint who is near to his God, and to the unsanctified man who lives far from him. The one sees everything on the illuminated side, the other on the dark and shady side. It matters not what they may be investigating—whether the mysteries of Nature

or of Providence; the rolling current of events as they affect nations or individuals; the trials, difficulties, perplexities, or bereavements of their own lives—all have, like the pillar of cloud, a bright side to the one, a dark side to the other. No strength of intellect can compensate for this want of light to the one; no feebleness of mind can deprive the other of the joy and peace, and of the real wisdom which that light imparts.

Paul was a man well versed in the learning, science and philosophy of his day; yet hear what he says: "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." A mere philosopher, whether of that day or of this, would suppose that in this resolution Paul had descended from a higher to a lower plane of knowledge. But no greater mistake could be made than such a supposition. Paul, by the exercise of faith as sublime as it was simple, mounted to the highest pinnacle of knowledge, and placed himself on the illuminated side of all things, whence he could look down through Nature and Providence and see all things working in order and harmony, and for good. He did not stand outside and look in; but standing in the light of God, he looked out and around. He looked at the cloud as Israel looked, not as Egypt looked.

When the poet talks about looking "through Nature up to Nature's God," he talks about that which is impossible. He inverts the true process. He places his observer on the dark and not on the luminous side of things. That which he calls "Nature's God" is but a figment of his own imagination, conjured up out of the deep darkness which human power of vision or of thought can never penetrate. But let Faith lift the soul to God, and Love bind it fast, then "in his light we shall see light." Then we can look through Nature down from "Nature's God," even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom to know is life

eternal, and in whom all things become ours, both to know and to enjoy.

I would by no means speak disparagingly of the labors of philosophers and men of science; but my sole object is to persuade those who are or may become votaries of science to place themselves first of all at the right standpoint—on the illuminated side of things—in the light of God. And I would exhort those who may be standing in the shadow of dark providential dispensations, to get around as quickly as possible to the bright side; for, be assured, there is nothing this side of the regions of despair which has not a bright side.

Where God Dwells.

“THOU art with me,” says David in the twenty-third Psalm, and he gives that as the reason why he fears no evil, even though he were in the valley of the shadow of death. This to David was more than that all-embracing presence of which he speaks in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm. It was that peculiar indwelling presence and fellowship expressed in the following passages:

“Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”—Isaiah lvii. 15.

“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” says Jesus.—Matt. xxviii. 20. This was just before he ascended to that “high and holy place.”

“If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.”—John xiv. 23.

“Behold,” says Jesus in vision to John in Patmos—a

part of the message to the lukewarm Laodiceans, "I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

When faith can utter David's words, "Thou art with me," in the sense of these Divine utterances, then all is well. It is not enough to grasp in faith and address in prayer a merely Omnipresent God; for the believer ought to seek, and not rest till he finds, this Special Presence; this reviving, comforting, companionable communion; this mutual supping together.

In the above citation from John xiv. we are taught at once the Trinity and the Unity of the High and Lofty One; for Jesus positively declares that he and his Father will both take up their abode with the soul which loves him and keeps his commandments. What is this, what can it be, but the fulfillment of the great promise of the departing Saviour: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth?" It is a sweet and awful thought, that when the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart, the loving Father and the redeeming Son have taken up their abode with us.

We are in danger of error as to the fundamental doctrine of one only living and true God, unless we suffer our thoughts to dwell often upon the Unity as well as the Trinity of the Deity, and ponder well such words as these: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

I have often thought that we poor sinners may be the most favored of all God's creatures. We know not the depth of our fall; neither can we measure the height of our exaltation through our union with the Divine Nature in Jesus Christ. As he took our nature, we take his, and thus, as Peter expresses it, "become partakers of the Divine

Nature." Thought, language, imagination, all fall immeasurably short of this stupendous fact. No wonder that angels delight to be the ministering spirits, the servants of those whom God thus delighted to honor. They are his servants and ours, bright, glorious and good as they are; but Jesus puts his redeemed ones in a still higher scale when he speaks so familiarly to them of "my Father and your Father, my God and yours."

It is only by contemplating man thus highly exalted through the great salvation—so thoroughly cleansed from sin, so invested with a righteousness absolutely immaculate, that we are able to take home to our hearts by faith the wonderful declarations quoted above, and feel and know that God does in very deed dwell with man; his nature, as it were, blended with ours.

How poor, how low, how far short of the truth are our habitual notions of the benefits which flow to us from the redemption purchased by Christ! How hard it is to believe that it is possible for a sinner to be made absolutely holy—perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. Self-righteousness dies long, long before the faith of a Christian can reach such a conception.

The Logos.

IN the opening of John's Gospel there is a grandeur and sublimity the depth and height of which it is impossible fully to comprehend. Side by side with divine revelation, as it was given to Israel, human wisdom and philosophy in Greece had climbed darkly and blindly upwards towards the Unknown God, whose existence, power and wisdom all nature attested. In the profound speculations of those sages, of

whom Socrates and Plato were the pioneers, the grand idea of the Logos was conceived and adopted as the basis of their speculative philosophy.

This Logos was to them an undefined something, through which the invisible and otherwise inscrutable Deity made himself known to human reason in creation, in the laws of nature, and in the innate consciousness of right and wrong, virtue and vice found in the mind of man. These sages did not exalt this thing which they called the Logos to a distinct personality; nor was it properly speaking a principle; but a kind of out-going of Divinity, the nature of which was inscrutable. As far as they could go they appear to have been guided aright. But in the Logos of the great Alexandrian school there was neither light nor life—nothing upon which the faith of man could lay hold. It was Light, true light, shining in darkness, “but the darkness comprehended it not.” As the wise men of the East saw the Star of Bethlehem, so the wise men of the West caught some glimmering rays of the Logos as he was about to be made manifest to Israel and to the world.

It is not until we place ourselves upon this lofty standpoint that we are able at all to take in the matchless grandeur of John's opening: “In the beginning was the Word (the Logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The evangelist came as a teacher sent from God to show to the philosophic schools of his day that which they had, as the culmination of unaided reason, dimly perceived, but were utterly unable to comprehend. He came to reveal the Logos, not as something unknown and incomprehensible, but as a divine Person. Not as God only, but as God made flesh and dwelling among us, so that his fellow men, the writer among the rest, “beheld his glory, the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father.” John came, as Paul came to the Athenians and talked with them of their

Unknown God, and with a similar message : “ Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.”

In both these cases, in John's introduction and in Paul's address to the philosophers of Athens, we see that Revelation begins where human investigation necessarily ends. It was the same process of thought, the same search after truth beyond the range of reason and investigation, which caused the altar “ TO THE UNKNOWN GOD ” to be erected at Athens, and which incorporated into the philosophical systems of that age the awful doctrine of the Logos. The Light was shining in the darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not, until John touched the sublime mystery, and “ gave to airy nothing a local habitation and a name ; ” and in the Logos of the schools revealed to mankind a Being at once divine and human, a God and a Brother, the Creator of all, and at the same time the Saviour of sinners—a being into the mysteries of whose nature angels cannot fully penetrate, yet so sweetly simple that childhood can embrace it in loving trust, and can behold his glory, and feel how full of grace and truth he is. :

The Logos, as the conception was gradually evolved in the minds of those deep thinkers of old, was a grand idea. Of them it may with truth be said, “ they did what they could ; ” and the Holy Ghost, in guiding the mind and pen of the last and grandest of the Evangelists, put honor upon their highest achievement by engrafting upon it the most sublime statement of the doctrine of God manifest in the flesh to be found in the Holy Scriptures.

“Where art Thou?”

WITH the question as to what would have been the condition of the human race, had our first parents been obedient to the divine command in the matter of the forbidden fruit, we have nothing to do. Speculations on that point are worse than useless. God has given us no means of determining anything about it. And what kind of worship and service were rendered by them to their Maker in their state of innocence, what was the extent of their knowledge, what measure of happiness they may have enjoyed, or what capacity for happiness they had, we have no means whatever of knowing. The very few utterances of Adam before the fall, which have been put on record, reach no higher than human relations. To ascribe to him, therefore, as many do, faculties, powers, and bliss almost angelic, is a draft upon the imagination altogether unwarranted by recorded facts.

He sinned. He broke the special command which had been given to him as a test of obedience; and by so doing, he incurred the penalty annexed to that law. It is at this point that the religious history of our race commences. Man is now lost, “gone astray like a lost sheep.” His direct relation to his Creator, as an innocent creature, is broken off, and under a conscious sense of guilt he flies from his presence and hides himself. He flies, but the Good Shepherd follows.

“And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, ‘Where art thou?’”

Let us look at this awful transaction, and see if we cannot find in it far more of the loving kindness of God our Saviour, than of the wrath and vengeance of God our Judge. Let us see if he did not deal with Adam and his

wife on the same principles that he deals with every sinner whom he leads to repentance, to faith, and ultimately to glory.

He first convinced him of sin, by requiring a confession of what he had done. He then placed him in other conditions—the best possible for a sinful being to occupy. Not a paradise, not a purgatory, not a hell, but a school of discipline, in which sorrow, toil and pain should be his lower teachers; in which ten thousand urgent wants of his nature should combine and draw forth his latent powers of mind and body; to teach him his dependence upon God; and to fit him for the higher teachings and discipline of providence and grace. And last of all, the return of his body “to the earth as it was, and his spirit to God who gave it,” should close his earthly existence and his probation, and bring him into that which is really life or really death.

Now all is ready for the work of the great Mediator, with his salvation through faith in him. Henceforth the just must live by faith. Salvation by works is impossible. *Thus was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

That is a wretched theology which sees an angry God in Eden, hurling curses and thunder-bolts of wrath upon the heads of our guilty parents. Nothing fell upon them which can with propriety be termed a curse. Let us examine those things, which some call curses, in detail.

“*Cursed is the ground for thy sake.*”—It is as if he had said, “I curse the ground and make it sterile, stubborn, and reluctant to yield food suitable for thee, that thou mayest be blessed by wholesome labor and discipline.”

“*In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.*” This sorrow means painful, wearisome toil. Does any one who understands the human heart desire that this should be

otherwise? If so, what does he say to these words: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Is a curse embodied in these gracious and cheering words?

“*Thou shalt eat the herb of the field.*”—Jesus teaches us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Surely there is no curse here.

“*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.*”—He must be a poor philosopher, as well as a lazy man, who can find a curse here. It is right, by every means in our power to lighten human toil; but it is in those communities in which science and skill have done the most to save labor that we find the most industry and the least idleness. Be assured, that except for this imposition of labor as a necessity of the race, Satan would have found vastly more idle hands to engage in his works of mischief.

“*Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*”—Is this a curse? Before deciding this point, pause for a while and think of a world filled with immortal sinners, that is, sinners who do not cease to live as such. The very conception, when made in the light of the Bible, of history, and of our own experience, is horrible. The death of men alone keeps this world from being a hell. The death of Jesus makes it the vestibule of Heaven.

In all these sentences, these sad but salutary allotments, the Lord God our Saviour only said in other words, “Take up thy cross and follow me.”

It is a glorious thought, and as true as it is glorious, that the voice which called to Adam and said, “Where art thou?” was the same which said, “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest;” and that the accents of mercy and loving kindness were as full and as emphatic in the one as they are in the other.

And still he cries! “Unto you, O men, I call, and my

voice is to the sons of men." To you, who may be reading these words, he calls and inquires, "Where art thou?" Are you standing in the light of his countenance, rejoicing in the assurance of his favor, washed in his blood, filled with his Spirit, and engaged in his service? or are you trying, as Adam tried, to hide from his presence among the trees of your garden? If so, he calls you, as he called Adam, to come out, not to be cursed, but to be blessed; not to be condemned and punished, but pardoned and saved.

Lot.

THE flocks of Abraham and Lot became so numerous that the land was not able to bear them. The pasturage becoming scarce, a strife between their respective herdmen was the consequence. Abraham was a man of peace, and would prefer to submit to loss, and even to wrong, rather than that there should be any difficulty between himself and his nephew, or between their herdmen; so he said to Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

There are few nobler or more generous utterances on record than this; and it would be well were Christian professors—I do not say Christians—to ponder these words of the father of the faithful before they engage in strife and litigation about some matters of less importance than this difficulty between him and Lot.

The river Jordan at that time ran farther south than it

does now, through a valley or plain of exceeding beauty and fertility. In Genesis xiii. 10, we are told that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—that it was even as the garden of the Lord, and like the land of Egypt. Very likely it was full of irrigating ditches, as was Egypt in ancient times, to an extent, probably, that absorbed all the water of the Jordan. Before the destruction of Sodom it may be that there was no Dead Sea; but that the water flowed on and on, until it was all either evaporated or lost in the sand, as the river Humboldt is lost in the dry atmosphere and sands of Nevada, east of the Sierra Nevada range. The splendid plain which Lot chose as his pasture ground, and the sites of the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, are now, doubtless, covered by the strong, sluggish, saline and bituminous waters of the Dead Sea, in which the waters of Jordan and of some other streams are now collected and carried off by evaporation. It has no outlet to the sea, and can have none; for it is more than thirteen hundred feet below the sea level.

It was very generous on the part of Abraham to offer Lot his choice; and the choice which Lot made shows us that he partook largely of those common failings of humanity, selfishness and worldliness. He saw in the rich vale of Sodom excellent and luxuriant pasture and plenty of water. He thought it a first-rate place for a man to grow rich; and that being so, he seems not to have inquired very carefully as to other things. Lot was a righteous man, and began to suffer at once for his unwise choice of a residence. It is probable that his flocks fared well and increased rapidly in numbers and value; but Peter tells us that he was unhappy; that he was “vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked;” that the people among whom he dwelt “vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their ungodly deeds.” Turn to the horrible scene described in Genesis xix. 4-11,

and that will give you an idea of the moral character of these people. It was a sad mistake on the part of Lot to travel Sodomward in pursuit of worldly prosperity, and it is no less a mistake now.

How long Lot dwelt in Sodom before the raid of the four predatory kings was made upon the cities of the plain we are not told; but chronologists make it from five to eight years. These kings were the petty chiefs of as many barbarous tribes. Their object was plunder, and they succeeded in taking a large amount. Men, women, children, and cattle were alike plunder. Lot and his family were taken captive with many others; and, had they not been rescued by Abraham and his three hundred and eighteen armed servants, a life of servitude would have been their fate. Abraham, brave and generous, conquered the robbers, rescued the captives, restored the property, set his kinsman Lot back where he was, and then returned in peace to his own pasture grounds, after having been blessed by Melchisedek, king of Salem and priest of the Most High God. In this man, of whose history we know nothing else, we see one of the last of the earliest line of God's people on earth, a line which reached from Adam, through Enoch, Noah and others to Abraham, who was the connecting link between that and the second dispensation, of which that most distinguished of the patriarchs was the head. Job and his friends belonged to that most ancient line; and in their discussions and arguments we have a sample of the theology of those earliest worshipers of the Most High God.

Abraham continued to dwell in quietness and peace, and in prosperity and honor, on the plains of Mamre for some years longer, while Lot in Sodom was probably growing more and more wealthy. We read of his sons-in-law who lived in Sodom, which fact shows that he was becoming

reconciled to the place, and probably more and more assimilated to the manners and customs of the people. His abominable attempt at compromise with the ruffians who gathered around his house (xix. 8,) shows a lamentable lack of moral sense on the part of a parent.

In serene old age, in prosperity and peace, in patient waiting for the promised blessing, Abraham is sitting in his tent door in the heat of the day. "And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him." (xviii. 2.) In the simple little scene which follows, the kind and generous old man is set before us to the life. From his extremely courteous address we can safely infer that Abraham saw not only that the strangers were of superior rank, but that they were good men; and, moreover, that one of them was superior to the other two. Addressing the chief, he said: "My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant." Then, addressing all three, he continued: "Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on; for therefore are ye come to your servant." With equal frankness the invitation is accepted, and Abraham hastened, not to bring "a morsel of bread," but to prepare a generous feast. The strangers ate, and as they partook of the good man's hospitality they, or rather he—the Lord and Master, and our Lord and Master, who, more than eighteen hundred years afterwards, sat at the humble board of Martha and her sister, and Lazarus—gradually made himself known. Sarah in her old age was to become the mother of the promised seed in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

The feast being ended, and the blessing promised to the venerable pair, the strangers rose to take their departure.

The kind host walked with them on the way, and as they walked the Lord and Abraham talked together. "And the Lord said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?'" and then he told him of his purpose to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, because of their sins, which had become very grievous. Abraham trembled for Lot, and plead successfully again and again for the city, lowering every time the number of righteous men for whose sake it should be spared, until he had fallen to ten. But he was still too high; and because Lot was saved we may infer that he was the only righteous man among those multitudes.

Why is it that so few believers are able to bring home fully to their hearts the fact that the same Almighty Being who called on Abraham that day, and talked so familiarly with him, and with whom Abraham conversed as friend with friend, calling him at the same time the Judge of all the earth, is also their God, equally near, equally kind, equally approachable, although they may feel themselves to be, as Abraham expressed it, "but dust and ashes?" This interview of Jehovah with Abraham, as they walked together by the way, was very much like the intercourse of Jesus with his disciples, and brings to remembrance his gracious words: "I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

The Lord, while he talked with Abraham, seems to have sent his two companions forward, and in the evening they arrived in Sodom and came near to the house of Lot. He saw them and greeted them with the same courtesy and kindness with which Abraham had greeted the three. These, we may be sure, were created angels, ministers of divine wrath against the devoted city. At first they declined Lot's invitation to enter his house, knowing what a horrible

scene of wickedness would transpire before morning ; but he pressed upon them greatly, and they turned in. It was very kind on the part of Lot ; and it is very likely that he saw by their deportment and countenance that they were good men, and persons of high rank.

Lot, like Abraham, made a feast for his heavenly guests, yet little dreaming that they were not mortal men. They seem not to have made themselves quickly known ; but upon what subject they and Lot conversed in the mean time, we have no account. Probably the evening meal was hardly over until the foul mob of miscreants had surrounded Lot's house. It was a horrible night—too bad to comment upon. But it has pleased God to give us that glimpse of the horrors of Sodom, that we may know to what depths of degradation and depravity human nature is capable of descending. Lot's expostulation with the ruffians was a flagrant case of casting pearls before swine. They received his soft and honeyed words with furious contempt, and would have "turned again and rent him," had not the angels drawn him into the house, shut the door and smitten the men with what is here called blindness, which I think was simply changing their vision from true to illusive. A similar miracle was wrought by Elisha upon the army of the king of Syria, so that he led them into the midst of Samaria, they not being able to see the city ; yet were not conscious that there was anything wrong with their vision. So, doubtless, it was with these men of Sodom. They were unable to see Lot's door where it really was, but fancied they saw it in many places where it was not ; so, the historian tells us, "they wearied themselves to find the door."

When all was again quiet the angels made known their awful errand, and sent Lot to warn his sons-in-law. "Up, (said he to them ; for by that time they were in bed,) get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city!"

But they utterly disregarded the message, and probably thought that the old man had lost his senses. Then he returned and awaited the morning. At dawn the angels hastened him, saying, "Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters who are found here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity (or the punishment) of the city!"

But Lot still lingered—lingered as thousands still linger when warned to flee from the wrath to come. That house and all that it contained must be left; so must those fine flocks and herds beyond the gates—all must be given up, all his worldly goods of every kind. He lingered as such men as he always linger. Then the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hands of his wife and daughters, and led them out of the city.

"Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed!" was the stern and urgent command. But Lot still held back. He plead earnestly to be allowed to take refuge in Zoar—"O, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live!" The kind and pitying angel allowed this request of the weak and terror-stricken man, and Lot entered Zoar just as the sun was rising.

Was the destruction of the Cities of the Plain effected by natural agents and forces, or was it purely miraculous? The sacred historian says: "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." These terms might be applied to volcanic fires; and had Moses told us of the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii he would probably have used similar terms. In some parts of that country petroleum exists to this day in great abundance, while bitumen abounds on the Dead Sea. Job, who probably lived before Lot, speaks of the rock pouring him out rivers of oil, which was petroleum (rock oil) of course. Vast volumes of gas would gather, as

it does in our petroleum region, far beneath the surface of the earth, and acquire sufficient force to cause a wide and fearful disruption of the superincumbent crust, making extensive rifts through which this pent-up inflammable gas would issue in vast quantities, thus relieving the upward pressure and allowing the crust upon which the cities stood to sink down. Then, under that enormous pressure, cataclysms of oil would spout up from the rent and torn earth, be ignited by the flaming gas, and fall back like a shower of "fire and brimstone." The miracle—if miracle it may be called—we find in God's holding those tremendous ministers of wrath in his hand until the right moment arrived; until the iniquity of Sodom was full; until he had told Abraham what he was about to do; until he had warned Lot, and given him time to warn his kinsmen; and until the angels had drawn him out of the doomed city by what was little less than physical force. So tremendous were the forces which had to be held in check while Lot lingered that even the angels themselves seemed to be alarmed and in anxious haste.

In the history of that awful event God has been pleased to show us how all natural forces, both beneficent and destructive, are under his control; and that nothing can hurt us—neither ill-designing men nor the blind forces of nature—without his permission.

Abraham, when he returned to his quiet and peaceful encampment from communing with the Lord, would feel profound anxiety; for possibly the Lord might not find even ten righteous men in Sodom, and he had not told him that if he destroyed the city he would save Lot. So we read, "And Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord (an elevation probably which overlooked the plain and its cities). And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the

land of the plain, and behold, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." A conflagration so fearful and wide-spread probably the world never saw, and never will see again until that day when the earth and all things therein shall be burned up. The great volume of smoke here mentioned favors the impression that there was an immense outgush of petroleum, for nothing else makes a denser smoke.

Lot, by the angel's permission, ran into Zoar, that *little* city, just as the flames burst upon the greater cities, and it was saved. But he did not stay long there. The scene was too terrific and too near. He then betook himself to the mountains, as the angels had at first told him to do. Bereft of nearly all his family; his wife lost on the verge of salvation; his property, for which he had traveled Sodomward, and toiled for years amid the most offensive surroundings, all gone—old, destitute, afflicted and affrighted, it is difficult to imagine a man in a more forlorn and miserable plight. Poor man! he had been building wood, hay, and stubble all his life. Now all these things are consumed—mercifully consumed—and he is saved, yet as by fire.

In all the history of Lot we find nothing worthy of imitation. His selection of the rich pastures of the valley of Jordan, leaving to his generous uncle and faithful friend and leader nothing but the comparatively barren uplands, showed his selfishness. His setting his face Sodomward proved that he loved this present world. His family alliances with men of Sodom are evidences that he was becoming more and more conformed to the world, notwithstanding his grief and abhorrence at the filthy conversation and ungodly deeds of the Sodomites. Still "the root of the matter was in him," and God, by his Holy Spirit, kept it alive. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," says the apostle; but what a fearful chastening Lot required!

O Christian, beware of setting your face Sodomward. The world is still full of Sodoms, and we may be drawn towards them and yet know it not. As a man of the world Lot chose wisely; for where he settled grass and water were in abundance, and he could hardly fail to grow rich. But a truly wise man, such as Abraham was, will look higher than to broad fertile acres and numerous herds for objects upon which to set his heart. Study the brief and sad history of Lot, and shun his almost fatal mistakes. He gathered property in abundance, no doubt; but his heavenly Father had in mercy to tear it from him, and he was saved, to use the language of Job, "by the skin of his teeth," while not a ray of glory gathers around his memory.

The Marriage of Isaac.

THE Bible is unlike other ancient histories; for, while these give us nothing but dry details of the doings of warriors and rulers, that leads us back to the times of the patriarchs, shepherds, lawgivers, judges, warriors, prophets and kings whose lives and actions make up the staple of its narrative. The first bring those old generations down to us as they would bring dried and shriveled mummies from the pyramids and catacombs of Egypt; the other transports us back to their tents and dwellings, and we seem to mingle with them in their pastoral life, and rejoice or mourn with them as we would with our present living friends. The stories of Joseph, of Ruth, of the Shunammite, of the lovely family who lived at Bethany, and of the still more interesting one of which Jesus was the head, are among the most notable-examples of this living style of history.

In the 24th chapter of Genesis we have a narrative of

surpassing beauty and interest. Isaac has grown to manhood; Sarah, his mother, is dead; Abraham, the pilgrim and stranger as well as the patriarch and prince, is well stricken in age; and the Lord had blessed him in all things. He knew that he must soon be called home. His son was now the only object of his solicitude; for in his person were bound up the Hope of the world, the Desire of all nations, the Promised Seed.

The whole world was sinking into idolatry. The mist and darkness of universal apostasy was slowly settling down upon the race of man. One star alone remained unobscured, and that star was then only visible in his own child of promise; but by faith he saw, through the vista of many generations, the glorious day of the Son of Man. Oh, what a terrible thought to that aged and faithful heart that this twinkling light, this star of hope, should be quenched forever in the floods of surrounding idolatry! True, he rested firmly in the promises of his covenant God; but his faith was attested by works and by all the means and precautions which were in his power.

There was something in the position of Abraham in the world which it is difficult for us, in this age of civilization and far-reaching institutions, to understand. Called of God to leave Ur of the Chaldees, his native place, he was led by successive steps to Canaan, the land which God had said he would show him and give him.

This land was preoccupied by numerous petty princes and their retainers,—subjects, serfs, or servants, just as we may choose to call them. The sacred writers generally call them servants. Abraham set out from Haran with some servants or dependents, and was accompanied by Lot, his nephew. When he entered Canaan, he entered it as a pilgrim and stranger; yet he never became subject to any of the princes of the country, while at the same time he never

acquired any dominion over the territory, nor did he build any city or permanent habitation. God blessed him greatly in the increase of his flocks and herds and in the number of his servants. "Thou art a mighty prince amongst us," said the sons of Heth; yet the only possession he ever acquired in the land was a burying-place. He was a shepherd prince, and lived in peace with his neighbors all his days; yet were his servants trained to war, and on at least one occasion he and they saw a little active service.

Abraham had one old and faithful servant, who for a long time was the steward of his household, Eliezer of Damascus. It is said of him that he ruled over all that Abraham had. In virtue of his age and authority, even Isaac himself, now grown to manhood, was placed under his authority. To him Abraham said, "Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, (then the usual form of an oath) and I will make thee swear by Jehovah, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." Eliezer gave the required pledge, and took upon himself this important and delicate trust. He felt the solemn responsibility of this commission; for Abraham had laid upon him two charges,—one, that Isaac should not take a wife from among the daughters of the Canaanites, the other, that in no case was he to allow him to go to Mesopotamia. Then the question arose, Suppose the woman should not be willing to come with the aged servant? "If the woman be not willing to follow thee," said Abraham, "then thou shalt be clear from this my oath; only bring not my son thither again."

At the call of God, Abraham had himself left his kindred and the land of his nativity to dwell as a stranger in another land. He broke off all intercourse with the one country,

and formed no alliances with the other. Paul beautifully expresses this in the 11th chapter of Hebrews:—"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." The same law which bound him, the same covenant into which he had entered, was equally binding upon his son. Under no circumstances, therefore, was he to return to his father's kindred and native country. The separation was perfect and entire; and the woman who should be his companion in life must first become a pilgrim and a stranger like himself.

No doubt Abraham felt assurance that God would prosper them in this solemn and important business; but his language shows us that he had received no divine revelation to that effect. God had left him to the exercise of a wise discretion, just as he leaves us in the conduct of our families and our business.

The Bible calls Eliezer Abraham's servant, and so he was; but it was in the same sense in which an ambassador is the servant of his sovereign. In accordance with the usages of the times, he set out on his journey with ten camels, with attendants, and with rich presents for her who was to be the wife of Isaac, and for her friends. His destination was Nahor, a city of Mesopotamia, nearly four hundred miles from Canaan,—a long journey for those days.

Arrived at the walls of the city, the good old man felt the full difficulty of his position and his need of more than man's wisdom and sagacity; for among the thousands of Nahor how should he choose a wife for Isaac? With a faith as strong as his master's and simple as that of a little child, he referred the matter entirely to God. "And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daugh-

ters of the men of the city come out to draw water ; and let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink, and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink, also ; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac ; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master." Was ever prayer so direct, so childlike, so circumstantial ? It is the very embodiment of faith ; and not only so, but it contains a lifelike picture of those primitive times,—a picture which we may contemplate from half a dozen different stand-points and every view be equally interesting and beautiful.

The wall of the city, under which Eliezer stood, shows us the insecurity of those early times.

The well by the wall, to which the inhabitants resorted, shows us how scarce, and therefore precious, was that beverage with which we are so profusely supplied.

"The daughters of the men of the city" coming out to draw water, not only for domestic purposes, but for the supply of thirsty animals, is another beautiful feature in the scene. "Say not," says Solomon, "that the former days were better than these ;" but we fear that not all the daughters of the men of our cities are so usefully or so healthfully employed.

The request that Eliezer proposed to make, and the response he required, as a sign or token of the divine will, is an evidence that he well knew the kindness of the female heart. It was a sure mark of a good and kind woman, and of one who would make an excellent wife. Beauty, or wealth, or rank, was not asked.

Before he had done speaking, Rebecca came out of the gate of the city with her pitcher upon her shoulder. She was very pretty, or, as the sacred writer expresses it, "very fair to look upon." She went down to the well, filled her pitch-

er, and came up. Good old Eliezer, having uttered his prayer, did not forget what he had asked for, as many of us are too apt to do, but proceeded immediately to seek the token for which he had prayed. Running to the maiden, he said, "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher." Promptly, and with the gushing kindness of a true woman's heart, she replied, "Drink, my lord;" and, lowering the pitcher from her shoulder to her hand, she gave him drink; then—exactly as he had prayed that it might be—she added, "I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking." Truly, here was a pretty serious undertaking for a woman. There were ten camels; and they drink enormously after traversing a dry region, as these had done. But she did it; and, as pitcher after pitcher was poured into the trough, how must the old man's heart have bounded with joy at the prompt and full answer to his prayer! Ah! Rebecca, you are giving him water to drink that you know not of!

This done, Eliezer took a golden ear-ring and a pair of massive golden bracelets and put them upon her, and then asked her whose daughter she was, and whether there was room in her father's house to lodge in. Having told him whose daughter she was, she added, "We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in." In the fullness of his heart, Eliezer "bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord, and said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren."

Rebecca's brother Laban, having ascertained in some way that a stranger stood at the well, ran out to proffer that hospitality which was then and still is a marked characteristic of the people of the East. There were no public houses; and what are called inns in the Scripture probably did not

then exist. These inns were large square buildings, erected at public expense, where caravans and other travelers could find shelter; but usually they had to provide and prepare their own food. They are more properly called caravan-saries. Whether there was any such establishment at Nahor or not, Laban quickly prepared his house for the reception of the stranger and his attendants, and made provision for their animals. In this he did nothing remarkable for that age of the world. In the 18th chapter of Genesis we have a most interesting account of Abraham's hospitality, and, in the 19th, of Lot's. Paul enjoins the same virtue upon Christians, adding "for thereby some have entertained angels unawares," alluding to Abraham, Lot, Manoah, and perhaps others.

Before Laban reached Eliezer, his sister had informed him of who the stranger was, and of all that had taken place. He then went to him, and in the fullness of his heart he exclaimed, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord: wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house and room for the camels."

Now let us follow the earnest old man into the house. Almost immediately food was set before him; "but he said, I will not eat until I have told mine errand." He then told them the whole story of Abraham's prosperity, of his son, of his own commission in regard to obtaining a wife for him, of his prayer for a token from the Lord as to the person he had chosen for Isaac's wife, and of his finding in Rebecca the exact token for which he had prayed. "And now," said he, "if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." Truly this was coming quickly to the point in so delicate a matter; but the simple hearted faith and piety of Eliezer had brought the divine will to be so unmistakably manifest in the transaction that

there could be but one answer to his proposal. "The thing proceedeth from Jehovah," said Laban and Bethuel: "we cannot speak unto thee either bad or good." The consent of all parties was at once obtained. Then Eliezer again bowed his head and worshiped; and, having bestowed upon the bride elect and upon her friends the princely presents with which Abraham had furnished him, he and his attendants ate and drank. Can the history of the world show us another such ambassador, if we except Him who said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work?"

Very naturally Rebecca's mother and brother plead with Eliezer that she might abide with them a little while longer, if it were but ten days. But no; it must not be. "Hinder me not," said the faithful man, "seeing the Lord hath prospered my way." Rebecca promptly consented to go the next morning; and so they set off, followed by the benedictions of the family.

At length the company reached Canaan; and the first incident mentioned is their meeting with Isaac, who had gone in the evening to walk and meditate. A stranger in the land of his birth, without brother or sister, his mother's grave yet wet with his tears, and his venerable father sinking under the infirmities of age, well might he commune with his own heart and with his covenant God as he walked and was sad. And the embassy of Eliezer would, moreover, be a subject of anxiety and solicitude. But presently he was aroused by the sound of an approaching caravan, and, looking up, he saw Eliezer and his companions coming, accompanied by a young woman. Suffice it to say that Rebecca immediately became the wife of Isaac,—the mistress of his mother's tent; "and," adds the historian, with that peculiar tact which throws a volume of meaning into a few simple words, "Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

Pharaoh and Joseph.

THE Pharaoh who ruled Egypt when Joseph was carried down into that country as a captive and a bondman, was evidently a man who possessed many excellent qualities, at the foundation of which lay good common sense, and an honest desire for the well-being of his people. He was not a vain boaster, like Nebuchadnezzar, nor a thoughtless and capricious tyrant, like Ahasuerus, nor a reveller and drunkard, like Belshazzar; but was a temperate man, as we may learn from the dream which his butler had in the prison. "Pharaoh's cup was in my hand," said he, in relating his dream to Joseph; "and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand." His dream had taken him back to his accustomed service, and was prophetic of his restoration to favor, and to that service. He plucked the grapes from the vine, pressed the juice into the cup, and gave it to the king. As it would be impossible for a man to become intoxicated on such wine as that, although it would be a pleasant and refreshing beverage, we infer that Pharaoh, who was so kind to Joseph, and so heedful of the heavenly warning given in his own remarkable dreams, was a man strictly temperate in his habits.

When those strange dreams filled the mind of the monarch while he slept, and left it full of anxiety when he awoke—dreams which none of the wise men of Egypt could interpret, or even pretend to interpret—Joseph was in prison under a false accusation. The pardoned and restored butler, who was so deeply indebted to him, had forgotten him; and of all the men in Egypt, none seemed less likely than he to be called to office and to supreme power. But God, in whom he trusted, had not forgotten him.

Pharaoh's trouble about his own double dream recalled Joseph to the mind of the butler, and like an honest man, as he doubtless was, he promptly said to the king, "I do remember my faults this day;" and then he rehearsed the matter of his own and the baker's dreams in the prison, and Joseph's accurate interpretation. Without hesitation or delay Pharaoh called for Joseph; and as quickly as he could shave and change his raiment Joseph presented himself before him. Let us imagine, if we can, that young stranger, that foreign slave, who was suddenly summoned from a prison to the presence of the mightiest prince then living. Not a sign of trepidation do we find in the youthful hero whom the King of Heaven has chosen as his ambassador to one of the kings of the earth; yet is he as humble and modest, as he is calm, resolute and dignified.

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it."

The reply of Joseph is among the grandest utterances on record. The king had said he had heard that he could understand a dream and interpret it; but the whole soul of Joseph rose in revolt against the false impression that this knowledge was in him, and against the sin of robbing God of his glory; so, rising to the dignity of a prophet, he exclaimed, "It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

The king then told his dream, his double dream, of the kine and of the ears of corn (Gen. xli. 17-24) which need not be quoted. Joseph then spoke: "The dream of Pharaoh is one; God hath showed Pharaoh what he is about to do." Then came the interpretation in clear and circumstantial detail (26-32). That hall, we may be sure, was crowded with the great men of Egypt, its statesmen, its wise men

and its warriors ; but the words of the young Hebrew prophet, as he so calmly and so grandly lifted the dark curtain of the coming years, would fill every soul with admiration and awe ; and in every heart would arise the thought, “ A greater than Pharaoh is here ! ” Then, under Divine guidance, the youthful prophet assumed the role of the counselor, and continued, “ Now, therefore, let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years ; and let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities ; and that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land perish not through the famine.”

The dreams, the clear, God-given interpretation, and the wisdom of the counsel all combined to carry such profound conviction to the minds of all present, the king included, that, without discussion, the advice was taken, and that discreet and wise man was chosen to take charge of this business of transcendent importance. Let the inspired writer tell the story of his appointment :

“ And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is ? ” Then turning to Joseph he said, “ Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art : thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled ; only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck, and he made him to ride in the

second chariot which he had; and they cried, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt."

Thus was Joseph exalted to the position of a prince and a saviour, and all power in Egypt put into his hands. In this he stands as the fullest and most perfect type of Him to whom is given all power in heaven and earth. And yet, in the midst of all this power and grandeur he is the same kind, humble, gentle, tender and affectionate Joseph that he was when his father sent him to Shechem to inquire after the welfare of his brethren; as our Saviour Prince, in his seat of power and glory in heaven, is still our brother, and is calling to us, as Joseph called to his brethren who had treated him so cruelly, "Come near to me, I pray you!"

It may be that Pharaoh, like many of the best men of that age, was a believer in and a worshiper of the Most High God. His language on this great occasion rather favors that impression; and in the first chapter of Exodus, speaking of a period long after Joseph lived, there is a very significant expression in these words: "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, *which knew not Joseph.*" But whatever he may have been, he certainly acted on this occasion the part of a wise and good man. It was perhaps ten or twelve years after this, when the starving people cried to him for food, that he told them to "go unto Joseph, and *what he saith unto you do.*" How strongly do these words of that kind and faithful monarch bring to mind the words of our Heavenly King, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye him!*"

Pharaoh saw, as soon as he learned what was coming upon Egypt, that he needed a man to take charge of an important public trust, a man of great executive ability, wise, faithful and true; and here God, who sent the warning dream, set before him a man so full of grace and truth,

so discreet and wise, that he made choice of him at once to take charge of this important business. Pharaoh's words to his surrounding courtiers, to the statesmen of Egypt, ought to sink deeply into the hearts of Christian citizens when they are called, as he was, to exercise the highest prerogative of sovereignty. The candidate was before him, and other names of able and upright men were doubtless in his mind. But he asked, "Can we find such a one as this is—a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" A good man, a God fearing man, was what he wanted.

But suppose there had been in the court of Pharaoh as much freedom of discussion as we have in our politics, and suppose a host of ambitious aspirants to the great and honorable trust had been pressing their claims, what eloquent harangues could have been made against the candidate! "What! set a Hebrew captive, a man under charge of a shameful crime, a released prisoner, an alien, perhaps an enemy, over all Egypt, and invest him with supreme power!" Ten thousand strong objections could have been urged against such a step. But only one argument could be urged in favor of the appointment, and that outweighed in the mind of this kind, gentle and sensible monarch, all such objections—he is a wise and good man, and the Spirit of God is in him. In short, Joseph was what in our country would be known as an eminent Christian. But we may be sure that the statesmen, councilors and wise men who surrounded the throne at that moment heartily acquiesced in the choice of the sovereign, and that Joseph entered upon the duties of his high office amid the joyful shouts of the populace.

Pharaoh was right, as subsequent events proved; and his wise example is put on record for the guidance of appointing powers in all generations, whether autocratic or popular. God has set this great example before those who are

invested with the right and the awful responsibility of suffrage, and by it bids them call good men to office and none other—men whose lives attest that the Spirit of God is in them, as Pharaoh saw that it was in Joseph. There are Christian men enough in our country to regulate this matter, if they would only stand up sternly to their principles, and make it a losing business on the part of our active politicians to set up scoundrels, drunkards, profane swearers, or men whose lives show that they have no fear of God before their eyes, as candidates for their suffrages.

Pharaoh who made this appointment was an autocrat and did just as he pleased, so far as men were concerned. It was his own sovereign will and pleasure that Joseph should fill that new, peculiar and exalted station, just as much as it was the will of a majority of the voters of the United States that Ulysses S. Grant should be their chief magistrate—in both cases the highest earthly power. But let us see how Joseph himself regarded this exaltation. After he had made himself known to his astonished brethren, he said, “God hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not.” Here the agency of Pharaoh is utterly ignored, and God is all in all. Was this superstition? was it an over-wrought recognition of the Providence of God? or was it the highest wisdom and the purest truth? Who dare say that Joseph was wrong in this solemn declaration? Well, if he was right, who that is called to office, whether by popular suffrage or executive appointment, can say anything less? There was just as much of human instrumentality in the case of Joseph as in that of the President, or any member of Congress, or any judge, or any officer of whatever grade; and every one of them should

feel and say as he did, "God hath made me what I am." Joseph, in the exercise of his official duties, rendered to Pharaoh the things which were Pharaoh's, and to God the things which were God's; and if our officers felt as he did, there would be more faithfulness on their part, and better government than we now have. Joseph and Daniel have been set before us as exemplars of what great executive officers ought to be; and in the heaven-directed example of Pharaoh, the citizens may learn for whom to vote. "Can we," said he, "find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" Citizens, ponder these words; for it is as true in your case, as it was in the case of Joseph, that God has made you what you are—an American citizen; and to him, as your Supreme Master, you are responsible for the manner in which you exercise your power.

Jacob's Ladder.

THE narrative of the life of Jacob, from first to last, is a strange story. The faults of his early life are told with a directness and simplicity which attest, as nothing else can, the perfect fidelity of the inspired record; while the storms of sorrow which darkened his old age are depicted with unexampled pathos. Yet, amid all this sin and sorrow, we see him lifted higher by the hand of God than any other man of his generation, and made the channel of boundless blessings to his race. We see him exalted high above his fellow men, a land-mark in the stream of time. In no biography in the Scriptures is the sovereignty of God more strikingly exemplified than in that of Jacob; and in none of the early saints do we see such a triumph of divine grace over inherent depravity; for a son who could act the part which

Jacob did in the matter of the savory food brought to his aged and blind father, could lay no claim to native goodness of character. Although Jacob was not cut off by that act from his covenanted blessings, yet, like David in the matter of Uriah, he met with soul-crushing retribution in after life through the wickedness and perfidy of his own sons.

Soon after that sad and humiliating transaction in the family of Isaac, Jacob, in obedience to his father's command, leaves home to go to the kindred of his grandfather Abraham in the East, to Padan-aram, to Laban, his mother's brother. It was nearly the same journey which Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, had taken some years before to bring a wife for Isaac. But Eliezer went with attendants, and with ten camels laden with presents, and with provisions for the journey. Jacob, on the other hand, set out alone, with nothing but a scrip and a staff. It was a sore trial, a bitter cross; but, penitent and sad, he seems to have taken it up without a murmur.

Mark the narrative closely, and see in it the comparative barbarism of that age: "And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran; and he lighted upon a certain place and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep." It was a dark and rude age; and in judging of the character and actions of the men of that age, it is well to bear in mind that they lacked most of the benefits and blessings of civilization, and that they were utterly destitute of literature.

Pensive and sad the poor wanderer laid himself down upon his hard and lonely couch. His thoughts upon the past could give him little comfort. His future was dark. True, he had his father's blessing, and his father's

God had promised good. But these could not pierce through the gloom which gathered over his soul in this first night of his exile. But of God it is written, "He giveth his beloved sleep;" so that night he gave Jacob sleep, and not only sleep, but a dream, a glorious vision, the very mention of which stirs the hearts of the people of all ages. It is poetry of the loftiest and profoundest kind; it is prophecy of the highest order. Under the similitude of a ladder, heaven and earth are united by a way over which angels ascend and descend. The lower end stood beside this poor weary one, this almost outcast, this father of a nation and representative of his race; while Jehovah stood above it and spoke to him in tones of loving kindness, announcing himself as the God of his fathers, reiterating the gracious promises made to them, and assuring him of protection and of personal blessings. No wonder that Jacob awoke in astonishment and exclaimed, "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not!"

What Jacob saw was not a figment, but was and is the greatest of realities; for that ladder yet stands, reaching across the immeasurable chasm which separates earth from heaven, and which, but for it, would be separated by a great gulf over which none could pass. That ladder is Christ. He is the Way over which angels travel on errands of good; the Way over which God himself comes to dwell with men; the Way up which the prayer of faith climbs; the Way by which we come to God; and the Way over which the redeemed shall travel when they ascend to glory. Jacob lived at the early dawn of revelation; and thus it pleased Him, who in after ages manifested himself to the people of Israel as man, and as God manifest in the flesh, to show himself to the prime ancestor of that people under this similitude. So Jacob saw Christ, and lived henceforth a life of faith.

The narrative, in all its strange and stupendous grandeur, is full of Christ. His infinite nature, like Jacob's ladder, reaches from earth to heaven, from us poor wandering, sinful, sorrowing fugitives, as Jacob was that night, up to the throne of the Eternal, opening a Way over which the redeemed can pass by acts of faith, and finally go home to be with Him; and over which our guardian angels go to and fro, glad to have such a Way and such a service.

We know from Jacob's exclamation, that he felt himself to be nearer to God than ever he had been before. We may be very sure that he rejoiced in that nearness, and that the longing of his heart would be just like this :

“Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me ;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !”

Let us keep Jacob's emotions blended with our own while we run through the other stanzas of that sweet hymn, in which that great vision is kept constantly in view. True, Jacob did not know, as we know, the story of the Son of Mary; nevertheless he was made glad in the love of his God, and in the promised Seed. But we can look upon the ladder in the light which shines upon us from the New Testament, and see as Jacob could not see, how all centres in Christ. Had Jacob been favored, as we are, with the story of Jesus, he too could have sung, as he thought upon the vision :

“Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone ;
Yet in my dreams I'd be

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

“There let my way appear
Steps unto heaven,
All that thou sendest me
In mercy given ;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !”

Now see the beautiful allusion to this part of the narrative : “And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it ; and he called the name of that place Bethel.” The gifted authoress sees in these stones emblems of life's griefs and trials, the best of all materials out of which the true believer can rear his Bethel.

“Then with my waking thoughts
Bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise ;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

“Or if on joyful wing,
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I fly ;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !”

This almost peerless hymn has been objected to because there is in it no direct mention of Christ. But what is the hymn but a filling out of the favored exile's emotions, as indicated by his brief exclamation and his subsequent acts of worship? The light is only that of the book of Gene-

sis, not that of the evangelists; but the aspirations are as high as it is given to believers in this life to reach. It is a beautiful blending of patriarchal faith with the clearer and brighter hopes which shine in the New Testament. In that clearer light the Christian can see that that ladder was Christ; and so seeing, he sees that the hymn just quoted is full of Christ. The Deist may accept and admire the hymn as speaking only to an absolute Deity; but the Christian is not likely to forget the words of his Lord: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." If the one cannot see Christ in the ladder, the other can.

It is very much to be regretted that a controversy, in which there is very little of the spirit of Christ, has arisen over this hymn; and that some one has even gone so far as to hitch on a clumsy addendum, in which the Saviour is expressly named. Paul, in one place, speaks of the letter which killeth; and truly such jealous care for orthodoxy of expression is a strong case illustrative of the truth of the apostle's words. He who cannot see Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life in the ladder which God showed to Jacob while asleep upon his hard and lonely couch, had perhaps better confine himself to other parts of the inspired volume. But I beg that he will not interfere by his grumbling with the poor, weak, but loving souls who can climb nearer to God upon this sacred song. God gave to Sarah F. Adams the genius, the faith, and the devotion which enabled her to give it to us. May we not believe that it came to us, as do all true blessings, down that Ladder?

Jacob's Interview with Pharaoh.

DRIVEN by famine, the patriarch Jacob and his family repaired to Egypt, at the invitation of his son Joseph, of which God had made him the ruler. His life had been one of sorrow and various and sore trials. But God had been his Guide and Portion; and now, in his old age, he has found a haven of rest in a strange land, under the protection of his illustrious son, with all his children and grandchildren around him.

“And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my pilgrimage been.” Is this the language of complaint? No; but it is the language of humility. At that age of the world, perhaps more than at present, length of days challenged veneration and respect; but Jacob endeavored to convince the king that no special honor was due to him on account of venerable age. His days, in his own esteem, had been not only few but evil, marred by sin and clouded with sorrow. His life—his long life, as we should esteem it—appeared to him, in the retrospect, but as a vapor which had appeared for a little while and was about to vanish away. The years of his childhood now looked like a speck in the dim distance. The twenty-one years of service in Padan-aram were contracted to a handbreadth in the receding vista of memory. The frequent visits of his Almighty Friend and Guardian and Guide would seem to crowd nearer and nearer together in his recollection, as the every-day scenes of life faded away; and

his own grievous sins would, like David's, be ever before him.

This was the time when the period of human life was rapidly diminishing. Noah had lived nine hundred and fifty years, and died but one year before the birth of Abraham. * The life of Shem was protracted to six hundred years. Arphaxad, his son, lived four hundred and thirty-eight years. At the death of Arphaxad, Abraham was one hundred and twenty-five years old, and Isaac twenty-five.

Thus we see how rapidly the span of human life was diminishing. Jacob's whole life extended to one hundred and forty-seven years, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten. But two hundred years after the death of Joseph Moses wrote, "The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away;" and so the period of man's life has continued ever since. Moses himself lived to a much greater age; but his life and strength were miraculously preserved. During a period of about eight hundred years, therefore, extending from the Flood to the time of Moses, human life was reduced from almost a thousand years to less than one hundred. It need not excite surprise, therefore, to hear Jacob say, after having lived one hundred and thirty years, that his days had been few.

"The days of the years of my pilgrimage," says the patriarch. Although life and immortality had been but darkly and obscurely revealed, yet Paul expressly tells us that Jacob was one of those who looked for "a better country, even an heavenly," and so regarded themselves as strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. "My pilgrimage!" The language does not refer to his wanderings in early life, nor to his late journey to Egypt; but it teaches us that Jacob habitually regarded life as only a journey, a pilgrimage

through this world to his everlasting habitation, to those mansions of which the Saviour speaks. Not a journey to the grave,—for even that is but a temporary resting place for the mortal part of the believer,—but to heaven.

There is something sublimely beautiful, as well as sad, in the picture which the patriarch gives of his own life. His days had been few,—far short of those of his ancestors. Jacob sighed at the thought that the strength of man, which, a few generations back, had enabled him to sustain the buffetings of nearly a thousand years, was so rapidly giving way that he found himself a wreck at the end of a single century. And his days had been not only few, but evil. His life had been one of sorrow. Jacob had been sorely chastened, but it was all for his profit; and now he stands at the end of his rough journey, filled with hope, and with little else to do but to bestow his parting blessing upon those he loved, and take his place with Abraham and Isaac in the kingdom of his Father.

It is evident from Jacob's language that he habitually regarded this life as only a pilgrimage. The very word presupposes a place towards which the pilgrim is journeying,—a rest, a home, an abiding habitation. It is one thing to feel and acknowledge this at times when solemn scenes or serious reflections press the truth upon the mind; but it is a very different thing to entertain it as an habitual, ever-present thought. This is what we ought to aim at, to cultivate and cherish, until the thought of heaven shall be the same to us as the thought of home is to the wayworn traveler as he is returning from a long and weary journey. Then will the evils and toils of the journey be lightly esteemed and easily borne; and the provisions for the pilgrimage, which "the Lord of the way" has kindly provided, be estimated at their proper value, thankfully received, and richly enjoyed. If our days be few, it is well: we are the

sooner home. If they are evil, if the way be rough and toilsome, no matter: heaven will bring us sweeter rest. The Saviour's command is, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, that where your treasure is your hearts may be also." This precept harmonizes sweetly with that of which we are speaking; for let our treasure and our hearts be in heaven, and it will be easy to feel that our life is but a pilgrimage,—that we are going home.

Jacob lived one hundred and forty-seven years on earth; but he has already been more than three thousand years in heaven. His pilgrimage on earth to us appears to have been long and weary; but how short it must appear in his view now! His trials were severe; but now he sees that those light afflictions, which were but for a moment, worked for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Where and When did Job Live?

THE land of Uz, named perhaps after Uz, one of the grandsons of Shem, was probably situated in that part of Arabia now known as Arabia Felix. This opinion is strengthened by the fact that the Sabeans, an ancient tribe who are known to have occupied a part of that fine region, are mentioned in the first chapter among those who slew the servants of Job and swept away his property. The Chaldeans, it is true, are also mentioned; but as their predatory and conquering raids extended far from their seat of empire, while the Sabeans were but a comparatively small tribe, this fact does not militate against the hypothesis that Job's residence was in Arabia Felix. His locality, however, is uncertain, and is a question of secondary importance.

Some persons have doubted whether such a man as Job ever existed, regarding him rather as a dramatic myth, like the poor man in Nathan's parable, or like the Prodigal Son. But there is no good reason for entertaining such an opinion; for in Ezekiel xiv., God himself speaks of Job, in connection with Noah and Daniel, as a person of eminent piety, and James holds him up as an example of patience. These references ought to settle all doubt on that point.

But the question, *When did he live?* is by far the more interesting and important. Mr. Scott, in his Commentary, and in his introduction to the Book of Job, remarks on this point: "It is very likely that Job was in his first prosperity between the time when Joseph died and the appearance of Moses in Pharaoh's court as Israel's deliverer." But I think that in this opinion that eminent commentator is mistaken, and that this hypothesis takes away very much of the interest which clusters around the record of that ancient and mysterious saint.

Since the fall of man there have been three distinct dispensations of true religion among men. The first began with Adam. Under it, Abel offered acceptable sacrifice. Under it, Enoch was a preacher of righteousness, walked with God, and was translated. Under it, Noah also became a preacher of righteousness, and by faith, and in obedience to the divine command, "prepared an ark to the saving of his house," and thus became a second ancestor of the race. Under it, those who worshiped the true God separated themselves from the corrupt progeny of Cain, even in the days of Adam and Seth, and were known as "the sons of God."* And again, in the time of Noah, these "sons of God" are mentioned as relaxing in their

* It is a notable fact that the true worshipers of Jehovah are twice called by the same term in the book of Job (chapters i. 6, and ii. 1.) In no other place are they spoken of distinctively by that term.

habits as a holy and peculiar people, and intermingling by marriage with the daughters of men—men whose worship was corrupt, if they had any at all. Thus, just before the flood, “all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” Noah alone held fast to his integrity.

After the flood, Noah built an altar and offered sacrifice, and the Lord accepted his offering. Thus was the true worship of the antediluvian world—of Adam, and Abel, and Seth, and Enoch—carried over that great dividing catastrophe by Noah, and still continued by his faithful descendants until a new dispensation was slowly evolved in Abraham and his posterity. Melchisedek, the priest of the most high God, doubtless belonged to this earliest dispensation; and to this same era and dispensation I would assign the date and the place of Job.

The third dispensation began with the incarnation of our Lord, and will continue until the consummation of all things. It embraces in itself all that is true, glorious and immutable in both the preceding dispensations.

It is remarkable that a veil is drawn over the religious history of the race from Noah until Abraham. In Melchisedek we get a momentary glimpse of the true faith which still shone, but with slowly decreasing lustre, in the outside world; and in the answer of Laban and Bethuel to Eliezer, touching the matter of their sister becoming the wife of Isaac—“The thing proceedeth from Jehovah; we cannot speak unto thee bad or good,”—we see an acknowledgment of the overruling Providence of Jehovah; although we afterwards learn that this same Laban had idol gods in his house. Thus slowly, through centuries, did the light of this earliest dispensation grow dim, until at length darkness settled down upon the whole earth, except the little spot occupied by Abraham’s children of promise.

Now let us see whether the life and habits of Job—his

mode of worship, so far as we know it—the doctrines uttered by himself and his friends—taken in connection with his domestic establishment as a patriarch prince, and his great longevity, will fix him in any period later than Abraham. It is, I think, more probable that he lived before Abraham, and that neither of these great men knew anything of the other.

His continual habit of offering sacrifices for his children mark him a priest of the most high God, as was Melchisedek; and in his mode of worship he walked in the footsteps of his ancestors, Enoch and Noah. In the sublime general truths uttered by himself and his friends (for his friends uttered truths as well as he, but erred in their application), we see a reflex, rather, of the antediluvian theology than of that pertaining to the Abrahamic covenant. Enoch prophesied of Christ when he said, (Jude 14, 15) “Behold he cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all,” etc.; and Job’s exultant cry out of the depths—“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth”—is very much like it. Both prophecies reach to the Resurrection and the Judgment, and dimly foreshadow the Incarnation. The truths are grand, but lack the distinctness of Moses and the Prophets, and still more that of Christ and the Apostles. It is a true light from Heaven, glorious, yet nebulous—bright, but not concentrated in a central orb.

Job was a shepherd prince, and it is written of him, that “this man was the greatest of all the men of the East.” In the ages immediately succeeding the deluge, there were numerous shepherd princes, some of them very powerful. A confederation of such princes conquered Egypt before the birth of Abraham; and it is believed that the king who reigned when Abraham, like Jacob, was driven by stress of famine to visit that country, (Gen. xii.) was one of these

shepherd kings. Before the time of Joseph, however, they had been expelled; and hence it was that shepherds were regarded as abominable by the Egyptians in his day.

If we would know what Job's position among his fellow men was in the days of his first prosperity, we need only turn to his own vigorous portraiture of it in the twenty-ninth chapter—a picture which would not apply to any period later than the purely patriarchal—a period which reached through the antediluvian world, and through the post-diluvian world to the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Of the age of Job, at the time when his calamities fell upon him, we can only reason inferentially. But that a man in early life could have attained to the wealth, position and authority to which he had attained, is altogether improbable. Moreover his children at that time were all living separately in their own houses. Again: when Elihu began to speak, he accounted for his previous silence by saying, "I am young, and ye are very old;" and in saying this he addressed his words to Job, as much as to his three aged friends. Again: Eliphaz the Temanite, in one of his addresses to Job said, "With us are the greyheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father; intimating that, old as Job was his father was yet alive. Now take all these in connection with what we read at the close of the book—"After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations." and it almost obliges us to infer that the life of Job extended over a period of more than two, probably not less than three, centuries, and that, consequently, he lived during the period between the flood and the calling of Abraham. Abraham lived one hundred and seventy-five years; Isaac, one hundred and eighty; Jacob, one hundred and forty-seven; Joseph, one hundred and ten. About two hun-

dred years after the death of Joseph, Moses wrote: "The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if, by reason of strength, they be four-score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." We see, therefore, that in the days of Joseph the period of human life was greatly diminished as compared with what it had been a very few generations before; and that in the time of Moses it was as short as it is now. How, then, are we to assign the place of this long-lived man to the period intervening between the death of Joseph and the exodus from Egypt?

This cannot be; for everything about the book—its hero and his friends, its sublime but peculiar theology, its strange and mysterious narratives—all bear the impress of the most hoary antiquity. In it, as I love to believe, God has fixed in permanence a bright coruscation of that light which shined upon the pathway of Enoch and Noah, and illuminated the altar of Melchisedek; and that in Jesus Christ, that "Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek," we have that earliest and most magnificent light, blended with the more definite and peculiar light of Moses and the prophets, all combined—not lost, but swallowed up—in his more glorious light. Thus viewed, how intensely interesting do the profound reasonings of these very ancient men become, as they grappled with difficulties too hard for them, and groped their way through such nebulous rays as it had pleased God to give them!

Job's Desire and Hope.

JOB earnestly longed for the grave as a place "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." Whether the afflicted patriarch looked forward to that higher and better world where is fullness of life, fullness of joy, we cannot tell. Probably not. He yearned for mere rest, absolute quietude. In his day the life and immortality so grandly set forth in the Gospel had been so dimly revealed that he could not take up the dying shout of the great Apostle, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Still his language is sublimely beautiful, full of hope and consolation. He saw in death something very much to be desired. To him the grave was not enshrouded in the blackness of darkness forever. Some light, some hope, some good not yet revealed, awakened fond desire; and although that hope had nothing in it more definite than an unshaken persuasion of his own immortality, and that God would bless him in it, he bursts out in the sublime utterance quoted above.

Jesus, with all his holiness and power, although enjoying always the infinite love of his Father, and with all the glory, triumph and joy that lay before him, was a man of sorrows, because of the troubling of the wicked. In his pure eyes sin was exceedingly sinful, unspeakably loathsome; and to his infinite dignity the scorn, the scoffs, the contempt of men must have been intensely painful, notwithstanding the meekness and patience with which they were borne. In this form of trial Christ was made like unto his brethren, only that his cup was more bitter than theirs, in the degree that his nature was higher and holier than theirs.

The troubling of the wicked is a part, and an important

part, of that discipline which God sees to be necessary for every believer in Jesus. We ought not to regard the bad conduct of those by whom we are surrounded, whether it be in personal injuries and wrongs done to ourselves, or wickedness in general, as something exceptional to the dealings of our Heavenly Father, but as a part of them, carefully meted out to us by his unerring hand. David, in the seventeenth Psalm, speaking of wicked men in his earnest and agonizing supplication, calls them "the wicked which is thy sword, men which are thy hand, O Lord." This is the right view of these things; for if we can regard these troublers as a part of our chastening Father's rod, faith can rise in triumph over them, and the chastening will result in our profit. By rising to that view of the matter there will be less danger of a struggle of mere human passion against human passion. Jesus so viewed the troubling of the wicked; and hence when he was reviled he reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not.

All this troubling will cease in heaven, and there the weary will be at rest. Sweet as these words are, they express but negative ideas, and nothing of the glory, the beauty, the love, the joy, the fellowship or the unwearying activities of heaven. Job was greatly afflicted with the troubling of the wicked, who turned cruelly upon him in the day of his calamity, as he himself tells us, and he was very weary of his complicated and protracted sufferings. Hence he looked forward to the grave as to a place of absolute rest, and to the ever-living but almost unrevealed God, with a good but shadowy hope of bliss beyond the grave. But now, since Jesus has brought life and immortality to light, the faith and hope of the weakest believer may be, ought to be, and is, greater than was Job's. So, in that light let us try to endure the troubling of the wicked, and those labors, cares and infirmities which bear heavily

upon us; for soon, if we faint not, the wicked will cease from troubling and the weary be at rest.

Christ as seen in Joseph.

IN all the Old Testament history we find no character who bears so close a resemblance to Christ as Joseph. As Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, so in the history of Joseph no fault is recorded. That he was a sinner we know, for "there is not a just man upon earth who liveth and sinneth not." But in the record of his life we find no sin, unless his use of the Egyptian asseveration, "by the life of Pharaoh," may be so regarded.

Christ on earth took on him the form of a servant; so Joseph, by the act of his cruel brethren, became a servant, a slave.

Like Christ, Joseph was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. During the twelve or thirteen years spent in the service of Potiphar and in the prison, he was sorely tempted and tried, but his faith failed not. Like Job, he clung to his integrity and to his God. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," is the grand utterance of Job's abiding faith. How Joseph suffered we may gather from his earnest and mournful appeal to Pharaoh's butler, who was soon to be restored to favor: "Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

His deliverance came at last; and nothing in the life of

any other man so much resembles the resurrection of our Lord from the tomb, and his ascension to the right hand of God as Lord of all, as does the call of Joseph from that dungeon, and his almost instantaneous elevation to supreme authority. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," said Jesus after his resurrection. Joseph's message to his father is in his measure very similar: "God hath made me lord of all Egypt. Come down unto me, tarry not."

But in Joseph's forgiveness of his brethren, who had so grievously sinned against him, we see the image of the great Redeemer most signally displayed. By a wise course of loving severity he brought them to repentance; and then, when he heard the noble and eloquent plea of Judah in behalf of Benjamin, offering himself to become a bondman that Benjamin might return in safety to his father, the great heart of the lord of all Egypt burst forth in revelation of himself as their long lost and deeply injured brother. Then he rushed to their embrace as the father ran to meet the returning prodigal. Not a word of reproach was uttered. All is loving-kindness and overflowing grace. The whole scene is very much in keeping with what was probably the first meeting between Jesus and Peter, after the denial, after the agony and death of Calvary, the three days' rest in the darkness of the tomb, and the resurrection to immortal life and illimitable power and glory: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Not a word of upbraiding is heard in either case.

Jesus says, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you;" and here we see Joseph in Egypt, seventeen hundred years before the divine Master went up into that mountain, acting out that great precept in all the fullness of its spirit. Thus God gave in those far-past times some glimpses of that overflowing good-

ness which burst upon the world in a flood of light when the Sun of Righteousness arose.

Moses in Exile.

THAT is a noble testimony which Paul bears to the character of Moses, that he "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." In this we discover the true secret of his subsequent excellence and honor; for among great men he stands without a peer. All the conquerors, kings and statesmen of antiquity dwindle into pigmies when brought into comparison with him; and the Holy Spirit himself testifies that "there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and of all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel."

Thrown by the providence of God, in his early childhood, into the family of the King of Egypt, and yet not deprived of the instruction of a pious mother, he grew up to manhood under the most favorable circumstances for the development of his mental powers; for Stephen tells us that he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." In this condition of life he remained until he was full forty years old. Possessing native talents, doubtless, of the highest order, and enjoying all the advantages that royalty could throw around him, his advances in knowledge and administrative skill were as far and as high as human erudition in that day was able to carry him. We see in this how God educates his

servants and fits them for their work. He lets man do what man can do, and what man cannot do he does himself. Little did the wise men of Egypt dream that their lessons to their gifted pupil were fitting him for the performance of those terrible acts which struck terror to the hearts of the Egyptians, and humbled that proud nation to the dust. And as little did Gamaliel think that in the talented and earnest Saul of Tarsus he was developing powers to be consecrated to the service of Jesus of Nazareth.

But, surrounded as Moses was with all the wisdom, wealth, honor, and splendor of the Egyptian court, the Divine Spirit kept alive those holy principles which had been instilled into his infant mind by Amram and Jochebed, his parents. He ceased not to remember that he was an Israelite, and that he owed homage and obedience to Israel's God.

At that mature age God led him away from the scenes of his earlier advantages by a series of mysterious events. The children of Israel were at this time in a state of bondage. They were not slaves in the sense in which we understand that word; but, like the serfs of Russia, they were compelled to labor a part of the time without compensation. I believe this labor was performed for the State, and not for individual masters, as in our Southern States; nor do I believe that the Israelites in Egypt were ever regarded as property.* That they labored for the State, and not for individual masters, is plainly intimated in Ex. i. 11, where it is said, "They built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Raamses."

It was policy, rather than cupidity, that led the king and people of Egypt to afflict this portion of their population; for they were there, as they have ever since been, a peculiar people. They differed from the Egyptians in language,

* This was written before the Great Rebellion.

manners, customs and religion, and they were living apart, refusing to amalgamate or conform, and yet growing prodigiously in numbers and power. This growth alarmed the politicians of Egypt, and revelation has given us the result of their deliberations upon the subject:—"Come on, said they, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass that when there falleth out any war they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them out of the land." So they did evil that good might come; or rather they did one evil that another anticipated evil might be averted.

At the age of forty years it came into the heart of Moses to visit his oppressed brethren. Great thoughts dilated his heart. No doubt he had some vague premonitions of his high destiny as the deliverer of Israel, for Stephen plainly tells us so. (Acts vii. 25.) Patriotism, indignation, and high resolve glowed in his breast; but no doubt they were mingled with baser passions and motives. His first act was one of indiscreet vengeance. The next, although right in itself, and performed with dignity, resulted in a way so mortifying to himself that his ambition was checked and his fears aroused. He saw that neither he nor they were yet ready to strike for freedom. Having incurred the wrath of Pharaoh by slaying the Egyptian, and his authority being repudiated by his brethren, he fled.

We next find him, a poor, weary, dejected fugitive, sitting by a well in the land of Midian. Thus was Moses led by his all-wise Teacher from the schools of Egypt to a higher school, in which he was kept another forty years. Here it was that he was chastened and disciplined and made meet for the Master's use. Oh, how would that mighty and cultivated intellect work during that long period of comparative solitude, guided and illumined by the Holy Spirit! This was his Valley of Humiliation. Here he

learned of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, and became transformed from the fierce and impetuous hero we found him when he slew the Egyptian, to the meekest of men. Here, being poor, he filled the place at once of a son and a servant to his father-in-law, and kept his flock. Here he sustained the tender relations and discharged the duties of a husband and a father; and here, doubtless, he penned those historical and poetical books and psalms which treat of events in which he was not an actor, and of grand truths which are eternal and unchangeable in their nature.

The pen of inspiration is almost silent respecting the personal history of Moses during this long period. We have a glimpse of him as he enters into his state of exile, and is introduced into the family of Jethro, at the age of forty years. Then the curtain drops upon him until, at the age of four-score, he is summoned to hold converse with Jehovah at the burning bush. We might indulge in any amount of fancy respecting both the inner and the outer life of this wonderful man during that long period; but to do so would not be profitable. That it was to him a school of discipline we know. That it was full of sore trials we may safely infer from their effects; for we see him rash and impetuous when he enters it; meek and lowly in heart when he again appears. That it was a period of sorrow we may gather from the 90th Psalm, where faith struggles with despondency and the drooping soul labors to strengthen itself in God by fervent prayer. He had formerly hoped that it had been he who should redeem Israel from bondage; but they were still groaning, and he was fast approaching that age when the strength of man is but labor and sorrow. "Return!" he exclaims in agony of prayer, "O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. Oh, satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the

days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children; and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it." Thus did the saint, the brother and the patriot plead with God; and in due time the prayer was abundantly and gloriously answered. At the period of life when other men are borne down with the labor and sorrow incident to old age, his youth was renewed like the eagle's, and he became the deliverer, leader, and lawgiver of his people, and for another forty years performed a part higher and more august than was ever before or since given to mortal man.

The Right Way.

"HE led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation," says the Psalmist, (107) speaking of "the redeemed of the Lord." Primarily the reference is, doubtless, to the children of Israel in their way from Egypt to Canaan. Had human wisdom directed their path, they would have gone up to Canaan by the same route that the patriarch Jacob and his family went down from Canaan to Egypt at the call of his illustrious son, and by which the mortal remains of the same patriarch were borne back to Canaan by Joseph and his brethren and a numerous retinue of mourners. And had the matter been left to man's wisdom and guidance, that would have been the "right way;" for it would have been folly and presumption in man to have attempted to lead them in the way that God led them. By the one route they could have reached Canaan in less than forty days; but in the way in

which it pleased God to lead them, it required forty years to reach the promised land. In that way they would have had no Red Sea to cross, and no Jordan ; but by the way God chose, both had to be passed.

But it was the better way, the "right way," notwithstanding it was the longest, the most difficult and the most dangerous. Infinite wisdom was their guide, infinite power their defense, and the glory of God and their highest and most lasting good the end. "He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation ;" and in doing so, he wrote, in the simple narrative of their wondrous migration, an allegory of the earthly pilgrimage of "the redeemed of the Lord" of all nations and all generations. It was expedient for them that they should be disciplined and proved, and, by a long and painful process, be made meet for the inheritance which lay before them. By being sorely tried, deeply humbled, severely chastened, they were taught to trust in the Lord their God, and to learn that without him they could do nothing.

There was much murmuring in that wilderness. So there is among God's people of every age. At nothing was the Lord more displeased than at this complaining spirit among his people in the wilderness. Is it likely that it is less offensive in his sight now? The wandering Israelites had more to complain of than most of us have ; nor had they half the evidences of the faithfulness and loving-kindness of the Lord that we enjoy. They had far more reason to persuade themselves that he was not leading them in the right way than any of us have ; yet were they required to believe, to submit, to trust, to obey. They saw the wonders of his power at the Red Sea. They experienced his fatherly care in the daily supply of manna. They walked by day under the shadow of the cloudy pillar, and by night in its light. But what were all these to the wonders and

the love displayed in the life and death of Jesus? In view of these, shall we dare to murmur at our Father's dealings with us, or for a moment entertain feelings of distrust?

It is a great attainment in the Christian life to be able to thank God for everything he does—not merely in the submissive spirit of one who yields to a power which he knows he cannot resist; but in the joyful assurance that the dispensation, whatever it may be, is really for good. It may be very grievous and hard to bear. It may cause the sufferer, like Job, to sit down in sackcloth and ashes. Yet the crushed and bleeding heart may utter, as his did, the grateful and adoring cry, “Blessed be the name of the Lord!” It is possible for the deepest sorrow and the highest joy to co-exist. To the unbeliever this is an inexplicable paradox; but Paul has allusion to this condition when he bids those to whom he wrote to be joyful in tribulation, and in everything to give thanks.

That is not the gratitude which arises from the thought that our condition, bad as it may be, might be worse; for there is no joy in such a thought as that. But it is the real, the positive comfort which flows from the full persuasion that all is well—that this sorrow, this suffering, be it what it may, is a token of the loving kindness of our Heavenly Father.

But suppose the sorrow to be occasioned by our own sins? Will not that reflection render the emotion of joy impossible? By no means. It may cause the sorrow to be perpetual; but that need not prevent the joy of the Lord from growing up side by side with it. It is traditionally said of Peter, that he never heard a cock crow, after that terrible night on which he denied his Lord, without weeping; and doubtless Paul often wept when he thought of the part which he bore in the murder of Stephen. But Peter and Paul were both happy Christians notwithstanding. I

once knew a naval officer who, prior to his conversion, had put his name to an official report to our government, bringing unfounded and slanderous charges against a body of American foreign missionaries on the Sandwich Islands. This was many years ago. That much-lamented act was a cloud that darkened all his future years; and many hours which might have been spent in peaceful slumbers were passed in tears and groans. Yet I never knew a man who had a livelier sense of the love of Christ, or a brighter or more joyful hope of heaven, than he. His penitence and humility were the most profound I ever knew, perhaps morbidly so; but as he sunk, Jesus rose in him, and his grace so abounded as to be far more than a counterpoise for all his sorrow; so that a joy which was not of this world shone in his countenance. The joy of the Lord was his strength, and oh! how earnestly he worked for the salvation of others! Thus even he was led in the "right way to a city of habitation."

Christians, whatever be your infirmities, your frailties, your losses, bereavements, afflictions, toils and vexations, be sure of this, that God is leading you in "the right way"—in the very best way for you to travel to your city of habitation. Lean upon his arm; lean heavily, but joyfully. Cast all your care upon him, and suffer him to make his strength perfect in your weakness. Mourn for sin; but beware how you render the grace of Christ of none effect by regarding your guilt as still adhering to you. Had Peter done so, it would have been impossible for him to have stood before his risen Lord and say, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." The remembrance of our sins and short-comings ought to humble us; but when it causes us to cast away our confidence, when it obscures our hope, and extinguishes our joy, then it partakes more of the nature of remorse than of penitence,

more of the legal spirit than of faith. It only proves that the man who loses his hope at the remembrance of his sins, would, were it not for those sins, be trusting in his own righteousness. Peter had a good deal of this self-trusting spirit, which is only another form of self-righteousness; but his shameful conduct on the night his Master was betrayed cured him of that. He, too, was led in "the right way" to heaven.

Oh! for an abiding persuasion that whatever be the way, whether light or dark, joyous or grievous, long or short, rough or smooth, still it is "the right way" for us. Whatever may be the best way for others, let us be sure of this, that what God appoints for us is the very best that he, in all the fullness of his love and his resources, can assign to us. We may feel sometimes as if we were uncared for, and tossed as a waif upon creation. But it is not so, for it is written, "He careth for you." Of the believer, God himself declares, "I will be with him in trouble." And one believer wrote what all others ought to echo—"Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." How happy would our world be, could every soul appropriate these words of faith, and joy, and triumph!

The Great Sacrifice.

WHEN Isaac discovered his father's object in taking him to the place of sacrifice, and that he was to be laid a bleeding victim on the burning altar, doubtless a prayer equivalent to that uttered by Jesus in Gethsemane burst from his agonized soul—"O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" Abraham could not grant the petition, for One greater than he had imperatively demanded the

sacrifice. But at the right moment that greater One did interpose and save him. The cup did pass from Isaac's lips; for his death would have been bootless. No sins could have been washed away in his blood. Still that record of the faithful patriarch, who, with uplifted arm was about to smite to death his beloved son in whom he was well pleased, stands as a great prophecy of what did take place many centuries afterwards, possibly on the same spot, when a greater Father smote to death a still more beloved Son—a Son whose life was given as a ransom for many, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, whose death is life to the world. When that Father grasped his sword and bade it smite the Shepherd, there was no voice in heaven or on earth potential enough to forbid the blow. It was not possible that the cup could pass from that victim.

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Abraham so loved God, that he withheld not his only and well-beloved son from him. The father of the faithful, therefore, stands as a type of the Eternal Father in this greatest of all transactions. Both went as far as the case demanded. Isaac's blood was not shed, for it could have wrought no redemption. No river of life could have flowed from that altar, therefore his days were prolonged on earth, a link in that patriarchal chain through which all the families of the earth were to be blessed. God saved Isaac; Jesus he could not save, without a violation of all his promises to the fathers, and an abandonment of his purposes of mercy to our fallen race.

Think what it cost Abraham to give his only son a bloody offering to God; and then think—but with the profoundest reverence—what it cost our Heavenly Father to give his only begotten Son a bloody sacrifice for us. Let us not assert, as some presumptuously do, that Divinity cannot

suffer; for we know not the capabilities of the Divine nature. Suffering is the consequence of sin, it is true; but beings perfectly pure may be involved in that suffering. Can we imagine, for example, that the angel who was sent to strengthen the agonized Redeemer in the garden, experienced no sympathetic sorrow? We know not now, but we shall know hereafter, as far as our finite natures are capable of comprehending, what it cost the Father to give his only begotten Son for our redemption.

In the brief narratives given by the evangelists of the crucifixion, the incidents, so far as the eye and the ear could observe them, are related in the simplest language; but what lay beyond this purview is only to be gathered from the utterances of the great Sufferer himself, and from the tremendous phenomena which occurred simultaneously. In the bitter and spiteful utterances of the chief priests, scribes, elders and rabble, we see an unexampled outbreak of human depravity, and an awful commentary upon the words of Jesus, uttered only a few hours before, "This is your hour and the powers of darkness."

As the tragedy deepened, the confession and salvation of one of the malefactors who suffered with Jesus is related as a beautiful and wondrous episode. Out of the deep darkness, and from the midst of those blasphemous surroundings, the sweet glories of Him who is mighty to save, and who can save to the uttermost, bursts forth in that hope-inspiring incident.

But now let us tread softly. Let us feel as Moses felt as he approached the Burning Bush, that the ground on which we tread is holy. Up to this time a scoffing, roaring, blaspheming crowd, together with the invisible powers of darkness, occupied the scene. Upon these the sun could shine as it shines upon all. But no sooner is the dying thief snatched as a brand from the burning, than it is added:

“From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.” One agonizing cry is all we have to indicate to us what transpired during those awful hours of darkness. Did that dreadful sword which Jehovah, by the mouth of the prophet, called upon to awake against “the Man who is my Fellow,” darken the heavens and cause the rocks to tremble even to rending! Surely it was during those hours of which we have hardly any report that the fierce conflict of the Son of God took place, and not while wicked and cruel men were mocking, and devils doing their utmost. That fearful cry, “*Eloi, eloi, lama sabacthani?*” tells us who was contending with him then. The preternatural darkness had awed the noisy multitude to silence. Spirits of evil had probably been driven to their own place, leaving the Father and Son alone upon the mount, as Abraham and Isaac were alone in their dreadful hour of trial.

It will be the work of the redeemed throughout eternity to fathom the depths of that infinite conflict, and of that love which led both the parties to it. In this life we can only look up to that height as we look at the far off stars, and down into that measureless depth, as we do into the period before the earth was. Still enough has been told us—as much as we are able to comprehend. Those three dark hours must remain dark to mortals. But be patient, Christian, and walk by faith, and soon angels will tell you, and Jesus himself will tell you, what it cost him to redeem you and lift you up to his throne.

It is evident that Jesus did not die, as mortals die, of the exhaustion of the powers of nature. His work was done. With a loud voice—not the agonizing cry of an expiring mortal, but the shout of a conqueror—he cried, “It is finished,” and then commending his spirit to the hands of his Father, he bowed his head and yielded up the ghost. He had said, “I have power to lay down my life, and I have

power to take it again ;” and in his death, and in his resurrection, we see a verification of his words. “Socrates died like a philosopher, but Jesus Christ like a God.”

Solomon.

“COME near to me, I pray you,” said Joseph to his awe-stricken brethren, just after he had told them who he was. “Handle me and see,” said Jesus, after his resurrection, to his still more awe-stricken disciples, whose superstitious fears suggested the idea of a spirit, a ghost, an apparition. It is the law of our being that whatsoever we would understand clearly we must examine closely, even familiarly ; and that whatever we keep at a distance is invested with a greater or less degree of vagueness and mystery. Before we can love any object we must first become intimate with it. We must come near to it, and, if it may be so, handle it.

Well, if we may become familiar even with God himself, —if the disciples might even handle their risen Lord, —surely we may examine closely the great men whose living portraits are embodied in the sacred volume. They are there for that purpose. They are mirrors in which we may see ourselves ; and their experience ought to be our guide. It is a great and hurtful mistake to suppose that Abraham, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and Samuel, and David, and the prophets, were invested with sanctity unattainable in the present day. It is far better to regard them as our fellow-servants, more highly favored than ourselves in some respects, and less so in others. It is the vague and erroneous notion of the unapproachable greatness and holiness of these Bible worthies that keeps the great body of God’s

modern people so unfamiliar with them, and chills that brotherly affection which ought to be felt for them. We hold them near enough to be admired, but too far off to be loved.

These general remarks are applicable to all the great and good characters set forth in the inspired volume. But there is one whose magnificent portrait flits before us in a gorgeous but ever-varying panorama,—sometimes enshrined at once in earthly glory and in the beauty of holiness, and again we see him marred and battered, and driven before a whirlwind of temptation, but still great,—“wandering, but not lost.”

The first notable incident that we read of Solomon, after he ascended the throne of his father David, is his humble prayer for wisdom. The prayer itself is evidence of wisdom far beyond that of ordinary men. The root of the matter was in him, and from that sprung his extraordinary clearness and quickness of perception of all manner of truths. Very soon afterwards, in the strange dispute between the two mothers, this wisdom, or, rather, this sagacity, was practically displayed in the judgment which he gave. The assertions of one woman were pointedly contradicted by those of the other. No other human being witnessed the transaction; so no witness could be called to settle the dispute. The king saw and acknowledged the utter impossibility of deciding the case by any ordinary procedure of law and evidence; so he instantly determined, by a test of terrible severity, to appeal for the truth to the irrepressible principle of maternal love. “Bring me a sword,” said the royal judge. “Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other.” This was too much for the real mother, as Solomon knew that it would be. “O my Lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it,” said she; but the other coldly and unfeel-

ingly agreed to the proposal. The case was now clear enough, and the living child was restored to its true mother.

In this incident we have an example of the quick, penetrating, far-reaching mind of Solomon, and of the almost unerring sagacity and readiness with which he could find and apply means to accomplish his ends. This affair not only proved that he had a deep insight into the human heart, but it also shows that he had extraordinary inventive genius. Any man could understand that both these women knew the truth, and that one of them told the truth; but the king silenced both the disputants, and made Nature, which cannot lie, speak. Doubtless this was the kind of wisdom for which Solomon prayed; and, in view of the responsibilities of the high office to which he had been called, nothing could be more valuable or desirable.

To a quick, penetrating judgment, Solomon added a searching scrutiny into the nature of all things, both moral and physical, that could be known. As a moralist, we have in the Book of Proverbs a world of practical wisdom. As a naturalist, it is said that he studied the nature of every thing, from the cedars of Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall. As a king or magistrate he surpassed all other men, so that the fame of his administration spread over the then known world, and the rulers of all nations sought his friendship and counsel.

But to this wonderful mental endowment it pleased God to add other gifts almost beyond measure,—wealth, prosperity, honor, influence. In his person and in his outward estate, therefore, Solomon had all that the largest ambition could desire of earthly good. As it was given to Job to prove experimentally the last degree of earthly adversity, so was it given to Solomon to exhibit to us a living example of the opposite condition. It is in this point of view that the study of his life becomes instructive and profitable.

He was not satisfied with the mere abstract knowledge of anything. He must have experience; therefore he appears to have tested the value of every thing by actual trial. Hence he says, "Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great *experience* of wisdom and knowledge; and *I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly.*" And again: "I sought in mine heart to *give myself unto wine*, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; *and to lay hold on folly*, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life." Strange and perilous experiment! Plunge into folly, and even inebriation, so that by the experimental test he might know their value, and thus become more wise, and be enabled to see what was good for the sons of men.

Of intoxicating drink he has given a faithful and solemn report in Prov. xxiii. "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not. When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again!" Who but an experienced inebriate could give so vivid a picture of the wine itself, of the revolting concomitants of drunkenness, of the confusion of brain and the irregular pas-

sions which follow, and of the incoherent and passionate expressions of returning reason under the lash of an outraged conscience? Thus did Solomon give himself unto wine that he might acquaint his heart with wisdom. We may not say that he did well in so doing; but we may say that it was well for the sons of men that he did. If we may not thank Solomon for the solemn lesson, we may thank God.

Elegant and gorgeous voluptuousness was indulged in by this extraordinary man to an extent beyond the power of any to rival. In this lay his most dangerous snare, his greatest error, his darkest sin. This, more than anything else, casts a deep and lasting stain upon his character. Strong as he was, he did not come out of that fire uninjured; for, like Samson in the lap of Delilah, he was shorn of his glory and strength; and when he tried to shake himself he found that he had become weak and like any other man. His alliance with idolatrous women led him to patronize and even to practice idolatry; and thus he became a snare to his own people, and greatly offended the God of his fathers. To him wine, and music, and every other species of pleasure, were like the cords on the arms of the strong man. He broke them as though they had been threads touched by fire; but the ensnaring influence of women was too strong even for him. See Proverbs v., vi., vii.

Solomon took great delight in making improvements of every kind. Of these he tells us in the second chapter of Ecclesiastes; and having fine taste and skill, together with almost unlimited wealth, no man can ever hope to rival him in this department of laudable and enlightened pleasure. He says, "I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me; and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from

them ; I withheld not my heart from any joy ; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor ; and this was my portion of all my labor." For seven years Solomon was employed, with all his power and skill and forces, in building the Temple ; but, that done, he seems to have turned his attention to other works. He built Tadmor in the desert, believed to be the same that is now called Palmyra, the splendid ruins of which are the admiration of travelers to this day ; and the pools of water of which he speaks are yet existing in good preservation a few miles from Jerusalem.

And what was the result of all this power, and wealth, and well-directed industry ? Let Solomon himself answer. "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do ; and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." What a report from a man who had all that heart could wish of this world's honor, power, wealth, and pleasure ! These are not the words of some sour ascetic, scowling from his narrow cell upon a busy, bustling world, but of a man who had drunk freely from every fountain of earthly joy,—a man who sought pleasure and enjoyment with all his heart, and found them in measure far beyond what any other man need hope for. They are the words of an honest, earnest, and wise man,—a man guided in all his researches after experimental wisdom by the Spirit of God. He, doubtless, often forgot, in the impetuous pursuit of ambition and pleasure, the object of his perilous wanderings ; but his Guide did not. The rein was freely given to his giant propensities,—his thirst for knowledge, his kingly ambition, his fine tastes, his love of pleasure, and even the indulgence of his sensual appetites. They led him to the achievement of all that could be done or enjoyed by man. And what did it profit ? What did it amount to ? Vanity and vexation of spirit, and no profit. And yet these are

the things for which men are starving their souls, and even bartering their salvation.

If we would understand the character of Solomon aright, we must regard him as an explorer, a discoverer, in the great moral world, extending from the portals of heaven to the purlieus of the bottomless pit; for he says himself, "I gave myself to know wisdom and to know madness and folly,"—not merely to know these things abstractly, but experimentally. God, in his providence, furnished him with the means, and gave him strength sufficient for the fearful tour, and finally brought him back an humbler, a wiser, and a better man, and has given to us, in the sententious language of his erratic servant, the rich stores of wisdom which he brought back when he returned from his wanderings.

Solomon's mission was to shed light upon this world, its interests, its profits and its pleasures, and to show us what is valuable and worth seeking, and what is vain, deceptive, and unworthy of pursuit, and thus lead our feet into the paths of true wisdom. The Book of Proverbs is an exhaustless treasury of practical wisdom; the Book of Ecclesiastes is a continuation of the same sententious expositions of the truth, blended with the strange and varied personal experience of the author. Oh, how earnestly he labors to convince the sons of men, for whose good he tried every thing and trod paths of sin and folly from which any other man would have been swept to perdition, of the emptiness, worthlessness, and vanity of the things which the great majority of men esteem so highly and pursue so eagerly. "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

How solemn and impressive is his conclusion, the sum total of all his wisdom and experience! "Let us hear (says he) the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole ——— of

man." In our version the last clause reads, the "whole *duty* of man;" but the word is supplied, and weakens the force of the sentence. It is elliptical, and admits of being filled up with many words. It may stand as it is, "the whole duty of man;" or we may paraphrase it in the words of the Catechism, "the chief end of man;" but to maintain the full energy of Solomon's words, we must say "the whole of man." Like Paul, Solomon appears at last to have cast every thing out of his heart but the fear of God and the spirit of obedience. In him sin abounded, it is true; but we have good reason to believe that grace still more abounded. The very fact that he found the joys of life unsatisfying; that he did not set his heart upon riches; and that he found nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit in his most splendid achievements, is satisfactory proof that he never lost his relish for the Chief Good; and that, returning from his wanderings like Noah's dove, he found rest in the Ark, "the bosom of his Father and his God."

Elisha, Naaman and Gehazi.

THE prophet Elisha was living in poverty and neglect, but still active and zealous, in Jericho. Every opportunity to do good and to impart instruction was joyfully improved by him. Like Him of whom he was a type, it was his meat and drink to do the will of Him who sent him. It was at this time that Naaman the Syrian was informed by a captive Israelitish maid that there was a prophet in Israel who could recover him of the leprosy under which he was sinking to a loathsome and horrible death. Naaman came, as the world always comes, with pomp and parade, and with his hands filled with costly gifts. He first applied to the King of Israel; but he could do nothing. "Let him come

to me," said the prophet: so the afflicted but proud Syrian sought the humble dwelling of the prophet; and acted as if he intended rather to order and pay for his miraculous services than to solicit them as a humble supplicant. The prophet sent a message to him directing him what to do,— simply to wash in Jordan; but deigned not, in his present state of feeling, to show him the light of his countenance. How similar is this to the dealings of the Saviour with the alarmed but unsubdued sinner!

The whole proceeding is distasteful to the proud heart of the Syrian general. The prophet disregards his rank and dignity, and the means prescribed are altogether too simple, and therefore too humiliating. Naaman had made up his mind that either he or the prophet, or both, must do some great thing; but in this he only acted as the whole world has acted since the creation. The apostle says the Cross of Christ is to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness; so Elisha's washing in Jordan was to Naaman foolishness, and likely to have proved a stumbling-block over which he had stumbled into destruction. Finally, however, through the persuasion of his servants, and from a sense of his hopeless condition, his proud heart gave way, and, like a humble seeker of salvation, he went down alone into Jordan, and there found, to his great joy, that God did indeed do a great thing for him. One minute ago he was an ulcerous leper, loathsome even to himself; now he is whole, strong, pure and beautiful, clothed with the fair flesh of a little child, and, better still, with the spirit of a little child. Behold here the type of a new creature in Christ Jesus. Then look again, and you will see a type of the primitive Church.

Naaman acknowledges and blesses the God of Israel, and in the fullness of his heart desires to make the prophet rich, by bestowing upon him a large sum of money and

other costly gifts. If ever a man might have properly received a present from another, this seemed to be the occasion. The work was done. The gift of Naaman was not at all in the nature of a *quid pro quo*, but purely an offering of gratitude. Moreover, Elisha had at this time under his care and tuition more than a hundred young men, sons of the prophets, to whom this money would have been, according to modern ideas, a most happy relief; for they were very poor, as we learn from the affair of the "death in the pot," and from the distress which one of them evinced at having dropped a borrowed axe into water so deep that he could not reach it, and to recover which Elisha worked a miracle by causing it to swim. For these and many other reasons we should suppose that the prophet might very properly have taken the money. But Infinite Wisdom forbade; and that was enough for him, and let it be enough for us.

Thus far the narrative is delightful to contemplate. Naaman is not only healed, but he seems to have become a simple-hearted, humble, and grateful believer,—a sinner saved by grace; for with all his power and wealth, he was saved, healed, and redeemed without money and without price. All the glory was God's, all the priceless benefits were his. How inconceivably glorious must the Lord God of Elisha and of Israel have appeared in the eyes of this newly-awakened heathen when he saw that his servant the prophet cared not for the wealth of this world, although surrounded with every aspect of outward poverty! So did the Church appear in the eyes of the heathen world in the days of the apostles; and hence the power which accompanied the preaching of the word. There was no attempt then to serve both God and Mammon upon the same altar.

But now the scene changes to one extremely painful. Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, was present at the closing interview between his master and the Syrian general; and

in his eyes the refusal of his master to receive the proffered present was very foolish. However superior his master might be to him in some things, he had no doubt of his own superior sagacity in respect to the affairs of *this* world and the value of money. Gehazi was a keen, penetrating, forward youth. When his master was desirous of conferring some favor upon the hospitable Shunammite, he was not long in suggesting what would likely be the most grateful benefit she could receive ; and the prophet acted upon his suggestion. Puffed up with the privileges of his situation and the kindness and confidence of his master, doubtless he felt himself to be almost if not altogether a prophet himself ; but in his own eyes shrewder and wiser than Elisha ; for he thus soliloquizes : “ Behold, my master hath spared Naaman, this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought ; but, as the Lord liveth, *I* will run after him and take somewhat of him.” Telling Naaman a gross falsehood about two sons of the prophet, the latter gladly bestowed upon him more than he asked. Then, having concealed his treasure, he returned to his master as if nothing had happened. Poor, deceived Naaman ! He gave it freely, gratefully, gladly. His heart was oppressed with the weight of the free grace of which he had just been the recipient. His pride, utterly abased, struggled with the load. He wanted to do something, to make some return ; and, having given two talents of silver (about 3,200 dollars in our money) and two rich changes of raiment, his reviving pride of heart would feel much relieved. Oh, how was the gracious work of God in his heart marred by this unhappy outbreak of covetousness on the part of Gehazi !

We here lose sight of Naaman. Whether he continued to be a true and humble worshiper of Israel’s God in the court of a heathen prince, God only knows. One thing we do know, that He who, as we trust, began a good work

in the man's heart, was able to carry it on. But, if the good impressions he received were ever effaced, the guilt lies heavily upon the soul of Gehazi.

Although it has pleased God to draw a veil over the subsequent character and fate of Naaman, we are not left in the dark respecting that of Gehazi. We need not rehearse the narrative of the final interview between Elisha and his servant; but the awful sentence pronounced upon the latter on that occasion may well cause our ears to tingle and our hearts to tremble, lest we fall, in a spiritual sense, under the same condemnation. "*The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed forever.*"

Who does not see bodied forth, as in the living epistles of God, the Saviour in Elisha, a lost world in Naaman, and a corrupt and mercenary Church in Gehazi? Ages after the last-named individual was gathered to his fathers,—after the Great Archetype had appeared and toiled and suffered for the redemption of a lost world,—after thousands had washed in the fountain which he opened for sin and for uncleanness, and had become new creatures, as Naaman had done,—men professing to be the servants of the Great Prophet began to act the part of Gehazi, and continued to do so from little to more, from bad to worse, until the greed of gain and the device of schemes to obtain it had thrust out of the Church every pure and healthy element, and converted it into a curse rather than a blessing to the world. Purgatory, Auricular Confession, Masses, indulgences, and many other such inventions, attest the ingenuity with which schemes were framed to extort money from a world suffering under the leprosy of sin. Gehazi put in a false but plausible plea, and he put it forth in the name of his master. So does the Church of Rome. Naaman was deceived by Gehazi. In like manner the nations of the earth have been for ages deceived by that Church. Gehazi

got Naaman's money, as Rome has got the world's money. But Gehazi inherited with it Naaman's leprosy. And what has Rome inherited?

But let us tread softly. Rome stands before us as the woman taken in adultery stood before the Jews of old. We know that she is guilty, for she has been taken in the very act. But are we in a condition to cast a stone at her? Are we Protestants entirely clear of the sin of Gehazi? Is he not in some sense our representative too, and does not some trace of the leprosy of Naaman for this cause cleave unto us?

Naaman came prepared to pay for his cure. He expected, nay, desired, to do so. The prophet had severely denied himself in order to give him a practical and striking proof that salvation and the blessing of God are not to be purchased with money; that all who come to Him must come as beggars, however rich they may be in this world's goods. Now, they know very little of the human heart who cannot understand that Naaman's sense of obligation would be greatly abated, and his self-complacency very materially restored, after his interview with Gehazi. As we are all men of like passions with Naaman, we are liable to be similarly affected when we reflect upon our own bounty contributed to the "support of the gospel." God wanted Naaman's heart, not his money; but Gehazi, acting upon the promptings of worldly wisdom, wanted his money; and it is possible that, in taking it, he robbed the Saviour of Naaman's heart and of the glory of his salvation.

The Pot of Oil.

THE Scriptures represent the goodness of God as an inexhaustible fountain, a boundless treasury, incapable of exhaustion, or even of diminution. "Out of his fullness have all we received."

Where, then, are we straitened? Certainly not in the fountain at which we draw, seeing that it is infinite in its fullness; but in ourselves, in our faith, in our expectations. Our faith or expectation may be justly compared to a vessel which we bring to a fountain. If it be very small, we can only carry away with us a very small supply. No matter how abundant the water in the well may be, it cannot do more than fill our vessel.

The centurion who applied to the Saviour to heal his servant came with almost unbounded faith and expectation. "Speak the word, and my servant shall live!" he exclaimed; and his draft, large as it was, was munificently honored. His vessel was filled to the brim. Jesus himself marvelled at him, and, turning to those about him, declared that he had not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. He then responded to the anxious applicant, "*As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.*" He had come with large expectations, but they were fully met. His vessel was a capacious one, yet it was filled to overflowing. Let us ever bear in mind that what Jesus said to the centurion he says to all. That scripture is of no private interpretation.

A striking instance of this rule of administration in the kingdom of grace is afforded in the case of the widow's pot of oil, as related in the first seven verses of the 2d chapter of 2d Kings.

The husband and father, who had been a good man— one who feared the Lord and was enrolled among the sons

of the prophets—died. He died poor; out worse than that, he died in debt. His estate consisted of two sons, and nothing more, so far as the history informs us. But two sons would be a strange entry among a deceased man's assets in our day; so it requires a moment's glance at the law of Moses and the practice in Israel. See Exodus xxi. 2 for the law, and Nehemiah v. 1-13 for the practice. Under the first, perhaps, a man's children might be sold to serve seven years in payment of a debt due by him in his lifetime; but under the second such a thing would have met with a most emphatic condemnation.

But at the time this poor woman lived in Israel, Baal was more worshiped than the God of Israel; and it is not likely that the merciful limitations and mitigations of servitude laid down in the divine law were very strictly observed. Be this as it may, the creditor seized, or was about to seize, the two sons of this afflicted woman, in order to sell them into slavery or servitude, or to keep them as bondmen, in satisfaction of the debt. It was very hard; but as the creditor had law on his side, doubtless he thought it just and perfectly fair. The anguish and tears of the widow and fatherless were nothing to him. All he wanted was his legal right.

What could she do? She had no means of paying the debt, nor friends able to pay it for her. In her deep distress she doubtless prayed earnestly to her own and her husband's God, and he heard her and directed her what to do. She applied to Elisha. After hearing her complaint, he inquired of her what she had in her house. "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil," she replied. "Go," said the prophet, "borrow vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full."

What a strange command ! Here was exercise for faith. What ! fill large vessels out of that little pot ? Even so ; for the prophet of the Lord God of Israel had said it. “ Borrow *not a few* ” would ring in her ears and help her to enlarge her expectations. She is about to draw from an exhaustless fountain, and the only limit to her supply is her own faith or her ability to procure vessels.

She has ceased to collect vessels. She has either got all that she could procure, or as many as she could hope to fill, we do not know which. She has shut the door, and the wondrous work begins. With a hand trembling with emotion she grasps the little pot of oil and pours out. The oil flows in a strong and unabating stream, and vessel after vessel is filled and set aside. In strong faith and joyful exultation she proceeds with her miraculous work, and “ Bring me yet a vessel ! ” breaks with stronger and stronger emphasis from her lips. At length her son replies, to her oft-repeated command, “ There is not a vessel more. ” Then, and not till then, the oil stayed. She sold her oil, paid the debt, saved her children from bondage, and had a surplus left for her ordinary support.

Here is a beautiful practical example of strong faith and large expectation to encourage us when we come to the Fountain of every blessing. The widow did not collect too many vessels, for they were all filled ; and had she procured ten times as many the result would have been the same. In prayer we are not straitened in God, but only in ourselves ; and when we approach into His presence who “ giveth liberally and upbraideth not, ” but who is pleased and honored in proportion to the largeness of our drafts upon him, it would be well to call to mind the abrupt and emphatic command of the prophet : “ Borrow empty vessels ; borrow not a few. ”

Mission and Poverty of Christ.

THE advent of Christ is the great event in the annals of time. It is not one event among many, but the CENTRE to which all other events are subsidiary, and for which the race of man exists.

He came, heralded by a train of prophets reaching from Enoch, before the flood, to the Baptist, who pointed out the humble Galilean to the people of Israel as "the Lamb of God." Their lofty strains had awakened in the breasts of the people of that generation a confident expectation that He of whom Moses and the prophets did write would shortly appear; but when he did come they knew him not. They looked for a mighty temporal Prince, a Deliverer of Israel, a Restorer of its kingdom. Their views were carnal, earthly, and contracted. Indeed it was impossible for them to conceive of such a kingdom as he did establish. Their preconceptions were altogether natural; but their fault lay in their obstinate adherence to their erroneous preconceptions after Jesus of Nazareth had, by mighty signs and wonders, attested his claim to be that great One whose coming they expected and longed for. But because he did not appear in the manner they had expected, they rejected him, shutting their eyes against the clearest light of truth and evidence.

The Son of God, who has control of all things in heaven and in earth, had it in his power to take any condition in life that he chose. He could have been rich. He could have clothed himself with outward majesty transcending that of the mightiest monarchs. He could have brought all mankind to his feet as vassals and servants, and laid the nations under tribute; and, had he done so, the preconceptions of the Jews would have been met. He had it in

his power to invest himself with the terrors of God, as Moses and Elijah were invested; but that would not have comported with the nature of his mission. Moses was a representative of the sovereignty and authority of the Almighty; Elijah, of his severity; for in him it was proclaimed, not in words, but in deeds, that "our God is a consuming fire." But Jesus was the embodiment of his love. He came, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. He came to seek and to save the lost; to heal the broken-hearted; to bear the sins of many; and to bring in an everlasting righteousness.

He had power to take any condition in life that he chose; and, being guided by unerring wisdom, his choice would necessarily be a good one. He was born of a poor woman, became a member of an obscure family, for whose maintenance, together with his own, he labored with his hands until he was about thirty years of age. So completely did he veil his divinity that he was only known as the carpenter's son, and as a carpenter himself.

The signs and wonders which had been shown at his birth seem to have been forgotten. Good old Simeon, and Anna the prophetess, and Zacharias the priest, are dead. The shepherds who heard the angels sing are perhaps dead or scattered. But they might have adopted the language of the prophet and exclaimed, "Who hath believed our report?" The wise men had long since gone back to their homes in the East, there to meditate upon the mysterious nature of the Star and the Babe of Bethlehem, until they should be called up higher, where, with still more exceeding joy, they should gaze upon, and contemplate, and adore the glory and beauty of the Star of Jacob.

But the whole nation of Israel lay in profound ignorance of the fact that He for whose coming they had so long waited was even then among them. The wonders which

attended his birth, the words of the aged Simeon, the predictions of Anna, the slaughter of the children,—all, all had passed out of the popular mind ; and thus the Shiloh of Jacob, the Prophet of Moses, the Star of Balaam, the Man of Sorrows of Isaiah, the Messiah of Daniel, the Branch of Zechariah, the Sun of Righteousness of Malachi, lay hidden from the gaze of the world in the humble mechanic of Nazareth. Yet he did not hide his light ; for, although we have an account of but one single incident in his life from infancy to mature manhood,—the interview, at the age of twelve years, with the doctors in the temple,—that is enough to show us that he was full of grace and truth, and excellent in wisdom and understanding, during all the years of his obscurity, poverty, and toil.

Such, then, was the condition in life freely chosen, of the Son of God ; and if it was good for him, O poor toiling Christian, is it not good for you ? Indigent as you may be, you have more of this world's goods than he had. You have a place to lay your head ; he had not during the years of his public ministry. You have a home, be it ever so humble ; he had none. In poverty, as in everything else, he had the pre-eminence. Let this thought reconcile us to our lot, whatever it may be. We cannot suffer as he suffered, for we are not able to bear it ; nor will he allow us to reach his depth of poverty and destitution.

Surely that cannot be a bad condition of life which Jesus chose as the best. It is not desirable to flesh and sense ; but his history shows that it is very profitable. No one ever lived who could more appropriately use the petition which he taught us—“ Give us this day our daily bread ”—than he. His was emphatically a life of faith and dependence ; and who among his true disciples would not be willing to follow in his footsteps ?

His poverty was to him a source of keen suffering and

trial ; for it not only subjected him at times to the pangs of hunger and the humiliation of being a beneficiary of the bounty of others ; but it would cause him to be treated with neglect and contempt ; for human nature was the same then as it is now. Yet, notwithstanding all this, he chose that condition as the best.

And why the best? Because it was a condition which called into active exercise the graces of faith and trust. Because it set him above the world, and prevented it from thrusting itself in between him and his Father. Because it behooved him to become in all things like unto his brethren, and to show them by his own example what is good for them. He, as before remarked, sunk deeper in poverty than he will ever suffer us to sink, for he will not lay upon us more or heavier trials than we are able to bear. But his example shows us that, however undesirable poverty may be in itself, it is nevertheless often the best condition to which God, in his wise providence, can assign us. To some he may give large possessions, with grace to use them aright ; but this is by no means a mark of special favor. To be rich in faith is far better than to be rich in silver and gold, houses and lands. Paul was a poor man ; yet who can conceive the riches of his inheritance even in this mortal life? He received, as his Master promised he should, "more than a hundred fold in this present life" of all he sacrificed.

But we may not seek poverty for its own sake, any more than we may seek sickness, pain, or sorrow. When God sends these things in the way of trial and discipline, they are good ; but if self-inflicted, or voluntary, they are evil and only evil. Of this truth we have examples in the Romish and Hindoo superstitions. Our business is to be diligent in the pursuit of temporal blessings ; and if our exertions result in wealth, it is well ; but if not, it is still

well. But, be our condition what it may, let us never forget

“That He who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head.”

Christ's Life-Work.

“HE went about doing good,” is the comprehensive statement of the laborious life of Jesus while he was a man among men. When he awoke from sleep in the little ship on the sea of Galilee, and with a word stopped the tempest and quieted the waves, he gave us a glimpse of the greatness of his power; but that was not the ordinary manner of his working. We see by that far-stretching act that all Nature was under his control, and that he was able, if he had seen proper, to give health to all the sick and suffering ones in Judea, or in the world, by the mere word of his power. But that was not his method. He labored hard, so that he often suffered weariness, hunger and thirst. In the labors of philanthropy he was made like unto his brethren; and in no case did he exert miraculous power to transport himself from place to place, or to supply his own wants.

The believing centurion begged him to heal his sick servant. Jesus said, “I will *come* and heal him;” but the noble Roman soldier, with a faith at which Jesus himself marveled, suggested that it was only necessary for him to speak the word and the servant should live. He was right; the word was spoken, and in a moment the man was restored to health, although at a considerable distance. This incident shows us three things: First, the readiness of Christ to endure labor and fatigue for the good of a suffering man—

“I will come and heal him.” Second, the nature and extent of the faith we are warranted to put in him ; and third, the omnipotence and omnipresence of Christ ; for while talking with the master in one place, he was present with the servant in another, operating with a power nothing less than divine upon his disordered frame.

Take another incident. Away out beyond the northern boundary of Galilee there was a poor and afflicted woman, whose daughter, as she herself expressed it, was “grievously vexed with a devil.” This woman was not a Jewess, but a Gentile, a Syro-Phœnician ; but very likely a believer in the God of Israel, and one who had heard of Jesus and believed the report. To reach this woman Jesus must have walked twenty or thirty miles. But it pleased him, when he did meet her, to put her faith and meekness to a severe trial. He repulsed her as a Gentile by saying, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread and to cast it to dogs.” The answer of the woman to this terrible rebuff is among the noblest and wisest on record : “Truth, Lord ; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.” That was enough. The Lord was pleased to try her severely, but not beyond what she was able to bear. “O woman,” he exclaimed, “great is thy faith ! Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” That moment health and peace were restored to that poor afflicted one ; and doubtless both mother and daughter were made to rejoice in God their Saviour while they lived ; and who can doubt that among the hosts of the redeemed in heaven that woman wears a brighter crown for that glorious reply to those only words which Jesus ever uttered that had even the semblance of cruelty ? He wished to give the world a living example of faith, humility and meekness, and hence his seeming harshness. But the compensation was rich and full, and all the sweeter for the momentary bitterness of the trial to which he subjected her. His

commendation was to her an unfading crown of glory, both in this world and in her eternal home.

On one occasion, while he and his disciples were away down near the river Jordan, Mary and Martha sent a message to him from Bethany in these simple and touching words: "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." They did not expressly ask him to come and heal him; nor did their faith rise to the level of that of the centurion, "Speak the word—speak it where thou art—and our brother shall not die." But it pleased him neither to go nor to speak the word, but to suffer the disease to take its course even unto death. Lazarus died and was buried before the Lord made any movement in the case. He knew that Lazarus was sick before the sisters sent the message. He knew when he died, for he told the disciples of his death. He knew how much agony he gave these loving sisters by not going to them; but this apparent neglect was the best part of his kindness. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;" and John, with inimitable simplicity and pathos, tells us that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." How many sorrowing, waiting, praying souls have been comforted by that which almost broke the hearts of these sisters!

When the proper time came he and the disciples returned to Bethany. The news of his coming reached Martha's ear first, and she hastened out to meet him. Her first exclamation was, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" We see how far her faith fell short of the centurion's. She could not conceive how he could have done anything unless he had been personally present. My impression is that she felt a little hard at him for not coming in time. No reflection of that kind is uttered; but if it was in her heart he knew it. Still she clung to him, and hoped for something, for she adds, "I know that, even now,

whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Then followed the grand and calm discourse which Jesus held with Martha, in which he proclaimed himself to her and to the world as "the Resurrection and the Life," and then added, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" It is plain that although Martha held that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world," yet her first remark that she knew that God would give him whatsoever he should ask, shows us that her conceptions of him rose no higher than that he was a highly favored prophet. Her error, if error it may be called, is seized by the great Teacher and made the occasion of lifting her faith, and the faith of his people of all ages, to a higher plane than mortals until then had ever known. And when he came to the grave and directed the stone to be rolled away, he addressed a few words of thanksgiving to his Father, but he does not ask for anything. Only to show the identity, the oneness of the Father and himself, he uttered those most remarkable words. (John xi. 41, 42.) Then turning to the opened tomb he cried, "Lazarus, come forth!"

Poor Mary, more overwhelmed than her sister, had come out before this and met Jesus. She uttered the same words that Martha had uttered—"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;"—but she did what Martha had not done; she fell down at his feet. Deep sorrow, humility and submission were doing their salutary work. She was one who was to be wept with, not talked with. That is a pathetic scrap of history wherein we are told that Job's three friends, when they came to condole with him in his affliction, "sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great." So Jesus, when he came to

Bethany and saw Mary weeping and the Jews also weeping which came with her, groaned in the spirit, was troubled, and wept. But to her he said not one word. There is a good example here. Silent sympathy, expressed, as it was in this case, by tears or other tokens of grief, or even by the warm and protracted pressure of the hand, is often, in the fresh moments of a great sorrow, more grateful, more comforting, more strengthening to the stricken heart, than the flood of pious utterances and scriptural quotations with which many well-meaning but not wise people fill the ears of those whose grief is very great. When, like Job, the afflicted one begins to curse his day, or, like Martha, is a little inclined to murmur because her prayers were not answered in time, or the Master delayed his coming, then some appropriate talk is good. Jesus, we see, did talk to Martha with great power and effect; but Mary only saw his tears and heard his groans. Each sister got just what she needed.

In all his work, as a teacher, as a healer, as an itinerant on errands of mercy, Jesus took no advantage of his divine powers to exempt himself from the toil and fatigue inseparable from such a life. In that respect he made himself like unto his brethren, and is their exemplar. None labored harder, or felt the effects of that labor more. He was a perfect man with all the social instincts and sinless infirmities of humanity, and this humanity acted itself out as fully and as freely as if it had not been conjoined with the Divine. Hence he was melted to tears at the grief of these sisters, although he knew that in a few minutes he would change their sorrow into joy. In his going about doing good, he acted as a man. As a man he sought for occasions to relieve the afflicted and impart instruction to the ignorant. But the wisdom which directed every step he took, every word he uttered, and every deed he performed, so that

light and truth gushed out in all directions from every recorded incident, was as great, as infinite, as was the miraculous power he exerted. That power was shown to be inherent, not derived. "O Lord, my God, I beseech thee, let this child's soul come into him again!" was the prayer of Elijah, when he restored the dead son of the widow of Zarephath. "Young man, I say unto thee, arise," was the sovereign command of Christ, when he restored the dead son of the widow of Nain. The language of the first, although he takes rank among the mightiest of the prophets, is that of one who, in himself, is utterly impotent in such a case as that; the language of the other is that of one who is absolutely Almighty. These two incidents compared ought to be sufficient to satisfy any mind of the divinity of Jesus Christ. In power Jesus rose to the full grandeur of God. In subjection to infirmity, temptation, weakness, toil, weariness and sorrow, he had no advantage over his brethren. In all things he was made like unto them. The Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through suffering. How emphatic are his own words to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus—"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

Christ and His Little Children.

THOSE simple-hearted parents who brought their infant children to Jesus that he might touch them, were doing a greater work than they knew, and were impelled and guided by a higher wisdom than their own. It was doubtless a concerted matter among a few neighboring families of believers in Jesus; and they appear to have come together. The children were not diseased; but the parents—possibly only the mothers—had a strong desire that those healing

hands, whose merest touch brought health and life to the sick and the dying, should be laid upon the heads of their infant offspring. We know not that their faith rose so high as to take hold on eternal life ; nor does it matter. They were graciously accepted, approved and blessed above all that they could ask or think.

When the little company arrived where Jesus was, the disciples, like a watchful outer guard, would inquire of them what they wanted, and when told they rebuked them, and, it may be, treated them unkindly, as though what they sought was something too childish, too trifling—an unwarranted liberty with their great Master, an assault upon his dignity, and an interference with his proper work, which must not be tolerated. Now let us see what a mistake they made.

“When Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.”

And then he added :—

“Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them.”—Mark x. 14, 15.

This tableau—so simple, so humble, so sublime—was the product neither of human wisdom nor of parental affection, although the latter was made to blend with it as a necessary and affecting factor. In this way Christ, in his adorable wisdom and power, set forth at once his loving kindness to children as such, and at the same time, that great principle in the kingdom of grace expressed by himself in these words : “Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” He called his disciples by that endearing term just before he suffered (John xiii. 33), and repeatedly he uses the term “little ones.” Paul calls the Galatians “my little chil-

dren," and four times does John in his first epistle use the same tender term.

Let us, in illustration of this great principle, look at two cases, where strong, resolute, self-willed men were turned into little children by the sweetly subduing power of divine grace.

Peter, during the time he was with his Lord, was a rough, hardy fisherman, honest and true, but impetuous, impulsive, and self-reliant. He seemed, indeed, to act as if he felt himself to be the champion of his more gentle Master, as we learn from his rebuking him for declaring that his enemies would put him to death, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord. This shall not be unto thee." There was not much of the spirit of the little child in that outburst. Again, "I will go with thee to prison and to death." And again: "I will lay down my life for thy sake." And again: "Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I." These bold and confident expressions—yet as honest as they were bold—were not much like the utterances of a little child. At length the Master is arrested, and offers no resistance. But Peter—brave, as a soldier is accounted brave—drew his sword and cut off a man's ear. That was anything but the act of a little child. Not being allowed to fight, he fled, for he had courage for nothing else. But his sincere love for his Master would not suffer him to stay away, so he followed him afar off to the palace of the high priest. There his courage failed utterly, and thrice he denied that he knew him. The last time his old rough character broke out, and he began to curse and swear. So he fell as far as a man could fall short of absolute perdition.

But then the cock crew, and "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter went out and wept bitterly." Then followed the awful tragedy of the next day. Then the dark three days that the Lord lay in Joseph's tomb.

Then the agitation caused by the rumors of his resurrection. The strong, self-reliant Peter is utterly broken down and has become as a little child. Having nothing else to do, he and some of his fellow disciples go a-fishing. They toiled all night, but without success. In the morning a stranger is seen standing on the shore of the lake, who directs them to cast the net on the right side of the ship. They obey, and immediately the net is full of fishes. "It is the Lord!" cries John, and instantly, regardless of fishes, net and every thing else, Peter plunges into the water and swims ashore to his much-loved Master. For the first time the rough, strong, impetuous sailor is a little child, and acts like one. The old Simon is utterly broken down, and Jesus could have said then, as he said on the first occasion, "Suffer the little child to come unto me, and forbid him not." And how like a child he meets him and talks with him—"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," is the childlike reply. Three times the question is asked, and three times the same unflinching answer is returned. Thus Peter, after three years of tuition and discipline, has become a little child, and is in the kingdom of God, prepared to feed the lambs and the sheep as his Lord bade him. Thenceforward he stands before us among the grandest and most intrepid Christian heroes the world ever saw. Up to that time his rugged natural manhood kept the little child down, as is sadly true of multitudes of real Christians of the present day.

Now let us look at the other.

Saul of Tarsus was as honest a man as Peter; but he came to the conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth, who had recently suffered death as a malefactor, was an impostor; and in his impetuous zeal for Israel and Israel's God he conceived it to be his duty to crush out the sect that bore his name. He "breathed out threatenings and slaughter."

Satan was using him and ruling him at the very time when, to use his own language, he “verily thought that he was doing God service.” Every Bible reader is familiar with the wonderful story of his conversion on the road to Damascus. Never was there a man more unlike a little child than Saul was when Jesus let his glory shine upon him, and spoke to him in a tone at once of authority and expostulation—“Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me?” Instantly the mad persecutor became a little child. Awe, reverence and submission dictated his first words,—“Who art thou, Lord?”—and when the astounding answer came, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest,” the little child, liberated from the clutches of the evil one, ran to him, if not at first with joy, at least with a spirit of filial obedience, crying; “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” The Lord had work for him, and grandly and faithfully he did it. No man ever left a more splendid record on earth than he; none wears a more glorious crown in heaven.

The transformation of Peter from a strong, self-poised, natural man to a little child, was the work of time and of varied and sore discipline. That of Saul of Tarsus was instantaneous.

The words of Christ are still living and authoritative words, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.” They apply to children in years, as at first; but they also apply to us all; for during all our lives we are or ought to be little children, and to suffer the simple trust, the humble, confiding faith, the meek submission, the out-gushing affection of children to go out to our Heavenly Father, without a shadow of doubt that he is our Father, and that he loves us. Each of us has such a child under his or her control. Let us beware, then, lest we incur the displeasure of the Saviour, as the disciples did, by rebuking these childish outgoings of the soul towards

him. We, in our pride, think it more becoming to consecrate to him our learning, our talents, our wealth, our influence—some great thing, as poor Peter imagined his sword to be; but his command is, “Suffer the little children”—simple trust, humble and unquestioning faith, deep-felt dependence, pure love—“to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.”

In Isaiah’s magnificent imagery we have a picture not only of the world at large in the latter day, but of each regenerated human soul:—“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.” All the warring elements of our nature brought into harmony, and placed under the control of that which is esteemed the weakest and most defenceless of any. Let Christians, therefore, be careful how they crush back, and rebuke, and forbid the growth, advance and controlling power of the little child that is in them.

The Measure of Love.

LUKE, in the closing verses of his seventh chapter, gives us an incident which throws more light upon the question of Christian love, its operation upon the heart, and its fruits in the life and conduct, than any amount of mere abstract teaching could ever give. Two personages are brought upon the stage, and exhibited to us by a few of as masterly strokes of word-painting as the world has ever seen. Luke is distinguished for this gift or talent beyond all the other writers of the sacred Scriptures. It was this which led some old divine to say that Luke was a painter, and that he had left behind him a portrait of our Lord. The re-

mark was taken up by the more simple and ignorant people of his day in a literal sense ; and hence a kind of legend spread abroad, and was transmitted to succeeding generations, that such a picture was somewhere in the world, and that if it could only be found we should know what Christ's personal appearance was.

A Pharisee, named Simon, invited Jesus one day to go home with him and dine. Jesus was pleased to accept the invitation, for he was eminently social ; and it was under such circumstances that some of his richest instructions were given. He knew what prompted Simon to invite him ; we do not. It may have been curiosity, and a wish to become better acquainted with this extraordinary person ; for, despise him as he might, he could not but see that he was no common man. Or it might have been an ordinary good-natured but careless act of hospitality. We say careless, for Jesus told him plainly and frankly that he had not extended to him those attentions and courtesies due to an honored guest. No matter what his motive was, Jesus went in and sat down to meat in full foreknowledge of all that was about to happen.

They are eating. Conversation is doubtless going on, but on what subject we are not told. Silently, timidly, humbly, tremblingly, a woman enters, says not a word, but walks to the feet of Jesus, which, in the recumbent posture of those days, are extended back from the table and easily approachable. In her hand she bears a box of costly ointment. Her object is to anoint those feet—

“ Those blessed feet,
Which, eighteen hundred years ago, were nailed,
For our redemption, to the bitter cross.”

But she found them soiled with the dust of travel ; for Simon had given him no water to wash them. Shall she mingle that precious ointment with that dust ? No, no !

she cannot do that. Then the full heart of the penitent burst, and Nature's fountain flowed copiously, the shower falling upon those dust-stained feet making them clean. With a woman's quickness and tact the drops of penitential grief are allowed to fall just where they are needed; and then, the dust having been washed away, her hair is made to do the office of a towel. Now they are clean. Now she can and does kiss them. Now the ointment is applied, and the room is filled with the odor.

This strange scene would engross the attention of all the guests and of the host himself, and put a stop to all conversation. The woman was well known, and her reputation was not good, "for she was a sinner." Such an outgush of love and tears, such a rich and costly offering, such an unparalleled work of love—washing dust-covered feet with tears and wiping them dry with that which a woman regards as her crown of glory—would excite a variety of thoughts and feelings in the minds of the company. One, and only one, understood it perfectly, and was able to measure the purity, sincerity and depth of the love which prompted the act. And we know what Simon thought, for the Searcher of hearts made this record of what he said within himself; but it is plain that he did not give it audible utterance: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner." Simon, by this, shows us that he was a keen, cold cynic, and one who was on the lookout for something that would discredit the pretensions of his guest. "He claims to be a prophet; but this shows that he is no such thing. Ah! I have found him out!"—and he doubtless felt inclined to chuckle.

Still not a word had been spoken. What the thoughts of the others at the table were we are not told. At last Jesus, in a tone in which the gentleness, dignity and severity of his character are blended, speaks:

“Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.”

“Master, say on.”

“There was a certain creditor who had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?”

“I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.”

“Thou hast rightly judged.”

Then, probably for the first time he turned to the woman, who, we may suppose, had finished her work and was about to withdraw, and said to Simon :

“Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house; thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little.”

Rebuked, abashed and silenced, but still resisting, this Pharisee is heard of no more. Then Jesus, turning to the woman, said, “Thy sins are forgiven.” O what glad tidings of great joy did these few words carry to that trembling, broken heart.

But it seems that the magnificent address of the Lord to Simon was lost upon some of his guests, for they at once began to cavil, and to say within themselves, “Who is this that forgiveth sins also?” We are not told that he deigned to say anything to them. The work was complete, and he only added, “Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace.”

To this woman's work the Saviour himself points as the

measure of her love. It was a hard and bitter cross to enter the dwelling of that cold, proud man; so it was to manifest her love and gratitude as she did in the presence of those men who, as she well knew, despised her and deemed her very presence offensive and polluting. To her the alabaster box of ointment was a costly offering, but it was freely given as a token of her love to her glorious Benefactor. Jesus tells us nothing about her emotions, her frame of mind, her sorrows, her hopes, or fears. He points to her works, and from them alone he draws his evidence that she loved much.

Does any Christian feel a wish to have this woman's opportunity to honor Christ, and does he imagine that he would gladly do likewise? Well, dear Christian friend, you have it. Hear his words—words of commendation to be pronounced in the great day:—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Christ and the Samaritan Woman.

THE patriarch Jacob, in his wanderings, with his numerous family and flocks, dwelt for a time at a place called Shechem, where he digged a well, which was for ages celebrated for the abundance and excellence of its water. This well was known in the days of our Saviour, and is even yet known, as "Jacob's well." Its original object was to water the flocks of the proprietor; but long afterwards a city was built near it, the inhabitants of which drew their principal supply of water from it. This famous well was situated in that portion of the land of Palestine which, in New Testament times, was called Samaria; and that which in Genesis is called Shechem had been changed to Sychar. Shechem

was the place where Jacob sent his son Joseph to seek his brethren and inquire after their welfare; but when he arrived at the place he found that they had removed to Dothan. He followed them and found them there, and there they sold him to merchants who were going down to Egypt. Jacob, at his death, bequeathed a piece of ground to Joseph, and the Evangelist John tells us that this was the same property. It remained in his family until the carrying away of the Ten Tribes.

On one of his journeys from Judea to Galilee, Jesus was pleased to pass through Samaria by way of Sychar. He traveled on foot, in company with his disciples. It was about noon when they reached the well. Wearied with his journey, the Master sat down by the well, while the disciples went into the city to buy food sufficient to furnish them with a frugal repast, which they designed to take at the well; for such was the prejudice existing between the Jews and the Samaritans that no act of hospitality was to be expected there. This prejudice did not prevent the Jews and Samaritans from making purchases one of another when the necessities of the case required it; but the Jews deemed it an abomination to ask even a cup of water of a Samaritan. The language of their conduct towards these neighbors was, "Stand back: I am holier than thou." It is true that the Samaritans had a corrupt religion,—a mingling of Hebrew and heathen rites,—for they were themselves a mingled people; but, from all we can gather of their character from the New Testament, they were a simple-minded people, more willing to receive the truth and embrace the Saviour than were the proud, bigoted Jews. The blame of this non-intercourse, I think, lay at the door of the latter.

While Jesus was sitting there, alone, weary, hungry, thirsty, and but ill sheltered from the rays of the meridian sun, a woman came out of the city to draw water. She

could not avoid seeing this Jewish stranger; and the consciousness that she was in the presence of one who despised her would cause her to hasten her operations that she might escape from his presence. That animosity which is inseparable from such a feeling would boil up intensely, and render her, as some might imagine, insensible to any good impressions. But it was not so in the case before us; nor is it a general truth that such a state of mind as we have supposed this woman to have been in is unfavorable to the reception of good impressions. It is true in the moral world, as it is in the physical, that the moment when any thing is strained to its utmost tension is the very time to break it and destroy its power of further resistance. Jesus, who perfectly knew all hearts, touched the right spring when he said, "Give me to drink." The woman was both surprised and pleased that a Jew should ask a favor of her. Her heart warmed towards him, because she saw that he at least did not despise her, nor disdain to ask a favor of her; and now she felt that there was one Jew that she did not hate. Still, her womanly curiosity was excited, and she asked him how it was that he, being a Jew, should ask drink of her, who was a woman of Samaria. There was nothing in the question that indicated any thing like displeasure; but the thing was so unusual, so unexpected, that she wished to know how it was that he differed so far from the rest of his countrymen. The Saviour did not choose to go into a direct explanation, but intimated to her that He who had just asked a favor of her was able to confer upon her favors infinitely more valuable.

I have said that the Saviour touched the right spring in this woman's heart. He asked a favor,—a small one, to be sure, but still a favor. Had he first offered a favor, doubtless it would have been coldly rejected; but in asking one he disarmed her prejudice and put an end to her hostility. How strange a thing is the human heart! and how important it is to understand its workings!

In answer to her inquiry, why he had asked her for drink, Jesus said, "If thou knewest the Gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water." The woman did not understand the imagery of the Saviour, but replied by asking another question, in which ignorance and shrewdness are curiously blended. "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?" In Palestine what was called living water was the water of springs, whether issuing from the surface of the earth or in the bottom of such a well as the one at Sychar, as contra-distinguished from the water of pools or cisterns. Understanding him literally, the woman seemed surprised that he should talk of having living water at his disposal. "Thou hast nothing to draw," said she, "and the well is deep." These words, although misapplied when first uttered, are words of awful truth when applied to the presumptuous sinner who imagines that he can draw water out of the wells of salvation when he pleases. Let him remember that he has nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. True, the proclamation is, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" and "let him that is athirst come." But let him not come in his own righteousness or strength; for the well is deep, and he has nothing to draw with. None but Jesus can draw that water; and to whomsoever wills he will give it, and give it freely. He desired to give it to this woman; and when at last he succeeded in convincing her that he was the long-expected Messiah, we have every reason to believe that she did joyfully receive this unspeakable gift.

"Give me to drink," was the prayer of the suffering Saviour to the Samaritan woman; for, sure enough, the well was deep and he had nothing to draw with. How

touching is it to behold the glorious Author of eternal life thus personifying, in a figure, the perishing sinner, to whom he only can give the water of eternal life! "Give me to drink," said he; and what he said to that woman he desires us to say to him. And how must it grieve him to see us forsaking him, the fountain of living waters, and hewing out to ourselves cisterns—broken cisterns—that can hold no water!

The woman seemed to be incapable of understanding the Saviour's metaphorical language, but persisted in a literal interpretation of it; so he abruptly changed the subject by requesting her to go and call her husband and come back to him. She replied that she had no husband. Jesus confirmed her words by telling her that, although she had had five husbands, she was then living in adultery; for, said he, "he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." Unabashed, the woman coolly remarked, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet;" and then attempted to draw him into an argument as to whether that mountain or Jerusalem was the proper place to worship. Then it was that he gave utterance to some of the sublimest truths that ever saluted human ears. With God-like authority, he pronounced the old ceremonial law of the Jews abrogated, and announced the advent of the gospel, when it should no longer be required of men to go to that mountain, nor yet to Jerusalem, to worship the Father. God was about to manifest himself to his people in a clearer and simpler aspect than ever he had done since Adam was expelled from Eden. "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

What an address was this to such an audience! One Samaritan woman only heard it fall from the lips of its author; but the pen of inspiration caught up his words, and they have gone to the ends of the world, and millions

of hearts have been thrilled, enlightened, and warned by them. When men are about to utter an important truth, they seek out some great occasion, and a large and intelligent audience capable of appreciating what they say. How differently did Jesus act! But in this he exhibited himself as God and not man. To him nothing was great, nothing small. As the God of Providence, his words were safe; for he had power to preserve them forever, and to send them to all the world.

The woman believed, and eagerly and gladly she called upon her neighbors to come out and see the Messiah. Many of them believed also, and he abode amongst them two days. He then resumed his journey to Galilee, on his mission of love and mercy.

The Blind Man Receiving Sight.

IT is a sad thing to be blind. Milton, who had enjoyed the blessing of sight until his mind had become richly stored with learning, and his fine genius had been grandly developed, thus in eloquent pathos, laments its loss:—

“ Thus with the year
Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark,
Surround me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works, to me expunged and razed,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.”

If to be deprived of sight, after having drawn in wisdom and knowledge through this greatest entrance to the soul,—

after the mind has been filled with the vivid images of beauty and truth which only the eye can reveal,—images which can afterwards be brought forth in endless combinations by the power of memory,—be so afflictive, what must it be to be born blind, and thus be totally incapable of even the idea of light, of color, and of the infinite field of beauty and grandeur which this most perfect and spiritual of our senses reveals to us! To know that others are blessed with a sublime and delightful power, of the nature of which we cannot form even the vaguest conception, must be an affliction of the sorest kind.

In the ninth chapter of the Gospel by John we have a very interesting narrative of a man who was born blind receiving the gift of sight from the Saviour. He was not only blind, but poor; for we are incidentally told that he sat by the wayside begging. Jesus, as he passed by, saw him. We are not told that the blind man said any thing to him, or solicited alms of him, much less asked him to give him sight. Very likely the man had never heard of Jesus; nay, we are almost sure of it; for, when subsequently questioned by his neighbors about the manner of his obtaining sight, he said, "*A man that is called Jesus made clay,*" &c., plainly intimating that all that he knew of his Benefactor was that he was called Jesus.

The disciples, who were in company, inquired of the Saviour, who had sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind. This was a common Jewish superstition, which attributed every unusual casualty or affliction to some heinous sin committed either by the subject of it or by his immediate progenitors. Jesus corrected their mistake by replying, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." We must not understand him as asserting that this man and his parents were sinless; but that neither he nor they had

sinned in the manner supposed. Possibly a trace of the wide-spread oriental and still existing superstition of the transmigration of souls had found a lodgment in the minds of the disciples; for the notion that this blindness was on account of the man's own sins could only refer to sins committed in a former body.

This conversation being over, Jesus approached the blind man, carrying in his hand a little of the dust of the road, moistened with his own spittle, and with this he anointed his eyes. Was there any thing in the dust and the spittle that could give sight to those rayless orbs? Certainly not. Could not Jesus have restored him to sight, as he did Bartimeus, with a word? Doubtless he could. Then why make clay, which of itself was worthless? Did he do so merely to manifest his sovereignty or to vary the mode of his operations? We must not think so. Unquestionably the clay was necessary, or it would not have been used. But Jesus is not enigmatical either in his words or his works; and a little reflection will teach us why he put clay on this man's eyes, and not on those of Bartimeus.

Bartimeus knew Jesus, and fully believed in his power to heal him; but this poor man, whose mind was as dark as his eyes, knew him not, and of course did not and could not believe in him. The faith of the former existed and was in full action, and he had done his part when he cried for mercy and afterwards cast aside his garment and ran to his great Deliverer; but in the wretched object before us faith was not yet even implanted. It required something tangible—something that he could feel—to excite hope or action; and the clay was well calculated to do this.

It was an extraordinary action on the part of a stranger; and when accompanied by the command, uttered in a tone of kindness, "Go, wash," strong expectation, however vague and indefinite, would thrill his soul and lead him to instant

obedience. This hope, this vague expectation of some benefit, was the beginning of faith, and his going and washing were its first fruits, his first acts of obedience. Moreover, there was a fitness between the situation in which the Saviour had placed him and the command; for the clay, had he not obeyed, would have been as uncomfortable as it would have been unseemly.

“Go wash in the pool of Siloam,” said the great Physician. This pool was not far distant, so the command was reasonable. But no other water would have answered, because to have washed anywhere else would have involved an act of disobedience. The blind man appears to have made no objection to the pool, but went immediately, washed, “and came seeing.” We cannot imagine the wonder and delight that would fill his soul, when, upon raising his head from the water, the glories of creation burst upon him in all their amplitude and splendor.

In the meantime Jesus went away, and the man saw nothing more of him for some time; but we may be sure that he did not for a moment lose sight of his glad and grateful servant. As was natural, the affair made a great excitement among the man’s neighbors; for the case was very surprising. Not content with wondering at and talking of the strange event themselves, they brought him to the Pharisees. These last would be astounded at this new evidence of the divine mission of Him whom they hated and were determined at all hazards to oppose. But presently they discovered that “it was on the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.” This terrible desecration of the Sabbath was enough for them. They were blind to the great and obvious fact that God himself had miraculously blessed the simple means which Jesus had made use of, and thus signally manifested his approbation.

In foretelling to his disciples the persecutions they should

meet with,—that they should be brought before kings and rulers for his name's sake,—the Saviour uttered this remarkable language: "Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before what ye shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." In the examination of this poor, simple man before these haughty rulers we see a fulfillment of this promise. In an artless but irresistible argument he confounds them, and then boldly asks them to become the disciples of Jesus. All the reply they had was in these words of scorn and pride:—"Thou wast altogether born in sin; and dost thou teach us?" plainly showing that they too labored under the same superstitious notion which the Saviour had corrected in his disciples; and, having uttered this cruel taunt, they cast him out of the synagogue. This was a heavy penalty, attended not only with the loss of religious privileges, but with many civil and social disabilities. Notwithstanding, therefore, the blessing of vision which had just been conferred upon him, he wandered forth, like his glorious Benefactor, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, despised and rejected, an outcast, accursed and shunned.

In this forlorn condition Jesus sought him, "and when he had found him he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Ah! here is more light,—better than that which the clay and the spittle let in. That showed him this world, and a sad revelation it had been to him; but now, having been chastened and tried, he is about to be translated into the glorious light and liberty of the children of God. The inquiry came home with power to his heart, and he eagerly asked, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him? And Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that talketh with thee." When the glories of the visible creation burst upon his astonished soul at the

Pool of Siloam, his wonder and joy would be great indeed; but the joy that now thrilled his heart at the presence of his God and Saviour as far transcended that as the heavens are higher than the earth. With passionate devotion he exclaimed, "Lord, I believe," and then worshiped him as no creature may be worshiped. Before this he had honored his Benefactor as a prophet; now he adores him as his God.

This is one of those passages which is in itself a fountain of living water,—a perennial spring at which we may drink and come again and again. The narrative, interesting in itself, is bestudded with gems of inestimable truth. In it we see the power, the goodness and the mercy of Jesus; we see the wretchedness of fallen man lying in hopeless darkness and ignorance; and we see the rise, progress, triumph, and reward of faith. Then, if we turn to the dark side of the picture, we see the invincible hostility of unbelief to all that is true and lovely and of good report. But, better than all, in it we read, substantially, a history of our own espousals, if indeed we do believe on the Son of God. And happy are we if, like the man upon whom Jesus bestowed sight, we can say, "One thing I know, that whereas I *was* blind, now I see."

"Wherefore didst thou Doubt?"

"It is I; be not afraid!" was the cheering cry of Jesus, as he came walking through darkness and storm, over the turbulent surface of the Sea of Galilee. Upon the impulsive and excitable spirit of Peter, the well known voice of his beloved Master wrought a sudden and remarkable change. Like his companions, he had been troubled, and almost in despair; but that voice and that presence in-

stantly threw him into the opposite extreme—one which, in a man more calm and considerate than Peter, might have been condemned as presumptuous; and his request—“Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water”—had it not sprung, sudden, fresh and gushing, from a loving and confiding heart, would probably have been denied. But the impulse was not condemned, and the request was immediately granted. Jesus said, “Come.”

Instantly and gladly, Peter left the ship to go to Jesus. Matthew tells us that he did walk on the water to go to Jesus. So long as his faith was firm, so long did he tread the liquid and turbulent pathway with a firm step; “but when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid.” His trouble commenced the moment he ceased to “look unto Jesus” with a single eye—when his attention became divided between Him and the turbulent elements around him. So long as he was able to keep his gaze fixed steadily upon Him in whom he trusted, and at whose bidding he was walking, so long was his tread as firm as his. “The works that I do shall ye do also,” is the law of the great relation between Christ and his disciples. But Peter’s error in this incident was in trusting too much in the strength of his own faith. He knew very well before he left the ship that it was only by the divine power of his Master that he could walk on the water at all; and the idea that it was possible for him to cease relying upon that power seems never to have entered his mind. He was just as confident on this occasion, as when he said, “I will lay down my life for thy sake.” Never did man utter anything that he more firmly and heartily believed than Peter did in these rash words; but yet, before the cock crew, he had three times vehemently denied that he ever knew Jesus of Nazareth.

The two cases are very much alike. In both, Peter trusted too much in his own strength and courage. In

both, he *began* to sink. In both, he was lifted up and saved by the same loving hand. On the sea he became afraid of the boisterous waves that seemed ready to engulf him. In the palace of the High Priest his spirit quailed before the fury of his Master's enemies, whose power seemed at the moment to be invincible. Even Jesus himself appeared to his terrified imagination to be overcome and lost—swallowed up by the angry and tumultuous waves of popular wrath. So that night, as on the stormy lake, he "*began* to sink."

But in neither case did he sink. It was impossible that he could sink. Both on the lake and in the High Priest's palace, his "life was hid with Christ in God." His faith, his strength, his courage, all failed; but his love did not. On the lake his faith, as first exhibited, failed wretchedly; but in a humbler form it rallied to the rescue with the cry, "Lord, save me." It was enough. Jesus put forth his hand and caught him. In the other place he could not take him by the hand, but he turned and looked upon him, and sent him as a humble, believing, loving penitent, out into darkness and solitude to weep bitterly. Oh! those were salutary tears! Weeping Peter, in the eyes of angels, stood on a higher plane of Christian character than boasting Peter. And Peter, returning with dripping garments, to the ship, grasping, with childlike, trembling trust, the hand of Jesus, was a wiser and better man than when he set out.

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" is the mild and gentle rebuke of Him who loved him and saved him, if rebuke it may be called. "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." He knew then what the same Peter so confidently and so truly affirmed, after the resurrection, and on the shore of the same lake—"Thou knowest that I love thee." That was enough. He might blunder, and stumble, make sad mistakes, and get

into trouble ; but so long as the fire of genuine love was not totally extinguished in his heart, his faith could not fail. Therefore it was impossible that he could perish.

But “wherefore didst thou doubt?” said Jesus. Peter, so far as the record goes, did not attempt to answer the question, even if an answer was desired. But we know, because the reason is given by the evangelist—“When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid.” He looked at his stormy surroundings, and the more he saw of them, the less he saw of Jesus. So he began to doubt, and then began to sink. Thus many a Christian looks so much at his sins, at his inbred corruptions, at his outward temptations and trials, at the sorrows, the troubles and the difficulties of his lot, that he cannot keep his eye steadily fixed upon Jesus, and hence is often doubting and sinking.

Peter erred in asking to be called to do what he did. There was a little presumption in it ; but it afforded a salutary lesson to him, and to believers in all ages. How glad we ought to be that our all-wise Saviour is able to make even the faults of those who love him work for their own everlasting good ! And we may safely believe that Peter’s glory and bliss in heaven are greater this day because of his partial sinking that day in that deep and agitated water.

Peter fishing for a Coin.

MATTHEW, in the 17th chapter, relates an incident, very briefly and very artlessly, which I have always thought one of the most remarkable and stupendous miracles of which we have a record. Jesus was at Capernaum with his disciples, and at the same time tax gatherers, or receivers of custom, were on their rounds. Finding Peter, and knowing

him, they inquired if Jesus paid tribute. Peter told them that he did, and so the matter rested for the moment.

Jesus at that time was in a house, resting, probably, after the fatigues of the day. After his interview with the receivers of tribute Peter also went in, when his Master, knowing what was in his mind, "prevented him," in the old English sense of that word, that is, anticipated him, as we would now express it, by asking—"What thinkest thou, Simon, of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?" "Of strangers," said Peter, "Then are the children free," said Jesus. "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a piece of money; that take and give unto them for me and thee."

In this incident we see the delightful familiarity with which Christ lived with his disciples. "What thinkest thou, Simon?"—as though he would learn of him. He asked Simon a question which he knew he could answer correctly, and thus made him feel himself to be a companion and friend as well as a disciple. As such, Simon answered the question, and in the brief terms which the easiest familiarity warrants. May we not safely infer from this, that when it shall please him to call us to the place which he has prepared for us, where we shall see him as he is, that he will be our familiar friend and companion as well as our Lord; for we read, "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters."

We have here an affecting glimpse, as it were, of the poverty of our Lord. Although the earth was his and the fullness thereof, yet during the days of his flesh he held his proprietorship in such total abeyance that he had neither where to lay his head, nor money wherewith to satisfy this little

claim. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich."

"Then are the children free," said Jesus. What does that mean? It is an assertion of his own kingly character. It can be nothing less; for certainly he was not a Roman citizen in any sense known to Roman law. Paul was, but Jesus was not. This, however, was no time or place to offer that plea for exemption from tribute. Moreover, he chose in this, as he did in all things, to be like unto his brethren—subject to their burdens as well as their sinless infirmities.

So far we have seen the social kindness and lowliness of the "Man of sorrows." Now turn we to the grandeur of the almighty, omnipresent, all-knowing God.

One little piece of money was all that he needed; but he had it not. To supply this want, for once, and only once, he laid tribute upon his own all-comprehending dominions. "The earth" (says the Psalmist) is full of riches, so is this great and wide sea." In some way, as men say, accidentally, a piece of money, just the amount required, had been dropped into the Sea of Galilee. Perchance it had lain there for years. Jesus sent a fish to pick it up and keep it in its mouth; for that was where Peter was told to look for it. This fish was then sent to the spot where Peter's hook should sink deep beneath the surface of the water, so as to be the first that should be caught. Every part of the complicated miracle is strangely at variance with the ordinary laws of nature, and manifested at once the omniscience, omnipresence and almighty power of Christ, showing us that all nature, and all events, the vast and the minute, the domain of what we call accident or chance, as well as the movements of the most intractable and unteachable of living creatures, are all perfectly under his direction and control.

How good and how pleasant a thing it is to contemplate

our glorious Elder Brother in the strongly contrasted colors of this picture, this gem, given us by the inspired historian ! On the one hand we see the loving and familiar Friend, meek and lowly in heart, and poor. On the other, we behold him glorious in power, doing wonders, at the contemplation of which we tremble and adore. The glory is brighter for the darkness of the shading ; yet as we turn from one to the other we know not which most to admire.

Character of Jesus.

A RIGHT conception of the character of Jesus Christ is essential to the formation of the Christian character in ourselves ; for we can only become like him by seeing him as he is. It is true that in this imperfect state we only see through a glass darkly, while in heaven we shall see him face to face, and know even as we are known. Yet even here it is possible to have right conceptions of him, however feeble they may be. But we may have wrong and distorted views ; and so far as they are erroneous and distorted, in a like degree will our own characters as Christians be distorted.

The great foundation truths, that he is the Son of God, and that he is both divine and human, need not be argued here. This stupendous mystery is received by faith alone. It is a truth so high that our intellectual powers cannot grasp or explain it. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," is a declaration so plain that it cannot be misinterpreted ; and yet so profound that reason folds her wings in utter impotency, and faith alone can deal with it.

But it is not in the midst of these high mysteries that we are to discover the character of Christ. This is best seen in his humble, simple, every-day intercourse with his disciples,

his brethren, and with his fellowmen, both friendly and unfriendly, good and bad, as it is graphically portrayed by the four evangelists.

In the epistle to the Hebrews we find these words: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." The circumstances by which he was surrounded, when those blessed feet trod the soil of Judea, Galilee and Samaria in weariness and want, as he went about doing good, and now when seated on the eternal throne, are very different indeed; but that change of circumstances does not change his character. That remains, as the apostle expresses it, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. Men could not see it; but he was just as glorious that day when he sat down weary, travel-worn and thirsty by Jacob's well at Sychar, as he is this day amid the splendors of heaven.

"I am meek and lowly in heart," is his own testimony of himself; and we read in confirmation of this testimony that the poor, the ignorant, the sick, the lame, the blind, and the sin-burdened, clustered around him eagerly and without dread, and not one was sent away unblest. Even lepers came boldly and were made clean by his word or his touch. With unparalleled patience he bore with the dullness and faults of his chosen twelve, treating them always as friends and brethren. He bore the scoffs and slanders of his bitter enemies and the contradiction of sinners so meekly, that low and gross minds take the impression that he lacked courage and spirit. But let any one into whose mind the notion has come that Jesus was weak and effeminate, or too gentle for wrath against obstinate wickedness, read Matthew's twenty-third chapter, in which he thunders tremendous denunciations against the Scribes and Pharisees to their faces. We read in the Revelation of "the wrath of the Lamb;" and in these awful words we have that wrath fearfully expressed. So humble, so meek, so mild, so ap-

proachable, so sweetly social was Christ while on earth, that Mary sat at his feet and learned ; little children were clasped in his arms and blessed ; and blind Bartimeus vociferously shouted to him as he passed by, and was restored to sight. Though lowly as the lowest, humbler than the humblest, yet hear him exclaim, "Behold a greater than Solomon is here !" Amid all this lowliness and social kindness, this poverty, toil and sorrow, never for a moment did he abate his infinite dignity and his immeasurable claims upon the love and devotion of mankind. Hear him: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

God took our nature and became like us, sin excepted, that we might be made like him by contemplating him as he is ; and it is by studying him in the simple portraiture given us by the evangelists—not looking at him afar off, but coming near and viewing him closely—that we can hope to see him as he is, and to be made like him.

Faith, True but Staggering.

SEVERAL days had passed since the dreadful tragedy on Calvary. The disciples were perplexed and discouraged. Early on the morning of the third day some faithful and loving women gave the report that the Lord had risen from the dead ; but their story fell upon the ears of these desponding men as an idle tale.

That afternoon two of them had occasion to go to the village of Emmaus, about eight miles from Jerusalem. Luke relates this narrative with his characteristic simplicity and pathos. He tells us that as they walked they communed together, and that a kind stranger who joined them inquired, "What manner of communications are these that ye have

one to another as ye walk and are sad?" We can easily imagine the tenor of their conversation from the few words which the writer gives. They would talk of their slain Prophet, and rehearse his mighty deeds and his matchless words, and then recall with amazement and profound dejection his apparent weakness when seized by his enemies. Perhaps they had heard the cruel taunt,—“He saved others ; himself he cannot save !”—and the truth of the dreadful words would go like iron into their souls.

Their patriotic hopes were all dashed. Their ambitious dreams of promotion in the Messiah's earthly kingdom, when, by his divine power, he should break the Roman yoke from the neck of Israel, and reign as a mighty potentate, were all shivered to atoms, and they found themselves scattered, orphaned, dispirited and forsaken, while Rome's power remained just as it was. To them everything was gloomy in the extreme.

But still there was a faint and bewildering glimmer of light. The story told by the women, although they did not believe it, might possibly be true; and from the remark of one of them about that being the third day since their Lord's death, we may infer that they had some recollection of what he had said should happen on that day. They were therefore perplexed, but not in absolute despair; cast down, but not destroyed.

In this condition the kind stranger joined them and introduced himself by asking the sympathizing question already quoted.

“Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem,” exclaimed the simple hearted Cleopas, “and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?”

“What things?” rejoined their unknown friend; thus leading them on to more confidential communications. Then Cleopas opened his whole heart to him, and told him

of Jesus of Nazareth, "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" of his condemnation and crucifixion, and of the report brought by the women of his having risen from the dead. Those noble, honest hearts were still true to their Lord; and with inimitable pathos they confessed their former hope: "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." As long as Jesus was in the world, both before and after his death, that fond notion of Israel's redemption from political bondage clung to them; and even up to the hour of his ascension to heaven it was cherished; for on the Mount of Olives, just before he ascended, they ventured to ask, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

But let us return to the road to Emmaus, and hear again the confession of an almost lost hope—"We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Was that hope founded upon true faith? Certainly it was, and was only wrong as to the manner and extent of that redemption. He had redeemed Israel—not that little, unbelieving, subjugated Israel which rejected their own Messiah, but that greater spiritual Israel, whose citizenship is in heaven, and who shall be gathered from the east and the west, the north and the south, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

This fondly cherished notion of a restored Israel, of an earthly kingdom grander than the world had ever seen, stood for a long time as a bar in the minds of these disciples to a right conception of the earthly mission of Christ. And it is well for all who come after them that they were so dull of comprehension—that their minds were so pre-occupied with a mistaken hope. Their slowness to believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus greatly strengthens our confidence in the truth of the narrative.

The kind stranger listened with sympathetic interest to

the sad recital of the tragic end of Jesus of Nazareth, that great and good prophet around whom their hopes of Israel's redemption had clustered. Then he suddenly burst forth in a strain of eloquence and power that made their hearts burn within them. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Still they did not know him. How long he talked we know not; but we do know that he turned in with them in the village, and that at their evening meal "he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them," just as he had done on the evening in which he was betrayed; "and their eyes were opened, and they knew him." And we know from their own words how they were affected and comforted by his discourse on the road—"Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

They would not be able to make out exactly how it was; but they knew enough to dissipate their gloom. "The Lord is risen indeed," was now an assured fact, and that was enough to give them peace and joy. But what he would do next was to them unknown. The notion of that kingdom did rise up again in their imagination, as we know from the question they asked just before he ascended. Indeed it was not until the great effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost that these men rose to a true and correct conception of the mission of the Son of God to this world, and of the spirituality and universality of his kingdom.

But this mistake, this error of conception, did not vitiate their faith. To a greater or less extent we are all in the same condition; for our highest and clearest conceptions fall infinitely below the reality of these things. On the

day of Pentecost these disciples were only lifted to a higher plane. From that plane the Christian church started; and not until they follow their risen Lord to his Father and their Father will one still higher be reached by those who believe in his name.

Simon Peter's fishing Party.

PETER, although only a fisherman on the sea of Galilee, was a genuine sailor, bold, impulsive, rough, but thoroughly honest. He lacked steadiness of character and persistence of purpose. Still his intellectual and moral nature were what may be termed strong, and this strength gave him great physical courage and self-reliance. The positive declarations, "Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I," and again, "I will follow thee to prison and to death," and again, "I will lay down my life for thy sake," show at once the ardor of his affection for his Lord, and his excessive self-reliance; while his readiness to fight when the guard, led by the traitor, came to arrest his Lord, attested his physical courage. Had his Master not stopped him in his rashness on that occasion, very likely he would have made one of his declarations good—he would have laid down his life for his sake, or thrown it away.

But Peter, brave even to rashness as he was, lacked moral courage; for only a few hours after he had attacked single handed a band of police officers, and the attendant rabble, he quailed and cowered beneath the scorn and ridicule of the idle hangers-on at the high priest's palace. It is not likely that Peter was under any apprehension of personal danger; but the trouble was that he could not bear a sneer. It was on this occasion that his old rough character burst out afresh—"He began to curse and swear."

That was a fearful storm of temptation ; and but for the interposition of that arm which is mighty to save, his frail bark would have capsized and he would have gone to the bottom. His faith, however, failed not; and deep and bitter repentance quickly followed his shameful sin.

Peter was a man of strong impulses and equally strong prepossessions. He thought, in common with the great body of the Jews, that when the Messiah came he would restore the kingdom to Israel, and raise the nation to a height of glory and power to which it had never before attained; so that his devotion to his Great Master was as much a patriotic as a religious sentiment. We see this in the sad language of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, where they are telling, as they supposed, to a kind stranger and fellow-traveler the mournful tale of the death of Jesus of Nazareth, wherein they say, "*We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.*" And again, the very day that he ascended to heaven, not knowing what was just about to take place, they ventured to ask him, "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" This notion clung to the minds of the disciples all the time that Jesus was personally present with them, both before and after his resurrection.

For a time the disciples were slow to believe that Jesus had really risen from the dead. To minds less broken down the testimony might have been sufficient ; but to them the events of the past few days had been so overwhelmingly disastrous that they could not believe, or even hope. The wondrous report of the women who had been early at the sepulchre and had seen the Lord was not fully credited. They might have been deceived. Their own observation had proved to them that his body was gone. Even he himself had shown himself to them, at Emmaus, and at their secret meeting, "the doors being shut." Yet still they

doubted. Superstition, like thick darkness, struggled in their souls with the light of truth, and thus their desponding spirits were fearfully perturbed. Poor Thomas, more cast down than any of the others, declared that even the evidence of his own eyes and ears would be insufficient to convince him. Nothing short of the sense of touch would suffice. "Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

This slowness of the disciples to credit the great crowning fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is very remarkable. We may, however, without irreverence, believe that the author of evil was permitted to fill their minds with despondency and unbelief, and tempt them to repel as long as they could this glorious truth, so that believers of all after ages should have fuller assurance that the Lord did indeed rise from the dead. Had they received without doubt or questioning the first report, we who live long afterwards might be tempted to doubt their testimony, and conclude that the wish was father to the thought. But God so ordered things that their unbelief tends to the strength and confirmation of our faith.

But the risen Lord acted, as they would suppose, strangely. Only occasionally, and momentarily, as it were, did he meet with them. They could neither tell whence he came nor whither he went. He was evidently the same kind, loving Master they had known so long; yet his conduct was very mysterious. Not a word is spoken of that visible kingdom of which they had so fondly dreamed. Day after day passes, yet they receive no mission. What will he do next? was, we may suppose, the question that would perpetually press upon their hearts; but Jesus takes his own time to answer it. He must first lead them through this dark valley. Satan has not yet sifted them sufficiently.

It was while the minds of the disciples were in this perturbed condition; tossed to and fro by the great adversary; tempted to conclude that all for which they had so fondly hoped had proved delusive; and that there was nothing left for them but to return to their former avocations, that Simon Peter uttered the deeply significant words, "*I go a fishing,*" and his six companions on that occasion so promptly responded, "We also go with thee." This was the lowest depth of despondency to which it pleased the Lord to suffer them to sink, the darkest place in that gloomy valley through which he was leading them into the glorious light of his kingdom. Trace, now, with one sweep of thought, the rapid transition of Peter from this sad and gloomy moment to that pentecostal day, when he stood before the people of Israel in more than an angel's glory and power, and gave the first great blast of the gospel trumpet.

They did go. Those old fishing vessels—ships, as the evangelists call them—which they had abandoned months and years before to follow Jesus, were still afloat, and still belonged to Peter and his partners. With strange and agitated feelings they would step on board, push out into the sea, and arrange their long deserted nets. But during what remained of that day, and all that night, they toiled in vain. Again and again were the nets cast, yet not a fish was enclosed.

At length the dawn of another day broke over the eastern hills, when our fishermen, weary, hungry, dispirited and sad, sought the land. Through the dim light they saw a man standing upon the shore, as if awaiting their approach. He hailed them in tones of kindness, and asked, "Children, have ye any meat?" They answered him "No." Such kind inquiries, and such endearing terms as "children," were not unusual in the East. As yet they did not know that it was Jesus. Perhaps their weary frames, disap-

pointed hopes, and troubled consciences had rendered them a little sullen, and hence their sententious reply to the kind inquiry of the stranger. The truth is, these men had got off the path, as Christian and Hopeful did just before they fell into the clutches of giant Despair and were locked up in Doubting Castle. But their Deliverer came just in time, as he always does; for "having loved his own he loved them to the end." The great enemy, who was permitted to try them sorely, as expressed in the tremendous figure of the Saviour, "to sift them as wheat," was not able to pluck them out of his hand.

Now we shall see Jesus apply the key to the door of Doubting Castle. "Cast the net," said the stranger, "on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." They cast it, and instantly it was full of great fishes. The remembrance of the miracles they had witnessed in the days when they walked with the Master, as he went about doing good, would at once rush through their minds and break in upon their gloom. John, quicker of apprehension than Peter—for these two seem to have been standing together—exclaimed, "It is the Lord!"

Peter's impulsive nature here showed itself more than in any former incident of his life. The words of his gentler companion set his whole soul on fire, as would an electric spark. Every faculty of his intellectual and moral nature, all the powers of his great, warm, honest heart, would respond, "It is the Lord! It is the Lord!" Regardless of the splendid prize enclosed in his net, and forgetful of his duty to secure it, he girt his fisher's coat around him, plunged into the sea, and swam to his much loved Lord.

It might be supposed that Peter, after having shamefully denied his Master, would have been among the last of these seven to come into that holy presence. But whoever thus judges has not yet fully learned the workings of true repent-

ance, faith and love. Very likely had he stood firm on that awful night on which his Master was betrayed, he would, on this occasion, as did the others, have stuck to his post until the miraculous draft of fishes was made secure. But the overwhelming consciousness of his abounding sin, and of the still more abounding grace of his Lord and Saviour, rendered this impossible. His act was dictated by his affections alone. Reason and deliberate purpose had nothing to do with it.

Of the first meeting of the Master and disciple we have no account. Presently the other disciples, by their united efforts, bring the full net to shore, and Peter returned and helped them to draw it up. Then they found on the beach a fire of coals and fish laid thereon and bread, all provided by the good Master who had sought and found them in this trying hour. They were hungry, and he gave them meat; they were in darkness, and he gave them light; they were troubled, and he comforted them. With all the gentle kindness of a familiar friend he invited them to come and partake of the food he had prepared. Whether he himself partook of it with them we are not informed. He did eat after his resurrection in the presence of his disciples, and it is not improbable that he did so on this occasion.

Having finished the repast, and the fishes being all secure, Jesus turned to Peter with the solemn yet tender question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Had we been there and seen the Lord when he uttered these words; had we seen his gesture and the glance of his eye, we could easily have understood what he meant by "more than these;" but having only the words, we can give to them three distinct interpretations. All three have been given and stoutly maintained, thus:

1. Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these thy fellow disciples and partners in business?

2. Lovest thou me more than thou lovest thy ships and nets now lying before us?

3. Lovest thou me more than these thy brethren love me?

In view of all the circumstances of the case—the rash and hasty resolve, expressed tersely but most emphatically in the words, “I go a fishing;” in view of the beautiful lake where he had spent his early days, and which certainly had strong attractions; in view of the glorious “haul” they had just made, and which was enough to arouse all the old enthusiasm of this ardent fisherman, I think the Saviour pointed to the water, the ships and the fishes when he asked the question, and not to the other disciples. As for the third interpretation, I cannot see how any good man could for a moment suppose that the kind and gentle Jesus would indulge in a cruel taunt, for it would have been nothing else. Peter, it is true, had boasted; but he honestly believed all that he said. He was too self-reliant. Strong as he was, he was more like an inexperienced child than any of the twelve. But he had the genuine stuff in him, and Jesus knew it and let all know that he knew it when he gave him the new name of *Peter*, a rock. He was a rough block when the Divine Artist took him out of the quarry, and no little hammering was required to bring out his inherent beauties. But it was done. Up to the time of which we are speaking men might have said of him, as the dying patriarch said of his son Reuben, “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel;” but Peter did excel. In no character of whom we read do we find a more striking example of the transforming, ennobling power of Divine Grace than in that of Simon, son of Jonas, the rough fisherman of the Sea of Galilee.

NOTE.—This subject is continued at page 159, under the head, “Lovest Thou Me?”

Every-day faith.

“As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.”

THE story of the centurion who applied to Jesus to heal his sick servant, is full of interest and instruction, and sets forth a principle in the divine government as no didactic teaching can do. The faith of this man surpassed that of any other of whom we have any account. Even Jesus himself marveled and said to them that followed, “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

In his reply to the centurion Jesus lays down a great and universal principle which runs through all God’s dealings with his people, in these words, “As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” How did the centurion believe? His own words will best explain; “Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” His persuasion of the Lord’s ability was full and unconditioned; and he illustrated his idea of Christ’s authority over the powers of Nature, of which his servant’s illness was a part, by his own authority as a military officer over well disciplined soldiers. None finer or more striking could have been given. Jesus called this faith the greatest he had found; yet it had, so far as it was expressed, no reference to any doctrine or dogma, nor did it reach to the salvation of the soul, or to the world to come. It was specific and concrete, and yet it was great. It was confident trust, and could only spring from a heart in which the Holy Spirit had taken up his abode.

“Speak the word and my servant shall live.” That word of power was spoken, whether audibly or not we do not know, further than the words above written—“As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” But the noble believer went home satisfied, and found that his servant, whom he

loved so dearly, had been cured that very hour. He found that he had not overrated the power of the Son of God. Thus he experienced, what every strong believer through all the ages has experienced—joy and peace.

Now, let us look, by way of contrast, at another case. Jairus was a good man and a kind and affectionate father. He, too, had a sick one at home—not a servant, but a little daughter—just at the age when daughters twine themselves most strongly around a father's heart. As Jairus was a ruler of a synagogue, very likely he had seen Jesus healing sick people; so the thought, the hope, crept into his mind that he could heal his daughter, too, if he could only be induced *to come to his house and lay his hands upon her*. Sometimes Jesus did heal in that way. Sometimes he only spoke to the sick one, as, for example, the paralytic who was let down through the tiling. At other times he healed persons at a distance, as in the case of which we have just been speaking. But very likely Jairus had only seen cases where he laid on his hands. He had faith, but it was feeble. He was persuaded that Christ had power; but his conception was low and narrow when compared with that of the centurion. He seems to have been a man of forms and ceremonies, and had a preconceived notion as to how the blessing he so greatly desired could come, and that notion is expressed in his prayer to the Master, “My little daughter lieth at the point of death; I pray thee come and lay thy hands on her that she may be healed, and she shall live.” He not only asked for the great boon, but he prescribed the process through which it should come.

Jesus took this man at his word, and said, in action, but not in words, “As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee;” for he went with him. But he was interrupted and delayed on the way by the poor woman who pressed through the crowd to touch his garment, and was thereby healed of

a sad chronic malady, and then sent away with a benediction. She, too, was dealt with as she believed. Meantime the sick girl continued to suffer and to sink, until she expired. Then an agitated messenger is sent in haste to the poor father with the message, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master." "Too late!" would be the despairing cry in the father's heart, until Jesus gently whispered, "Be not afraid; only believe;" then calmly continued his walk to the house to which he was going with life and joy and salvation. We all know the sequel. The daughter was quickly restored to life and health, and doubtless that family became believers in Jesus.

But the point I wish to bring out is this, that it was done to both these men just as they believed. The one had a sublime trust in the power of Christ, no matter how distant he might be from the subject of that power, and no matter how it might be put forth. The other, by thrusting in his own poor notions and prescriptions as to how the thing could or should be done, subjected himself to great mental anguish, almost despair, and his beloved daughter to prolonged suffering, and even to death. As he believed, so it was done unto him.

"But it ended well." So it did, and so did the pilgrimage of Little Faith of whom Bunyan tells us. A stronger faith, however, would have given him a happier and more useful life, a brighter crown, and brought more glory to his Lord and Master. As he believed, so it was done unto him; and hence his doubts and fears, his clouds and darkness, his weakness and inefficiency, so that he had hard work to get through at all.

"I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel!" exclaimed the Saviour in amazement. But what was that faith? Was it a belief in the saving doctrines of the gospel? Not at all; although something like this may have underlain the

faith which was so highly commended. It was a full and grand feeling and expression of confidence in the person of Christ, and in his power and willingness to give him the particular blessing which he needed at that moment. He asked nothing for himself, but only for the life and health of a humble and beloved friend. His prayer was as simple and specific as was that of Peter when he was sinking in the water, and cried, "Lord, save me!" or that of Bartimeus, when he cried, "Lord, that I may receive my sight!"

Jesus—when with a word he had calmed the wind and the sea, and then rebuked his disciples for their lack of faith—made no allusion to their lack of doctrinal belief, or of hope of ultimate salvation, but only to their want of trust in his power to save them from the physical danger which they had just been in. This is the kind of faith which Jesus insists upon so much all through his teachings. Of the wants and cares of every-day life, see how he talks in Matt. vi. 25 to the end; and when in the same chapter, he teaches us to pray, the very first petition we are to ask for ourselves is, "Give us this day our daily bread." This kind of faith we need continually, just as we need our breath continually. Having that, we are perfectly safe. It is written, "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Again: "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Again: "I will trust and not be afraid." And again: "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;" and so on in a hundred other places.

On the other hand, when we, by an act of saving faith, enter into covenant with God, we commit to him the keeping of our souls as unto a faithful Creator. It is like having our title deed recorded—our record made safe and fixed on high. Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, expresses this

thought beautifully : " I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." A sensible man who owns an estate, and who knows that his title is good, is not forever worrying himself about the record of it. He knows that that is all right. So ought the Christian to know that his title to mansions on high is clear, and keep his active faith for every-day use, just as Jesus teaches us to do.

In the common things of life, as we believe so will it be done unto us, in a great measure. If we do not trust in God for common blessings, for those things which he knows we need, and if we feel and act as if we believed that things fall out pretty much by chance, and that we are driven about by the blind forces of Nature, why, as we believe, so it will be unto us. The promise is to those who trust, not those who do not. There is not a doubt that there are many who have truly believed in Christ, and committed their souls to his keeping, who yet, for want of this trust in God for little common things, get themselves into great trouble and sometimes sore perplexity, as poor Jairus did with his low and restricted notions of Christ's power. He had it all planned. If he could only be persuaded to go to his house, and then if he would lay his hands upon his sick child, she would not die, but recover ! Had he believed as the centurion believed, and prayed as he prayed, he would have been sent back to his home with his heart at rest, to be greeted by his restored child in perfect health.

But unbelief replies, " The days of miracles are passed." So they are ; but is the Holy One of Israel limited because miracles have ceased ? Does it require a miracle to give us our daily bread ? or to preserve the life of a sparrow, so that it cannot fall to the ground until our Father please ? Is any miracle involved in these words of Jesus : " Consider

the lilies of the field how they grow ; 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. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ?”

It is a sad fact that many who profess and call themselves Christians, and whose creed is unexceptionally orthodox, live without practical faith and trust in God, so far as the things of life are concerned ; and as they believe, so it is done unto them. Like the utterly unbelieving, they are left to drift where the blind forces of Nature, or what the world calls accident and chance, may drive them, because so far as these things are concerned their feet are not set upon a rock.

Confessing Christ.

IN the narrative of the poor woman who touched the Saviour's garment in the crowd, and was by that means cured of an inveterate and distressing malady, we find many topics for profitable reflection. We see in it a display of the power, goodness, and omniscience of Christ. In the woman we see true faith, mingled with much weakness and sinful fear.

The Saviour was walking in the highway, going to the house of Jairus to heal his daughter, and was dispensing divine instruction to the multitude who crowded around him. Among them was a pale, melancholy female, agitated with a new hope of recovery from an incurable malady. Too timid to make an open application to the Great Physician, she resolved to take, as it were by stealth, that healing virtue which she so much needed. Eagerly, with spas-

modic energy, she pressed forward, until with her hand she could reach his garment. She touched it. Instantly her feelings made known the great fact that she was restored to health. A trembling hope gave place to exulting joy.

But suddenly Jesus stops, and demands, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples think it a strange question, for they immediately reply, "Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" But the accidental touch of the multitude was nothing. Neither he nor they were affected by it. There was no inherent virtue in his clothes, any more than in other clothes. But the woman's touch was an act of faith, and as such it met its appropriate reward. Whether any superstition mingled with her faith is not for us to inquire. Possibly there did; yet He who "knoweth our frame, who remembereth that we are dust," pardoned and accepted the poor supplicant, for such she was.

Why did Jesus ask, "Who touched me?" Could he be ignorant of that? Surely not. He saw the first rising of this thought in the woman's heart. He had observed all her movements as no one else could observe them. But he asked the question because this woman, who had secured a great blessing, *had not confessed him before men, and, for aught we know, did not intend to do so.* If ever there was a case where this might have been permitted, we might suppose this was that case. But no; this could not be permitted. The Saviour was inflexible. His eye ranged over the multitude until it rested upon the timid, trembling object of his search, when she rushed forward, regardless of the sympathies or the sneers of those around her, fell down before him, and openly confessed all, acknowledged her obligation; and received from the lips of her great Benefactor a blessing which would cause a purer thrill of joy than

the mere healing of her malady had given. "Daughter," said he,—she has confessed him before men; he already confesses her before his Father and the holy angels, and calls her by that endearing term—"Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." What majesty and kindness are here commingled! The loving kindness of a familiar, sympathizing friend is blended with the authority and power of the Almighty! When that poor woman discovered that she was healed, she was glad, for she was greatly benefited; but she could not have gone away in peace. Now, however, she rejoices with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Her joy is no longer a selfish joy. By touching the Saviour's garment she received the healing virtue which she so much needed; but by confessing him before men she received that peace which passeth all understanding.

Often in after life would that woman think and speak of this interesting incident; and, could we hear her testimony, doubtless we should find that her strongest emotions of gratitude were excited because her Saviour would not permit her to depart without confessing him.

This subject teaches how unwise it is to expect salvation by a secret faith, a hidden devotion. Most of our prayers and communion with God are, and ought to be, in secret; but if our light be worth anything it cannot be hid. The true believer will bear his humble testimony before the world, and can never find peace until he does so. He may have joy, the joy of pardoned sin; but not peace. If his faith be genuine, he will be constrained to own his obligations to his Saviour in the face of a scoffing, unbelieving world.

To unite ourselves with the church of Christ is the common form of confessing him before the world. Time was when to do so was a great cross. Its conditions were

shame and contempt, often danger and death. But it is not so now. To join the church now is a reputable act, almost a fashionable one. No reproach, no loss, no danger, attaches to the act now. But in this very fact there is cause for deep searchings of heart. If we can confess Christ, and yet avoid the reproach of Christ, we may apprehend that something is wrong. "Is the offense of the cross ceased?" Are the terms of discipleship easier now than they were in the days of Christ and the apostles? Oh, I fear that while many of us have *professed* to be Christians, not so many have *confessed* Christ. If we have not his spirit, we are none of his. If we have, the world will hate us as it hated him. Our religion may be too lifeless, too tame, to excite the derision, reproach, or opposition that the early Christians met with. Why, if such people should appear in our day they would be stigmatized as enthusiasts and fanatics.

What then? Shall we court persecution? By no means; but rather bless God that we are exempted from it, provided that exemption does not arise from our conformity to the world; for remember it is written, "The world will love its own." But is there not reason to fear that the present apparent reconciliation between the church and the world arises more from the conformity of the church to the world than from that of the world to Christ?

The Last Interview.

THE hearts of the disciples were filled with sorrow and dismay at the near approach of the loss of their beloved Master. He had more than once spoken to them in language intended to prepare their minds for the sad events that awaited them. But that any evil should befall him, or

them, while with him, was a thought which, in their love for him, and their fondly-cherished although unfounded hopes of his earthly reign, they resisted until the closing scenes of his life forced upon them the sad reality.

In the language of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus we catch a glimpse of the early and long-cherished impression of the disciples:—"We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Piety, patriotism, and personal ambition united in keeping dominant in their minds the idea that their Master, whom they firmly believed to be the long-promised Messiah, would re-establish the throne of his father David, and reign forever over the kingdom of Israel, after having redeemed it from foreign bondage. But now they began to discover that in all these bright anticipations they had been mistaken.

The thoughts of his own dreadful death seem to have been ever present to the mind of the Saviour. He foresaw all its anguish and its horrors, in reference to which he had said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and oh, how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" But still he sympathized deeply in the sorrows of his disciples, and looked forward with desire for a suitable occasion of ministering to their comfort. Such an occasion was furnished in the observance of the last paschal supper. Then, in that upper room in Jerusalem, at the close of the sad and solemn feast, he rose and took bread, and brake it, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you." In us, who are familiar with all the facts, and know the true import of these words, they excite no dismay. We behold the gloom and the glory at one view. But to them these words expressed chiefly violence and death. "Broken for you!" Awful and mysterious words! After having long been dreaming of seats in an earthly kingdom, near the throne of their beloved Sovereign, to hear him speak of

his body being broken and his blood being shed *for them*,—how would it overwhelm them with astonishment and sorrow! With these feelings they ate the bread and drank the wine; and then he, seeing their affliction, poured forth those words of consolation recorded in the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John, beginning, “Let not your heart be troubled.” But for that last blessed conversation the disciples must have sunk into utter despondency. They loved their Master fervently; they believed in him as the promised Christ; but as yet they did not understand the nature of his mission, or of the kingdom which he had come to establish.

What a scene that was! There stood the great Sufferer, crushed beneath the weight of the sins of a world,—a load which nothing short of infinite strength could sustain. The horrible tempest of Divine wrath is coming nearer and nearer. His innocent humanity shrinks in terror, and he exclaims, “Father, save me from this hour!” But instantly he remembers his high mission, and adds, “but for this cause came I unto this hour.” In that awful storm which was beginning to beat upon him were mingled the wrath of God, the cruelty of men, and the malice of devils. There sat the weak, trembling, perplexed, dispirited disciples. In his pity for them he seems for a time to forget his own sorrows, and to cheer them he utters words full of encouragement and hope, and even of joy. His eye saw the gloom as they could not see it; but beyond the gloom he saw the glory that should follow. He saw the joy that was set before him, and was content to endure the cross. He saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied.

There he stood in their midst, in appearance not now so much that of a master as of a brother, a companion, and a friend. His language has in it not one desponding word. All is joy and triumph. Love dictates every sentence,

every precept, every promise. His opening is tender and affectionate beyond example; his close, the sublimity of triumph:—"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

In thinking of Jesus, we ought never to forget that he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," and that he was altogether as great and glorious in that upper chamber as he is amid the splendors of heaven. In the scene so well portrayed by the pen of the evangelist, we see him as he was, kind, affectionate, companionable, admitting his friends to the most intimate intercourse, and expressing by word and deed the greatest fondness for their company. "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." And in that wonderful prayer which followed, these are his words:—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." We may therefore safely conclude that Jesus has, and ever will have, an intense desire for the company and fellowship of his redeemed ones; and that in heaven we shall not worship him at an awful distance, but be admitted to still closer intimacy than were his disciples in the days of his flesh. In heaven we shall be more like him than they were.

Jesus speaks of the period during which his disciples should not see him as "a little while;" and the same is true of all his people. A very minute portion of their existence is spent in a state of absence from him. A few saw him on earth,—saw him for a little while,—and then for a little while they lost sight of him. But soon they were with him again, and will remain with him forever. "I will see you again," said he; for it was expedient for them that he should leave them for a little while.

“I will see you,” he says to every one who believes in him, to every one whom he has redeemed. In earnest prayer, he says, “I will that they be with me where I am.” Of them it is written, “They shall see his face;” and John says, “We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

How good it would be for us could we rise to and maintain a realizing sense of these glorious prospects! Then could we obey the closing injunction of the blessed Saviour, when he says, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Such a faith would bear us above the cares, anxieties and temptations of the world; but, better still, it would render us proof against the dangers arising from its riches and honors and pleasures.

The Denial of Peter.

THERE is nothing better for the heart than the contemplation of the Saviour’s character, as it is drawn out and exhibited before us in his unparalleled trials. In so learning Christ, we will do well to take a single incident at a time, rather than a succession of incidents.

During that dreadful night in which he was betrayed, as narrated by the Evangelists, there are incidents enough set forth to show to us his whole character,—enough to occupy our thoughts forever. The tender and affecting scene in the upper chamber; the consolatory and instructive farewell address; the prayer; the agony in the garden; the sleeping disciples; the arrival of the band of soldiers; the perfidious kiss; the arrest; the flight of the disciples; the mock trial; the crown of thorns; the buffetings and insults of the cruel men by whom he was surrounded; and the

denial of Peter. What a cluster of subjects for contemplation !

In meditating upon these things, the Christian will find his heart inclined to dwell upon one or another of the affecting incidents, according to the circumstances in which the providence of God has at the moment placed him.

We propose now to dwell for a few moments upon one incident of that ever memorable night, which is equally affecting and instructive. We mean the denial of Peter.

Peter loved his Master sincerely, passionately, vehemently ; and this love was met by the deep and unchangeable love of Jesus in a measure of which he only was capable. What, then, must have been the agony of the Saviour's soul—for he had the natural affections of a man, a friend, a brother—when Peter, in that trying hour, denied him with cursing and bitterness ! “I know not the man !” exclaimed his unstable friend and disciple, and then added to perfidy and falsehood the further sin of gross profanity. Jesus heard these words ; and of all the wounds inflicted upon his spirit that night this was the deepest and the keenest. The traitorous kiss of Judas, and the gross insults of the rabble and the soldiers, were nothing compared to those words of vehement, scornful, thrice-repeated denial from a bosom-friend.

But he bore it all meekly. He did not withdraw his love and tender compassion from his faithless disciple. He knew the strength of his temptation ; and his all-prevalent prayer preserved him from utter apostasy. He turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered his words : his heart melted, his faith resumed its power in his heart, and his love revived and glowed more fervently than ever.

That look was a look of love, of compassion and forgiveness. It spoke what tongue could not speak. It was not a frown, but a look of unutterable sorrow, tenderness and expostulation.

We, too, are sometimes wounded in the house of our friends. Words of bitterness, uttered by those we love, sometimes enter our hearts and burn like coals of juniper, causing us to endure the insufferable torture of a wounded spirit. At such times let us call to remembrance the meekness and unwavering love of Jesus when he was denied by him whose professions of attachment had been the most ardent of any; and in our feelings and conduct towards the offending party, let us try to imitate his example. Jesus, by a look of tenderness and compassion, broke Peter's heart, and caused copious tears of penitence to flow, leaving him a wiser, humbler, and better man. So may we, by doing likewise, restore to ourselves the alienated affections of our friends, whose words or actions, like daggers, may have pierced our souls.

Had the Saviour resented the gross affront that was put upon him by Peter, even by a frown or reproachful word, he might have rendered him an enemy forever. So we, if we would save our offending friend, no matter how sorely he may have wounded us, must be the first to seek reconciliation. This is the way God does with sinners; this is the way Jesus did with Peter; and in this, as in other things, we must follow his example.

It is a law in moral philosophy, seen as well in the dealings of God with men and men with God, as in the dealings of man with man, *that the offending party hates and shuns the offended*; and that if there ever be any true, lasting reconciliation, the first overture must come from the injured party. By nature we hate God. Why? Because we have injured him. God loves us, and seeks to be reconciled to us. Why? Ah! Christian, we must seek for the reason in his infinite goodness and mercy; but the fact that he loves us and seeks to be reconciled to us shows us that this wonderful moral law of which we have been

speaking governs all moral beings, from the Infinite One, down to the feeblest of his rational creatures.

This great truth, while it reveals to us God reconciling a world of rebels and enemies to himself, reveals to us our duty in some of the severest trials of the heart.

Friend, has he in whom you confided been unfaithful or unkind, so that he has ceased to love you and you to love him? Has he acted in such a manner that you feel justified in casting him off? Do it not. Remember that his offense is not so great as was Peter's, and Jesus did not cast him off.

Wife, has your husband offended you in word or injured you in deed? Turn upon him a look of tenderness and love, as your Saviour did upon his erring disciple. Beseech him to be reconciled to you, as God has besought you to be reconciled to Him. Do not indulge the vain hope, if through his injurious conduct your hearts have become alienated, that he will seek reconciliation. It is not to be hoped for. It is contrary to the great law of man's moral nature.

Husband, has your wife stung your heart with unkindness, with groundless accusations, with a withdrawal of her confidence, with words of wrath and bitterness, or in any way in which poor human nature may sin? Oh, place a guard upon your heart, lest the same enemy which has led her captive seize also upon you! Let your unchanging love call back your poor erring companion, as the love of Jesus rescued Peter. Had he waited until Peter should have repented and returned to his first love, he would have waited forever.

These reflections might be extended indefinitely; but let this suffice. Our object is accomplished if we have succeeded in setting forth this great law of our moral being, this all-important rule of action.

“Lovest Thou Me?”

I FEEL inclined to return to that memorable incident so graphically narrated by John (chapter xxi.), when seven of the doubting and desponding disciples of the risen Lord went “a fishing” on the Sea of Galilee, toiled all night and caught nothing. We spoke of the Lord appearing on the shore early on the following morning; of the wonderful success he gave them; of the ardor of Peter when he discovered that it was his much loved Master who had come to seek them, as shown by his casting himself into the water and swimming to the shore; of the morning repast, so much needed after their night of toil; and then of the solemn and pointed question of Jesus, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” With a brief discussion of the import of the words, “more than these,” the article, (Simon Peter’s Fishing Party), abruptly closed; for to have proceeded further would have opened too wide a field of discussion for one essay.

Thrice was the awful yet tender inquiry propounded, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?” Once in the comparative sense, and twice in the absolute. Some commentators fancy that the question was put thrice because Peter had thrice denied his Lord. While it is possible that it may have been so, it is more curious than profitable to speak of this coincidence in number as if that inference were an established truth.

Each time the main inquiry is couched in precisely the same terms, and each time the answer of Peter is in the same words—a bold, confident, yet humble appeal to the omniscience of Christ, that he did love him—“Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” The third time, instead of a simple “Yea, Lord,” he expressed in emphatic language, what was only implied in his first two declarations, his own

belief in the absolute omniscience of his Divine Master—
“*Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.*”

Taking all the circumstances into view, this is one of the most extraordinary and instructive conversations that ever was recorded. It was only a few nights before that this same Peter thrice denied, in strong, bitter, and even profane terms, that he knew Jesus. This was not done at a distance from his Master, but while looking at him as he stood apparently a helpless prisoner in the midst of his enemies. This denial involved in it almost all that we can conceive of falsehood, cowardice, meanness, cruelty, unfaithfulness and insult. Rarely indeed has Satan been permitted to get such a mastery over a good man. But terrible as was his fall, his faith failed not; for we read: “And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him ‘before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice;’ and Peter went out and wept bitterly.” That look of admonition and pitying rebuke restored him to himself; and who can doubt but that those bitter tears were followed by a sweet yet sad and humbling sense of pardon. Not a mere hope of pardon, but a blessed assurance of it.

Here it is that we must seek for a key to unlock the mystery of Peter’s holy boldness on the occasion of which we are speaking. He was forgiven much; he was lifted up from the lowest depths of self-abasement; therefore he loved much, and he knew it. The love which flows from such forgiveness as this cannot be a matter of conjecture, a mere peradventure, a subject of trembling hope; but one of absolute certainty, of positive consciousness; hence Peter’s impetuous haste to reach Jesus where he stood on the beach, and hence his confident language, thrice uttered, “Thou knowest that I love thee.” Here we have a beauti

ful picture of faith working by love; and here we see the sweet and blessed assurance to which every Christian may attain; for surely if a man who had sinned as deeply as Peter had done was able to utter such language as this in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, there is no reason why any believer should be debarred from the same high privilege.

It would have cast a sad and gloomy cloud over this beautiful narrative, over the lesson which it teaches, and the hopes which it inspires and warrants, had Peter only been able to have answered—as too many genuine believers who live below their privileges do—“I *hope* that I do love thee.” Ah! for our encouragement, for our instruction, for our comfort and peace, and for our growth in grace, the Holy Spirit guided Simon son of Jonas to a better answer than that; and better still, to persist in the utterance of the same words three times, although knowing and feeling that just then the piercing eye of Omniscience was looking down into the depths of his soul.

Christians,—every one of you who may read these words,—the Master is standing before you asking the same question in the same loving and familiar manner—calling you by name, as he did Simon. Can you give him the same answer? or can you only say you hope you do love him, or that you are trying to do so? Now let us try the same principle on a lower plane. Suppose a noble, kind and affectionate husband were to put the same question to the partner of his life, and get “I hope so,” or “I try to do so,” for an answer, how would he feel about it? Would so cold, so doubtful, so half-hearted a reply be satisfactory? Ananias and Sapphira, who kept back part of the possession, might have safely gone that far, and doubtless did; but for those who, like Peter, have made a full surrender of their hearts to Christ, to be unable to give the same answer

that he did, is a self-inflicted wrong. "The joy of the Lord is your strength," says the Bible; and that joy can only co-exist with the assurance of that mutual love which makes Christ and his people one.

Many truly love Christ, yet are not sure of it. This is strange, but it is true. Their loss is great; for all their graces are weakened in their exercise by this doubt. It is one form of unbelief, and has its spring in a spurious humility, arising from that legal spirit which clings so strongly to human hearts, causing them to feel that they are too unworthy to venture to indulge in such assured convictions or utterances. If any man might have shut himself out of this high privilege on the score of personal unworthiness, Peter was that man; but not a word does he utter about that. The heinousness of his sin, now that he knows that it is pardoned, only makes him love the more and be more conscious of the fact.

It is well worthy of special notice, that there is no intimation in any of the gospel narratives that Jesus, in their subsequent intercourse, ever upbraided Peter for that shameful denial, or made the slightest allusion to it. What a glorious example is that to us! and what a cheering commentary this fact is upon that Old Testament promise, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more!" Tradition tells us that, ever after that awful night of the denial, the crowing of a cock caused Peter to weep. It may have been so; but if so, it did not take away the sweet assurance and comfort that he loved Jesus; and none ever better portrayed that love than he, when he wrote—"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Jesus as a Teacher.

THERE is not so much bald infidelity in the world now as there was thirty years ago ; but skepticism has made, and is yet making, fearful advances.

Infidelity boldly and squarely denies a divine revelation ; skepticism does not deny, but suggests doubts and difficulties. The one comes as an open and avowed antagonist of the system of Christian faith, by taking the ground that the Scriptures are of no more authority than the writings of Confucius, or of the sacred books of the Brahmins ; the other comes in the garb of a philosophical inquirer, digging about the foundations, and, by telling us all about the fixedness and immutability of Nature's laws, starts doubts as to the possibility of such intercourse between the Creator and his creature man as the Scriptures tell us of. Nature, material nature, combined with what we are capable by our own resources of finding out about mind, is made to testify that the universe, the cosmos, operates by its own laws and through inherent forces, and that it is unphilosophical to believe that the Creator is perpetually interfering with and superintending the working of this all-perfect system.

Skepticism is not dogmatic, or at least professes not to be so, but is simply an inquirer, a learner, finding a few facts scattered on the border of the great realm of truth, and then drawing conclusions which claim to cover all things, even to the infinitely great and incomprehensible God, whose being, by searching, cannot be found out. The world is becoming full of what they themselves complacently term "thinkers," men who, from the low and narrow range of observation to which the most powerful human intellect is confined, vault confidently into the judgment seat, and discourse with oracular authority how far faith may go without entering the realm of superstition.

With a little knowledge, and with a head stuffed full of rationalistic notions, any man can set himself forth as a thinker, and bewilder and puzzle people who have not thought much about such matters. There seems to be an air of superiority in their eyes in being thus able to reach truth by a process of ratiocination, instead of accepting it from a divine revelation in simple and humble faith. Such a process is very flattering to the vanity of such men.

Shall we undertake to meet them by a counter process of reasoning? We may; but it is not the better method. Jesus has left words enough on record, if we could only use them aright, to sweep all such superficial and vain reasonings from the earth. Take one or two examples, where he is telling us that our Father does perpetually interfere with our affairs and take special care of us, notwithstanding the fixedness of natural laws. He points to the sparrows, and tells us that not one of them can fall to the ground without God's volition; and then tells his disciples to fear not, "ye are of more value than many sparrows." Again: "What man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

How divinely clear and simple are these few words, and what a flood of light they shed upon the nature of God, and the relation he bears to us! Then observe how he assigns to faith and reason their proper places and their appropriate work in the human soul. Let us examine the passage in detail.

By an illustration drawn immediately from nature, he sets forth the relation which God sustains to us and we to him in terms so simple and so touching that any mind, however weak or illiterate, can not only comprehend it, but feel it.

The natural kindness of the parental heart is made to illustrate the love of God our Father. Here is no abstruse speculation, no groping in the dark, no guess-work, no climbing up through Nature to Nature's God, no far-fetched inferences or opinions, but truth itself in its clear light and simple majesty. Jesus Christ, in all his teachings, never uttered an opinion. He spoke as one having authority. Thus he taught us that God careth for us, that he is ever with us to hear and answer when we ask "good things;" as ready to bless as human parents are to give good gifts to their children.

"What man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" He appeals to a universal principle, one not only known and believed in the abstract, but felt, and therefore perfectly understood, as well by the simple and unlettered peasant as by the scholar and the sage. He sets the reasoning powers at work, and, unlike our profound thinkers, his illustration is as easily comprehended by the feeblest intellect as by the strongest. Based upon this universal and beneficent principle of natural affection, he builds the grandest argument for the fatherhood of God that ever was offered. "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto *your* children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask *him?*"

Observe how he sets reason to work on this great problem, but in subordination to faith. He is not here asserting that God exists; nor is he showing us that he is ever present and ever active in his Providence. He is showing us the loving kindness of our Heavenly Father. His words here are in harmony with these lines, which for quaint simplicity, combined with the loftiest sublimity, have few if any equals in our language:—

“Such pity as a father hath unto his children dear,
Like pity shows the Lord to such as worship him in fear.”

Thus does our Lord lift the weakest and the strongest of his people away up beyond the utmost range of reason and philosophy, up into the light of God, not the light of Nature; and yet with consummate skill he makes for us ladders of the simplest natural things, on which we are able to climb into the regions of pure and unmixed truth—to truth which the highest reason can approve, and yet can reach in no other way.

Jesus presupposes that the son will ask for what he desires and needs. Here is prayer set forth in the simplest light—a hungry child asking for food. Any parent who is not a monster will listen to such a prayer as that, and give the needed good thing. Here, then, is prayer and the answer to prayer. So Jesus tells us that God answers the petitions of his children. But our “thinkers,” who have been delving until they are blind among the mysteries of the material and tangible universe, tell us that all things are governed by immutable laws, established in the beginning; and that therefore prayer is unavailing. They think that they have discovered that the Almighty does not interfere with the operation of the laws of Nature, and that therefore it is in vain to ask for anything. They hold that God is good and benevolent, because they see evidences of goodness in the order, beauty and benefits of creation; but that good they hold to be general, not special. How shallow their philosophy is compared with the profound utterances of Jesus!

It is not without a purpose that Jesus makes the son ask bread or a fish. The prodigal needed bread greatly while in the field feeding swine, and would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat. In his soliloquy about his father’s house he admitted that he was perishing with hunger. But he had not yet asked. He felt his

need; but he had not yet prayed. His father made no movement towards relieving him, but suffered the inexorable laws of cause and effect to operate. The son had been obstinate and rebellious; he had been reckless, dissipated and wasteful; and those things had brought forth their natural and appropriate fruit. Did his father hate him while he was acting thus? No. Did he do anything for him? No; for to have followed him with benefits, to have given him tokens of his love, while his heart was in a state of alienation, would have done him more harm than good. But when he said, "I will arise and go to my father," both parties were set in motion; and while he was yet a great way off his father met him and showered upon him every token of his abounding love. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." This was prayer with confession, and the answer to that prayer fell as naturally and harmoniously into the chain of phenomena that runs through the entire case as did the degradation and suffering which resulted from a course of extravagance and dissipation.

What, then, is the difference between the teachings of Christ and those of these skeptical "thinkers?" Simply this: He goes immeasurably beyond them. Standing as he does above all things, all truth is perfectly clear to him; while they, from their low stand-point, are only able to examine a few material things lying along the shore of the great ocean of truth; and so little light have they that the most they can do is to grope and feel and speculate; dealing largely in inferences and opinions, which Jesus never does.

John's Gospel.

“FIRST the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear,” is the divinely appointed order in Nature and in Grace and the same order is apparent in the recorded revelation of Jesus Christ to the world. We have four witnesses who have set forth the facts in that wondrous story, and recorded the utterances of Him of whom they wrote. The first three testify to the extent of the light which was given them. In their testimony there is only so much discrepancy as arises from one recording incidents or sayings which the others have omitted—just enough to prove that there was no collusion among them, but that each is a true, disinterested and independent witness. For example: Matthew tells us that the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus, railed upon him, and echoed the taunts of the chief priests and scribes and elders. Mark does not mention them at all; while Luke narrates the penitence, the faith, the confession, the prayer, and the salvation of one of them. Now here is no contradiction; and what difference there is in their narrations challenges our belief in their general testimony more strongly than if they had all told exactly the same story.

But no careful student of the Holy Scriptures can fail to be struck with the marked difference in style and manner between John's Gospel and those of the others. He starts out on a higher plane, and maintains it throughout. They begin with the nativity or before it, and follow Jesus through his eventful life as simple historians or biographers. John, on the other hand, begins with the Logos, who was with God, and who was God, and who became flesh and dwelt among us. To establish this grand opening proposition seems to have been the work given of the Father to this witness. It is only here and there that he touches upon the incidents

which crowded to fullness that short but wondrous life; but all the incidents he mentions, go to establish the great fact that God was manifest in the flesh. His first mention of Jesus as a man is in terms which show that he was speaking of one with whom the world was already familiar—one whose personal history had been sufficiently set forth—one who was already believed on in the world as the Saviour of sinners; but whose transcendent grandeur had not yet been clearly revealed.

As Jesus gave to the people his doctrine "as they were able to hear it," (Mark iv. 33,) so, in his providence, he seems to have given the Gospel to the world. Matthew, Mark, and Luke had written their simple synoptical narratives; Luke had given to the church his Acts of the Apostles; the Epistles of Paul, and Peter, and James had become the property of the church; and believers had become so confirmed in their faith that they were at length able to hear what the earlier disciples would not have been able. John, the beloved, the intimate, the bosom friend and companion of the Lord, was preserved in life long after all his brethren had gone to their reward; and probably forty years after the others had borne their testimony, he, full of years and the Holy Ghost, went back to the beginning and set Christ forth as he was, "God manifest in the flesh."

In his valedictory address at the last supper, recorded only by John (xiv., xv., xvi.,) Jesus said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." In John's Gospel we see a fulfillment of this promise in the fullness and fidelity with which he has given many of the longest and most important discourses of the Master—discourses not given at all by the others—held back, we may without irreverence suppose, until believers at large were

able to hear them. Take, for example, his discourse to Nicodemus, his conversation with the woman of Samaria, his closing address to the disciples at the supper just before he suffered, and, more wonderful than all, his prayer to the Father at the close of that address.

John often touches the paths of the other evangelists and narrates the same incidents; but there is no collision—all is substantial harmony. But everything he narrates seems to subserve his main design, which was to set forth Christ's Divinity. It is somewhat remarkable that John only narrates the great miracle of the raising of Lazarus. Luke gives us in a few words, the narrative of the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, and he does so in terms of inimitable simplicity, beauty and pathos; but the narrative of Lazarus, as more fully and circumstantially given by John, was probably left to him by Him who fits all his servants for their work. It may be that it required higher gifts and fuller inspiration than any of the others possessed to narrate that stupendous miracle. But we had better not speculate, but simply say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

There have been some who doubted, and there may be some who still doubt, the authenticity of this book, because of their opposition to Christ's Divinity. But there is sufficient outside testimony of its genuineness to satisfy all reasonable minds. We shall mention but one witness. Irenæus, who was, in early manhood, the friend and pupil of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John, has left a letter distinctly and positively affirming that Polycarp accepted John's Gospel as authentic, as he did also those of the three earlier evangelists. The lives of those three men, John, Polycarp, and Irenæus, reached through two centuries. John was nearly or quite a hundred years old when he died; Polycarp was nearly the same age when he suffered martyr-

dom; Irenæus also reached a very advanced age, and wrote the letter referred to about the second year of the third century.

But to the fair minded and thoughtful student the internal evidence of the book is sufficient, for the simple reason that it soars far above the range of thought which any impostor could reach. Such simplicity and grandeur, such purity and sweetness, are not of earth, much less do they belong to the domain of falsehood and deception. The stream can never rise higher than the fountain; and fiction, however ingenious, must always have its roots in the domain of the known and knowable. John goes far above that plane, and therefore must be one of God's own witnesses.

Jesus in Trouble.

JOHN, in his gospel, lets us more into the inner life of Jesus than do any of the other evangelists. He records no parables, and relates but few miracles; but no other writer gives such full reports of the profound sayings of our Lord as he. His gospel was written long after the others. Probably the youngest of the twelve, his life was protracted to extreme age, and among the closing labors of his life was the writing of this book. The cloud of common and more recent memories had rolled away from his mind, while those of his youth came back clear and bright. This is a common and natural psychological phenomenon. But beyond and above that was this promise of the Master, which he himself records: "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you; but the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my

name, he shall teach you all things, *and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*"

To the writers of the synoptical gospels accuracy of statement appears to have been given, and verbal accuracy as far as was necessary for the task that was given them to do ; but to John the words of Jesus were given back with a degree of fullness, freshness and accuracy, of which there is no example. Sixty years at least must have rolled round from the time the words were uttered until the venerable apostle put them upon record. John, doubtless, was present when Nicodemus called upon the divine Teacher, and the record of the conversation is as fresh as if he had taken it down in short-hand at the moment. We know he was present in that upper room in Jerusalem; yet notwithstanding the long delay, every word of that divine valedictory, with every interrupting remark of the listening disciples, is given just as if it had been written at the moment. There is something very wonderful in this; and it can only be accounted for on the hypothesis that in John's case the promise quoted above was accomplished in absolute fullness.

In his 12th chapter, John records a cry of anguish which burst from the heart of the great Captain of our Salvation as he drew near to his terrible conflict. It is very much like the cry of Gethsemane: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name!"

John alone records this wonderful outburst of anguish. He does not tell us any thing about the still deeper and more protracted anguish of Gethsemane; for as the others had told the story well and fully, he need not repeat it.

This preliminary shudder reveals to us how terrible must have been the burden of sorrow which Jesus bore all through his life, and which made him as the prophet, in language sublimely pathetic, expresses it, "a man of sorrows and

acquainted with grief." With the psalmist he could easily exclaim, "I will not fear what *man* can do unto me;" but oh! to encounter the concentrated wrath of God as he only could know it; to bear the penalty due to a world of sinners was more than even his courage could calmly contemplate. For once he is puzzled and exclaims: "What shall I say?" His first impulse is to escape, and he cries: "Father, save me from this hour!" But no sooner is the petition uttered than it is taken back; for he adds, "but for this cause came I unto this hour." What next? What can he pray for? But one thing is left for which he may ask. Shut in on all sides, out of the depths he sends his last availing cry, "Father, glorify thy name." Instantly the Father answers audibly: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." When Jesus awoke on the boisterous sea and said to the fierce tempest and the agitated waters, "Peace! Be still," all nature was instantly hushed in a deep calm. So was his soul now. The prayer of the troubled Saviour is answered, and he is at rest. He cannot escape death, but he triumphs over it. He cannot be delivered from the avenging wrath of God, but he is content to endure it. It is given him to see the travail of his soul, and he is satisfied; for in the next minute we hear him exclaiming in triumph: "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

The man of sorrows himself never uttered a better or more available prayer than this; and it is one which every crushed spirit may utter just as freely as he did. No sorrow can be so great, no apprehension so gloomy, no immediate prospect so appalling as was his. No one can be more sternly and rigidly shut up than he was; none more peremptorily denied that which may be ardently desired. Yet see his triumph, when, rising above his dark and troubled

surroundings, he desires and seeks only the glory of God.

“Father, glorify thy name!” A wife may utter the ejaculation over a dying husband, a mother over the coffin of her babe; and even a father over the body of a depraved son from whose dark grave no hope of a glorious resurrection beams forth. It is a cry which did originally come, and ever will continue to come, from the lowest depths of earthly trouble and sorrow.

Justice and Mercy.

THAT in some minds there exists a vague and cloudy idea that these essential elements in the character of God are in some way antagonistic the one to the other, is abundantly shown by the tenor of some sermons, discourses and prayers which we hear. This error, when it gets a lodgment in the mind, leads to the cognate error that God is bound by the constitution of his nature to be just, which is true; but that he is not bound in the same way to be merciful. That he dispenses justice in accordance with a perfectly holy and unchangeable law, which is true; but that in the dispensation of his mercy he is regulated by no such law, but acts arbitrarily, and in a manner which, if attributed to a human sovereign, would be called caprice, which is a great and injurious error.

“Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other,” is God’s own testimony respecting these all-important elements in his character. The words are as expressive of perfect harmony, concord, and everlasting unity, as anything in human language can be; and hence the remarkable declaration of the apostle on

this point: “He is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” It is a glorious thought, that the Justice of God is as much exercised and as much magnified in our salvation as is his Mercy. That in this, as in all things else, they are essentially one; and that, combined, they constitute what we call his Goodness.

There are beings upon whom Justice has no claims, that is, they have violated no law, and are therefore not amenable to that punishment which is the penalty of violated law. There are others who stand in such relations to their Creator and Sovereign that he cannot bless them. There are others—and such are we—who, although by nature at enmity with God, are so situated that, through the great Mediator, they may be reconciled, pardoned, accepted and saved. In his dealings with all these three classes of his creatures the Justice and Mercy of God are alike harmonious, and are equally glorified.

When our glorious Redeemer took upon him our nature and our iniquities, worked out our redemption by yielding a perfect obedience to the divine law, and by enduring the penalty his people had incurred, thus magnifying the law and making it honorable, Justice and Mercy walked hand-in-hand in perfect harmony; and when the adorable Sufferer writhed in agony in the garden and on the cross, they were, as they had ever been, and as they ever will be, locked in fond embrace. And when the redeemed shall reach their everlasting home, Justice and Mercy will unite in the bestowment of their crowns, as they united in laying upon Him the iniquity of us all.

The Marys of the New Testament.

THE number, excellence and prominence of the women who bore this pretty name in the four gospel narratives is remarkable. Even the chosen twelve hardly seem to have been more closely allied to our Lord than they, or their history more closely interwoven with his, than theirs.

But some confusion of thought as to their personal identity seems to have crept into the minds of Christians, and even into standard theological works, by which the bright and beautiful reputations of two of them have suffered. I mean Mary Magdalene and Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Let us see if we cannot fix them in their proper spheres, each in her place, and with her own peculiar characteristics.

THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

Mary the mother of Jesus stands forth pre-eminently distinguished among women, because she was so. That she was eminently good is certain. But the little that we have of her history shows us that she was one of those quiet, undemonstrative saints, which is characteristic of vast numbers of believing women. She seems to have been remarkable for her simple, unquestioning faith. When Gabriel made known to her the glad yet astounding fact that she should miraculously become the mother of the Messiah, her meek and calm reply was, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." These words reveal the character of the woman, so far as her child-like faith is concerned—a faith which even at the time excited the admiration of her friends; for we read that Elizabeth exclaimed in her rapturous salutation, "Blessed is she that believeth that there shall be a perform-

ance of those things which were told her from the Lord!" (I follow the marginal reading.) That her piety and her general character were quiet and undemonstrative we learn from such words as these—and we find them two or three times: "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." Once, and only once, we hear her burst forth in an eloquent and rapturous prophetic song at the house of her friend Elizabeth; but her common faith and devotion seem to have been passive rather than active. She stood by the cross on Calvary, where the sword of which good old Simeon spoke at the circumcision pierced her soul; but we have no record of either word or action there. She was with the waiting and praying one hundred and twenty followers of Jesus when the Holy Ghost was poured out on the day of Pentecost; but all that we know is that she was there. That is the last record we have of this illustrious, but meek and quiet woman. Nothing could be in stronger contrast than the humble and undemonstrative part she bore on earth, and the activity and power which the Romish church attributes to her in heaven.

MARY MAGDALENE.

Mary Magdalene is so called because she was a native or resident of Magdala previous to her acquaintance with the Lord. When he first found her she was laboring under a fearful mental malady, strange and mysterious to us, but common then, called in the New Testament "possessed of devils." Some understand this phrase in its simple verity; others that it is only used because a simple and superstitious people supposed that certain forms of mental aberration arose from the in-dwelling of evil spirits, and the control by them of the physical powers of the human beings of whom they were allowed to take possession. My own impression is that it was truly a diabolical possession—that evil spirits were really permitted to enter human beings at

that time, so that there should be a kind of balance of antagonistic power during the time when the Divine Being was incarnate and walked as a man among men. The recorded language of Christ himself constrains me to this conclusion. In this way he brought himself into closer contact with his mightiest foe, and in the sight of angels and men asserted his power over the evil one, together with his angels or subordinates.

We read that out of Mary Magdalene Jesus cast seven devils. She was fearfully afflicted; but the cure was thorough, and her gratitude to her Benefactor was expressed, not in words, so far as we know, but in acts of heroic devotion to his service, especially in that terrible closing scene when his male disciples and chosen ones forsook him and fled.

“Last at the cross and earliest at the tomb,”

it was Mary's high privilege to be the first to hear the voice of her risen and now immortal Lord, and to recognize that voice in the heavenly music of her own name. Never will that scene of unequalled pathos be forgotten, or its lustre be dimmed, either on earth or in heaven.

But who and what was Mary Magdalene? Had she ever sunk to a life of shame and moral degradation prior to her first knowledge of her Saviour? Thousands believe so. Yet there is not a word in the inspired history to warrant such a notion. That she had been terribly afflicted is true; but that her life had been vile, that she was such a one as she whom Simon the Pharisee called “a sinner,” is a gratuitous and injurious assumption. In the copy of the Bible now before me, in the summary of topics set over the 7th chapter of Luke, I find these words: “Christ showeth by occasion of *Mary Magdalene* how he is the friend of sinners,” &c. In the closing part of that chapter Luke gives us the beautiful narrative of the weeping peni-

tent who washed Christ's feet with tears, wiped them with the hairs of her head, anointed them, and then received from his lips words of commendation, peace and pardon. This woman was a fallen one, "a sinner," as Simon in his heart called her; but that she was Mary Magdalene is the sheerest assumption. In all that chapter there is not the slightest allusion to her. We know nothing about the name of the woman there spoken of; but we do know that she loved much, and that her action, under all the circumstances, was one of heroic devotion. But to make her and Mary Magdalene identical, as has been done in the heading of that chapter, which many simple minded readers will receive as inspired verity, exhibits a degree of carelessness, or dullness of apprehension, which is truly marvelous.

This wide-spread and long existing mistake has led to a use of the word Magdalene, by which this noble Christian woman is designated in the sacred record, which puts a stain upon her untarnished reputation—making it a synonym of shame, dishonor and degradation, coupled with better aspirations. I allude to the term "Magdalene" as applied to asylums for fallen women. I trust that some other term will be adopted, and the honored name of Mary Magdalene be delivered from the dishonoring ideal association.

MARY THE SISTER OF LAZARUS.

But what about Mary the sister of Lazarus—that Mary who sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word at a time when her more active sister thought she ought to have been engaged in her domestic duties? Was she the same woman of whom Luke tells us, who went into the Pharisee's house, where Jesus was sitting at meat, came behind him, washed his feet (which the Pharisee's discourteous neglect had left covered with dust,) with her tears, wiped them with

the hairs of her head, opened an alabaster box of ointment, anointed them, and of whom and to whom the Lord spoke words of commendation and forgiveness, and then telling her that her faith had saved her, bade her "go in peace"? While there is far more plausibility in this opinion than in the other already spoken of, that the woman mentioned by Luke was Mary Magdalene, I believe that that woman and Mary of Bethany are not identical—that while the one was a penitent cyprian of the city, the other was a devout, gentle, kind and beloved friend of Jesus, whose home was in the little town of Bethany, two miles to the eastward of the city. It is true that John says in a parenthesis, in speaking of Mary of Bethany, that "it was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick." (xi. 2.) In the 12th chapter he relates the incident here alluded to, in these words: "Then took Mary a pound of ointment, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." Matthew, chapter xxvi., relates the same incident, and fixes it in the house of Simon the leper; but he does not name the woman. Whether Simon the leper was a Pharisee I do not know; but there is very little similarity between this narrative and that of Luke, while it agrees in nearly every particular with that of John, except that Matthew says the *head* of the Saviour was anointed, and John mentions only his feet. Mark's account agrees in almost every particular with that of Matthew. John says they made him a supper at Bethany, and that Martha served, and Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. He does not say at whose house the supper was made; but Matthew and Mark both say that it was at that of Simon the leper, who resided at Bethany. But "*they* made him a supper, and Martha served," from

which we may infer that it was a joint affair among the neighbors. That it was the same incident which Matthew and Mark relate we may gather from what all three say of the grumbling of Judas at the waste. Matthew and Mark do not tell us who it was that complained, but John does. All of them record the Saviour's commendation of the act. But to satisfy any observant reader that the affair of which Luke gives such a graphic account, and that of which the other three evangelists speak are altogether different, it is only necessary to compare, or, rather, contrast the language of Jesus on the two occasions. For the sake of brevity I forbear quoting them, but request any reader who may feel an interest in the subject to turn to the narrative given by Luke, chapter vii. 36, to the end, and to those given by the other three of the anointing of the Saviour by a woman. Moreover, the affair which Luke records is put under the date of A. D. 31; the other in 33, only six days before the passover and the crucifixion. Still there is a remarkable coincidence in some particulars given by Luke and the others. In both cases the name of the host is Simon, one a Pharisee, the other designated by the term leper. In both, the gentle devotee is said to have wiped his feet with her hair. Luke speaks of washing them with tears, but John says nothing about that. Luke speaks of sin and shame, of penitence and pardon, and of great love because much was forgiven. None of the others say anything of the kind. I am persuaded, therefore, that the woman mentioned by Luke and Mary of Bethany are not identical. While there are some particulars in both strangely similar, there are still more as much in contrast as anything can be.

The contrast between these two sisters, Martha and Mary, both excellent Christian women, is an interesting subject of study. The one seems to have been active, energetic, generous, and perhaps a little petulant. Her ambition was to

give to her Lord and Master, when he visited the family, the very best that it was in her power to give ; and hence, becoming “cumbered about much serving,” she grew impatient with her sister, who preferred to sit at Jesus’ feet and hear his discourse, leaving her more careful sister to serve alone. Perhaps Mary was to blame for this ; but Martha was still more to blame for addressing the Lord himself in words of complaint and ill humor—“Dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone ? Bid her therefore that she help me.”

When Jesus visited the family after the death of Lazarus, both sisters used the same words upon meeting him—“Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died” —first Martha, afterwards Mary. To the first he replied in language as calm and lofty as ever fell from his lips ; for probably Martha in her heart entertained a trace of hard feeling at his seeming neglect. But when the gentler sister uttered the same exclamation, the outgush of a great sorrow, unmingled with a murmur, her great but gentle Friend could only mingle his tears with hers. He did not, possibly could not, speak, but “groaned in the spirit and was troubled.” In these two incidents we see two types of character, both of which are common in the world to this day.

MARY THE MOTHER OF JAMES.

Of Mary the mother of James we know very little ; but we do know that with Mary Magdalene, and like her, she lingered to the last at the cross, saw the Lord laid in Joseph’s sepulchre, and at early dawn on the first day of the week was at the tomb ready to do all in her power to honor him. Thus she became one of the first to hear from angelic lips the glad news of his resurrection. This is I think the same woman whom John calls Mary the wife of Cleophas, and

the sister, or kinswoman, of Mary the mother of Jesus. It is not likely that she was her full sister, as she bore the same name.

The Affair of the Tribute-Money.

THERE are few examples of deeper and more consummate craft than was involved in the question propounded to Christ by the Pharisees and Herodians, as to whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not. Judea at that time was a conquered province of the Roman Empire, and the Jews were obliged to acknowledge the authority of the Emperor and to pay tribute to him, however reluctant they were to do either one or the other. While among the Jews nothing could be more unpopular than to profess friendship and fidelity to Cæsar; on the other hand, filled as Judea was with the civil and military officers of Rome, nothing could be more dangerous than to deny the lawful authority of him whose conquering arms had made him the supreme ruler not only of Judea, but of nearly all the then known world.

Eager to entrap the Saviour and to get him into difficulty with the Roman authorities, or to render him odious to the Jews,—they cared not which,—they resolved to put a question to him which he could not well refuse to answer, and which, as they supposed, answer it as he might, could not fail to involve him in difficulty. And in order the more certainly to insure a reply of some kind, a committee was appointed to wait on him, who approached him with expressions of profound respect and abject flattery. “Master,” said they, “we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men: tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou? is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar

or not?" Here was a dilemma too great for human wisdom to escape,—a net so artfully woven that any but Jesus must have been caught in some of its meshes. In bland and honeyed accents the problem, with its flattering introduction, was uttered; and, the leader having delivered himself, the artful deputation awaited with malicious exultation the confusion into which they were sure of throwing Him whom they hated. But how were they astonished to see a dark cloud of indignant scorn gather upon that calm, mild, benign countenance, and hear him thunder forth the severe reply, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" Now they would gladly escape; but he has caught them, and holds them fast in his grasp. "Show me the tribute-money," is his instant and stern command. They cannot refuse; so they produce a penny, (a small silver coin, bearing Cæsar's image and superscription, of the value of about fourteen cents in our currency.) "Whose is this image and superscription?" he demands of his now abashed interrogators. The question cannot be evaded, although they now feel that the little coin which they have put into his hand, and which he is holding up before their eyes, is at once the badge and symbol of their national degradation; and they feel how ridiculous it is in them to be asking such questions. They are now sufficiently punished; so he dismisses them by uttering one of the most profound and important precepts that ever fell upon mortal ears:—"Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

I desire to offer a few reflections upon this divine and comprehensive precept.

Nothing is more common than for rulers to invade the rights of God; for God has reserved to himself great and important rights. While it is true that "the powers that be are ordained of God," and that we are bound by a di-

vine command to yield obedience to the ordinances of men, yet all these, in order to challenge our obedience, must be subordinate to that Higher Law which God has laid down in his word. The apostles and early Christians were obedient to all the laws and ordinances of the Roman Empire, so far as they did not conflict with the rights and laws of God; but, where they did so, they deliberately disobeyed them. Had they yielded an indiscriminating obedience to the laws of the Empire, had they rendered unto Cæsar all that he claimed, Christianity must have ceased to exist; for to confess Christ was for a long time a highly penal offense. These men gave unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's; but they suffered death in its most terrific form rather than yield unto Cæsar the things that were God's.

When Darius the Mede issued a decree that no man should ask a petition of any god or man, except himself, for a space of thirty days, he usurped one of the rights of God. Daniel at that time was high in office under Darius; and if any man was under obligation to render obedience to the decree he was the man. But while he was ever faithful to his prince, and in all things rendered unto Cæsar the things that *were* Cæsar's, he firmly and openly refused to render unto Cæsar the things that were God's. Daniel might have prayed in secret, as doubtless he did; but his custom had been to pray with open window, with his face towards Jerusalem; and to have discontinued this custom during these thirty days would have been an acknowledgment that the laws of Darius were higher than the laws of God, and the rights of Darius more sacred than those of God. This Daniel would by no means do, but preferred rather to incur the penalty of being cast into a den of lions. "He that honor-eth me I will honor," says God; and we see the truth of his promise wonderfully exemplified in the case of Daniel. "Fear not them which kill the body," says the Saviour,—

an injunction which presupposes that it is sometimes necessary to resist the authority of the powers that be. Daniel found it necessary; so did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; so did the apostles and early Christians, and even Christ himself.

In the comprehensive scope of the precept before us, the word Cæsar is put for any civil government. It comes home, therefore, to us as much as it did to the Jews, and is as much the rule for the government of free American citizens as of Jewish tributaries. Our circumstances are, however, materially different. Our Cæsar is in a measure under our own control; theirs was not; but the rule is of equally easy application to both. We, however, have one responsibility which did not rest upon the conquered Israelites, and that is the exercise of a perpetual vigilance to prevent any conflict between the laws of the country and the laws of God. This is the great duty of the citizen in his sovereign capacity, as an integral part of the very government itself. But if, unhappily, any laws shall be enacted contrary to his conscientious views in the sight of his supreme Sovereign, and which he cannot obey without sin, his only course is to obey God rather than man, as the ancient worthies of whom we have been speaking did, and take the consequences. Daniel's disobedience and God's interposition for his deliverance put an end to the impious decree of Darius, restored God to his rights and man to his liberty; and, if we wish well to our government and nation, we will do well always, and in all our duties as citizens, to cling to the supremacy of God and his laws.

But who is to be the judge whether a particular law agrees or conflicts with the divine law? Here is one of the highest prerogatives of conscience. Daniel exercised it; the three young men on the plain of Dura exercised it; Peter exercised it before the Sanhedrim; and all the martyrs ex-

exercised it. The word of God is the only tribunal to which we can bring such questions. We must hear that word for ourselves; another cannot hear it for us; and, having heard it, our own conscience, as in the sight of God, must decide.

“If any man sue thee at the law,” says Jesus, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also,” thus showing his estimate of the rights of property—as not worth contending about. So, of course, we are to violate no law because we honestly think it infringes the rights of property. This is one of our personal rights; and our mere personal rights, involving only material interests, are the lowest. The three orders of rights are the rights of persons, the rights of government, and the rights of God. Conscience is the divinely constituted arbiter amongst all these rights. It says, That is my coat, my right to it is unquestionable; but conscience under certain circumstances, may say, Let it go; do not contend about it. (See Matthew v. 40-42.) A personal right may sometimes be relinquished without sin. Cæsar says, Pay me so much tribute. Conscience sits upon the case and decides,—Cæsar has a right to it, in virtue of his supreme authority: let him have it. Next God speaks and claims ready and entire obedience to all his commandments, let who will forbid. Here conscience bends humbly before its only Lord, and, without gainsaying, urges obedience. We see, then, that the conscience of the humblest individual can of right have no sovereign but God himself, and that its rights are among the rights of God; for whoever undertakes to rule the conscience of another is guilty of usurping one of the reserved prerogatives of Jehovah.

All consciences may not be equally enlightened, and may err in the interpretation of God's laws, or may misapprehend his revealed will. But, be his honest impressions what they may, the man is bound to observe what he believes to

be its teachings. (See Romans xiv.) To those who do so out of regard to the glory of God, and with a sincere desire to obey him, he has promised more light; for he has said, "To the upright light shall arise in the darkness." We ought to be very tender, therefore, of the conscientious scruples of our brethren; for we may be sure that he who is really desirous of obeying God will not be suffered to go very far astray.

But let us beware of doing any thing merely because the law of the land enjoins it or allows it; or of regarding things as right simply because they may in this sense be lawful. Let us not forget that God has claims upon us as private individuals, as citizens, as sovereign people, quite as sacred as those which he has upon us as Christians. It is a fearful truth, that, as a nation, we are prone to forget God; and this is seen in the fact that when we come to exercise the highest act of sovereignty—the choice of our rulers—we forget the claims of God. Let us render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; but, while we do so, let the latter clause of the precept be kept ever in view; else we shall be in great danger of giving to Cæsar the things that are God's, and of regarding the authority of Cæsar as supreme. Cling, then, to the Higher Law, and only render an entire obedience to the laws of man after they have been brought by an honest conscience to the bar of that law. Some will tell us that this is a dangerous rule, subversive of all government. Let such ponder the terrible examples with which history abounds of the ruin of nations which gave to Cæsar the things that were God's; and then let them point, if they can, to the example of any nation that sustained damage from a too scrupulous regard to the laws of God. His service is perfect safety; and there can be no true freedom except in obedience to him. "Where the law of the Lord is, there is liberty."

How Jesus taught forgiveness.

MANY, many times did Jesus press home upon the minds of his disciples, and through them, upon the consciences of all to whom his instructions come, the duty of forgiveness; nay, the imperative necessity of it in order to be saved at all. As one speaking by authority, he solemnly and positively declares: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Peter, we may suppose, was thinking about this great law of his Master's kingdom—perhaps he and some of the others had been talking about it—before he came to Jesus with the question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" He thought that surely there must be a limit somewhere; and seven times was as large a measure as he could imagine. But the direct and emphatic reply of the Lord:—"I say not unto thee 'until seven times,' but until seventy times seven"—gave him a larger, higher, and grander view of the subject. The number of times, although expressed in specific terms, is practically unlimited. Then follows the parable of the two creditors and the two debtors, as found in Matthew xviii. 23, to the close.

This awful parable, which comes home to every soul on earth, of every age and condition—to the child in the nursery or on the play ground; to the woman in her social life or amid her domestic cares; to the man of business in his counting house, or his shop, or in his intercourse with his fellows; to the family circle in which God has sweetly bound his children together in little bands; and in short, to the whole circle of human life—is but a commentary upon the conditions more abstractly expressed, as above quoted, to which our Father in heaven holds every one of us.

What is it to forgive? It is to feel towards and treat the offender as though he had not offended. This applies to injuries or affronts, and not always to debts or dues, as in the parable. It applies to what we call trespasses, the word our Lord uses when he states the condition upon which our Father will alone forgive us. A beautiful exemplification of forgiveness in this sense we have in our Lord's treatment of Peter after his denial; for we do not learn that in all their subsequent intercourse he ever made the remotest allusion to Peter's offense, which comprehended all we can conceive of perfidy, insult and personal offense. He demanded no open confession, no apology. He did not call his sin to remembrance in any way. Those who imagine that they can see an allusion to this sad defection in the tender and thrice uttered inquiry, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" do not, I think, understand either the nature of divine forgiveness or the character of Jesus. One might suppose that the risen Redeemer had forgotten all about it, after reading the narrative of the resurrection and what followed. But he did not forget, nor will he suffer his church to forget; and his treatment of that ardent, honest but impulsive disciple will stand to the end of time, not only as an example of forgiveness, but to show us what forgiveness is, and how to practice it. Here was no "I'll tell him what I think of his conduct;" "I'll make him apologize;" "He shall acknowledge it;" and all that kind of stuff, so common in the world, and even among the professed disciples of Jesus.

An offense or a trespass is not forgiven if a subsequent offense will call it up and cause it to be spoken of. There is no surer or sadder evidence of an unforgiving spirit than this, and, alas! few things are more common. God says of his forgiven people, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." With him absolute forgetfulness is

impossible ; but he only means that he will treat them as Jesus treated Peter. There is a loose phrase common in the mouths of some people, "Forget and forgive ;" but forgiveness which must be preceded by forgetfulness is no virtue or grace at all. The glory of true forgiveness is in the fact that the offense is vividly, perhaps painfully, remembered.

But in the parable the transactions were all pecuniary. One servant owed his lord the king ten thousand talents—a vast sum, utterly beyond his ability to pay. This represents the relation of sinful men to God. The servant begged for time, and promised to pay all ; but the king knew that he never could pay, so he mercifully forgave him by remitting the debt. This was forgiveness in that sense, and agrees with the terms of the petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts ;" but in this case the conditional clause, "as we forgive our debtors," was forgotten ; for this huge bankrupt was himself a creditor in a small way—a fellow servant owed him a hundred pence. He owed the king ten thousand talents ; that which the fellow servant owed him was one hundred pence. These two specific sums are used by the divine Author of the parable to show, by strong contrast, the difference between any possible indebtedness of man to man and the debt which sinful man owes to God. But the forgiven servant would not forgive. He felt that, although it was the king's prerogative and pleasure to show mercy, he was entitled to justice. He stood upon his rights, and the law would sustain him in so doing ; so he instituted rigorous proceedings in the case, as he had an undoubted legal right to do, and he met the consequences: His own tremendous debt rolled back upon him, and he sunk forever under its crushing weight, as thousands of professed Christians, who are rigidly exact in seeking their own legal rights, will do.

Would you deny to a Christian the right to collect an honest debt? somebody may ask. By no means, provided it can be done with a good conscience in the clear light of this parable, and in that of the Lord's Prayer, and the condition annexed to that prayer.

There is one little incident in this parable to which I desire to call special attention; for Jesus used no idle words. It is this: "When his fellow servants saw what was done they were very sorry." Oh! if greedy, grasping, grinding professors of religion only knew how sorrowfully good men regard their conduct, it might be some check upon them, and cause them to give up either God or Mammon, both of whom they cannot serve.

"What lack I yet?"

THREE of the evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, relate the case of the wealthy young man who came to Jesus with the anxious inquiry, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" They all tell substantially the same story, with only such slight variations as prove that each was an independent witness and historian. But the main points stated are the same in all. The narrative is to the last degree peculiar, instructive and sad; and the Saviour himself seems to have been saddened at the result of the interview.

It is plain that the young man knew neither himself nor Jesus. The complimentary salutation, "Good Master," was the utterance of a gentleman rather than a believer, and hence Christ's gentle rebuke, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." When Thomas exclaimed, at the sight of the prints of the nails and the gash of the spear in the risen body of his recently

murdered Master, “My Lord and my God!” he was not rebuked; but here the compliment of a well-bred man is rebuked, because offered as mere flattery to a fellow man. His words had in them no recognition of the Son of God.

This was a sincere, amiable, moral and wealthy young man. He did not come as the poor weeping penitent came in the house of Simon the Pharisee, bathing his feet with tears while she kissed them and then wiped them with her hair, but in calm self-complacency, yet not in much self-confidence. He thought he had done well; for he claimed to have kept the law from his youth; but still he did not feel quite safe. His heart, or the Holy Spirit operating upon his heart, told him that there was something lacking; that there was some other good thing for him to do to give him an assurance of eternal life; that his observance of the law, perfect as he supposed it to have been, was not enough; so, as Matthew tells us, he asked, after declaring that all these things he had kept from his youth up, “*What lack I yet?*”

Truly this must have been an amiable man, for Mark says, “Then, Jesus beholding him loved him.” He was what would pass current in the world for a good man. No eye less than omniscient could see that he was not a good man, and that, as he then was, eternal life was impossible to him. He thought he was a good man; others doubtless thought the same; but Jesus said, “One thing thou lackest. Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me.” His case was one of fearful difficulty, and demanded a corresponding remedy, and hence the severity of the terms. Jesus, who knew what was in man, knew that his heart was wedded to his wealth, and that, so long as he possessed it, God and heaven could have but secondary places.

Matthew tells us that Jesus said, "Sell what thou hast and give to the poor;" Mark's statement is quoted above; but Luke says that the command was, "Sell *all* that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." In this particular case an absolute renunciation of the world may have been necessary; but a total and literal abandonment of property is clearly not a universal Christian duty. The difficulty lay not in the wealth, but in the grip which the wealth had upon the man's heart, in other words, in his covetousness. No sin is more abominable in the sight of men than this, when it makes its victim a thief, a cheat, a niggard, or a miser; but none, in other phases, puts on more beautiful garments, such as industry, economy, care, prudence, enterprise, thrift, all good things in themselves; but all of which may be made the ministers of this master passion, which the Bible denounces as idolatry. This young man, whose many good qualities won the love of Jesus himself, was, in this sense, an idolator.

Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount, pleads with his people in these earnest words: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." There is a perfect consistency between this injunction and the case before us. He did not wish to make that young man poor. His requirement, to our worldly eyes, it is true, looks hard; but could we see from an angel's stand-point, we should discover that it was kind and generous to the last degree. He wished the young man to transfer both his treasures and his affections from earth to heaven; from where they could last but for a moment to where they would be ever enduring and ever increasing. "He had great posses-

sions,” say Matthew and Mark, and Luke tells us that he was very rich. So much the better for him had he obeyed the Saviour, for his sacrifice would have been so much the greater—so much the more good he could have done to the poor, and so much the greater would have been his treasure in heaven which Jesus promised as a compensation.

Laying up treasure in heaven, and making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, are two forms of expression which we poor sinners durst not have used had not Christ himself used them in some of his most solemn injunctions; and it is a sweet thought to the true believer, whom God has blessed with large possessions, or upon whom he has bestowed the gift or power of rapid acquisition, that he can send his wealth before him to heaven, sanctified by the blessing of God and the gratitude of those who were ready to perish, to wait till he comes, washed in his Redeemer’s blood and clothed with his righteousness, to take possession of it again, and keep it forever.

But there is another kind of possession which we must all renounce before we can enter the kingdom of heaven, and that is our own personal righteousness. When the young man of whom we are speaking said that he had kept all the commandments from his youth up, he thought he was telling the truth, for doubtless he had lived a very correct life, and was truly an estimable person; but even had he added the generous sacrifice of all he possessed in charity, the next step the Saviour required was, “Come, take up the cross and follow me.”

“Thou shalt have treasure in heaven;” but that treasure can only be reached through the atoning blood of Calvary received by faith alone. Oh! how ought those awful words, so severely true and yet so immeasurably kind, which sent that rich young man away in sorrow, and cast a deep sadness over the soul of Jesus himself, as we may learn from

his own immediate exclamation, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" to sink into our hearts! Let each of us, after this examination of this sad and awful incident, ask ourselves, "What lack I yet?"

"Some fell among Thorns."

In his explanation of the Parable of the Sower, Christ speaks of some seed which fell among thorns. In the parable itself this part is given in these sententious and vigorous words: "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit."

Had our translators used the broader and more comprehensive term *weeds* it would probably have given to us, in our present sense of the words, a more accurate expression of the idea; for we now restrict the word thorns to trees or shrubs armed with sharp ligneous spikes; whereas the growths which choke and render unfruitful the valuable plants which we sow or plant in fields or gardens are very different, and are multitudinous in their varieties and forms. No one word reaches so widely over this department of the vegetable kingdom as weeds. Matthew tells us that the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon the head of Jesus, and John mentions the same thing. In this case I think the word ought to be understood in the same way—that the soldiers plucked up some worthless weeds, the first that came to hand, of which they made that use, and that this crown was an expression of mockery and derision, but not a thing of torture. But be that as it may, the thorns of the parable are unquestionably something different from the few shrubs and trees which bear sharp woody shoots, which we call thorns. Our Saviour's own words favor this interpretation,

when he says, “the thorns *grew up* and choked it.” That is the way weeds do; but thorns are perennial, and could do no harm unless they were already grown when the seed was cast in. Sometimes we see a piece of ground just prepared for the seed. It looks clean and good; but soon it shows that it is foul with bad seeds, which spring up and choke the more tender and delicate plants which we are trying to propagate.

But our business at present is with the Saviour’s explanation of the parable, rather than with the figures which he was pleased to use. He says:

“And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, choke the word and it becometh unfruitful.”—Mark iv. 18, 19.

He is not here speaking of hardened soil, such as the way side, nor of poor, thin, superficial soil found in stony places; but of rich, deep soil—soil capable of bearing a bountiful crop of weeds—soil which, had it not been preoccupied, would have borne a plentiful crop of good fruit, and which, had it been cleansed of its foulness, would have ranked with the good ground of which he afterwards speaks.

Jesus divides these injurious products of this foul soil into three classes, two specific and one general. Let us consider them in their order.

“*The cares of this world.*”—This does not mean a wholesome diligence in business, which Paul lays down as one of the duties of a Christian. Nor does it mean that prudent care which every good and sensible man takes of whatever property a kind Providence may have committed to him, be it much or little. But it does mean that anxious and distracting care which drives one man to dishonesty, another to meanness, another to excessive exertion, another to penuriousness, another to hard bargains and grinding of the

faces of the poor, and all to hardness of heart and away from God. It is the state of mind against which Christ so earnestly protests in his sermon on the mount, where he says: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on;" and then goes on to point his people to the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field as the objects of God's care, and asks, "Are ye not much better than they?" meaning the fowls. And again he asks, "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

All the cares of this world here spoken of have their prime origin in unbelief—that form of unbelief which is more definitely known as distrust. A man may be thoroughly orthodox in his creed, and yet have no real trust in God. The good seed may have fallen into his heart and germinated, and he may pass current with his fellow-men, and with his own conscience, as a Christian; but he bears no fruit. Whatever feeble shoots may spring from the good seed are choked by worldly cares; and, as a Christian, he drops into the class spoken of by our Lord in these awful words, where he takes to himself the similitude of the True Vine: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away."

"*The deceitfulness of riches.*"—There is no delusion that ever creeps into the heart of man more common, or more difficult to eradicate, than the notion that wealth, whether in lands, or merchandise, or stocks, or money, will make him contented and happy. Herein lies the deceitfulness of which Jesus speaks. Wealth in itself is good, provided a man can keep it in its proper place among his treasures; but woe to him who makes it his chief good. The rich young man who came to Jesus and asked, "Good Master, what

good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” had his heart set supremely upon his wealth; and when he found that his salvation required the sacrifice of that idol, he went away sorrowful, and we are left to the sad inference that, notwithstanding all his fine qualities, he was lost.

Solomon’s great mission among men was to “see what was good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life”—to show them, among other things, the “deceitfulness of riches.” Let us quote a few of his words :

“I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces. I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me; and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my portion in all my labor. Then I looked upon all the works that my hands had wrought, and on all the labor that I had labored to do, and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.”

Take this vigorous passage as a definition of what Jesus means by the “deceitfulness of riches.” Here was a man of almost unbounded wealth, to which were added matchless wisdom, skill and taste, and a large, active and gener-

ous spirit. If any man could make himself happy by surrounding himself with the grand and beautiful things of earth, Solomon was that man; and had he not told us that the miserable sum total of all his glory was only vanity and vexation of spirit, and that in all he possessed there was no profit, we should have come to the conclusion that he was a happy man; or as the coarse and the vulgar would express it, that he was a "lucky man."

Extreme cases prove principles. Here was a man who had all that he could desire. God poured upon him an immeasurable tide of wealth, kept him in peace and free from outward trouble, and endowed him with mental capacities beyond any other of the sons of men, as if to show us, as no abstract declarations could show us, the folly of seeking in such things as these our chief good—to show us, as Jesus expresses it, "the deceitfulness of riches." Solomon writes like a dissatisfied, soured and disappointed man; and then tears his heart away from all this rubbish, and seeks his chief good in that which the poorest man may share with him equally. In closing the narrative of his own experience he exclaims: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole — of man." The word *duty* is supplied by our translators, and contracts and diminishes the grand comprehensiveness of the thought. Had it been, "This is the whole life, and glory, and bliss of man," it would have been more in accordance with Solomon's magnificent ellipsis, where the word man is made to express all that pertains to man—his glory, his blessedness, his capabilities, and his unending progression.

This single example, which God himself has given us in his Word, is better calculated to impress our hearts and show us the deceitfulness of riches than all the abstract homilies that were ever uttered or penned.

“*The lust of other things.*”—This general clause embraces a vast variety of things. David says in the fourth Psalm, “There be many which say, ‘Who will show us any good?’” One seeks good, and thinks it is to be found, in low sensual indulgences and gratifications; another in fine apparel; another in excitement of the mind, and greedily devours sensational literature; another in some object of ambition—to reach some office, whether high or low, or to excel his fellows as a scholar, a speaker, or a writer, or to achieve some discovery or improvement in science or the arts, and so on to the end of the extensive range. Now every one of these things is well enough in itself, provided we can keep it in its proper place. Our natures require some degree of sensual enjoyment, and God has given us thousands of things to gratify these natural desires and wants. We need some pleasurable excitement and even sport; and many of the best Christians are brimful of pleasantry and humor. The wish to be well clad is right in itself; and is evil only when it becomes the ruling passion. The ambition to be called to places of trust, emolument and power, or to excel in learning, literature, art or science, is even commendable; and it is only because it is suffered to become supreme that it becomes a thorn, an over-shadowing weed, to shade the Word and render it unfruitful. It is not to, be it observed, other things, but the *lust* of other things, of which Jesus speaks—the predominance of these other things in the heart. He gives us the rule when he says, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,” meaning all things that you really need, or that you will in that case strongly desire. Then everything will take its proper and subordinate place, and not be allowed to over-top, and over-shadow, and smother, and render unfruitful the heavenly principle here called the Word. The live Christian

does not want to go to the theatre or the ball-room, because he has within himself a better source of enjoyment; just as the prodigal son, when he got back to his father's banqueting house, no longer wanted to "fill his belly with the husks which the swine did eat."

We are told that the Lord God put the man into a garden to dress it and to keep it; and still in a most emphatic sense he puts every man and every woman into a garden, and that garden is the heart. Into it he casts the good seed, the seed which came down from heaven. But in that heart are many other seeds, which, if not kept under, will quickly outgrow and choke and render unfruitful this precious plant of righteousness which springs from the Word of God. Let us, then, look well to our gardens, dress them and keep them, and keep down every other plant, or weed, or thorn that would interpose its shadow between the plant of heavenly origin and the Sun of Righteousness.

Our Father.

THE highest honor ever put upon man was given by the Son of God to the poor men whom he had gathered around him, when he spoke to them with easy familiarity of God as "Your Father." Human thought can no more grasp the height and depth, and length and breadth of such a relationship, than it can measure immensity, estimate eternity, or comprehend the infinite Being who is thus spoken of.

How is it that God and man are thus brought so near together? Is God brought down, or is man raised up? God cannot be degraded; therefore those beings who are brought into the relation of children must necessarily be exalted. It is simply wonderful; and John in his first epistle so regards it, when he exclaims, "Behold what man-

ner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" He then goes on to declare to his believing brethren, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Here is not a word about condescension on the part of God, either expressed or implied; but all is ascribed to love, boundless love, goodness which passes knowledge. That word condescension is a bad word in the heart or mouth of a Christian; for in our conception the term is inseparable from some degree of degradation. When the Great Supreme becomes the Father of a believer in Jesus, he does not stoop to do so; but elevates the pardoned and renewed sinner to the relation of an honored and beloved child, giving him glory commensurate with the relation.

"Make me as one of thy hired servants," was the highest aspiration which the prodigal, when returning to the house of his injured father, dared to entertain; but when he reached home, he found himself elevated to the highest honor which it was in his father's power to bestow. So will the poor, trembling, repentant sinner find, upon his entrance into his Father's house on high, that his relation to his Divine Redeemer has exalted him to a place in the heavenly family higher than any mere creature could ever reach.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be," writes the venerable apostle, who, in the days of his pupilage, was "that disciple whom Jesus loved." If he could so speak, surely we, whose devotion is so cold, can know but little of that wondrous love which sets us among the children of God; still less of those unimaginable things which he has prepared for those who love him.

We know not in this life how much we owe to our Saviour, nor will ever we know the full measure of blessing which

his perfect righteousness and his atoning death give to us ; but it is all embraced in these two words, "Your Father." No terms in human language can express greater nearness to God than these, or greater exaltation, or more perfect holiness. But all this nearness, glory and holiness we owe to Christ. Washed in his blood, the redeemed sinner is purer than any mere creature can be, however innocent. Clothed in Christ's righteousness, his glory surpasses the angelic ; and being able to claim the son of God as a Brother, the Eternal Father becomes his Father in the same sense that he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Are saved sinners more favored, more exalted, dearer to our loving Father's heart, and taken into closer relationship with him, than any other of his creatures? We have much reason to think so. Why? No others cost so much. The Son of God took on him our nature, not that of angels. Of angels it is written that they are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. When speaking to believers of the infinitely great and holy God, Jesus uses the simple, familiar, endearing term, "Your Father ;" and the Father himself testifies that he anointed the Incarnate Son, the man Christ Jesus, with the oil of gladness above his fellows. Moreover, it is written that they are joint heirs with him.

We know not how deep was our fall, nor the awful import of the words, "dead in trespasses and sins ;" neither can we comprehend the greatness, glory and blessedness of the life given to us at the new birth—that life which is hid with Christ in God. Hid here means incorporated, blended, made one with his own life ; hence he says, "as I live, ye shall live also." No more can we forfeit our life, as Adam did. Never again can we wander away from our Father's house, as the prodigal did ; "for, (says Paul,) I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor princi-

palities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“Arise, Shine.”

Two hundred and fifty years ago, when the Bible was translated by a body of churchmen under the auspices and patronage of King James, the sacerdotalism which had for centuries enfeathered the Christian world was still strong, and to this day believers are not fully emancipated. Hence in the headings of the chapters in the sacred Scriptures “the church” is often put in the place where the individual believer ought to stand. The most striking example of this abstractness, where the individual is lost in the general mass, is found in the headings of the chapters of Solomon’s Song, in the text of which the idea of the Church is not found in the remotest degree. The strictest individuality of the parties is maintained throughout. It is true that in many parts of the Scriptures God speaks to the Church, or, more properly speaking, to believers in the mass; but even this can only be done by reaching each separate individual in the mass. The sun does not attract the earth and hold it to its orbit as one general globe, but by operating on each atom. In the same way the Sun of Righteousness operates upon the Church.

In the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, from which the inspiring words at the head of this article are taken, the Lord is speaking to his people in the mass, and the voice comes, as comes the bright, warm, life-giving beams of the sun upon not only the earth at large, but upon each living thing, whether vegetable or animal, as separately and dis-

tinctly as if it were the only existence on the planet that is affected by it. Hence the call, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," is given to each and every one who hears the Gospel and obeys it. Elijah heard it as he lay desponding under the juniper tree and believed that he only was left. The individual disciples heard it when Jesus called them. Blind Bartimeus heard it when the people said, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Saul of Tarsus heard it on the way to Damascus; and of all the great multitude of the redeemed in heaven and on earth it can truly be said, each heard it separately and alone.

As a seed buried deep in the soil, cold and dark, responds to the power of the great orb whence all natural light and life are drawn, so responds the human soul, dead in trespasses and sins, to the power of Him who calls, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." No matter what may be the state of the church at large; no matter whether it be as dark and discouraging as it was in the days of Elijah, or bright as it was on the day of Pentecost, still the call comes home to the individual with equal force and cheer—"Arise, shine; for thy light is come."

It is a great and hurtful mistake to confine this exhortation and call to some millennial period in the distant future, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Doubtless that period will come; but how will it be brought about? By individuals arising and shining, one by one, until their aggregate light shall fill the world with glory. But to arise and shine in a dark period, as Elijah did, as many of the old prophets did, as our Lord himself did, as his apostles did, as Wickliffe, Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, and Knox did, is a more worthy object of a high and holy ambition than to shine in the general light of the millennium.

“For thy light is come.” Is that so? Certainly it is so; for Christ is come, and we have his record, his living words and his living Spirit; and greater light than this our world will never have. No clearer revelation of truth, no richer displays of grace, will be known in the future than in the past or the present. We have, it is true, precious and oft-repeated promises that their triumphs will be more diffused and general in the future than they have been in the past. Thus, in a secondary sense, may these cheering words be applied to the church at large in that day—“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.”

But still, O Christian, do not put away these and similar gracious declarations from your own individual self, and lose them on the church in general, which to you is but an abstraction, an indefinite aggregation, which, taken apart from individuality, is as impersonal and soulless as corporations are proverbially said to be. You, only you, not the church as an organism, a mass, or an abstraction, are capable of what is here called for. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

“Put on thy Beautiful Garments.”

“THE joy of the Lord is your strength,” said Nehemiah and Ezra to the weeping people of Israel, when they mourned before the Lord on account of their own neglect of the law which had that day been read and expounded in their hearing. “Go your way, (said they) eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared;” and at the close of their animating exhortation they added, “for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Many Christians live as if they did not believe that God is good. They pray as if they did not believe in the forgiveness of sins, or in the loving kindness of their Heavenly Father; but come before him as poor heathen might come to the shrine of a malignant deity to deprecate his wrath. They speak in their long prayers as if they were very desirous of his presence and his blessing, and as if he was unwilling to bestow these blessings; which is the very opposite of the truth. What would a generous and loving parent think, were his own child to come into his presence, and, in a doleful and whining tone, and with cowering gesture, ask him for some good gift which he had a thousand times pressed upon his acceptance? However much he might pity the supplicant, it would be impossible for him to regard him with complacency, to smile upon him, to caress him, or to bestow upon him such tokens of his loving-kindness as he could and would shower upon another who should approach him as a child ought to approach a kind and loving parent. God is love, and in all his dealings with us, in his Providence, in his Gospel, in the gift of his only-begotten Son, in all the declarations and promises of his Word, he is saying to each of us—not collectively as a church only, but individually and particularly, “Thou knowest that I love thee.” We do know it; but yet, paradoxical as it may seem, we do not believe it. The mere knowledge of this fact cannot make us glad. It is only when the sweet truth flows into the heart, and entwines itself, as it were, among the moral fibres of our nature, that it becomes a matter of faith, excites reciprocal love, and makes us glad. Then we have the joy of the Lord; then the soul begins to lay hold of all the goodness which our God has set before us, and of which we ought to partake as freely as our lungs inhale the surrounding atmosphere, and with just as little misgiving as to our right to do so. Is this disputed? Then what mean

these words? “Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!” “Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;” with many other passages of like import.

Jesus, in some of his parables, compares the Gospel to a feast. It is indeed essential that the guests be clothed in the wedding garment; but, having that, what would the King think of a guest who would not eat of the rich provisions of his house, or be glad, on the plea that he was not worthy? What has that to do with it? The more unworthy he felt himself to be, the more the guest is entitled to rejoice; for, with that garment on, all are alike worthy, all are alike beloved and honored. Those who feel that they have been forgiven much will love much; for joy is always commensurate with love. See Luke vii. 40-50, for the most beautiful illustration of this principle that ever was given to the world. That weeping penitent, whose life had been one of sin and shame, went from that holy presence clad in the beautiful garment of her Saviour’s righteousness, every stain of sin removed from her soul, her heart glowing with gratitude and love, and ready to take her place either with the saints of earth, or with the spirits of the just made perfect in Heaven. What a contrast between her garment and that of the self-complacent, cold-hearted, carping Pharisee, who scowled upon her and spoke contemptuously of her. Her joy was unspeakable and full of glory. He had no joy. She felt that she had sinned grievously, and was happy because her sins, which were many, were forgiven; therefore she loved much. He loved little, if at all, because he felt that he had sinned little, and hardly needed forgiveness.

It is a grievous error into which many good people have fallen, that they still carry the burden of their sins long after they have professed to have obtained a good hope through

grace. It is well to bear them in remembrance ; but it is sinful, it is the fruit of unbelief, to mourn over them as though they were unpardoned. Is a debt any longer a burden to a man after it is fully paid? Did the burden, which Bunyan's pilgrim carried, when he first set out, impede his progress or cause him grief after it fell from his shoulders at the foot of the cross? Did he go down into the deep valley into which it rolled and disappeared to find it again? Certainly not. Yet he never forgot it. He often spoke of it, but always with exultation and joy. Not that he gloried in it, but in his deliverance from it ; and very soon he put on his beautiful garments, and his Christian armor. His beautiful garment he carried through all the way to the Celestial City. His armor he left in the river. As for his burden, it was never seen or felt from the moment it fell from his shoulders.

The Source of Life.

THE law of life is set forth in these words of Jesus as we nowhere else find it: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Again: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." And again: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

These figures, drawn from the vegetable and animal kingdoms, are the same in their import, and express with equal force the necessity which the soul of man is under to draw its life, and all that nourishes life, from Him, who is the great centre and source of life. Separated from the vine, the branch withers and dies. Deprived of food, the animal

nature pines away and expires. These are facts so plain, so indisputable, that no sane mind would think of disputing them; and these the Great Teacher seizes upon to express that ineffable union which exists between himself and the soul of the believer. In this wonderful exposition of the highest and most sublime truth which we can know, and which no abstract teaching could enable us to understand, it is brought down to the comprehension of the sage and the child, the learned and the unlearned alike. It is at once the most simple and sublime teaching the world ever heard. Faith forms this union; and in the light of these expressive figures we see how it is that the just live by faith.

Christ says, "I am the TRUE vine;" but he does not say, "I am the *only* vine." There are many other vines; and in one or another of these every man is fixed who is not abiding in the True Vine. A man may be separated from the True Vine, withered, and ready for the burning of which Jesus speaks, and yet be followed by loud huzzas of popular applause; and from these he draws a fictitious, a transient life, and is for the time satisfied. Or he may be a withered branch, and yet be profoundly learned, honored among his fellow men, and noted for his noble qualities as exhibited in public and private life. Or he may be dead, and ready for that awful gathering spoken of, while rich in this world's goods, living sumptuously every day, and feeling so full of life and life's joys that he has need of nothing.

"I give unto them eternal life," says Christ, speaking of those who are united to him; but the life which men draw from other vines is transient, evanescent, delusive. He only is the True Vine in himself; and the life which he gives is divine, and endureth forever. In Christ's esteem, no life short of this is worthy of the name of life. He teaches us that we are destitute of it by nature; that no effort on our part can put us in possession of it; that it is

found only in himself, and can only be made available to us by a true, sincere, self-appropriating belief, not only in respect to his will and power to save sinners generally, but to save *us*. This faith must come right home to us personally; for a mere abstract belief of the doctrines can do us no good. Look at the figure—a branch abiding in the vine, and drawing life and strength and fruitfulness from it. What relation can be closer, more intimate, or more personal than that?

“Abide in ME,” says Christ. It is not enough that we abide in the church, however pure and evangelical; or in anything short of the living and personal Son of God, who only is the True Vine, in whom alone our life is hid. Were we asked to abide in any being less divine, it could not preserve us from withering and dying; or in one altogether divine, it would be impossible to obey. But here is one who is at once our God and our Brother—one exactly suited to us; for towards him human sympathy and faith in God can flow out together, so that we become engrafted into him, there to live and flourish forever. The moment this union to the True Vine is formed, everlasting life begins.

In a general sense this principle may apply to nations. Christ is ruler among the nations as well as the Saviour of his people; and nations, as nations, may have such a union to him as will preserve them in life and vigor, so that men shall never be called upon or permitted to gather them and burn them. Or they may be so far devoid of this union that they are quickly gathered and burned. That vital union, imperfect as it is, we may devoutly believe, saved our country in its recent hour of trial. The fire was great, but the bush was not consumed. Our national constitution was in some degree purged of its impurities; and our condition is better, not worse, for that tremendous ordeal.

Twenty-two years ago France adopted a constitution like ours. But France, as a nation, is far from Christ. Its vaunted institutions of freedom drooped and withered at once, and “the basest of men” was suffered to come in, gather them up and burn them. He, in turn, is now politically consumed, and the wretched nation which he ruled and oppressed for a few years in the midst of flames which all the power of the world cannot quench (1871). God only knows what the end will be. One thing we do know, because he has told us, that he will restrain the wrath of man as soon as it shall have accomplished his work and shown forth his praise.

Seeing, then, that not only personal, but social and national salvation, depend upon this vital union, how ought we to labor to bring this true and omnipresent Vine into contact with our own hearts, to hold it forth, before all our people, and never cease to labor and pray until the fruit which attests this union shall appear abundantly !

“Empty, Swept and Garnished.”

IN one of my Bible class lessons this passage occurred: “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, ‘I will return unto my house from whence I came out;’ and when he is come he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”—Matthew xii. 43, 44, 45.

Never before had the tremendous import of this mysterious passage so impressed my mind as when the members of the class read these three verses. The gross sinner, re-

formed in a measure, but not regenerated, the empty, swept and garnished human heart, but still deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, darted up before me as I had never before seen them. There stood the Pharisee, scrupulously moral and immeasurably religious, utterly devoid of a single trace of the grace of God—negatively good, but positively bad—cold, barren, unholy, unfruitful, dead—“empty, swept and garnished.”

What is this unclean spirit which is spoken of as going out of a man? Is it some malignant being separate and distinct from himself? I think not; but my impression is that the gross and carnal appetites and passions of the man are here spoken of as subdued. When these are brought under the control of the higher reason, the man undergoes a reformation of life and manners. He is emptied of his gross, natural uncleanness; he is swept, and the house, which is the figure the great Teacher uses, is put into decent order. To drop the metaphor, the man becomes respectable; and we, who can only see the outside of his character, admire the change and admire the man. And it is right enough that we should do so. The house is more than swept; it is garnished—set off with ornaments and decorations. These embellishments are good in themselves, and the world rightfully extends to such adornments of life and character the meed of praise, and calls it reformation.

But when this is accomplished the spirit walks through dry places, seeking rest, but finding none. Why? Because the house is empty. It is clean, it is adorned; but it is empty, and the spirit finds nothing in it to satisfy its insatiable cravings. Then is the time for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, with their appropriate servitors, selfishness, avarice, ambition, pride—spirits more wicked than the lower and grosser propensities of human nature—to go in and take possession.

The human heart cannot long remain empty. If barred against the Holy Spirit, then will spirits more and more wicked, in proportion to the expansion of the intellectual nature, enter and take and hold possession. Hence it was that Jesus told the Pharisees that publicans and harlots would go into the kingdom before them. They pretended to be righteous men; and so far as men could see they were so. They were to all appearance exceedingly devout; and doubtless most of them believed that their salvation was sure. But they were self-deceived hypocrites, totally ignorant of the power of holiness upon the heart. They were “empty, swept and garnished,” while their hearts were the temples where Satan held undisputed possession.

It is a fearful mistake to suppose that a mere reformation of life and manners will make a man good. There is no such thing as a negative goodness. The going out of the unclean spirit only leaves the house empty; and the most that man by his best efforts can do is to sweep it and garnish it. God by his Spirit can alone fill it, and give life and peace to the soul, which, when it rises above the status of the brute, wanders forth seeking rest and finding none. It is to the sinner in that seeking condition that Christ says: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me.” When he enters, the heart is empty, swept and garnished, but he fills it. No more hunger then, no more thirst, no more yearnings after rest which cannot be found, no room there for the seven wickedest spirits of which Jesus speaks; and the last end of that man is peace.

These seven spirits more wicked than the first, who take possession of that empty, swept and garnished house, are often such evils of the heart as the world tolerates easily. Indeed some of them come clothed as angels of light; and

when the disembodied souls of many who had them for guests through life shall pass to the other side and cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," and plead, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets"—the fearful response will come, "I never knew you." They supposed themselves to be Christians; but now they discover that they were only "empty, swept and garnished."

"Even so come, Lord Jesus."

WITH this fervent aspiration the sacred volume closes. It is the response of the beloved disciple, the prophet of Patmos, to the declaration of Christ which immediately precedes, and where he declares—"Surely I come quickly. Amen."

Christ comes in many ways and for many purposes. He was, and is, and ever will be while this world endures, the great Ambassador from heaven to earth. He came from heaven to take upon him our nature. He came to live a life of perfect obedience, for he was made under the law. He came to show us how to live, how to suffer, how to die. He came to deliver us from the curse; to give his own life, for we were dead; and to redeem us from guilt and wrath by bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. He came to break our bonds, cleanse our natures, and lead us to heaven.

But it is of other comings that I desire more particularly to speak now.

Where two or three are gathered together in his name he comes; for this he positively promises to do. Let the ever ready response of these few humble, contrite, waiting ones be, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

Often he comes with the rod. He chastens his people for

their sins ; he dashes in pieces their idols ; he lays upon them sore afflictions and trials, not willingly, but for their good. Even under the rod we should try to respond in the same words, and accept these things joyfully as evidences of his love. It is to such experience that the apostle refers when he speaks of being joyful in tribulation.

He comes to our hearts in the still, small voice of his Spirit, and says : “ Behold, I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” To these words of wondrous grace let every heart instantly and gladly respond, “ Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

But Jesus speaks in another place of the same gracious visitation to his redeemed ones, whose hearts have been opened to him—“ If a man love me, he will keep my words ; and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our abode with him.” To this amazing declaration of the loving kindness of God our Saviour what response can be more fitting, more expressive than this : “ Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

But the prophet declares that he will come from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength—treading the wine press alone, none being with him—trampling his enemies in his anger and in his fury, their blood sprinkled upon his garments and staining all his raiment, and crying “ the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come !” To this awful announcement the believer may tremblingly respond, “ Even so come, Lord Jesus ;” for it is but another way of saying, “ Thy kingdom come.”

And at last, as Jesus himself tells us, “ The Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him ; then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory ; and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them

one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." Even in this prospect of the final judgment—"that day for which all other days were made"—the Christian, secure in the love and faithfulness of Him before whose throne he must stand, can, in joyful hope of his blessed resurrection, and of his complete and eternal redemption, exultingly exclaim, "Even so come, Lord Jesus!"

Evidence of Things not Seen.

IN introducing the long line of ancient worthies, whose lives exemplified true faith in God, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews uses this broad, deep and comprehensive language: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This is not properly a definition, but rather a description, of faith—a general summary of the powers and properties of this abstract principle which binds man to God, and, in the lower plane of its operations, links man to man in bonds of brotherhood.

All men exercise faith in something, and to some degree. This principle underlies every form of religion, however gross or absurd. This going out of the soul after some supernal power marks the strongest line of distinction there is between man and the lower animals. Paul, when he talked to the savans of Athens, spoke of men *feeling* after God—a blind consciousness that they had lost something. They had been groping in the dark for ages for their lost God—some among the stars, some among the most abominable things of earth, some in graven images of their own making, and some in theories based on the facts of science—theories which can go no higher than material and tangible things, and which are as devoid of true religious life as the graven image of the gross idolator is of natural life.

It is to this strong and universal principle that God appeals when he says, "Look unto me." Man of himself was unable to find him; so in mercy he came and made himself known. But he did not come within the range of man's natural powers of observation, nor of his profoundest inductive philosophy; but yet so plainly, so convincingly that "way-faring men, though fools, need not err." He presents to them such evidence of things not seen that the "feeling" of which Paul speaks is satisfied, and the Holy Spirit witnesses in their hearts that what they believe and trust in is truth. That blind feeling which had been groping in the dark for something to lay hold of, to lean upon, to trust in, thus becomes a living power, which, in the Scriptures, is called faith; and if that natural power might be personified so as to speak, its language would be that of the blind beggar to whom Christ gave sight—"I was blind; now I see." He had eyes before, but he had no light; and those sightless eyes and those seeing eyes with which that man went and came from the pool of Siloam, illustrate the difference between that blind feeling and the faith which Christ gives by the Holy Spirit to all who believe on him.

It required the evidence of something not seen to believe in Christ, even when he dwelt as a man among men. It required the evidence of things not seen to perceive that he was the Christ the Son of the living God, and to receive and rest upon him alone for salvation; and so great was this faith esteemed even in his own presence, that when Peter made this confession, Jesus exclaimed, "Blessed art thou, Simon bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven!"

When the disciples told Thomas that their Lord had risen from the tomb, and that they had seen him, he declared that except he should see in his hands the print of the nails, and put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his

hand into his side, he would not believe. Poor Thomas! his faith was weak, and the dreadful events of the past few days had driven him to the verge of despair. The Lord suffered him to abide under this cloud for a week, and then came to his relief, offered him the very tests he had asked, and then Thomas joyfully confessed his belief not only in the resurrection, but in the Godhead of his Lord. Now hear the gentle words of that blessed One to his doubting friend: "Thomàs, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

When Christ came in the flesh, but few believed on him. Isaiah, in prophecy, says: "He is despised and rejected of men When we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him;" and John, in the opening of his Gospel, says, "The world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not." This was true of a great majority of his own countrymen. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." It required in the presence of Christ as much faith to receive him as it does now when he is not visibly present; perhaps more. It required then, as it does now, the evidence of things not seen. He can only be received by faith in either case; but when received, the right of sonship with God is also secured. Then, only then, perfect assurance and rest are attainable.

Faith, when fixed upon Christ, becomes a higher source of knowledge than any or all the natural powers of man can be. It lifts its subject to a higher plane, and puts him into vital union with the divine. Things not seen, things which lie beyond the reach of human investigation, become the simplest, surest, greatest of realities. We know that these things are to the mere scientist foolishness, because he cannot discern them; but to the believer they are as clear as any thing that

eye hath seen. In language, than which nothing ever written is more vigorous, Paul gives the culmination of the blessed state of those who have received Christ Jesus the Lord by faith, and have thus been made God's children: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." The Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirit is the crowning testimony, and is emphatically "the evidence of things not seen."

The Prodigal Son---A Sermon.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."—Isaiah lv. 7.

THIS is a glorious text; but as I am not a preacher myself, I shall try to find a sermon to suit it ready made, so that I shall have little to do except to put the text and the sermon together. The author of the sermon is Jesus, he who spake as never man spake, and the sermon is his parable of the Prodigal Son. No sermon that ever was preached is so good as that, or so exactly suits this beautiful text.

The text speaks of the wicked, and of the unrighteous man. The parable speaks of the same character under the figure of a discontented, foolish and rebellious young man, a son of a good and kind father. The text speaks of the Lord our God, who is merciful and ready to pardon. The parable speaks of the same merciful God under the figure of

a good and forgiving earthly father. The text speaks of the wicked forsaking his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and returning to the Lord, who is our Heavenly Father. The parable tells us how it was done—how the unrighteous man returned, and how abundantly he was pardoned. Now let us listen to Jesus.

“A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.’ And he divided unto him his living.”

This self-willed young man thought if he only had his share of his father’s estate, so that he could use it just as he pleased, he would have such a good time. He did not feel that he had liberty enough in his father’s house and under his father’s government. So his father gave it to him; for he did not wish to force him to stay with him against his will. Just so does God do with his sons and daughters. He gives a great many good things—life and health, and strength, and mind, and learning, and all kinds of bodily faculties and powers, and sometimes money and property, and high social position; and then, if they wish to wander away from him, he permits them to go and try it, just as the father of this wicked young man did. Now let us hear the rest of the story as Jesus told it.

“And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would have fain filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.”

Before he left home he was sure that he knew better than his father did what was good for a young man. He wanted to see the world; he wanted to enjoy himself; he wanted to have plenty of sport. And now he danced, he sang, he

laughed, he feasted, and perhaps drank, and very likely he soon learned to swear. Of course he was not happy; for such things never did and never can make anybody happy. But he rushed on, and never thought of stopping as long as his money lasted. So wicked boys and girls, and men and women almost always do, until their youth, and strength, and character, and their ability to enjoy themselves are gone. Oh! what a miserable thing is a worn-out sinner! Do you want to see a picture of one? Look back to what Jesus says of that poor foolish man who is out in the fields among the swine, so hungry that, if he could only do it, he would eat what they ate.

But now we shall find something better. Let us read on.

“And when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.’”

It is thus that the wicked man forsakes his way. His way had led him far from home, and into want and wretchedness. This is repentance. Thus the unrighteous man forsakes his thoughts, and returns unto the Lord. But will the Lord have mercy upon him? Will he abundantly pardon? We shall see. Jesus will tell us how that good old man received that wicked, wandering son.

“And he arose and came to his father.”

Now, suppose that he had only *wished* that he was at home! Suppose that he had done nothing more than cry out in his bitter anguish—“How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger?” Would that have done him any good? Certainly not. Or suppose he had said, “I will go to my father,” and still did not go. Would that have saved him from perishing? Not at all.

Then, Jesus says, "He arose and came to his father. But when he was a yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Thus God our Father sees his wandering children while they are yet a great way off; and he hastens to meet them,—not when they say, "we will arise and go to our Father," but when they do arise and go to him. Then it is that he has mercy upon them. Then it is that he abundantly pardons. Now let us hear Jesus again :

"And the son said unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.'"

Now mark : the son found his father so much kinder than he expected, or had dared to hope, that, although he truly confessed that he was not worthy to be called a son, yet he felt that he was a son, dearer than ever; and not a word does he say about being made a hired servant. So the penitent sinner, when he feels and knows that his sins are forgiven, and that God loves him, confesses that he is not worthy of the least of the mercies granted. Still he cannot bear the thought of anything less than a child's place in his Heavenly Father's heart and in his family. Now let us see how glad the father was at the return of his prodigal son.

"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hands and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'"

Such is the picture which Jesus gives us of the forgiving grace, the loving kindness, the tender mercy of our Father in heaven. Oh! sinner, arise and go to him, for this is the way you will be received. Go and be washed in the blood of Him who spake this parable, and who has prepared for you that best robe. He will be glad to see you coming,

and you will find him kind beyond anything you ever imagined.

Or would you rather stay, and feed swine, and starve, and perish? Your Father God gives you your choice. He calls you; he waits for you; but until you arise and turn your face towards him, he cannot run to meet you; he cannot have mercy upon you; he cannot abundantly pardon. Neither can he give you that kiss of reconciliation, nor that best robe, nor that ring, nor that feast, nor the place of a son or a daughter in his family.

Looking unto Jesus.

“AND I, if I be lifted up from the earth, (says Jesus,) will draw all men unto me.” To this great saying John immediately adds: “This he said, signifying what death he should die.”

That, doubtless, was its primary intent; but in the discourse of the Saviour to Nicodemus, where he says: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life,” the fullness of his meaning is revealed.

Now let us transport ourselves to the camp of Israel. It was while that unbelieving and rebellious host were on their slow and devious pilgrimage that God in righteous judgment sent the fiery serpents among them, and many of the people were bitten, and many died. The sting of those serpents was deadly. No remedy could be found. What medical skill may have been among them would be taxed and exerted to the utmost by some, while others would put forth all their energy to extirpate the deadly reptiles. But none of these expedients was of any avail. It was man's ex-

tremity ; it was God's opportunity. This was one of the earliest practical lessons on record that "the just shall live by faith."

When there was no eye to pity and no arm to save, God's own arm brought salvation, and he brought it in a way which no man would ever have thought of. Moses was commanded to make a brazen image of the very thing that was destroying the people. So was Christ made in the likeness of sinful flesh. The serpent thus made was reared aloft upon a pole, and made so conspicuous that all the people could see it. So was Jesus lifted up on Calvary. This done, messengers would be sent to run to and fro throughout the widely extended camp, proclaiming, "Look upon yonder image of the fiery serpent ; for thus saith the Lord, 'every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live.' It is a sure remedy ; it is the only one. Look, and be saved." This prefigured the great command : "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Some who heard the message would believe and obey, as some hear and obey the gospel message. Others in fever and delirium, would pay no attention to it. Others would look upon the proposed remedy as an absurdity, and cling in fond and delusive hope to the nostrums of their own devising. Some, believing themselves to be too far gone to warrant them in entertaining hope, would not so much as lift their languid and despairing eyes to the divinely appointed means of cure.

Thus, not only was the brazen serpent a type of Him who was lifted up for the salvation of all the dying members of our race who can be persuaded to look ; but the poisoned camp of Israel, in that dreary region, was a type of our world. It was by faith that the dying Israelite turned his languid eye upon that uplifted serpent ; and to every one who thus looked God said in the result, "thy faith hath

saved thee." So he says now to all who will look by faith upon Him who was lifted up, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The messengers whom Moses sent throughout the afflicted camp, would have but one message and one exhortation. Their message would be to tell the dying of this God-appointed remedy, and to point to it, as John pointed to the Lamb of God; and their only exhortation would be "Look! look!" It is very likely that these messengers, as they ran to and fro would often encounter one another; and it is also very probable that there would often be found several of them together, so that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be established. But it is not at all probable that these men—and perhaps women too—would stop by the way and fall to wrangling as to the precise way in which the sufferers were to look—whether they should rise to their feet or get upon their knees, or lie still upon their couches. Whether they should look over the right shoulder, or the left, or straight before them; or whether all or only a fixed and specified number could be benefited. Neither is it likely that they sat down to speculate upon the connection there was between that serpent of brass upon the pole and those deadly reptiles that had got amongst them, and which all felt and deplored. It was enough for them to know that God had said, "Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live."

These messengers, while imploring the dying Israelite to look, would be very careful not to put themselves between the eye of the sufferer and the object of his salvation; and if the poor creature had surrounded himself with his own stuff, they would labor to remove it; for everything depended upon his getting a clear and unobstructed view of that object. And again: When these messengers encountered in their walks any of these fiery flying serpents, as they doubt-

less often did, they would feel that it was not their business to start off in a fruitless pursuit of them. They would know and feel that that was not their mission. Their business was to point to the great uplifted remedy, and bid the people look.

The application of the lesson which God has given us in this incident in the strange, eventful life of the wandering Israelites is so obvious, especially in view of the use which Jesus himself makes of it, that every reader can see it for himself.

Thus may we look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross—to Him who came to be lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.

The Vineyard.

THE grapes of Palestine were very good, and the culture of the vine was a common industry among the Jews; hence our Saviour often took the vine, the vineyard, and the fruit of the vine as illustrations of the kingdom of heaven, and even of himself, where he says, "I am the True Vine."

In his parable of a man hiring laborers to work in his vineyard he teaches us several important truths, prominent among which is the great fact that the reward is of grace and not of merit; for the employer of the laborers is represented as giving to those who began at the eleventh hour the same wages as he agreed to give to those who went in at the first hour. To all he paid the full hire, whether they went in at the first, the third, the sixth, the ninth or the eleventh hour—to each man a penny.

This, to us, seems to have been very low wages; but what is

here called a penny was a Roman silver coin called *denarius*, (from *deni*, ten) worth in our currency about fifteen cents. One of these coins is in the cabinet of the United States mint in Philadelphia, bearing the same image and superscription to which Jesus pointed when he asked his crafty enemies, who tried to entrap him in the matter of the tribute money, "Whose image and superscription is this?" and they were constrained to reply, "Cæsar's." It is a coin very much like the old Spanish 12½ cent piece once so common in this country. But in those ancient times the purchasing power of such a coin was very much greater than it is now, and would be nearly equal to a dollar in our day. The good Samaritan is represented by the Saviour as taking two of these coins out of his purse and giving them to the host to pay him for taking care of the robbed and wounded man whom he had found on the wayside. It is well enough to know these things.

It pleased our divine Teacher to illustrate the calling of sinners into his kingdom, his service, his church, by this transaction between the proprietor of the vineyard and those who labored in it. These men went in, not to rest, but to labor. Not to eat grapes, but to receive their reward at the end of the day. Their business was not to enjoy the fruit of the vines, but to do all in their power to put the vineyard in a condition to bear much fruit. They went in to labor, not to lie down and rest in that safe and pleasant place; and they did labor until they were called to their reward, whether the time was long or short.

There is instruction here for all who enter the Master's vineyard, and for all who are already in. Are we laboring? or are we sitting down at our ease, trying to find some of the refreshing fruit of the vineyard before the time? It is bad to be standing idle in the market place; but it is worse to go into the vineyard, with a promise of

labor, and there stand idle. The Owner of the vineyard in his goodness goes into the market place to see if he can find some poor creatures who have had no call, even to the eleventh hour. But the idler in the vineyard, who has engaged to labor faithfully and does it not, is treated as a hypocrite, and receives a hypocrite's reward.

Many go in with the delusive notion that there is nothing to be done but to gather grapes and rest themselves; forgetful that the Master calls them in to labor according to their several abilities, with a full assurance that they shall in no wise lose their reward.

Knocking at the Door.

No teacher ever used such simple figures of speech as Jesus. Instead of puzzling us with deep, dark, abstract discussions of the nature of the relations which we sustain to God and he to us, he points us to the most familiar things, and so teaches us the profoundest truths by analogies which a child can comprehend as easily as a sage. All his parables are of this nature, and are so simple, and their analogy to the truths set forth so perfectly obvious, that the poor unlettered reader, who can just make out the words, or he who can only hear them as read by another, can reach the precious and saving truth—truth which the profoundest learning and the most laborious investigation never did and never could otherwise reach. What amount of abstract reasoning could have ever arrived at the disclosure of the mercy and love and forgiveness of our Father in heaven towards a repenting sinner which we find set forth in the parable of the Prodigal Son, in terms of which Nature, in its best and truest affections, is the interpreter?

But it is of another class of figures of speech which we

wish to speak, and only one of the class—"knock." When we wish to gain admission to the house of a friend, the common rule the world over is to knock, and that knock is the well-understood expression of the desire of the one who stands outside that the occupant shall of his own good will open the door and admit him. A bell, now so common, is but a modification of the knocker, and a knocker is but a contrivance to save the knuckles of the party desiring to enter. The good old way, and the mode in the mind of the Saviour when he used the word figuratively, and the one to which we necessarily resort at a majority of doors to this day, is to strike the door with the knuckles. But to rap against the door with anything that will cause a slight noise is to knock.

A knock is a notice to one friend that another desires to enter, or at least to see him or speak with him. It is of the nature of a petition. The party inside is supposed to comply with the well-understood request or not as he sees proper. It is the very opposite of force or violence. The party inside is, for the time being, a sovereign in the case, the other is a supplicant, no matter what their relative positions might be in other places.

When our Saviour says, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you," he exhorts and encourages us to go to his door, and assures us that if we do so we shall not be repulsed. This is amazing grace and kindness on his part; and had he gone no farther we should not have imagined that he could have gone farther. The one who knocks is in the attitude of a supplicant; and to be assured by Him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, that if we come to his door and knock it shall be opened unto us, ought surely to take us all there. But it does not. Thousands make light of it, and would rather have something else than the pure and holy gifts he bestows upon those who do go. The world has

many doors at which they prefer to knock. Some are afraid to go, because they feel that they are not good enough to enter that door, or even to knock at it; forgetting that pardon and grace and holiness are the very things that are to be obtained there, and can be found no where else. Bunyan gives an affecting account of the overwhelming fears of his young pilgrim Mercy at the wicket gate; of the vigor with which she knocked when she did begin; and of the great kindness of her reception. Timidity, however, slays few. Worldliness and carelessness are the ruin of millions.

Jesus knew that it was not enough to ask sinners to knock at his door, although assuring them that none should ever knock in vain. He therefore changes places with them, and himself becomes the knocker, the supplicant. Here are his words :

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

O careless, thoughtless ones, think of God your Saviour coming to you; knocking at the door of your heart for admittance; beseeching you to open it that he may come in to do you good, to make you holy and happy, to save you from sin, and from death the wages of sin, to have sweet fellowship with your spirit, and to fit you for heaven, where you will see him as he is and be ever with him! He stands at the door and knocks; but the opening of that door must be your act, not his. He does all he can to make you willing. He tells you what he intends to do for you if you let him in; but it is impossible for him, in the relation he now bears to you, to open that door. You yourself must be willing. His willingness, even his intense solicitude—for his words indicate nothing less—will not avail.

Such is Christ's relation to you while he waits to be gracious. You will not knock; but he does. You will not

pray to him ; but he prays to you. He asks for nothing but your love, your faith, your confidence. All he asks is that you open the door and receive him as a friend who comes laden with precious gifts. He comes and only asks permission to give you, as he himself expresses it, "gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed."

But this posture of affairs cannot last beyond the brief term of your probation. Hear what Jesus himself says : "When once the Master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open unto us,' and he shall answer and say unto you, 'I know you not whence ye are!'" Do you expect, after refusing to know the Saviour, or hold any communion with him at all—after keeping the door barred against him during life, although open to almost everything else—that a death-bed cry of "Lord, Lord, open unto us," will avail you? The Lord himself declares that it will not. "I know you not," will be an awful reply to prayers deliberately or thoughtlessly postponed to the last moment.

A very different knocking will then and forever assault those hearts which would not heed the gentle voice of the pitying, pleading Saviour, even anguish and terror and a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, unmingled with mercy. He offered pardon, but it was scorned ; he offered heaven, but the world was preferred ; he offered himself, but Satan had greater charms for them as he came bedecked with the pleasures and profits of this world. Christ proposed to make them joint heirs with himself, but they declined the offer ; and the only alternative is joint heirship with the great adversary. It is their portion ; and by keeping that door barred against the Friend and Saviour of sinners they fitted themselves for it.

Let us close with the sad and sorrowful words of God through Moses, as he contemplated the heedlessness and obstinacy of his people whom he would gladly have saved if they had only been willing: "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

Theme for Serious Thought.

THAT is a very remarkable utterance of our Saviour, just at the close of the parable of the Unjust Judge, where he says: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" It seems to be an assertion in the strongest possible form that at that coming the faith of his people will be at the lowest ebb, and not an inquiry to which he expected a reply.

But of what coming does he speak? for on that turns the meaning of the passage. Or does he speak of any one particular coming? I think not. He has already come many, many times to deliver, to revive, and to bless his people, collectively as his church, and individually as his children. When he tries them by sore chastisements, and by leaving them for a time, as he often does, to walk in darkness, faith almost expires, as it did in the heart of the injured widow who went daily with her petition to the unjust judge. Then he comes and gives comfort, deliverance, light and joy. Then faith revives and becomes a power in the soul. All true believers understand this experience.

When Abraham took the knife into his hand to pierce the heart of his beloved son, his faith had done its utmost. It was enough. Then the Son of Man came and delivered him, and sent him and Isaac on their way rejoicing. When Israel fled from Egypt, they were led to the sea shore in a

pent-up place between the mountains of Pi-hahiroth and Baal-zephon, with the sea before them and an enraged tyrant with his army behind them. Then the Son of Man came, but he found no faith. Even Moses himself seemed to be in despair. But he gave deliverance by opening a way through the sea, and put a new song in their mouths. What seemed to have been a trap for them proved to be a trap for their enemies. So he comes to his people under all circumstances and in all ages, whether to assembled Israel on the sea shore; to the agonized father of the faithful on the mount of sacrifice; and so he comes to all his lowly hidden ones, in their hours of sore trial and expiring faith. Thus he makes good his promise—"I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."

But are we yet over the entire length and breadth of this profound declaration? for, although put in the form of an interrogation, it is not a question. There are times when the drift of things in the world beats with such tremendous force against Christian faith as to threaten its utter extinguishment. Such was the state of things through what we call the mediæval period, when error, and superstition, and mummery, and heaven-daring assumption of spiritual power had well nigh swept true faith from the earth. A few faithful but almost hopeless souls still clung to Christ and cried, as did that poor widow, that God would avenge them of their adversaries. Then, at the right moment, the Son of Man came, and the great Reformation was the result. "The just shall live by faith," became the exultant cry of emancipated millions—of generation after generation up to our day.

During the dark ages a thick cloud gathered over the earth, and the human mind lay fettered as in a dungeon. Now we are threatened with danger of an opposite kind. Then the adversary crushed the race down to slavery and chains; now his tactics are to cast off every yoke, even the

easy yoke of Christ. He claims to be our Master, and will not abate his claim; and all who take his yoke upon them find that it is easy, that his burden is light, his service perfect freedom. But within a few years human pride has laid hold of the beauties of Christ, and like the excited crowd at Jerusalem, who cut down palm branches and strewed them in the way, they are crying "Hosanna to the Son of David," a sentimental hero, while scornfully ignoring his yoke as degrading, and his cross as foolishness—honoring this greatest and purest of characters in a patronizing way, so as not to bring any humiliation or subjection upon themselves. This new view of the great Philanthropist and Teacher is not Christianity, but Humanitarianism, the "enthusiasm of humanity," as Professor Seelye calls it. It is intermixed with much of the fashionable literature, both prose and verse, which is pouring upon the world like a flood. It is the offspring of the dazzling and bewildering light of the nineteenth century, combined with what passes current for philosophy. Repentance, faith, prayer, self-denial, and all the humbling graces are thrown out of this scheme, if scheme it may be called.

The adversary, during the eighteenth century, waged a fierce and direct warfare against Christ. By some of his agents he was denounced as a deceiver; by others the authenticity of his history was assailed. Infidelity was then bold and undisguised. But the experiment of a century showed Satan that that kind of warfare would not avail; for Christ's kingdom in the world grew mightily in the face of these fierce assaults. Now he has thrown away his sword and has grasped a palm branch, and his voice mingles with that of his pseudo worshipers in shouting hosanna to the King, but not to the Saviour; to the purest, wisest, greatest of men, but not to God manifest in the flesh; to an imaginary being, but not to the Christ of the evangelists, whose

stern words to those who only cry "Lord! Lord!" are, "Depart from me; I know you not."

We cannot exaggerate the beauty and loveliness of Christ; nor his love to those for whom he died; nor his kindness to those who gathered around him in the days of his flesh, and to those who believe in his name and trust in him for salvation from sin in all ages; neither can we exaggerate his terrible holiness and severity as our Sovereign, our Lawgiver, and our Judge. "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned," are fearful words; yet they were uttered by the same lips which poured blessings on the meek, the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, the peace-makers—by the same lips which said, "Where have ye laid him?" and then wept with the bereaved sisters—the same which said to his sad and troubled disciples, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." No being of whom we have ever heard is at once so lovely, benevolent, merciful, and terrible as Christ. No words that ever reached human ears are so kind, and yet so fearful, as his. Such is the Christ of the evangelists, "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders."

Contrast that Christ with the pretty, bedizened Christ of polite literature, "so sweetly mawkish, and so smoothly dull," so soft, so weakly kind, that all are by him alike beloved; but rising no higher than a bright example, an embodied sentiment—a kind of link, nobody can tell how, between heaven and earth, between God and man. Christ, who knew what was in man, wept over Jerusalem the very moment when her enthusiastic populace rushed out to welcome him with shouts and palm branches. And when, it may be, some of the same people, two days afterwards, cried "Away with him! Crucify him!" he opened not his mouth. In neither case did they know what they did. So it is with these superficial admirers of a sentimental Christ.

How is this dangerous and soul-destroying assault upon Christian truth to be met? Only by getting back to the feet of Jesus as he is set before us in the simple narratives left by the four evangelists, and letting his words sink deeply into our hearts. Only by doing his will; by taking up his cross and following him. By accepting with the same readiness his severe and humbling commands and declarations as we do his most kind and gracious precepts and promises. We must go to him as lost sinners, not as sentimental admirers and flattering courtiers. We shall not then carry Christ into the opera, nor the opera into our churches; neither will we throw around him a gorgeous robe of our own fabrication which can only hide from our eyes the true glory of his character as the Holy One of God—"merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty." We shall, in a word, regard him just as he is set before us by the inspired record, as Jesus, so named because he saves his people *from* their sins, not *in* their sins.

It may be well that the attack of the adversary has taken this form; for it will drive true Christians back to the source of all religious knowledge; back from philosophical speculations; back from the teachings of schools however excellent; back from the worldly vanities which have long been gathering around our most sacred services; back from mere creeds, however orthodox; and leave us no place to go but to Him whose words are spirit and life. "To whom shall we go," said Peter, "for thou hast the words of eternal life?"

Then he will come to his people; for he only can roll back this delusive light, this *ignis-fatuus* from the earth, this form of error so flimsy, so unsubstantial, that no logic, or argument can grapple with it; for it has no definite shape, and can only be dislodged from the hearts which it has entered

by the Holy Spirit. Sore trial of some kind will doubtless be made instrumental in casting out this evil spirit, and bringing the whole world, as the restored demoniac was brought, to its right mind, and to the feet of Jesus. For we may be very sure that our Redeemer will not fail nor be discouraged till he has set judgment in the earth.

Building a House.

EVERY human being who has sufficient length of days and mental capacity to form any character at all is building a house, and that house is founded either upon a rock or upon sand. There is but one Rock—"none other name under heaven is given among men whereby we must be saved." But this fact does not shut up our sinful race to narrow metes and bounds in the matter of salvation. All are invited to come to this Rock, to build upon this sure foundation. The language of the Saviour could not be more comprehensive—"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them." The same great and precious truth is elsewhere taught under another expressive figure—"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Many a doubting, despairing soul has drunk in rich comfort from those all-embracing words—"Whosoever will!"

But to recur to the figure first quoted. Paul, in a very instructive passage, (1 Cor. iii. 11) says: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Yet in the same connection he gives this pregnant warning: "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." He then goes on to speak of the kind of materials which even real believers, who have reached the rock, use in the superstructure. On one side he puts gold, silver, precious stones—expressive of things which Jesus

calls treasures in heaven, and which he exhorts his people to lay up for themselves. On the other hand he uses the striking figures of wood, hay, stubble—things of little value—transitory and perishing, and fit only to be burned. “The fire” he adds, “shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.”

Be saved, yet suffer loss! Saved, yet have no treasure in heaven! In the light of what Paul here says, we can see what Peter means when he talks of the righteous scarcely being saved; and in another place of an abundant entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Paul and Peter are at perfect agreement, although the latter says nothing about building a house. Still he speaks of the same things which Paul calls gold, silver, precious stones. He tells believers in Christ how to build. Hear him: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue (courage, firmness); and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.” Very likely Peter was not thinking of a house when, under divine guidance, he wrote these words; yet see what a beautiful edifice he has erected—strong and solid near the base, bringing in brighter and brighter graces as he ascends. Here are no wood, hay and stubble—nothing for the fire to consume.

Lot was a righteous man, but he builded wood, hay and stubble all his life. His flocks fed in rich pastures, and it is probable that he became wealthy in Sodom, the home of his choice, and at last was saved as by fire. The house which he built was a bad one, but no worse than many a

professed Christian is building to-day. Abraham, on the other hand, put into his house much gold, silver and precious stones, and his record and his example have blessed the world for more than three thousand years, while he is represented as heading in heaven the great army of the redeemed. The house which David built, notwithstanding the turbulent life he lived, was gemmed with precious stones, in the light and beauty of which many generations have rejoiced; while his son Solomon, with all his advantages, began in early life to build wood, hay and stubble—the most magnificent structure of the kind that man ever built. But ere he died he denounced his work as vanity and vexation of spirit and of no profit. He was a bad builder nearly all his life; but finally he finished his house with some imperishable gems. His is a grand yet lamentable record; and never dare we class him with distinguished saints.

Mary and Martha were both building vigorously on that day when the first sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word, and the other was "careful and troubled about many things." Martha, with all her care and kindness, was building perishable things; but Mary's work will endure forever, the Master himself being judge.

The widow who cast her two mites into the treasury built well. Her record upon earth is great, although we know not her name. But it is written in heaven; and the gold, silver and precious stones into which her little gift was transmuted are her heavenly treasure, which moth and rust can never corrupt.

Paul, during his laborious life as an ambassador of Christ, built the richest house of which we have any knowledge; and death, which separates the worldling from his wealth, and drives him from his loved abode, put the devoted apostle in possession of his. We are all familiar with the exulting cry

with which he entered his house on high, and received from his Lord the crown of righteousness.

So much for building on the Rock. But alas! for those who build upon the sand! No matter of what sort it is, whether honorable or dishonorable, beneficent or injurious, whether a rude and unsightly pile of rubbish, or a beautiful edifice adorned after the similitude of a palace, if not founded upon the Rock, it must be swept away in irremediable ruin; for it is written, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Philosophy claims to have laid many solid foundations; but none has really been found yet. Doctrines and theories framed by mere human wisdom are ever shifting, ever changing, even under our eye. How then must they appear to the eye of Him who sees the end from the beginning! There is one Rock, the Rock of Ages, and there is no other. "But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."

Thoughts on a Precious Passage.

THERE are many passages of Scripture which go to establish the absolute divinity of our Lord; but I know of none more thoroughly satisfactory than the three last verses of the eleventh chapter of Matthew, especially the first of the three: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." No being less than divine would have dared to utter such words as these. No man, no angel, no created being, however exalted and mighty, has power to make good such a promise as this. A man or an angel might say, "God will give you rest;" but Jesus says, "*I* will give you rest." It is the voice of God himself, speaking for himself, and promising what he alone can give. The promise is to all that labor and are heavy laden. There

may be millions of such at the same moment, scattered all over the earth, so that Omnipresence is implied in the promise. In this sense it agrees with that other great saying of our Lord, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" and with that other, "Lo, I am with you always."

The thing promised is rest. This does not mean a cessation from labor, but peace, quietness of spirit, comfort—freedom from perturbation, anxiety, apprehension, doubt or dread. Peace is the most comprehensive term, and one which Jesus often used: "Peace be unto you," was his salutation to his troubled disciples when he appeared to them after he rose from the tomb. Nothing could be more fitting, for they were terribly troubled and agitated by the awful scenes through which they had just passed. On the night on which he was betrayed he said to them—and his words are living and abiding words, coming home to every heart which is turned towards him—"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you." He really gives it. The world promises peace, but gives it not. This brings us back to the rest promised in the text—a promise which God alone has power to make good.

Yet it is plain from what immediately follows that it is not God in his absolute character who is speaking; but only Jesus of Nazareth, the man of sorrows of whom Isaiah speaks—who carried through his mortal life the awful burden of a world's guilt, together with all the sinless infirmities of humanity—a pure and holy being who was laden with more guilt than any who ever walked this earth. "Take my yoke upon you," he says, "and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Only a man could use such language as that, as only God could use what immediately precedes it, or utter the promise which immediately follows—"and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Here we see the divine

man, the incarnate God, the great Mystery of Godliness, set forth in a light so clear that to see the one nature we must see both. In adoring wonder let us cease to speculate, or to make any attempt to separate them even in thought.

Then he adds, "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Why is he able to add these comforting words? Because he himself bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. He took our yoke upon him; he bore our guilt and the resultant sorrows. That was a burden which required infinite strength to bear; and when we contemplate the awful scene in Gethsemane we see that even that strength was taxed to the utmost. But he bore it all, and triumphed both there and on Calvary. Hence the burden he lays upon his redeemed people is light, and his yoke easy. Jesus paid it all. His yoke and his burden give rest instead of labor and sorrow. When the burden of sin fell off Bunyan's pilgrim at the foot of the cross, he went on his way light and joyful, bearing only the armor of a Christian warrior. That was the only yoke which Christ gave him to bear. That easy yoke, that light burden, afford the only rest that it is possible for a sinner to have; for it is written, "there is no rest, saith my God, to the wicked."

That great burden-bearer was God, the Logos, the Word, who was made flesh and dwelt among us. He was also the most perfect of men—not a man united to God, but was himself God—"God manifest in the flesh," and subject to all the conditions of humanity. "Great is the mystery!" exclaims the apostle; and when we contemplate it, let us "only believe," and not attempt to explain it, or theorize upon it. Let us not say that it is God in union with man, for "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Yet infinitely great as he is, he himself testifies that he is meek and lowly in heart; and we know that of all the beings who ever walked this earth, none ever sorrowed or suffered as he

did; none were so heavy laden. Hence it is that he can say to the poorest and the weakest, "Learn of me."

They shall see God.

LIKE Jacob's Ladder, the blessings which Christ pronounces upon class after class—beginning with the poor in spirit and ending with the pure in heart—ascend in beautiful gradation from earth to heaven; from the first glimmering of light to perfect day; from a perception of the poverty, nakedness, and emptiness of self to a glorious revelation of the fullness of God. In a few words our great Teacher carries us up from "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven," to "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

We know that we cannot see God as we see one another, and as we see visible and tangible objects, be our moral purity what it may; for he is a spirit. But does it therefore follow that the blessing here promised is unattainable in this life? I think not. David says, "I have set the Lord always before me"—as an object upon which he steadily kept his eye; and under the influence of that strong faith he bursts out in a glad and triumphant song of praise. He saw God.

Does the purity of heart here spoken of imply perfect holiness? Certainly not. We can find the key to the term, and its safest definition, in these other words of Jesus, "If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light;" and we read of eminent and devoted Christians in the early Church who "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." The eye and the heart are here convertible terms, and so are singleness and purity.

In his message to the Church of the Laodiceans, Christ

says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man open the door I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me;" and surely that heart where he is the honored and supreme guest must be pure in the sense we are discussing; and the soul thus open to him is in possession of the blessing promised to the pure in heart.

The reason why we fall short of this crowning blessing is, that we suffer so many things to usurp God's place in our hearts. We fail to keep our eye single. Martha was careful and troubled about many things, while Mary sat at her Saviour's feet and heard his word. The first could not see God at that time, although she was a good woman; her sister did, and was commended by her Lord for choosing the good part which should not be taken from her. While we are in Martha's condition we are not pure in heart, nor is our eye single, nor is our body filled with light; but when we become like Mary, our hearts are pure, we are full of light, and that light is God.

Hear what Jesus says about seeing our Father God: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, 'Show us the Father?'"

Whatever displays it may please God to make of his glory to the redeemed in heaven, it is a precious truth that in the present life the believer can see God by faith, and rejoice in the light of his countenance. But to do so he must climb above the world and its cares, desires, passions, ambitions, hopes and fears. Then, and only then, can he set the Lord before him; then, and only then, can he see God.

Communing with God.

THE offering of prayer, however sincere, does not of itself rise to the dignity of communing with God; much less does the utterance at stated times of a form of words. To commune requires two parties, and these two or more must be at substantial agreement, in friendly accord. It means to converse, to confer, to talk together familiarly. Hence communing is familiar converse, private intercourse, where both the parties bear a part.

Is it possible to commune with God in that way? Certainly it is, for Jesus promises to every one who will open the door to him, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." As this supping together is not to be taken in the gross and corporeal sense of the term, it must mean familiar converse, private intercourse. Let us make only one more citation on this point.

While Jesus was talking familiarly with his disciples at the last supper, one of them asked him, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Rarely has a more pertinent or more important inquiry been propounded than this; and the wonderful reply of the Master shows us that the mind of the questioner was guided by the Holy Spirit. Here it is: "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."

Surely those who love each other and have their abode together will have much familiar, confidential, sympathetic converse. The heart of the man who loves Christ and keeps his words will often rise towards him in strong and sincere desire, "uttered or unexpressed;" and the Divine response will come as fresh and with as lively power as if it were

uttered for the first time, in some gracious promise, some word of peace, some assuring declaration, written in the Holy Scriptures long centuries ago, but which are "as new and fresh as ever. These never grow old. These are the things of Christ which the Comforter stands ever ready to show unto us.

I always feel a reluctance to speak of my own experience; but pardon the mention of a single incident. A good many years ago, through inability to sell what I had to sell, I found myself unable to purchase supplies pressingly needed by my own family and others who were working for me. I labored all day in vain, and retired to my chamber at a hotel under that cloud. Prayer was all I had left. I knelt, but before a word rose to my lips, the divine declaration, "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things," struck upon my heart, as the ringing, cheering voice of a friend at hand would strike upon the ear. I knew that it was not an audible voice; but the effect was the same as if it had been a voice from heaven. The assurance was complete. Anxiety gave place to deep gratitude and peace. My prayer was anticipated. I had nothing more to ask. I then laid down and slept as soundly as I ever did. The next morning, without any difficulty I got what supplies I needed.

But I have not yet reached what I was mainly aiming at,— I mean the thirty-second Psalm. It is so rich that a volume might be written upon it without exhausting it; yet if carefully pondered it hardly needs any comment. In the first six verses, David speaks of his own experience as a penitent and burdened sinner, and also of the misery he felt, so long as he withheld a full and frank confession. At the seventh verse commences a loving converse between him and his God. David speaks in the fullness and gladness of his heart. Faith and love being in lively exercise, the two

graces, operating together, result in joyful assurance, which he thus expresses: "Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." To this God responds: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." Then the Divine Party in the communion continues: "Be not as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee."

Apply to this last verse of counsel the words, "I will guide thee with mine eye," and then see how God draws and guides his people without resorting in the slightest measure to what we call force. The choice of both the communing parties is alike free. They are mutually elected. Yet it remains true that salvation is all of grace—"not of works, lest any man should boast,"—and that while one of the parties is nothing, the other is all in all. David then closes this communing Psalm with some fervid utterances on the blessedness of the man who trusts in the Lord.

The Great Philanthropist.

"My delights were with the sons of men."—Prov. viii. 31.

THIS is a very remarkable expression. Who is speaking? It is Wisdom personified. Not an abstract thing; not a principle embodied and set forth in allegorical guise; not a beautiful myth, whose birth-place was the brain of a poet; but a true, living, acting personage—one who has a history of his own—a real being, distinct from every other being.

What is his history? It is given briefly and eloquently in the chapter from which we have quoted. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works

of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. . . . When he prepared the heavens I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth; then was I by him as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."

Can the one who here speaks be an abstraction, a principle, an attribute, or even an angel? No; but a greater than any of these is here. In language equally eloquent, but with greater brevity and strength, John also carries us back to a past eternity when he says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." These two sublime passages agree. They both speak of Christ; and in prayer (John xvii. 5) he himself speaks to his Father of the glory which he had with him before the world was. In the light of these three passages we have the fullest assurance that he who says that his delights are with the sons of men is none other than the Son of God.

Think of these words. Consider the great fact here declared. It is more than mercy. It transcends mere compassion. It rises far above pity. It goes beyond generous bounty, however boundless. It is complacency; it is delight; it is love in its fondest and sweetest sense. It is in one place spoken of under the image of conjugal affection. "As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so will I rejoice over thee." Maternal affection is also used to illustrate this complacent love of Him who bore our sins in his own body on the tree; and in one of the prophets the Lord says, "He will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest

in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."—Zeph. iii. 17.

Many cold, sad, drooping Christians tremblingly hope for mercy, for pity, for pardon; but they would deem it awful presumption to suppose that God himself delighted in them even as a bridegroom delights in her whom he has taken to his bosom, or as a mother's affections go forth to the child of her love. Yet it is even so; and it is our fault, not his, that we do not daily enjoy the sweet consolation which such a trust would afford, were it heartily received.

This great truth is calculated to give us an exalted idea of the completeness of the work of redemption. In ourselves there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that God can delight in; but when we become new creatures in Christ Jesus, then we are sharers in his righteousness, and are viewed only through that medium. That infinite eye which sweeps at a glance through both time and eternity, sees the believer, not only in this poor, struggling, sinful life, full of the corruptions which he is slowly and painfully overcoming, but a perfect conqueror in heaven, pure as Immanuel himself, crowned with a righteousness absolutely perfect, and in his measure as lovely as He is who visited and redeemed his people, and who has put his own beauty upon every one of his ransomed ones. Taking this range of thought, we can easily conceive how dear to the Saviour are his people, and how it is possible that his delights can be with the sons of men. Balaam had a glimpse of this glorious vision which is ever before the eyes of Him who sees the end from the beginning, and who sees the sinner that believes in Jesus perfectly redeemed: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them."

Other Worlds.

THE steady advance in the power and perfection of astronomical instruments enables men to learn more and more of the existing conditions of the other members of our solar system. The first question which rises in the mind of a thinking person is, "Are they, like the Earth, theatres of vegetable and animal life, and abodes of intelligent beings?"

Of Mercury we know very little, other than that the fervor of the sun's rays there is such as to render the natural economy which is found here impossible; and it may be that the same is true with regard to Venus. The bulk of the latter is almost the same as that of the Earth, and the length of its day nearly the same; but were the Earth transferred to the orbit of Venus, all life would cease under the four-fold heat of the sun.

The Moon, so far as the most careful observation goes, is destitute of water, and is very nearly, if not totally, devoid of an atmosphere; and small as it is, it revolves but once on its own axis in about twenty-nine days, the same time exactly that it requires to travel in its own orbit around the Earth. All is barrenness, desolation and death—intense heat alternating with intense cold, but neither affecting anything. No soil, no sand—nothing but rugged, jagged and unchanging rock, just as it chilled and hardened long, long ago, leaving the traces of the expiring ebullitions of the slowly cooling mass in those deep, dark caverns and circular mountains, which tower higher above the general surface than do any mountains on this globe.

Mars, which revolves around the Sun in an orbit forty millions of miles beyond that of the Earth, is a comparatively small planet, being only about one-ninth of the volume of the Earth; but being comparatively near, and presenting to

us, as Venus does not, a full illuminated disc, it can be more minutely examined than any other of the planets of our system. In some respects it bears a remarkable resemblance to the Earth. It has an atmosphere in which clouds float. It has seas—more in number, but much smaller, than those of Earth—which have been mapped and charted, as have its continents. It may have rivers; but of course they cannot be seen; neither could vegetation be discovered at so vast a distance, if any exists. The periodical increase and diminution of extensive tracts of whiteness around the polar regions, show that there is snow on Mars as well as on this globe.

But the ruddy color of that planet, where it is not covered with snow, indicates the absence of vegetable life, such as we are familiar with; and if that be lacking, then animal, breathing life cannot exist. As there is water, there may be aquatic animals; but beings such as man there cannot be.

The Sun's rays on Mars, as compared with those which fall upon the Earth, are as two to five. It is too cold, therefore, for such vegetable and animal life as we have in this world; and though an atmosphere, and water, and clouds, and snow are seen to exist; yet as the color which would indicate the existence of extensive vegetation is lacking, we are constrained to give up the pleasant hypothesis that Mars is an inhabited world like ours.

But can it be that God would make so many worlds in vain? it may be asked. In asking such questions we know not what we are saying. Suppose some intelligent being had been making a tour of observation through the universe at the time when this beautiful world of ours was "without form and void," and darkness and hideous desolation brooded over it, millions of years ago perhaps; and after looking at it year after year, and century after century, had asked the same question, would it have been wise? These sur-

rounding globes, with the millions of other systems of which we know nothing, except that they lie scattered all around us in the immeasurable fields of space, are not made in vain, even though man be the only intelligent material being that is yet warmed and enlightened by this sun. God has unlimited duration in which to operate, as well as unlimited space; and in this vast universe he will forever display the glory of his wisdom and power. It may be that this world, the theatre of the incarnation of the Son of God, by whom the worlds were made, stands first in the order of these works of his hands. Who can tell what deep and mysterious meaning lies in these words which our incarnate God applies to himself—"The beginning of the creation of God"? (Rev. iii. 14.) Unquestionably the words refer to his relation to our race, both in person and in office, and not to his absolute divinity. No matter how far back we may count in geologic periods; for these were but preparatory to the great development; and so it may be that this world of ours—this world wherein the Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us—has the pre-eminence among the countless multitude of worlds which we see around us. What the other planets of our system may become in the unlimited hereafter, we know not; but this we know, for God himself has told us, that here, in our world, He who has all power in heaven and in earth, took the nature of man upon him, and with that nature ascended to the throne of the universe clothed with omnipotence, and having a name which is above every name. Through Christ, man is lifted to the highest rank among created beings, although every one may for himself take Job's language on his lips and say, "Behold, I am vile!"

As the outer and greater planets of our system are yet void and covered with the thick darkness of their own vast and dense atmospheres, just as this world was when the ac-

count of the creation given in the first chapter of Genesis begins, so in this sense may we, without violence to either science or revelation, entertain the belief that our race, including our adorable Lord, are "the beginning of the creation of God"—the beginning so far as material beings capable of knowing and worshiping him are concerned.

If so, think what scenes lie before us in the never-ending future, as order after order of glorious creatures shall be called into being, and possibly we, as the nearest of kin to the great Master of all, may be, under him, their teachers and benefactors. But it is not good to speculate too much. Still John, when he exclaimed, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," only that "we shall be like him," gives a great impulse to the believer's imagination.

The Millennium.

I HAVE recently been reading a volume of upwards of five hundred pages, entitled "Maranatha" (the Lord, or our Lord, cometh), by Rev. James H. Brookes, of St. Louis, in which the author labors to prove that the latter day glory of the Church, the triumph of truth over error, the period of universal peace on earth—of which many of the prophets speak in language too plain to be misunderstood, and to which the hopes of nearly all Christians are directed—cannot come until Christ shall come the second time in person to reign visibly upon the earth. Those who hold this view are called Pre-millenarians, while those who hold the opposite view are known as Post-millenarians, meaning those who believe that the personal appearance of Christ "the second time unto salvation" will not occur until after the Millennium.

Many excellent men, some of whom I have known, hold

the views of this author ; but, so far as I have examined their arguments, I think they have failed to establish their position.

The term Millennium simply means a period of a thousand years; nothing more. As used in the sense before us it rests solely upon the remarkable prediction found in the 20th chapter of Revelation, in these words: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and he laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season." No other Scripture gives any intimation of the duration of that happy period.

He would be a bold and presumptuous man who should undertake to tell us what all these tremendous metaphors of the angel, the chain, the key, the dragon and the bottomless pit, mean. The period, twice mentioned, is plain enough; but doubtless a large specific number is here used to express a long period, long enough to make the righteous and the saved greatly outnumber the wicked and the lost.

The other figures—be they what they may—are manifestly expressive of influences and forces from heaven—repressive, restraining forces—acting upon agents of evil, and not gracious influences acting upon the hearts of believers. The passage is restricted to the removal of obstacles to the advance and triumph of truth, and the suppression of all manner of error, deceit and lies, whether entrenched in heresy in the church, in dark idolatry and superstition, or in bold philosophy and science, falsely so called, which end in infidelity.

But in order to get a safe and sober idea of the Millen-

nium, that glorious period of a thousand years, as it is called, we must bring the light of other prophetic Scriptures to bear upon it; such, for example, as these:

“The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.” Of this knowledge Jesus says in his great intercessory prayer, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

“Unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”—Gen. xlix. 10. “All shall know thee from the least to the greatest.” Jesus, in a transport of triumph, just before he suffered, had his eye fixed upon that period of which the prophets so often spoke—one of them in the words just quoted—that period which to us seems so remote, but to him so near: “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out;” (that dragon which John saw chained and cast into the bottomless pit) “and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.” This harmonizes with the angelic song: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

“He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. . . . All nations shall serve him.” (Psalm lxxii.) “And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”—Rev. xix. 16.

“And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.”—(Joel.) “In the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord

shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all people shall flow unto it; and many nations shall come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”—Micah.

In all these glowing predictions of the triumphs of the Prince of Peace, and many others like them, there is not the slightest intimation of a personal, visible presence in the world on his part, nor of anything miraculous, nor of any change in the administration of the kingdom of heaven as it now exists in the world. The binding of the great dragon, the arch enemy of God and man, for a thousand years is tantamount to a promise that evil influences and agents, both human and diabolical, will then be greatly restrained, so that the Gospel shall have free course and be glorified, the world be enlightened, and all men be drawn to Jesus as he exultantly declared that they should be.

But still it will remain with our race, as David declared it to be with him—“Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Still will it be true that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Still will the just live by faith. Still will the prayer of Jesus go up to the Eternal Throne, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” Still will it be true that in the world God’s people shall have tribulation. Still will they pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Still shall men be obliged in the sweat of

their face to eat bread. Still will they marry and be given in marriage, and thus multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it. (The work of subduing one another will then be over.) Still will the tear of natural affection, but not of hopeless grief, be shed over the ashes of the departed; and still will the hope of a glorious immortality, a better life than is found even in millennial glory, buoy up and make glad the departing spirit of the saint.

“The grace of God which bringeth salvation” will be the same then that it is now, and eternal life will begin then, as it does now, in the new birth, and believers must walk by faith as they do at present. The conditions will not be changed at all; but the results so glowingly depicted by the prophets will be brought about by the Word and the Spirit, just as the same agency has quickened millions in the past and present generations who were dead in trespasses and sins.

Whatever the binding of the dragon for a thousand years may mean, it is manifestly an exertion of the divine energy upon the powers of evil, an overcoming of opposing forces, a removal of obstacles both human and satanic, so that human hearts will almost universally be ready to receive Christ and the things of Christ as they are freely offered in the Gospel, and pressed upon their acceptance by the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus of Nazareth walked among the people of his day as a man of sorrows, poor, humble and despised, it required as much faith to receive him as the promised Messiah as it does now; perhaps more. Then as now the just lived by faith. But should he come, as our Pre-millenarian friends believe, arrayed in power and glory, all the conditions of the kingdom of heaven upon earth would be changed. Faith would then be impossible; for as well might we talk of our belief in the existence of the sun

when he is shining in noon-day splendor as an act of faith, as to call that faith which believes in an all-glorious Being who is visible to our eyes. How could sinful mortals born under such circumstances be saved? Hear what Jesus said to Thomas: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." If that view of the Millennium be correct, then we learn from what the Saviour said to Thomas that those who shall not see that day are more blessed than those who shall. Jesus was not mistaken when he said, "It is expedient for you that I go away."

The gracious appliances of the Gospel are all complete. They need no addition, no amendment. God's power over the prince of darkness is absolute, and so it is over all the evil powers of earth. In his word he has promised to give the heathen to the Son for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; and in the chaining of the devil we see the coming of Him who is mighty to save, saying to his long afflicted people, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

The Millennium is nothing more nor less than a universal revival of religion which shall be maintained throughout many generations, the whole earth being filled with light and love and peace—no hurting or destroying in all God's holy mountain. The very implements of warfare are to be changed to peaceful uses, and war is to be learned no more.

"After that he (Satan) must be loosed a little season." The event—which is still very remote—must show what this strange prophecy means. I know of no key to it in the Holy Scriptures. But it strikes my mind as being in direct conflict with the notion that during the period under consideration Christ will be personally and visibly present upon the earth.

Should that period be such as is here supposed, and the church, the family, and the peaceful avocations of life go on as at present, and at the same time all destructive and hurtful evils be banished from human society, the population of the globe will be enormously increased, so that the number who shall live during that time will vastly exceed that of all preceding generations. Even now, notwithstanding the drawbacks of war, intemperance and other evil and vicious practices, Christian nations are advancing rapidly in population. But were the people of the world all righteous, and living in harmony among themselves, and in obedience to the laws of Nature and of God, the ratio of increase would be greater still by far. This is a pleasant thought; for it removes the painful impression that only a comparatively small minority of our race will reach the mansions of the blessed.

The Minuteness of the Divine Government.

WHEN Jesus tells us that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without our Father, and that the hairs of our head are numbered, that is, that the number of our hairs is known to him, we are not to understand him as simply announcing these two facts, which, taken in themselves merely, are of but little practical importance. In these wonderful declarations he put down these two landmarks by which we may know how far the divine knowledge and government extend. The concrete, in its minutest form, is put for the abstract, which is infinite in its extent, all-embracing, and from which it is impossible that anything can be excluded.

Our minds often dwell upon the greatness of God; but our conception of what constitutes greatness may be very imperfect and one-sided. The common idea is that it is

something opposed to smallness, minuteness. Some minds can see greatness in the sun, which is more than thirteen hundred thousand times the bulk of our earth; they can see it in the vast sweep of the planets around this central orb; they see it in the millions of the fixed stars, each a sun, and probably the centre of a system like ours, scattered through the immensity of space; and still more in those immeasurably distant nebulæ—other aggregations, it may be, of suns like this of which our own sun is one. Truly the term great is justly applicable to these things.

But when the mind traces the evidences of divine power in this direction until it is overwhelmed with the idea of vastness, it is difficult to maintain at the same time a conception of the still more overwhelming greatness of the minuteness—if we may so speak—of God. We see him on the one hand stretching creation, with suns and systems, through spaces which to us are infinite. Then we turn from the telescope to the microscope, and see him forming beautiful animal organisms so minute that it requires a thousand of them to equal a grain of sand in bulk; and still we have not discovered the boundary in either direction.

The terms great and small, far and near, many and few, are necessary to us; but to the Infinite God there are no such terms. No size, no distance, no number, can be either great or small to him; and not a creature he has called into existence, whether an archangel or an animalcule, is for one moment forgotten by the great Father of all. But let us not infer from this that all are alike great or small, and of equal value in his eyes. The great Teacher has taken care not to let us fall into that error. “Fear not,” says he, “*ye are of more value than many sparrows.*” In his eyes, we may be sure, everything which he has made is estimated at its proper value; and the value he sets upon man may be estimated by the price he paid for his redemption.

Nothing in the universe is so extended, and at the same time so minute, so penetrating, so all pervading, as the divine government and agency. Natural laws, as we call them, and millions upon millions of other agents, are in perpetual activity; but not in one of these operations is God excluded or absent. A sparrow cannot fall without him. Jesus selected the sparrow to set forth this great truth; but had he chosen a gnat or a worm, the abstract would have been the same.

The Scriptures are equally explicit with regard to the minuteness of God's knowledge of the workings of every human mind. "Thou understandest my thoughts afar off," that is, before we ourselves are conscious of them. "There is not a word in my tongue but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Well might the Psalmist exclaim, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me!"

Jesus tells us that God clothes the grass of the field, and feeds the fowls of heaven. A scientist would tell us that both these acts are but the operations of the laws of Nature; and were he content to leave the matter just there, he might not be far wrong. But most of those who aspire to guide the thoughts of mankind, speak of those laws as if they were self-acting and independent; and that consequently all things fall out in accordance with general laws, and not by the special direction of the Supreme Ruler. It is just here that the minds of men find their greatest difficulty in thinking and judging of the events which are transpiring around them. As they seem to arise from a concatenation of natural causes, or human agencies, the hand of the Prime Mover is not observed, and is often not acknowledged—sometimes denied.

Natural causes or forces, and the active operating power of God are really one and the same thing. This truth Jesus teaches us in the little concrete examples he has chosen in

the cases of the sparrow, the hairs of our head, and the grass of the field clothed in glory and beauty surpassing anything that Solomon could boast. Under his teaching the rule of Chance is utterly excluded. No event, however apparently fortuitous or unimportant, can transpire except by the direction of the Divine Will. The Bible is full of direct and indirect assertions of this universality of God's government; and not a sentence can be found to warrant us in believing that even a dry leaf, fluttering in the wind, can alight here or there *by chance*. This minuteness of the divine government is even more awful than its vastness. To him who knows that he is at peace with God, and who can in filial confidence approach him as his reconciled Father, it is a delightful thought, and ought to banish from his mind all fear, distrust, and anxiety. It is the erroneous notion that they are, to some extent at least, under the dominion of chance, and subject to the operation of blind natural forces, or liable to injury at the hand of their fellow beings—as if they could act independently of and contrary to the will of God—that keeps thousands of people in a state of unrest, disquietude, and apprehension. It is all wrong. The Bible, if properly studied and devoutly believed, will fully vindicate its own strong assertion: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.”

All this, however, does not do away with the necessity and duty of prudence, care, and forecast on our part. These are required at our hands. God enjoins this duty upon man to the extent of his ability. What lies beyond that ability, he takes charge of himself. Nothing is so minute as to be below the range of his observation; nothing so great as to be above his power of direction, whether found among what we call the blind forces of Nature, or in the still more perverse domain of human agency.

Disintegration.

THE great saying of our Lord—"What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder,"—although applied, when first uttered, to the first and dearest of human relations, is not necessarily restricted to that. It applies with equal force to a thousand other things. Its scope is as wide as the harmonies of the universe, and embraces all the works of God in their marvelous inter-blendings and inter-dependencies.

Men, when they undertake the work of analysis, are obliged to separate things which God has joined together; and when separated, they leave the parts asunder, and speak of them as independent existences. Hence we have a multitude of terms expressive of fragments of what the Creator joined together in unity; and these disintegrated fragments, simply because they are put asunder, are different from what he made. In our efforts to reach the ultimate condition of things, whether physical or psychological, whether material or spiritual, whether religious or secular, we put asunder things which God has joined together, and which, when thus made diverse, we are unable to restore to unity. So we leave them asunder and speak of their disintegrated parts as complete factors in our cosmos.

Man, under this process, is made a duplex being, composed of matter and spirit, as if we were able to enter into the essence of either. As God made us, we can understand as much as we need to know of our own nature; but when we attempt an analysis, we plunge into an ocean of difficulties and absurdities. Even in morals we undertake to separate and analyze, and assign such and such of the separated parts to the world; other parts we lift up to a higher plane and link them to the Deity. The one set we

call secular, the other religious. God joined them together; we put them asunder; and having done so, we treat them as if there were little or no relation between them. From the one department God is excluded; in the other we admit his claims.

In that relation which is the foundation of all human society from the family to the State, Christ expressly tells us that God joined the parties together in unity. Thus, as he says again, he set the human race in families. For mutual well-being, families aggregated into tribes, and tribes into nations, and so the race has continued to exist for many centuries. Owing to the wickedness of men, many abuses have been blended with all these organizations, the family not excepted. Yet they are all of divine origin; for we are told that "the powers that be are ordained of God." All the relations found among men, from the wedded pair to the most complex and powerful political organization, are expressly claimed by the Almighty as his work, and necessarily amenable to him as the Supreme Lawgiver.

Where, then, dare we draw the line between the religious and the secular? There is no such line; and when we make such distinctions, we are putting asunder what God has joined together. Paul does not separate the religious from the secular in this exhortation: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Here nothing is excepted. The rule covers everything, whether in religion or the affairs of every-day life, or voting, or legislating, or the construction of national organisms. Here we find no fine-drawn distinctions between things secular and things¹ sacred; but God is to be glorified in all we do, whether as Christians or citizens; whether we minister to the wants of the animal or the spiritual nature; and in all our relations, to ourselves, the family, the Church, and the State. The

rule is as broad as it can be—"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Christ is called the King of kings; but unless he is the Ruler of Nations, how can he bear such a title? It were impious to assert that this is an empty, unmeaning phrase. Yet the people who deliberately refuse to acknowledge his supreme authority over them as a nation, and yet recognize him as the Head of the church and as the Saviour of the world, really do dethrone him as the King of kings. It is written, "All nations shall serve him." Shall we interpret this to mean that the people of all nations shall serve him as individual believers and worshipers, while in their collective capacity as citizens they may rightfully refuse to recognize his authority, and deliberately say, "We will not have this man to rule over us"? To do so is to put asunder that which God has joined together. Such reasoning reminds one of the man who was at once a bishop and a general. In his military character he was very profane, and when his servant ventured to suggest that such language was unbecoming in a bishop, his plea was that he swore as a general, and not as a bishop. "Well," said the servant, "when the devil comes for the general, what will become of the bishop?" So, when Christ comes to deal with a denying nation, what will become of the Christian citizen, who, by his influence and vote, took sides with those who denied him? As citizens, we are just as firmly joined to our Lord and Master as we are as church members. In the one capacity we are as much bound to acknowledge him as in the other. It matters not whether we are in the majority or the minority, our individual obligation to acknowledge him as our National Ruler is the same; and as soon as a majority of our people shall so declare themselves, the amendment of our organic law which we seek will be made.

There is nothing to which human nature is more prone than to separate things which God has joined together ; and to this disintegration we may trace the greater portion of the error, the confusion, the strife, and the party divisions, which curse the world and retard its progress. We see its evil fruits in politics, in philosophy, and even in theology. We may rest assured, therefore, that Jesus had more than the marriage relation in his mind when he uttered these pregnant words, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

The Angel and Peter.

THE infant church, soon after the day of Pentecost, was subjected to alternate triumphs and trials, both of which were made to advance the cause of truth, and spread it farther and farther abroad. Divine power combined with human agency, from the very beginning, waged stern warfare with the spirits of darkness and human depravity. Early in their career did the disciples of Jesus realize the truth of the Master's words—"In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world."

The church had grown strong and was well established, when Herod, one of the most powerful and magnificent tyrants of his day, let loose his hand against the most prominent men in it. First he killed James the brother of John with the sword, and seeing that the murderous deed pleased the Jews, he had Peter arrested and thrown into prison. He did not kill him at once, but thought to keep him till after Easter, so that he could make his execution grace the popular holiday which succeeded that festival. It is plain from the extreme care with which he ordered him to be kept, that Herod regarded the apostle as no or-

dinary prisoner, for it was made the work of no less than sixteen soldiers to guard this one man. To two of them he was chained, so that the slightest attempt on his part to get away would arouse these guards, and put the whole sixteen on the alert.

Night after night he slept between these two armed men, while the other fourteen guarded the doors and the outer gate. The last night had come. No existing human agency could save him from death on the morrow. All that his Christian friends could do was to pray; and this they did without ceasing, though with feeble faith and trembling hope, as we may learn from their incredulity when the damsel Rhoda went in and told them that their prayers were answered, and that Peter himself stood at the gate.

But Peter slept that night so soundly that the angel whom God had sent to deliver him had to smite him on the side to awake him. Peter did not fear Herod's sword. If it were his Lord's will to call him home by that instrumentality, as he had just done in the case of James, he acquiesced cheerfully and doubtless joyfully. He had already accomplished a great work, and probably felt as Paul did when his departing time was at hand—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me." He slept sweetly, because the peace which passeth all understanding filled his soul.

But his work was not done. So an angel was sent, not to bear his disembodied spirit to his rest on high, but to release him bodily and send him back to his work.

It is interesting to observe the conduct of this celestial deliverer on this occasion. How he divided the multitude of things that were to be done. How promptly, almost

sternly, and yet how carefully and deliberately, he proceeded. He awoke the apostle with a blow; then, "Rise up quickly," is the first word he speaks. Peter might have objected, that he could not do it without lifting up the two sleeping soldiers. But he obeyed the command without gainsaying, and behold he is free from his chains and the men sleep on. Shall he fly just as he is? No. "Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals," is the next command. It is obeyed. The next is, "Cast thy garments about thee and follow me." Peter obeys as quickly as his bewildered senses will enable him; for as yet he knows not who is speaking. "Follow?" How can he do that? for there are two massive doors and an outer gate guarded by fourteen vigilant armed sentinels. But Peter's business was to obey, not to question—as it is yours and mine, dear reader—and he did obey. Those massive doors opened before them, and closed behind them as tight as they had been, and that ponderous iron gate swung noiselessly upon its hinges and then closed again, and its bars returned to their places, all moved by the hand which rolls the planets in their orbits and opens the blossoms of Spring. Those doors opened and closed, and those two persons passed by those vigilant guards, but the guards saw them not.

Peter seems to have passed through this strange and sudden transition from close confinement to perfect liberty without uttering a word, and the angel appears to have been entirely reticent except those brief commands in the prison. He did not tell Peter who he was, nor whence he came. As soon as he had him safely in the street he left him to find his way to his friends and brethren as he could, and to find out by the exercise of his own reason that God had sent an angel to deliver him. "Now I know of a surety (said he in soliloquy,) that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hands of Herod,

and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." This last clause shows us how the enemies of Jesus of Nazareth were looking forward to the execution of this distinguished man as to a great, perhaps decisive, triumph.

In this transaction we see how easily God defeats the machinations of the wicked when he chooses to do so, and how he pours contempt upon princes. Herod felt it keenly, as we may know by his cruel rage in ordering the keepers to be put to death, and then immediately departing from Jerusalem.

Another thing which we may observe in it is, that Peter was required to do all that was in his power to do. What was beyond his power was done for him. So it is in all the work pertaining to our deliverance from the powers of the great adversary. Peter obeyed every command, and the result was his deliverance from prison and from death. But what he did, although essential, did not break those chains, nor open those doors, nor bind for the moment the senses of the keepers.

One thing more we may observe, and that is, the care of the angel for little things, the girdle, the sandals, the garment. Calmly and deliberately, yet with all practicable diligence, the man was required to fix himself for traveling with comfort, and for a renewal of his apostolic work. "He that believeth," says the psalmist, "shall not make haste." God cares for our smallest wants, and they that put their trust in him shall not want any good thing.

How the people at the house of Mary, who were assembled to pray for Peter, were astonished that their prayers were answered! When Rhoda ran in and declared that Peter was at the gate, they exclaimed, "Thou art mad!" How hard it is to believe the promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive!"

Cornelius.

IN the days of Christ and his apostles, Judea was a subjugated province of the Roman Empire, and the power of the subordinate rulers under the Cæsars was maintained by numerous garrisons of soldiers. These soldiers constituted the police of the country, and were the agents in executing sentence upon persons condemned to death or to corporal punishment. A band of soldiers crucified the Saviour; and when Peter was confined in prison he slept between two soldiers. Over this scattered police-soldiery there were many officers, called centurions. They were competent to command one hundred men, as the name indicates, although it is not probable that the number under their command was often full.

Four centurions are distinctly mentioned in the New Testament, and all favorably. The one who applied to our Lord to heal his servant, and who exhibited such admirable humility and faith. "Lord," said he, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word, and my servant shall live." The second in order is the one who attended upon the crucifixion of the Saviour, and who, seeing the natural prodigies which attended his death, smote upon his breast, exclaiming, "Surely this was the Son of God!" The third is Cornelius, of whom we propose to speak; and the fourth is the one who treated Paul so courteously on his voyage to Rome. That such excellence of character should be found among military men, heathens, is well calculated to disarm prejudice and check harsh, indiscriminating judgment upon entire classes. And such susceptibility to divine truth and sacred impressions as we find manifested by these men is well calculated to inspire hope in reference to the entire Gentile world, the great majority of whom are yet ignorant of the Saviour.

What was Cornelius? That he was a Roman military officer we have already seen. But what was his condition as a religious man? Was he a heathen? No; for his residence in Palestine had made him in some measure acquainted with the true God, and him he feared and worshiped sincerely and fervently. He is called a devout man,—one who feared God and prayed to him always. Was he a proselyte to Judaism? No; for, had he been so, Peter would not have hesitated to enter his house and hold communion with him in worship. What, then, was he? In his outward relations he was a heathen; but in his heart he was, according to the light he had, a true worshiper of the God of Israel; for we are told that his prayers and alms had come up as a memorial before God. His condition, when we first hear of him, is an anomalous one; but he is nevertheless one of the most highly favored of men,—chosen in the adorable sovereignty of God to be the first-born of many brethren, the forerunner of a multitude of redeemed ones that no man can number, redeemed from the Gentile world. In his person the middle wall of partition was broken down between Jews and Gentiles. In his house they both became one in Christ Jesus. In his house that door was opened which can never again be shut until the consummation of all things,—that door through which we have entered into the kingdom of heaven, if indeed we are partakers of it at all. Viewed in this light, the 10th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles is a narrative of exceeding interest. What the call of Abraham was to the Hebrews the call and conversion of Cornelius is to us Gentiles. He is our representative, our forerunner, our exemplar.

Cornelius was “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.” “Why,” exclaims the superficial reader, “this man was every whit a Christian, especially

when it is added that his prayers and alms had come up with acceptance in the sight of God." But no; he was not a Christian yet. He was a devout man, a praying man, a benevolent-man; and doubtless these virtues which shone so resplendent in his character were the genuine fruits of the Holy Spirit, who was leading him in the right path, but had not yet led him to Christ; and, in order to complete the good work which he had begun, it was necessary that he should be further instructed.

To this end an angel was sent to him; and what did the angel say? Did he tell Cornelius of the Saviour? Not at all. He made not the most remote allusion to him. Although angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, and have often been the agents in imparting to men important revelations, they are not permitted to preach the gospel. This commission, this distinguished honor, is given to men; this treasure is contained in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of God,—to men, who have themselves been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ,—to men who by faith are made partakers of Christ, and are more intimately allied to him than angels can be,—to men who, through the wondrous agency of redeeming grace, are made one with Christ, participants in his righteousness and his glory,—it is given to make known to their fallen brethren the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to open to them the kingdom of heaven.

The angel bore to Cornelius a message of divine commendation, and then added, "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter : . . . *he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.*" Thus we see that the piety of Cornelius was good as far as it went, but that it was deficient. Such a religion, had it stopped here, could not have saved him. This Cornelius knew; and doubtless his unceasing prayer was for more light; and his prayer was abundantly answered.

“Send men to Joppa,” said the angel. The command was one that Cornelius could easily obey, for he was a man in authority, having soldiers under him. He could say to one, Go, and he went, and to another, Do this, and it was done. All God’s commands are reasonable and just. “Go wash in the pool of Siloam,” said Jesus to the blind man. This he could do without difficulty, although it might have been out of his power to send men to Joppa. “Wash seven times in Jordan,” is the sovereign command of Elisha to Naaman the Syrian, as the condition of his being recovered of his leprosy. Naaman’s pride for a time revolted at so simple a prescription; but Cornelius was not for a moment disobedient to the heavenly vision. “Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter.” “*One Simon.*” The expression plainly denotes that Cornelius, until that moment, was altogether ignorant of the existence of the man who is thus appointed to be his teacher; nor does the angel tell him any thing about him, save that he lodged at the house of another Simon, a tanner, whose house was by the sea side. He is not informed that Simon is a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, who had recently been crucified at Jerusalem. In short, he was left in profound ignorance as to the nature of the instructions he was to receive. Yet he staggered not at the command, nor at the promise that he should tell him what he ought to do. His obedience, therefore, was very similar to that of Abraham when he complied with the divine command to leave his kindred and his native country and sojourn in a land which God would show him,—“not knowing whither he went.”

While the men were on their journey, God was preparing Peter for the discharge of a new and strange duty. He was a Jew, and was strongly tinctured with Jewish prejudices. By them the nations of the Gentile world were regarded as outcasts, as unclean and accursed. During the

ages of the Mosaic economy—nay from the call of Abraham—they had been a separate and peculiar people; but that wise and righteous interdiction against their mingling with their idolatrous neighbors had degenerated into an unholy and inveterate prejudice,—a prejudice so deep-rooted that it required a wondrous allegorical vision to remove it from the mind of even an apostle. But the same Spirit which was carrying on a good work in the heart of Cornelius, and preparing him to embrace the Saviour, thus taught Peter that he erred when he supposed that salvation was confined to the people of his nation. All things being thus arranged, the apostle accompanied the messengers of Cornelius promptly and without gainsaying.

When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, the latter exhibited a trace of heathenism in falling at the feet of the apostle and worshiping him as a demigod. No doubt Cornelius supposed that a being of whom an angel is sent from heaven to apprise him must necessarily be divine. Peter having corrected this mistake, and checked this incipient idolatry, they all went in together and made up what was certainly one of the most interesting worshiping assemblies ever seen in this world. Cornelius, having learned to regard his guest and teacher as a fellow man, then rehearsed, in calm and dignified language, the particulars of the vision with which he had been favored. While Cornelius spoke, a new and grand idea burst upon the mind of Peter; and at the close of the remarks of his Gentile friend he exclaimed, in accents of astonishment and adoration, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.” Thus that door which had for ages debarred the Gentiles, as such, from the Church of God on earth, and upon whose ponderous bolts and bars the rust of almost two thousand years had accumulated, is thrown open, and Jews and

Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised, mingle in delightful harmony at the feet of their common Saviour and Lord, and are baptized with the same water and the same Spirit. It was a great and glorious event; and all its concomitants were in perfect keeping, and are as instructive as they are delightful.

“*I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,*” said Christ to Peter. Do we not, in the great events which occurred on the day of Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius, see him discharging the grand and mysterious commission he then received? On the first occasion his proclamation was, “Ye men of Israel, hear these words;” and then he set before them an open door, through which thousands of them immediately pressed for safety and salvation. And in the house of Cornelius we behold him wielding another key, at the use of which he himself seems to be startled. Thus was it given to that illustrious man to open the kingdom of heaven to both Jews and Gentiles.

The Holy Ghost, we are informed, accompanied the words of the apostle; and Cornelius and his company believed the gospel, embraced the Saviour, were made partakers of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, united with their Jewish brethren in the high praises of their common God and Saviour, and were baptized, and thus fully inducted into the Christian Church.

In this transaction two great truths are held up for our contemplation and encouragement. The first is, that the honest, earnest seeker for truth is sure to find it. Such was Cornelius. That is a precious promise which declares that “to the upright light shall arise in the darkness.” Cornelius was a devout man even while immersed in almost heathenish darkness. His devotion was honest and sincere, and his works were good. When he is first introduced to us he is in a transition state. God has begun a good work in his

heart; but it is not yet perfect. He is a good man; but not a Christian. He is near the kingdom of God; but not yet in it. It were impious to suppose that Cornelius, or any other man in like condition, could be left without further light. In some way or other, God, whose work is always perfect, will see to it that the sincere seeker of truth and salvation shall find them; and that man makes a perilous assertion who says that he has sought for the truth and failed to find it.

The second great truth taught here is, that prayers, even such as come up with acceptance before God, and alms, even though well pleasing in the sight of Heaven, are not sufficient of themselves to secure salvation. Good a man as Cornelius was, it was necessary that Christ should be revealed to him, and that he should believe in him and trust in him for salvation. What now becomes of the moralist, who thinks to secure the divine favor and mercy upon the strength of his blameless life and his active benevolence? He has heard of Christ; but he imagines he does not need him. Did Cornelius need the Saviour,—this man of devotion, of prayer, and of charity to the poor? Certainly he did; else why send men to Joppa for one Simon, who should tell him what to do? Was he not doing well? Did not an angel from Heaven assure him that his prayers and alms had come up as a memorial before God? Yet Peter must come and tell him what to do! Oh! if Cornelius' works could not save him, whose can? But Cornelius, with all his devotion, with all his alms, was a sinner, and needed to be washed in the blood of Christ,—needed to be united to him by a living faith. He, and the thief on the cross, and the jailer of Philippi, must all be saved in the same way; and this day their united voices blend in the song, "To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Saul of Tarsus---Paul the Apostle.

HISTORY furnishes no example of so mighty a moral revolution as that which passed over this extraordinary and illustrious man in his conversion. To understand it, we must first analyze the character of Saul of Tarsus, the most zealous, powerful and persistent enemy of Christ that existed in his day.

It will not do to class Saul with ordinary wicked men ; for no man was more zealous in the service of the God of Israel than he. Being an honest and earnest man, he had an intense hatred of all impostors ; and being rash and impulsive in judgment, and strong in his prejudices, he had settled it in his mind firmly that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor, and that the religion which he had established in the world was a pernicious and destructive heresy. He had watched the rapid progress of the new faith with ever increasing jealousy and hatred, as a thing which threatened the subversion of the sacred institutions established by God through Moses and the prophets. His conduct leaves us to believe that he never for a moment wavered in his convictions. He seems to have been fully persuaded that it was his duty and his life-work to war against this tremendous heresy, in which he saw a force, a vitality and an aggressive power for which his philosophy could not account. That it was based in falsehood he seems not for a moment to have doubted. He was too impetuous to reason calmly, as his gifted preceptor Gamaliel did, when he told the Jewish council to “refrain from these men and let them alone ; for if this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought ; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it ; lest, haply, ye be found even to fight against God.” Saul, nobler, more honest, but madder than Gamaliel, rushed to full persuasion that the

crucified Nazarene was a false prophet and teacher, and that the best service he could render to his God and his nation would be to crush out his deluded followers by violence and a war of extermination; hence we read that he breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. He himself tells us, long after he became a Christian, that in so doing he verily thought he was serving God.

But such fiery zeal, however honest, hardens the heart and is desperately wicked. Paul himself so regarded it after he became filled with the mild and gentle spirit of Christ. "Lord," he says in words of deep penitence, years after he had become a great and successful apostle, "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee; and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him."

Saul thought he was doing right; but his thinking so did not make it so. He believed that he was serving God; but his own subsequent confession shows us how dreadfully he was mistaken. Such zeal, however honest, is not in accordance with the spirit of Christ, and can only arise in the soul through erroneous notions of God. The people of a Samaritan village, on one occasion, refused to allow Jesus and his disciples to enter their town, because he appeared to be going towards Jerusalem. John—the gentle, loving John—and his brother James, asked leave to call down fire from heaven to consume them as Elijah did; but Jesus rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." These good men on this occasion gave place to the devil, but did not know it; and just so Saul of Tarsus served the devil out of zeal for God's glory, as he understood it. Zeal without knowledge and without the guidance of the Holy Spirit is a consuming fire, a desolating force.

Impelled by this force Saul was hastening to Damascus,

armed with legal authority and burning with hatred towards the followers of the Galilean impostor, as he supposed, and resolved to crush out them and their heresy together. He is near the city. The sun's hot rays beam upon him; but hotter still is the hatred and furious zeal which burn in his breast. It is the supreme moment of his life. As far as a man could go in mad, mistaken, hell-inspired zeal, he has gone. Now let us take his own eloquent narrative before Agrippa of what occurred:

“At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me and saying in the Hebrew tongue, ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.’ And I said, ‘Who art thou, Lord?’ And he said, ‘I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.’”

Never in this world was there such a meeting of forces as this. The power of hatred, under the guise of zeal for God, was impelling this man onward in his cruel crusade; but the force of love brought the Son of God—doubtless in his full and complete nature as God and man—to arrest him in his mistaken and mad career; to turn his feet into the way of holiness and peace; to change him from a foe to a friend; to save and bless him, and make of him the most shining light the world ever saw in a mere man. Between these two mighty

forces there was no conflict. Great as was the force of hatred as it raged in the bosom of Saul, the power of the love of Christ was infinitely greater. There was no conflict. The lesser force yielded to the greater at once. When Jesus spoke to the raging winds and waters on the Galilean lake, there was no conflict between the opposing forces. When he called Lazarus from the tomb, there was no conflict between the powers of life and death; so here, on the road to Damascus, prejudice, hostility and opposition at once gave way to light, and truth, and love. Not for a moment was this great and energetic and self-willed man disobedient to the heavenly vision. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" was a cry which indicated a full surrender. O sinner! follow the example of this greatest of converts when the voice of Jesus reaches your ears!

So Jesus came down from heaven to capture the noblest yet most formidable of his enemies; for with all his errors Saul was an earnest, honest, zealous and highly gifted man, one who, according to the light he had, worshiped and served God zealously; although that light was but the glare of the bottomless pit, and that zeal such as Satan inspired. The evil one never had a nobler captive in his clutches. But when the great Deliverer came, see how he changed him; see how he expelled anger, malice, and all uncharitableness from his heart, and filled it with his own Spirit, his own love, his own zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of the lost. With all his intellectual greatness, and the dignity of the office with which his Master invested him, never was there a spirit more meek and gentle and loving than that of Paul the apostle. See his letters to Philemon, to Timothy, and indeed all his epistles, but especially that to the Philippians, from which let us take one single out-gushing sentence: "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand

fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved!" These are the words of the man who once breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. Such is the transforming power of the grace of God and of the love of Christ.

Saul of Tarsus and Paul the apostle seem like two different historical personages, as far asunder in character as men could well be. Yet we know that they are the same; and we trace in the apostle the same earnestness, the same impetuous, untiring zeal for Israel's God, the same honesty of purpose, and the same patriotic devotion to his nation that we find in Saul of Tarsus. Before his conversion he was under Satan's guidance; but afterwards Christ led, inspired and strengthened him. With all his grand natural forces, still he always ascribes his ability and success to grace. Of himself he was nothing; but, he says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." So, before his conversion, he seems to have been urged on and strengthened by a supernal though evil power. The transition in his case from darkness to light, from hatred to love, from Satan to God, was so great and obvious, so strongly marked, that it affords an example such as is no where else found of the transforming power of the grace of God. Doubtless the greatness of this change enabled Paul himself to understand this converting power more clearly than he otherwise could have conceived it, and to set it forth as no other preacher and writer has ever done.

Paul and the Jailer.

PAUL and Silas, in their missionary travels, came to Philippi, where they preached the gospel as in other places. A miracle was wrought by Paul upon a damsel, in delivering her from the power of a foul spirit, here called a spirit of divination, into the nature of which possession it is not our purpose at this time to inquire. Suffice it to say that by so doing he destroyed the source of gain which some people had found in this young woman's calamity. Nothing so exasperates wicked men as interference with their profits, as is abundantly manifested in our day by the rage which is excited against those who endeavor to put an end to dealings in another kind of spirits, equally foul, equally lucrative, but far more destructive; for that spirit, if let alone, would have destroyed one soul. This destroys thousands.

Paul and Silas were seized, and before a tribunal more of the character of a mob than of a court of justice, were condemned and sentenced to be severely beaten. This done, they were thrust into prison, and the jailer charged to keep them safely. He, in obedience to the injunction of his masters, placed them in the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. It were difficult to imagine a situation more forlorn and deplorable. To the eye of sense there could be no more wretched individuals in all that city than Paul and Silas; but in that case the eye of sense would have brought back a very erroneous report. They held communion with God in prayer, and at midnight were so filled with his fullness that they burst out in songs of praise. Jesus had said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and here we see how faithful he is to his promise.

This was a strange sound in such a place and at such an hour. The usual language in such a place is that of com-

plaint, lamentation, curses and blasphemy,—the utterance of remorse, despair, or rage. But here is the voice of joy, of gratitude, and of thanksgiving. “And the prisoners heard them.” God saw the hearts that were melted and the tears which flowed that night in that prison at that song of praise. To some of them, it may be, it was the still small voice of love and mercy, guided and made effectual by the Holy Spirit. The pen of inspiration is silent as to the effect of the wonders of that night upon the hearts of those prisoners; but we may build our hopes upon the significant clause, “The prisoners heard them.”

“And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.” That this earthquake was purely miraculous we may infer from its peculiar effects in opening the doors and liberating the prisoners from their fetters. And although the doors were opened and every one’s bands loosed, by some strange attraction they all remained: not one attempted to escape. That strangely sweet anthem of praise still sounded in their ears and thrilled their hearts, and, it may be, caused them to cluster around the wonderful men who had come to be their companions.

At this interesting point the keeper of the prison is again introduced. We are told that, “awaking out of his sleep and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.” That this was a wicked man we may confidently infer from the barbarous manner in which he carried out the orders of his superiors respecting Paul and Silas; for to put the feet of men abused as they were into the stocks was an act of abominable cruelty. But the tortures of his prisoners did not disturb his slumbers; for we are told that he slept until he found himself surrounded by

the terrors of the earthquake. But that produced no saving effect, no penitence; for we find that his chief concern was about his prisoners. Seeing the doors all thrown open, he supposed that they had escaped, of course. Driven to desperation at this thought, he was about to destroy himself. Among the Romans, suicide, in some cases, was regarded as commendable; and this man was about to act upon that heathenish sentiment, probably to escape the ignominious death that awaited him had the case been as he imagined. It is impossible to suppose that the jailer did not recognize in this tremendous event a supernatural power; but still he was not awed by it. It did not arouse his conscience. He thought only of his earthly masters and of his own earthly honor. Never was that man's heart harder, never was he in higher rebellion against his Maker, than at that awful moment. The earthquake had expended its terrors upon him without any saving effect; for "the Lord was not in the earthquake."

But emotions which he had never felt before poured like a flood through his heart at the voice of Paul, who, in a tone of kindness, cried out, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here." His prisoners are safe; his own life is safe; but his heart is broken. He trembles now, and, humbled, stricken, and convicted, he falls down before his two Christian prisoners. What crushed this bold, bad man, who a moment before was about to rush unbidden into the presence of his Maker? It was Love. Paul yearned for his salvation, and the Spirit of God carried the words of His servant with power to his heart. At the still small voice of God Elijah hid his face in his mantle, after witnessing unmoved the wonders of his power; so this jailer, only hardened by the exhibition of divine power, was utterly subdued by the simple language of love and mercy, and cried, in accents of penitence and trembling hope, "Sirs, what

must I do to be saved?" The goodness of God—not his severity—led this man to repentance.

Some have very unwisely interpreted the anxious inquiry of the jailer as referring to his alarm about his prisoners. But Paul had already assured him that they were all safe, and that he had therefore nothing to apprehend on that account. His words removed the fear of man, but they implanted the fear of God; and now he is only anxious to be delivered from sin and its consequences. Paul so understood him, and directed him to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation. He believed, was baptized, rejoiced, and at once became kind and compassionate to the men he had used so cruelly.

I have confined myself to a single point in this instructive narrative, and that is, the illustration which it affords of the truth—too much forgotten—that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance; and that it is only the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ that can ever awaken in the breast of a sinner true sorrow for sin. Terrors, judgments, and chastisements are useful, and are used as auxiliaries; and the apostle has said that "the law is a school-master to bring us to Christ." But all sacred history and all experience testify that terrors, of themselves, only harden the sinner and render him more desperately wicked. It was so with Pharaoh; it was so with the jailer. A look of kindness and love broke Peter's heart; and a few kind words from a deeply injured prisoner caused the cruel jailer of Philippi to cry for mercy, and were made instrumental in bringing him to Christ, and in filling his heart with pity and loving kindness.

The Germ of Eternal Life.

IN the cluster of blessings with which the Sermon on the Mount opens, the Divine Teacher observes the law of order and progress. It is a graphic delineation of the kingdom of heaven—not of heaven above, but of that new life which, beginning in regeneration, goes on from strength unto strength until the character is perfected. Grace, action, suffering, are the three conditions through which the citizen of that kingdom is carried in these beatitudes.

The first—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"—is the entering into that kingdom. "It is easier (says Jesus,) for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom"—one who trusts in his riches, as the Saviour explained it.

Poverty—the absence of wealth—and poverty of spirit—the absence of imaginary goodness and merit, a humble sense of unworthiness—are very different things; and it is of the latter that Jesus speaks. I know of no words which more clearly express this foundation grace, this initial step in the path of life, than these simple lines:

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

Whoever can utter these words in their true import from an honest, sincere and earnest heart, has the promised blessing; the kingdom of heaven is his; for he is in. He may and will mourn; but he will be comforted. He will be meek; for a sense of his own unworthiness will make him so. He will hunger and thirst after righteousness, because of his deep-felt poverty in himself, yet be filled with the

perfect righteousness of Christ by faith. He will be merciful; for he will have the spirit of Christ. And finally he will become pure in heart, and thus be prepared to see God.

This ascending scale of graces and their resultant blessings, is as natural as that other figure of the chain of progress—"First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." One step leads to the next, and then the next, until perfect holiness and the highest heaven are reached. The benedictions of Christ on the mount are like Jacob's ladder, one end of which rested on the earth by the side of a poor, benighted, prostrate wanderer, the other upon the throne of God. The two extremes of strength and weakness, of fullness and destitution, of purity and vileness, are put in connection; and while faith and hope look upward from the lower end, blessings come down, and strength is given to the weakest saint to climb into life and light and joy for ever and ever.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit?" How are we to understand these words? Do they mean a low and abject spirit? No. Or a gloomy, moping, desponding spirit? Not at all. Or a timid, trembling, doubting spirit? Far from it. Or a spirit that is afraid to lay hold of a Father's promises or a Saviour's cleansing blood? The very opposite. Does poverty of spirit cast hope and joy out of the heart? So far from it that peace in believing and joy in the Holy Ghost can only come in through that medium. Poverty of spirit is not a negative grace. It is simply a renunciation of all thought of personal merit and of self-righteousness. It is clearing out of the heart of all objects of hope and trust, so that Christ may reign without a rival.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," says Jesus, or happy are the poor in spirit, which is the same thing. Why? Because now there is no obstacle to their complete salvation—nothing to prevent their coming to him, nothing to bar him out. So

long as people plead that they have tried to live right, that they have been honest and kind, free from gross vice, and better, as they think, than many Christians, they are not poor in spirit and cannot enter Christ's kingdom. Once, when a future state was the subject of conversation, a lady who had many fine traits of character, remarked, "I hope to go to a good place when I die, for I never did anybody any harm." Upon that wretched foundation a dull, stupid and joyless hope rested; but she was not poor in spirit. She did not feel the need of the cleansing blood of a Saviour, and supposed that her imagined innocence would be a passport to "a good place." That lady was but one among thousands who are resting in the same delusive hope. To such Jesus speaks in these faithful words: "Thou sayest, 'I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing;' and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." If they only knew themselves they would be poor in spirit, and be ready to enter the kingdom of heaven, first in the life that now is, and then in that which is to come.

The only Sure Foundation.

IN closing that magnificent summary of doctrines, moral precepts, blessings, promises, warnings and encouragements recorded most fully by Matthew in the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters of his Gospel, commonly called, "the Sermon on the Mount," which for freshness, terseness, vigor, and comprehensiveness, stands without a rival, our Lord introduces this simple and striking illustration:

"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house

upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

The figures here used are so simple, so much the objects of universal observation, that the learned and the unlearned are equal in their ability to understand them. In this adaptation to all grades of intelligence we find one of the strongest proofs of the divine authorship of the Holy Scriptures. Put a volume from the pen of one of our deep philosophic thinkers into the hands of a man or woman of ordinary grade of intellect, and he or she can make nothing of it. But let them have the recorded words of Jesus, whose teachings have height and depth immeasurably transcending those of the profoundest philosophers, and they can understand them as easily as though a little child had spoken.

But what is this rock of which he speaks? Is it himself? It is; and in the most comprehensive sense. It is himself as "THE TRUTH"—as the Alpha and Omega of all absolute and imperishable Truth, at once its source and its end—Truth unmixed with error, or theory, or opinion—Truth flowing from its source, not gathered from Nature as we find it around us in the planet we inhabit, or among the stars with which we are surrounded—Truth, not reflected as light is reflected from illuminated objects, but as it flows directly from the sun. Hence Christ is called by the prophet the Sun of Righteousness, and he himself says in express terms, "I am the Light of the world."

Men gather much valuable truth from their investigations

of Nature; and this is light as far as it goes. But not a ray of this light can penetrate beyond the grave, or reveal to us what relations we hold to the Author of our being. Investigate and theorize as we may, we cannot reach him. Like the prodigal in a far country, we must turn our faces towards him as our only hope, and then, although yet a great way off, he will enable us by faith to see him, for he will meet us, manifest himself to us, and let us know how good he is. Then, and not till then, may we safely begin to build our everlasting house, for we have found the rock. Then and there we begin to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. No storms can shake a house resting on that foundation. Resting there, we can sing Habakkuk's song: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

All else is sand. There is but one Rock; and "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Sand is disintegrated rock, as the highest and best of human science, when it attempts to reach beyond the range of tangibility or of ocular observation, is but disintegrated truth. Nothing is more shifting and unstable. If, then, we dare not rest upon the highest unaided reason, how much less upon lower and meaner things!

We must hear Christ's words and do them. This is faith and obedience. With our foundation upon this rock we cannot fall; off of it we cannot stand. Sand may do very well until the rains, the floods and the winds come, as come they will; but when death comes, as the deluge came to the old world, we must have something more secure. We must build upon the only Rock; "for," says Peter, in his

address to the Jewish rulers, "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Christ calls him a foolish man who builds upon anything else.

The Mountains were Covered.

THE account which Moses gives of the flood is brief, but very graphic—the rain, the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, and the awfully rapid and resistless swellings of the waters which followed. Read Genesis vii. 17–20.

Whether the flood was brought about miraculously, or by an extraordinary and divinely appointed combination of natural forces, is a question I do not propose at present to discuss; for I think there is no profit in such discussions. I am not one of those who hold that where Nature comes in, God is excluded. To my mind his hand is as apparent in the semi-diurnal tide as in the dividing of the Red Sea; in the opening of a flower, as in the raising of Lazarus. The only difference is, that the first is what we call the regular course or operation of Nature; the others were miraculous. Both, however, were and are alike the work of God.

Few events in the world's history afford a richer field for the play of the imagination than the one we have under consideration; the tremendous outpouring of rain; the impetuous torrents of water flowing and leaping from the higher to the lower grounds; the rapid and long-continued swelling of the rivers; and, most awful of all, the overflowing of the ocean,—for I think that is what is meant by the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep. We may stretch the imagination to the utmost to depict the feelings of the unhappy wretches who refused to take the warnings of Noah, as they gradually changed from astonishment to

alarm, from alarm to terror, from terror to despair. Those whose habitations were on the lower grounds—the valleys—would be first in danger, and the first to be driven out to wander in quest of higher and safer ground. Then we may imagine others whose more elevated dwellings were on the hills. These, for a while, would hope that their lives at least were safe, and would look out with various feelings and mingled emotions upon the devastation and death below them. Others, still higher, would for a while feel quite sure that the flood could never reach their habitation. Sages, whose lives were spent in the clear atmosphere of mountain-tops, would look down upon an almost submerged world, and wonder and speculate upon the strange phenomenon of what would seem to them an endless torrent of rain.

But there, away down on a low plain, stood the ark which they had laughed at for a century. At first the swelling waters would surge and roar around it, and threaten to break it up even before it got afloat. Noah and his family were in, and the door was shut. Here and there, on the plain, perched on little sand-hills which were rapidly washing away, would be multitudes of terrified people who would now gladly be in the ark with Noah, but it is too late. Those on the hills would look down upon it as the waters raged around it, and please themselves with the notion that their position was still safer than that of Noah. His ark might, and probably would, be dashed to pieces in the boiling flood; but their hills were solid rock, and could not be moved. As for their being overflowed, that, for days together, would seem to be out of the question. Thousands of the dwellers below, who had mocked when Noah begged of them to come into the ark, would now run to the hills and ascend higher and higher as the waters of the flood urged them on. "We shall not surely die," would

still be their fondly cherished thought, as step by step they climbed to higher and, as they supposed, safer ground.

But on, on, on rises the relentless deluge. The plain is now a sea upon which the ark still floats securely; the great hills in which they trusted have become low islands, and the tide is still advancing. Summit after summit disappears, and, with them, all who took refuge upon them and trusted in them for safety. Finally, "the mountains were covered," and all was over. The ark is now higher than the loftiest mountain summit; and, had the waters risen ten thousand fathoms more, it would still have been secure.

There is much instruction in the brief narrative we have of the flood. In the deluge we have an awful emblem of the curse which will surely overwhelm a world of sinners, and above which no hills of morality, no mountains of human excellence and greatness, can lift us. "The mountains *were* covered;" they will be covered again.

But, blessed be God, we have an ark into which every one who will may come. Christ is that ark. In the days before the flood men despised the ark, and none took refuge in it save Noah and his family. They preferred to trust in the hills and mountains which surrounded them in case of danger, which they did not believe would be very great. Now men are doing the very same thing. They hear warnings of the coming flood; but they are hardly at all alarmed. "Let those who live in low places, the profane, the drunken, the dishonest, be warned; but I am too high up to be in any danger from the flood you speak of. I am an honest man; I wrong no one; I do my duty. Let those who are in danger get into the ark: but I shall trust in the elevated ground upon which I stand." Ah! deluded man, bear in mind, "the mountains *were* covered." Where, oh! where, in the coming flood, will your high ground be when again the mountains shall be covered?

From a point still loftier, a voice comes saying, "I stand on higher ground still. Here no light is needed but that of Reason. From my stand-point I 'look through Nature up to Nature's God,' and behold all things continue as they were from the beginning. There will be no change. There is no danger. 'Where is the promise of his coming?'" Well, proud man, remember, "the mountains *were* covered" at a time when men might have talked just as you do.

Another, still more foolish, builds himself a perch of cold, barren and fruitless orthodoxy out of the scaffolding used in the erection of the ark, not considering that that kind of rubbish will be the first thing that the flood will sweep away. As long as the door stood open, he could and did run in and out, and men regarded him as one of its inmates. But they were mistaken. He rested outside, and he kept his treasure outside; and when God came and shut the door, he was out. Branding upon his forehead the fearful term, "hypocrite," he cast him into the surging billows.

Nothing on this earth was so lofty that it could raise its head above the waters of the flood; so nothing is so high, so excellent, but the flood of divine wrath will overwhelm it. There is no safety but in the ark. Fear not, active, ardent young man, that your powers will be crippled and confined in this ark. In that which Noah built they would have been; but this, thank God, is as broad as the earth and as high as heaven. It is a secure and pleasant abode, in which dwell all the excellent of the earth. Nowhere else does the light shine so sweetly; for the Lamb is the light thereof. Nowhere else is the prospect so grand; for it reaches to heaven itself. Nowhere else is such joy and peace; for Jesus comes daily and takes up his abode in it, saying: "Peace be unto you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Come down from those mountains and hills, for they cannot save. They will surely be covered. Come to Jesus, who alone is the ark of safety. As in the deluge not one was saved except those in the ark, so will it be in the end of the world. But be sure you are in. The most dangerous place in the world is to be near it, yet not in. Remember, you may be in the church; yet not in the ark. You may give assent to every word that God has spoken; and yet be outside. Your blows in the work of building the ark may have been heard for years resounding through all the valley; yet you may have no part in it. You must be in, and God must shut you in, before you are safe. You must be in Christ. Reason cannot save; morality cannot save; the church as a visible organization cannot save; many and long prayers cannot save; sound doctrine, firmly held and zealously contended for, cannot save; for all these, if these be all, will, like the mountains in the days of Noah, be covered. There is nothing left but this: "Come thou into the ark!"

Salvation Completed.

THAT is a sweet account we have in Revelation vii. of the condition of those who out of much tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, have got home to their everlasting rest. The language used by the celestial being, here called an elder, is so calm, so graphic and comprehensive, that nothing more can be desired. The prophet had a vision of the Saints' Rest in heaven, and one of the elders asked him, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes?" "Sir, thou knowest," was the modest reply of the astonished and bewildered prophet. The scene was so different from anything he had ever witnessed. He had seen Jesus weeping, groaning, dying. He

had known him as a man of sorrows and familiar with grief. He had seen his blood flowing from his hands and feet, and gushing from his heart when pierced by the soldier's spear. He had seen the Holy One in great tribulation, and, with thousands of his suffering followers, he had himself journeyed through a long and weary life. But such scenes of glorious rest and joy as now met his gaze were new to him, and therefore he turned to this inhabitant of heaven and said, "Sir, thou knowest." As if he had said, "As there is nothing on earth like this which I see, as there are no beings on earth like these, I cannot tell what they are, or who they are."

And the elder replied, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them."

How many are there of these happy ones? We know not; but they are spoken of as a multitude which no man can number. Whence came they? From earth, from all nations and all generations. Abel is there, and so are the good men of whom we read in the world's earliest records. Naomi is there, whose life was so embittered by tribulation that she told her friends to call her Mara; and so is the fond and loving Ruth, who went forth in faith and patience to toil amongst the reapers under the ardent sun of Palestine, that she and her beloved mother might not perish with hunger. Job is there; but the wicked one can no longer trouble him. David is there; but his harp gives out no more wailing sounds. Jeremiah is there; but God has wiped all tears from his eyes. The apostles and martyrs are there, and so are all who amid sorrow and trial stood up for Jesus during the dark ages. Thus have they been gathered

from all generations, from all conditions in life, from palaces, from halls of learning, from city and country, from toil and drudgery, from persecution and scorn, from infancy and age, from weakness, fears, temptations, infirmities and sins.

But their robes are washed white in the blood of the Lamb; all are arrayed in the wedding garment; all are alike holy; and every one sings the same song, ascribing all the glory of his salvation to Him who washed him in his blood. However different they were while on earth in condition and character, in one thing these redeemed ones were alike, they were all sinners; their natures were unholy, and their lives—if they lived long enough to form any character at all—were more or less stained with sin. Joseph, with all the beauties of his blameless record, is washed in the blood of the Lamb, as much as are the blood-stained Manasseh and the persecuting Saul of Tarsus; as much as the royal slayer of Uriah and the malefactor who died in penitence by the side of his suffering Redeemer. All are washed. All are alike white, spotless, holy. All have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.

But we are not to infer from this likeness in purity, this perfect holiness, given by the atoning blood of Jesus, that the redeemed in heaven will be alike in all respects. As one star differeth from another star in glory, so will the saints differ one from another in heaven. So, we may be sure, will there be great diversity in taste, in fitness for particular services, and in power to rise to loftier and grander views of the glories of God. Gabriel, when showing to Daniel the winding up of the great drama of this fallen but redeemed world, said, “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” It is wonderful what diversity of gifts and powers the short lives of men in this world bring forth. In less than fifty years they often acquire such

power and influence as to draw upon them the eyes of the whole world. What then must be the progress of such spirits through unlimited duration, each following the line of his peculiar idiosyncrasy. Think of the language, the eloquence, the poetry, the music, the philosophy, the profound learning of heaven; for, says the heavenly speaker, "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters." Christ himself shall be their companion and their teacher, their intimate and loving friend, opening to them fresh fountains of knowledge and rapture, and causing them to comprehend more and more what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know his love which passeth knowledge,—which can never, never be fully known—and thus fill them with all the fullness of God.

So God in his word sets heaven before us. He does not give us its topography, nor describe it as a man would describe a city or a country; but he does tell us where a portion of its inhabitants come from, and how they were fitted for their glorious heritage. He does tell us that their number is very great, a multitude which no man can number; that they are clothed in white robes and have palms—emblems of victory and triumph—in their hands; that their robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. All are his; and washed in his blood and clothed in his righteousness, they are more honored than angels, and lifted more nearly to the Divine.

Here is where our Lord bids us lay up our treasures, so that our hearts may be there also. If we are believers, we shall soon be there. Then surely we ought to look forward with joyful hope to the day when God shall call us home from sin and sorrow, from the vexations and inquietudes of this life, to the perfect rest of that, and thus have some sweet foretaste of Heaven to buoy us up amid the tribulations of earth—an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast.

The Scriptures represent this present life as a pilgrimage. Here we have no continuing city, is the emphatic declaration; and Bunyan's matchless allegory, which sets forth this great verity with graphic fidelity, has more vitality than any other uninspired book, just because it is so true. We follow his pilgrims through the hard, the humble, the perilous way, until they reach the river. With anxious solicitude we watch them as best we may in their passage through the cold, dark waters, and then gladly witness their entrance into the celestial gates. Why is it so hard to realize in sober verity that we are the very people he has there described, and that our chief business in life is to travel on, taking thankfully the blessings which the Lord of the way has scattered in our path, but never thinking of making them our portion—taking patiently the trials and conflicts with which we meet, knowing that all things work for good? Many of us are nearly through—almost at the margin of the river. Some may shrink from the chilling flood; some may keep their eyes so low that they can see nothing but the river; while others can look across to the "shining shore" on the other side, and sing with David, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

The Leaven in the Meal.

THE thirteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel is a constellation of parables, so simple and expressive, that the feeblest minds can understand them without danger of error or mistake; yet so profound that the mightiest intellects can never fathom their depths. In these Christ tells us what the kingdom of heaven is, by showing us what it is like: A sower sowing seed; wheat and tares growing together in the same

field; leaven, which a woman hid in three measures of meal; a grain of mustard seed, which, although so small, grew to be a shelter for the birds of the air; treasure hid in a field; one pearl of great price; and a net cast into the sea, which gathered of every kind.

The evangelist, in recording this cluster of similitudes, quotes two of the psalms in which Christ is prophetically spoken of—the forty-ninth and the seventy-eighth—“I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.” Thus did Jesus, by a few plain, homely, and universally understood similitudes, make known to mankind truths which all the learning of the world and the investigation of unaided reason could never have discovered—“things,” as the prophet expresses it, “which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world,” and but for him would have remained unknown forever. This is the only way in which it is possible for us to learn any thing at all of heavenly things. It is telling of heavenly things in earthly language. You remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus, when he was unable to comprehend or accept the doctrine of the new birth, which was a heavenly truth illustrated by a well-known phenomenon of earth: “If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” But the most wonderful thing about these parables of our Saviour are their brevity, simplicity and vigor. Surely he was right who said, “Never man spake like this man!”

Let us look at one—so brief that it is all embraced in these few words: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” The parable, short as it is, is complete in all its parts. Leaven: all civilized people know what that is, by observation at least, if not scien-

tifically. A woman hid it in, or mixed, or incorporated it with three measures of meal. A measure is not quite a peck and a half. Three measures, therefore, would be a little over a bushel. As in the Prodigal Son, he tells the whole story, and gives the result—"the whole was leavened."

In this parable we have set before us both the active, energetic, diffusive, all-subduing power of the Gospel in the world, and also the life-giving energy of the grace of God in the individual soul, for both are the seats of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus planted his kingdom in the world, as the woman hid the leaven, and for more than eighteen centuries it has been operating upon the enormous mass, and will continue to operate until the whole is leavened. Jesus lodges in a human heart, dead in trespasses and sins, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, the principle of life, as the woman of the parable put the leaven into the dead mass of meal. There it operates silently and unseen, assimilating all the powers of the soul to itself, until the entire nature is changed, and brought into the image of the ever blessed God.

Leaven is a kind of life, and in its peculiar power of assimilation, changing the whole mass of meal to its own nature, it affords the most striking emblem to be found in all the range of natural phenomena of the work of grace in the soul. It is, to be sure, but a feeble emblem of life; but it is not the measure of its vitality, but its diffusive nature and its assimilating power, that Jesus wishes to set before us as emblematic of the grace which he implants in the soul. When Paul writes to his Ephesian brethren and says, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," he speaks of the same thing that Jesus sets forth in this concise parable. But that we may know the extent and power of the life given by that quickening, that new birth, that change of nature, we have only to hear his prayer for them, that God "would grant them, according to the riches of his

glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith; that they, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and that they might be filled with all the fullness of God."

In these words of immeasurable energy the apostle sets forth the kingdom of heaven as Christ establishes it in the human soul—that same kingdom which he compares to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal.

The leaven, as it sets forth the kingdom of heaven in the world at large, is the same in its mighty assimilating and changing power upon the dead mass in which it has been lodged. It has been working through the centuries with ever-increasing power, and will work, until all shall be subdued. Let us see the glorious consummation, as given by the apocalyptic prophet: "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

The Law of Development.

THE doctrine of Development, as held and set forth by Darwin and others of that school of speculative philosophers, has much truth in it; and it is that truth which renders their speculations dangerous. It is true, so far as it represents all created things as in a constant, steady, never-ending state of progression from lower to higher planes; as no one can fail to observe who intelligently studies the geological structure of our globe, and contemplates the re-

mains of vegetable and animal life from their earliest, simplest, crudest forms, up through successive periods of vast duration to the day when God said "Let us make man." Upward Progress, or, in other words, Development, is plainly one of the laws of God, immutable as himself, and doubtless, like himself, endless. It is a pleasant thought that this boundless theatre of Divine wisdom, goodness and energy is steadily progressing, and will forever continue to progress, towards perfection—from dark, unorganized chaos to higher and higher degrees of order, beauty and blessedness, the absolute end of which will never be reached.

But the error of this system of philosophy lies in this: Nature is substituted for the Author of Nature; the forces of Nature for the divine energy; and the unvarying relation of cause and effect is mistaken for that ever present, ever operating Power which, although above what we call Nature, is pleased to operate in this way through unnumbered agencies, most of which we can observe, and some of which we can comprehend. A Darwinian philosopher would say that Nature, from its exuberant stores of vegetable and animal production, furnishes food for the fowls of the air; but Jesus says, "Your Heavenly Father feedeth them." Is there any disagreement here? Only this: Jesus sees farther than the philosopher. He sees God above Nature, and using Nature as a man would use an instrument, a thing utterly powerless, however perfect, without his living energy and directing skill; while the philosopher, the "thinker," as such a man complacently terms himself, sees only the instrument.

The difficulty which all such teachers encounter lies in their first step. Some of them profess to believe in an Infinite Personal Intelligence as the First Cause, while others stagger at this idea, and seem to regard Nature and God as one, a kind of pantheistic notion, incapable of clear defini-

tion. But even those of them who hold to the belief in a personal Deity speak of him as having a past, a present, and a future, as all created things, whether animate or inanimate, necessarily have. They speak of him as having in the far past, long, long ago, given to matter certain laws, and as having put into action certain forces, which would operate of themselves, as a man would make and wind up a clock and let it run, or draw water upon a mill-wheel, which will do its work without further effort or supervision on his part. Thus they miss their way in the very first step of their progress in the search of truth, by limiting the Infinite and Holy One to the conditions in which they are conscious of being themselves entrenched—as having a past, which is gone, a present, which is but a point, and a future, which is interminable.

“Your Heavenly Father feedeth them,” says Jesus. How? when? He did it when he said, or, to speak more accurately, he does it when he says, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth.” That all-potent utterance, to us so old, so long ago, is with the great Inhabiter of Eternity coetaneous with our bread of this day, and with the food gathered by the birds this wintry morning, and for which, in their own way, they thank him in joyous songs and merry chirpings.

If men would only believe as they ought that the Infinite God is absolutely non-progressive as well in duration as in space; that he fills both; that with him there is no past, no future, no here, no there; that what they call the laws of Nature are but his will ever and alike actively governing the universe which it has pleased him to construct; and that the forces of Nature are but the divine energy operating steadily and irresistibly, they would not perplex and bewilder their own and others' brains with so much profound nonsense.

Above the plane of natural laws, but not in conflict with them, come in the laws regulating the peculiar relations between man as a rational, immortal, and morally responsible being and his Maker. This required special interposition on the part of God, and a special revelation of his will—another set of laws touching man only as their subject—a revelation of God himself infinitely higher and clearer than anything that Nature or unaided reason could impart, in which the *moral* character of God is set forth in a thousand points of view, but which is comprehensively proclaimed in these awful words: (Exodus xxxiv. 6) “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” In those few words more is revealed of the character of the Divine Being than men by the light of Nature and the exercise of their highest reasoning powers, could ever have discovered. This was among the early revelations. But when He who is the Light of the world came in our nature, and with all the grandeur of a God, the loving kindness of a brother, and the guileless simplicity of a child, took us by the hand and introduced us to his Father and ours, pointing us to the lilies of the field and to the fowls of heaven as the constant objects of God’s regard and care, as well as ourselves, whom he acknowledges as his beloved children, how radiant he made all Nature, and these rigid, irrevocable and stupendous laws and forces, with the glory of the ever-present, ever-operating Jehovah! He then showed us by his mighty works his own power over those vast and complicated forces, whether manifested in disease and death, or in stormy winds and agitated seas. Soaring far beyond the utmost reach of science, or the highest range of reason, he bears us up to Nature’s God, and then bids us look down

through Nature on its illuminated side. A poet talks about looking "through Nature up to Nature's God;" but such a look is all darkness the moment we get beyond the range of our senses. God, as seen in this way, has for us no light at all; but when we humbly permit Jesus to show us the Father, we find, as John beautifully expresses it, "that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

While sitting at his feet, how foolish and absurd are all those speculative theories about the origin of things and the law of development which, as it is contended, brought up man himself from a mollusk, through an ape perchance, to what he is, and which will, in the lapse of ages, lift the race still higher! That the first man, the immediate product of his Maker's power, the end and crown of his work so far as our globe is concerned, was a perfectly developed man is beyond all question; and that the earliest of our race of whom we have any record, were men of great intellectual power is attested by the book of Job, probably the most ancient of extant writings, a work which, for profundity of thought and eloquence of diction, transcends any production of modern genius. "God made man upright," says Solomon; but does he mean an upright savage, or a mere brute, as these speculators would have us believe? "But," adds Solomon, "he sought out many inventions." Men wandered away from God by transgression, and thus many wandering tribes lapsed into barbarism. As Paul expresses it, "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and the consequence was the deep degradation of almost the entire race. The early history of the human race depicts a condition of retrogradation rather than of progress; and whatever progress has been made in later periods is clearly traceable to Jesus Christ. The great law and power of development is found in him, and not in man apart from him. Every branch on earth, whether in-

dividual or national, which either did not or does not abide in him, is dead, or is withering and dying, and men are at this moment gathering them, as he said they would, and casting them into the fire.

Darkness and Light.

“While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”—Gen. viii. 22.

THUS did the Lord announce the regular and perpetual alternations of Nature after the great catastrophe of the deluge. These changes are all beautiful in their season, all salutary, and all essential to the development of the mighty scheme.

In the spiritual world the same general law prevails. Cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night are found as invariably in the kingdom of Grace on earth as in that of Nature. The sun is the natural light of the world; but nothing that has life, whether vegetable or animal, could bear his perpetual shining. Shadow and gloom are as essential to their healthy development as is light; and the same is true of the light of God in the soul. But abstract reasoning on such a subject is not so profitable as is the study of some examples of this wholesome alternation which God himself has given us in the inspired Scriptures. In these examples we see God at times leaving some of the most highly favored of his servants to sink to the verge of despair. Abraham was in this condition (Gen. xv.) when God called to him, and said, “Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” And Abram said, “Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?” Jacob was in the dark when he uttered the despairing cry, “Joseph is

not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." Moses was groping his way in darkness and despondency when he exclaimed, "All our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told;" and thick and terrible was the gloom that rested upon the spirit of Job when he cursed his day. But all these eminent saints were delivered from their fears, and led forth into higher paths, clearer light, and more glorious displays of the Divine goodness.

In carefully studying the historical Scriptures, we shall find that many of the most distinguished and active of the servants of God were severely tried in this way, almost immediately after they had achieved their most signal triumphs. At present I shall only allude to two of these—two so similar in their spirit and power that, in prophetic language, they are spoken of as one. Both were austere, severe, and intrepid; both were full of the Holy Spirit; both visited Israel in times of general apostasy and declension; and both came so fully accredited from the court of Heaven that all men acknowledged them as prophets. Kings trembled at their words, and were constrained to yield obedience; and the people were led by both to some degree of repentance and reformation of manners. It is hardly necessary to tell the reader that we are speaking of Elijah the Tishbite, and of John the Baptist.

After three years of terrible struggle and of fearful judgments, Elijah summoned the king and people of Israel, together with the priests of Baal, to meet him at the base of Carmel, and there, by fire from heaven, attest the claims of Jehovah to be the God of Israel. All the people fell on their faces and made confession of the great truth; and Ahab, in all his pride and power—bigoted devotee of idolatry as he was—cowered before the solitary prophet, and yielded an unresisting obedience to his commands. At his

word rain, which had been withheld for three years and a half, descended in torrents; and in triumph he ran with giant strength in advance of the chariot of the discomfited monarch to the capital of his kingdom. Doubtless Elijah thought the victory complete; and it may be that he forgot that it was not his arm, his power, that had achieved the victory. Be this as it may, it is plain from the narrative that the Lord, at this point, withdrew his Spirit, his sustaining hand, and the light of his countenance; for a mere threat from the wife of Ahab caused him to fly for his life; and the godlike hero of yesterday was transformed into the frightened and despairing fugitive of to-day. Hear him cry, as he sat in deep dejection under a juniper tree, "O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers!" What a change! Is this the giant hero of Carmel, at whose prayer the all-consuming fire from heaven descended upon the sacrifice?—at whose command the priests of Baal were slaughtered?—at whose word the clouds rolled over the sky, and gave abundance of rain? and who girded up his loins, and outran the royal chariot? It is even so; and humble, desponding, and useless as he seems to be, he is, perchance, a better man than he was yesterday. He did his work, and he did it faithfully and well; and now, it having pleased his Master to strip him of his armor, and extinguish his light, shall we despise him? Shall we presume that He who "knoweth our frame, who remembereth that we are dust," regarded him with less complacency under the juniper tree than he did while confronting the king and people of Israel at the base of Carmel? By no means. God is still leading him onwards and upwards, to higher degrees of personal sanctification and to still more glorious services, the whole to be crowned with a triumphant transit from earth to heaven in a chariot of fire, instead of passing through the vale of death!

In his deep despondency, Elijah could still say, “*I have been* very jealous for the Lord God of hosts;” but although more humble, was he less jealous then? Surely not. Dark as was his condition, he was as true, as faithful, as safe, and as much beloved of his God as ever; and when he emerged from his deep gloom into the light of God’s countenance, how sweet it would be! Thenceforth he would be a humbler, wiser, better and stronger man.

We come now to consider him who came “in the spirit and power of Elias,” the eloquent and intrepid forerunner of the Redeemer. Although no terrible miracles attested the divine character of his mission, yet so grand, so unearthly, so strange and wondrous were his words, that all Israel was moved and awakened by them. To John was given the high honor of introducing immediately to the people of that generation Him of whom all the prophets had written, and to cry, “Behold the Lamb of God!” At his hands even the Son of God was pleased to receive the rite of baptism; and then he saw the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him, and heard the voice of the Eternal Father testifying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Of this great and highly favored and gifted man, Jesus himself testified that “Of those born of woman there had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist.” But his career of labor, glory and triumph was quickly run. His bright beams, like those of the morning star, gradually and sweetly faded in the superior glories of the Sun of Righteousness, and he was lost to the sight of men.

But John was a man, a saint, as well as a prophet. He had been highly exalted—it was needful that he should be deeply depressed. For his intrepid faithfulness he was thrown into prison, and there left to wear away the sad days of solitude, gloom and inactivity. Like Elijah under the juniper

tree, he might be constrained to pray, "O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." Rumors of the doings of Jesus of Nazareth would reach him from time to time through his few adhering disciples; but, so far as we can learn, Jesus had sent no kind message to his suffering friend, but seemed to have forgotten him. At length his great soul is wrapped in a pall of doubt and uncertainty, and who can conceive the agony of such a mind under such a pressure? He could bear it no longer; and summoning two of his disciples, he sent them to Jesus with this fearfully significant inquiry—"Art thou he that should come, *or look we for another?*" We can hardly imagine how John could doubt; but, dear reader, if you will look into your own heart you will find that there are, or have been, doubts there quite as unreasonable as were his.

It was enough. Jesus received the messengers kindly, and detained them for a little while before he gave them any answer; and in a single verse following, the evangelist Luke gives us an insight into the power and forecast of Jesus as the God of Providence, calculated to make us at once tremble and rejoice. "And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight." He knew the doubts that were torturing the soul of his imprisoned servant. He knew that his messengers were coming; and by the unseen operations of his power he gathered this company of unconscious witnesses—of poor to be instructed, of afflicted ones to be healed—so that John should have full assurance of his being the Messiah. It would have been idle to have sent him a verbal message, for any pretender could have done that; but here Jesus exhibited to these two men his credentials, with the seal of heaven glowing freshly upon them. Then calling them he said—"Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see,

the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached;" and then added, "and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."

From that hour John's soul would be bathed in light, and would rest in full trust in him in whom he believed and whom he served. Like Paul, he would feel that he had finished his course, and that for him a crown of righteousness was laid up. In tranquil faith and patience he would wait his time. Although he was not, like his illustrious brother of a former age, carried to heaven in a fiery chariot; yet soon the messenger of deliverance came, speedy and bloody, dismissed him from labor and suffering, and put him in possession of his great reward.

Now, beloved, think it not strange that you are sometimes left to grope your way in darkness, for it is a necessary part of a believer's discipline. It is easy to trust in God when his candle shines upon our head; but though harder, it is better, to be able to trust him in the dark.

"Shall Never Die."

"WHOSOEVER liveth and believeth in me shall never die," said Jesus to Martha, when she was mourning over the recently made grave of her brother; and immediately he asked, "Believest thou this?" He had uttered a distinct, concrete, pointed truth, and then inquired whether she believed it. Martha's reply involved a very good general confession of faith; but to a reception of the wonderful disclosure of life and immortality made in her Saviour's declaration she could not then attain. Her thoughts hovered around that dreary tomb. Lazarus was dead, and the

thought of the dissolving form of him who had been so dear to her filled her soul and almost excluded hope and joy. She had said that she knew he would rise again in the resurrection at the last day; but that was a persuasion of an event so remote that its rays could hardly reach her and illuminate the darkness of the then present hour.

But we have clearer light and a fuller revelation than Martha had in that hour of grief. She had not yet seen Lazarus called forth, nor had her great Master himself died and risen again. Yet how few of us can mount above her in the general confession expressed in her reply, “Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the son of God, which should come into the world.” A very good confession for her in the light she had; but the more pointed inquiry still comes home to every one of us, “Believest thou this?” Believe what?—that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, as Martha did? Yes; but more than that. Do we really believe—not in some vague, figurative, spiritual sense—but in simple verity, that whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall never die? for unquestionably this is the degree of faith to which the Divine Author of the declaration desires us to attain.

It requires a revolution in our natural conceptions and our habitual ideas to believe this in the full and simple import of the words. We see the body die; but we cannot see the disembodied spirit. Sight and faith come into conflict here; and our strongest impressions are made by that which strikes the senses. “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth,” said Jesus to his disciples; but they did not understand him correctly, and immediately replied, “Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well;” for they thought he spoke of his taking natural rest in sleep. He then descended from his own plane of thought to theirs, and said plainly “Lazarus is dead.” In the brief record of this conversation we have

what we usually call death set before us as it is seen in the light of Heaven, and also in the gloom of earth.

Paul speaks of departed saints as "they that sleep in Jesus,"—as sweet a phrase as was ever penned. "Some are fallen asleep," he says, in another place, of those who saw the Lord Jesus after he had risen from the dead. "We shall not all sleep," he says in another place, when speaking of the coming of the great day. Frequently the same great inspired writer uses the word "depart" to express the same thought, and "abide" as expressive of still living here. In Philippians i. 23, 24, he speaks in almost impassioned terms of "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Paul stood strongly and steadily on the high plane of faith involved in these wonderful words of Christ, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." In the easy and familiar style in which he uses these words, he shows us that he habitually regarded death as but a change of place, not as an end of life—a transition from what was good to what was "far better."

Jesus, speaking of his people, says, "I give unto them eternal life." He does not say, I *will* give, but "I give." When does he give it? Let the words we have already quoted interpret these: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Martha, perhaps, was not able at once to grasp this glorious thought; but we have seen that Paul rested in it with steady and serene faith. He grasped the eternal life which his Saviour had given him, and thenceforth thought and spoke of abiding or departing instead of living or dying. His life was sure in either case. With him it was simply a question of place—either abiding in this world, laboring, suffering, and doing the work his Saviour had given him to do—or departing to be with Christ.

Paul may have risen higher in this triumph of faith over natural death than most other Christians; but he was by no means singular in it. Thousands, of whom the world at large never heard, have reached the same plane of faith, and looked forward, not spasmodically, but calmly and steadily, to the end of mortal life as the beginning of one that is far better. Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, second part, gives a beautiful account of the waiting of Christiana and her friends in the land of Beulah, for their summons to go over the river. In that simple, yet sublime allegory, death is utterly abolished. All are taken over in their proper persons and characters, and all triumphantly. Nothing is lost in the river but their weaknesses and infirmities. Even Mr. Ready-to-halt shouted on the river's brink, "Welcome, life!" Despondency cried, "Farewell, night! Welcome, day!" and his daughter, Much-afraid, went through the river singing. With the strong and the weak death was alike swallowed up in victory. It is perfectly manifest that the author of that matchless allegory accepted in its fullness the wondrous truth uttered by Jesus, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

But the body of the believer dies, just as does the body of an unredeemed sinner, or one of the inferior animals. This is true in one sense, but in another sense it is not true; for, as Martha well expressed it, it "shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." The body, therefore, is redeemed as well as the soul. Its dissolution is changed from absolute death and destruction to a sleep, a temporary suspension of its activities. Hence, in the New Testament, this state of separation between soul and body is often called sleep. The victory over death is complete. "Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

“Sleep in Jesus !” Can a sweeter thought be expressed ? While the spirit departs to be with Christ, the body dissolves in the grave. But both are equally redeemed ; both are united to Christ ; both are safe ; and in the resurrection they will be reunited, never to part again.

The wages of sin is death ; but if sin be taken away, as it is in the case of all believers, however feeble and imperfect, death goes with it. It must be so ; for Jesus has emphatically declared, “ They shall never die.” That which is still death to the unredeemed is no longer such to them. It is a sleep, a change, a departure, a going home, a fullness and perfection of life. Nature, it is true, goes on as before ; but He who is our life, and in whom our life is hid, stands above Nature, changing a tremendous curse into the highest of blessings. God, in infinite wisdom, has left the natural repulsiveness and terrors of death over us, so that we instinctively shrink from it, and thus are made careful to preserve our lives to the extent of our ability ; but in infinite goodness he has lifted our faith so high that this repulsiveness and terror can be so overcome, that, like Bunyan’s pilgrims, we can go down with gladness to the brink of the cold dark river.

Since the foregoing article was written, I had a letter from Mr. Walter Ludbrook, a dear Christian friend in London, who was slowly sinking under consumption, which began with these remarkable words : “ I am not yet in the land of the living.” He viewed death as only a departure.

Life and Immortality.

WE believe that the lower orders of animals perish utterly at their death; that to them there is no hereafter. They are incapable of knowing God. There is no immediate link, so far as we can discover, between them and their Maker; and, but for what is called the religious principle, there could be no hereafter to man. "This is life eternal," says Jesus in his last recorded prayer, "that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

The capability of that knowledge is the germ of life eternal, or immortality; and having that, the human being, whether saved or lost, whether redeemed from sin and taken home to the bosom of his God, or driven away in his wickedness, cannot cease to exist as a conscious intelligence. Immortality is, therefore, in the very nature of man, an inherent and indestructible principle. It was implanted in his creation. "The Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"—not an evanescent but an ever during soul; and whether, in consequence of sin, that soul shall be banished from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, or saved through faith, and enabled forever to rise nearer to God, this original law of his nature remains unchanged. This natural immortality is that which renders man capable of being the subject of the work of grace unfolded in the Scriptures; and it was this same principle, natural to all men alike, which rendered it possible for the Divinity to take our nature upon him.

The notion which some Christians have taken up, that the lost soul ceases to exist at all, has nothing either in revelation or philosophy to sustain it. To be forever banished

is called "the second death;" but to be "driven away in his wickedness," to "go away into everlasting punishment," are not terms in which the idea of annihilation would be expressed.

Life and Immortality, however, are not convertible terms. To exist and to live may be the same, or they may be as opposite as heaven and hell. In union with God we live; but separated from him there is no life, although there may be intensely conscious existence. Sin separates man from God; hence the Scriptures speak of being "dead in trespasses and sins," although the subject may be full of animal life and vigor and of great intellectual strength. Strictly speaking, there is no life in the world, we mean immortal life; for although unending conscious existence is an attribute of our nature, it is only in Christ, in whose person the Divine is linked with the human, that there is any life. In him that indestructible nature, which apart from him is in a state of paralysis, is revived, and we begin to grow. "In him is life." "Your life," says the apostle, "is hid with Christ in God." The word "hid" here means incorporated, the same as in the parable where the woman hid a little leaven in the meal. In him we become, in our measure, "partakers of the divine nature;" and this is life.

Immortality, so far as it is only a natural attribute of a human being, is only the undeveloped germ of eternal life. Animal life, in a human being, is no more than the animal life of a horse, and in both it is of brief duration. Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and is engrafted upon the natural but lifeless germ just spoken of. It is well to keep these distinctions clearly before the mind.

That grand and heavenly principle, which in the New Testament is called eternal life, is not so denominated solely because it will never end, but mainly because it is God's own life given to us. This life is drawn directly from the

infinite Fountain of life. "I in them and thou in me," is the way our Lord in his prayer expresses this union of God with man. The thought is too high for us, but we can understand a little of it; and the vision is so bright and beautiful, and so in harmony with our best and most exalted conceptions, so in unison with our nature in its holiest sympathies, that we are able to cry, "Abba, Father!" and to know and feel what the spirit of adoption is. This is immortality indeed, living, growing, expanding, and climbing higher and higher above the clouds and darkness whence we set out.

But how much of man is immortal? All. Christ died and rose again, and became the first fruits of them that slept. In his case we are permitted to see more of the mystery of the resurrection than we could possibly learn from any abstract teaching. Just before he expired upon the cross he cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," from which we may know that his spirit departed like that of any other man. All that was left was a dead body, which kind hands removed and laid in a tomb. But on the morning of the third day that body was not found in the tomb. The linen clothes and the napkin were left, but not the body. Just as it was, with the prints of the nails and the gash in the side, it had risen. "He is not here," said an angel to the women, "for he is risen, as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay."

There is something delightfully suggestive in the words of that angel. He did not say, "Come see the place where *your* Lord lay," but *the* Lord—your Lord, my Lord, the Lord of all.

Soon the risen Saviour appeared to the women and to the disciples. Once they were affrighted and thought they saw a spirit; but he told them to handle him and see; for "a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." On

another occasion he bade Thomas put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, all of which indicated a real, substantial, material body. It was, however, no longer a mortal body. On several occasions he entered where they were, the doors being shut, and vanished suddenly out of their sight, teaching us that it had become a spiritual body, whatever that may mean. With that body he was parted from his disciples and carried up to heaven.

It was to his body, not to his spirit, that Christ referred when he said, many years after his ascension: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore." The apostle exhausts all we can know in this life on the subject of the immortality of the entire man, both body and spirit, where he says, "Even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

Of the condition of the disembodied spirit between death and the resurrection, diverse opinions are entertained among Christians. Some believe that it will remain in an unconscious state during that interval, and that to it, therefore, the article of death and the sounding of the judgment trumpet will be practically coetaneous events. Others imagine that the souls of just men will occupy some intermediate region called Paradise, where they will await in quietude and peace the redemption of the body. Others, that the spirits of the just made perfect enter heaven at once, in full consciousness and capacity for its bliss, although not yet in the enjoyment of complete redemption. We like this last view of the matter; and it accords with Paul's bright and ecstatic hopes, where he says, "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."

Nature suggests the idea of immortality. Many of the wisest of the heathen philosophers—prominent among whom was Plato—believed it firmly. The soliloquy which Addison

puts into Cato's mouth, as he meditates suicide, expresses the heathen view eloquently :

“It must be so! Plato, thou reasonest well;
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?” &c.

But Christ, who came down from the Father of lights, brought life and immortality to light—not as a pleasing hope, a fond desire, merely, but as a great and glorious fact. The wisest of the heathen philosophers held to the opinion that man had an immortal spirit; but of the life which Christ not only makes known but gives, they had not the most remote conception. Here is where Revelation rises infinitely beyond anything that Nature can teach. They travel in harmony, as far as true philosophy can go; but beyond that point the just live and walk by faith alone; while they who do not believe stumble into darkness and eternal death.

Wood, Hay, Stubble.

THESE strong figures of speech, expressive of things perishable, combustible, and of no permanent value, Paul, in the third chapter of first Corinthians sets over in vigorous antithesis against gold, silver, precious stones—equally strong figures, expressive of things of intrinsic and enduring value.

But to what does he apply them? Is he contrasting the work of good men and bad men, of saints and sinners? Not at all. Both clusters—the valuable and the worthless, the perishable and the enduring, that which can and that which cannot abide the fiery trial of the judgment—are set before us in startling contrast. But he is discussing the life-work of true believers, and nothing else. Let us quote a

few words: "Ye are God's building. . . . I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon."

Now, in these words the apostle is not speaking of the laying the foundations of churches, but of Christian character and work. "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." In this argument it is taken for granted that the foundation is all right; but the caution is, "let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." On one side he gives a cluster of precious and indestructible things—gold, silver, precious stones; on the other side a very different cluster—wood, hay, stubble—things worthless and perishable. Of some of these every believer in Christ is building up his own character and record; and as he builds of the one sort or of the other, so is he rich or poor in a spiritual sense. Both will be saved; but mark the difference as Paul expresses it: "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

This shows us that this building is a personal and not an ecclesiastical matter. The writer is speaking of the life-work of individual believers. It shows us that even such may suffer loss through wrong building—that nearly all their work may be burned up, yet they themselves be saved, as Lot was saved from Sodom.

The history of Abraham and Lot affords one of the most striking examples on record of these two kinds of building. The one, by a long and consistent life of faith and obedience, built upon his foundation gold, silver, precious stones. The other, by turning his face Sodomward, and by making fertile soil, rich pastures, and abounding flocks and herds the chief objects of his life and labors, built only wood, hay and stubble. He finally fled to the mountains poor and destitute,

and at last entered heaven without having laid up any treasure there.

Solomon, with all his wisdom and all his advantages of fortune, built wood, hay, stubble. Let him tell his own experience; for this seems to have been the mission which God gave him—to build wood, hay and stubble almost all the days of his life—to build as no other man ever did build; and then at the close of the unprofitable work in which he had taken delight while he was at it, to tell us of the worthlessness of all his splendid achievements. He says: “I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me; and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my portion of all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do, and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.” As Paul expresses it, he suffered loss; his work was burned. Doubtless he himself was saved, yet so as by fire.

Now contrast that man—with all his advantages, his vast wealth, his peaceful and prosperous surroundings, his wisdom and far-reaching knowledge—with his father David, who in his turbulent and troubled life built more gold, silver, precious stones than did any saint who blessed the world before the advent of the Son of Man.

“Whoso giveth a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward,” is the language of Him before whose judgment seat we all must be gathered. That little act will there be laid up as treasure in heaven. And what mean these words: “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” Let the passage about building upon the only sure

foundation cast light upon this great saying, and then let these words of the Saviour illuminate that passage, and at once the startling truth bursts upon us, that it is possible to be saved and yet be destitute of those precious possessions which Jesus calls treasures in heaven, and which Paul sets forth under the triple figure of gold, silver, precious stones. That it is possible for even true believers to suffer loss, yet be saved, by giving their chief labor and care to the building of wood, hay, stubble, upon the true foundation. Hence the solemn warning: "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." Closely allied to this thought are these words of the Master: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." This will turn the wood, hay and stubble into gold, silver, precious stones, as that rich young man would have found to his infinite profit and joy had he obeyed the voice of Him whose instruction he sought.

Fruit from the Tree of Life.

IN the closing chapter of the inspired volume John shows us, as the angel showed him, the river of life, and also the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of which were for the healing of the nations. That river flows, that tree grows and bears fruit, here and now. They will be found in heaven, too; but in heaven there are no nations to be healed.

Christ gives us similar figurative descriptions of himself, where he speaks of living water, and where he takes to himself the figure of the True Vine—the centre and source of all spiritual life, and of all God-glorifying fruit.

In his recorded discourses we can see this tree of life

expanding in multitudinous branches, all richly laden with fruit in endless and inexhaustible variety, and every word is full of grace and truth. Hence he declared, "My words, they are spirit and they are life."

But what good will it do us to stand off at a distance and gaze and admire this rich profusion of fruit, and these beautiful and healing leaves? We must pluck and eat this life-giving fruit, and apply these healing leaves to our sick and wounded nature. Suppose we were brought to such a tree while hungry, thirsty, sick and faint, would we stand and look and speculate upon the nature of the fruit and its quality? Or would we puzzle ourselves about its chemical properties, and calculate to a nicety how much was due to the soil, how much to the atmosphere, and how much to the sunshine? Hungry, fainting people don't act in that way; and our blessed Saviour does not wish us to act in that way when we come to him; but his invitation is, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved—let your soul delight itself in fatness."

In his parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus gives us a cluster of fruit, abundant, rich and various—truth, love, pardon, encouragement, grace, mercy and peace. Brief and simple as it looks on the sacred page, it is like the loaves and fishes of the miracle, inexhaustible, and more than enough for all. In the father's forgiving love, and in the bad conduct of the son, the wretchedness of the sinner who wanders away from God; the nature of true repentance and the works meet for it; the goodness of God in meeting and blessing the returning penitent while yet a great way off; and the perfect restoration to favor and sonship, no matter how vile, rebellious and degraded he may have been, are all set forth.

In the feast of gladness, in which the kind father celebrated the return of his lost son, the joy in heaven over one

sinner that repenteth is set before us; and even out of the carping, grumbling envy of the elder son, Jesus draws a grand and delightful truth. The evil of the heart of that hitherto dutiful son burst forth lamentably, as the bad passions of Christians often do. But, badly as he behaved, the father's loving kindness remains unchanged. Hear his kind expostulation: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Every word is full of grace and kindness.

He calls him son, although he is hard, rebellious and disrespectful—grumbling because his father had never rejoiced over him in the same way. "Son," he cries, "thou art ever with me." Sin, such as this man committed on this occasion, grievous and damaging as it was, did not separate him from his father's love. "My loving-kindness will I not take from them," says our Father in Heaven, "nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." "Son, thou art ever with me," said he, "and all that I have is thine." His relationship, his father's presence, and his inheritance are all secure. Not one upbraiding word falls upon his ear; no frown meets his upturned gaze; and we may hope that the father's goodness led him to repentance, and that he went in and became glad over the return of his long lost and almost ruined brother.

God says, through Isaiah, "Come, let us reason together;" so this father reasons with his obstinate and murmuring elder son: "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found." Sad indeed is the condition of that Christian heart which does not rejoice over the repentance and return of a sinner, even though he may have devoured the gifts of God with harlots, and sunk to the degradation of a swine-herd. Yet there are some Christians so cold, so full of clannish prejudice, that, like this elder son, they grow angry and will not go in.

But the elder son, like the younger, is forgiven, and the father's loving-kindness is not removed from him. But is not the father's goodness more signally manifested in his case than in that of his returned brother? I think so. In one case we see how our Heavenly Father receives a returning sinner; in the other, we see how kindly and indulgently he deals with his cold-hearted, petulant, murmuring and discontented children. O brothers in Christ, it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not all consumed!

So may we go on searching among the multitudinous branches of the tree of life for fruit to nourish and strengthen us; and here in this deeply touching appendix to this parable of the prodigal son, we find some fruit exactly adapted to the case of cold, hard, petulant, narrow, prejudiced, party-ridden professors—true Christians it may be, but of a low type. Let the noble and generous words which our Lord has put into the mouth of this good old man, addressed to his discontented son, sink deep into our hearts.

Rending of the Veil.

WHEN Jesus expired upon the cross the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. This veil divided the most holy place from the outer courts of the temple. Into that inner sanctuary none were allowed to enter save the high priest, and he only once a year, carrying the sacrificial blood, as an atonement for his own and the people's sins.

The rending of that sacred veil at that awful moment is profoundly significant. It marked the dividing line between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations. It was heaven's

announcement to earth that the great sacrifice which could really take away sin, and of which all the sacrifices of bulls and goats and lambs had been only symbolical, had been made and accepted.

But it has a still higher significance. The most holy place—holier than that which the high priest entered yearly and sprinkled with blood—holier than the mercy seat, overshadowed as it was with cherubic wings, was thrown open to all believers alike, even the throne of God, with the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, upon it. No bar, no veil now excludes the common worshiper from “the Holiest of All.” There is no priest now but Christ; and when pastor and people come to the mercy seat, his blood cleanses them, his life vivifies them, his love embraces them all alike; while his voice to them is, “One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren”—brethren one of another, and my brethren.

No doubt the people of Israel, when they saw their high priest lift that awful veil and pass into the most holy place would regard him as highly favored—as lifted above the ordinary plane of humanity. And so he was. But now every one who believes in Jesus is lifted higher still; for by faith he can take the blood of the Lamb and go, not behind that veil, but into the very presence of the Most Holy, and receive remission of sins and the unspeakably precious gift of the Holy Ghost. We can come directly “to Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God his Father.”

But again: this rending of the veil is a type of the opening of heaven itself. “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” said the dying Saviour; and then, we may be sure, heaven’s gates were thrown wide open to receive him. Stephen, just before his death, saw Heaven open, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. This, to him, was a

rending of the veil even to his natural sight; and thousands of departing saints have seen by faith what Stephen saw. Since Jesus passed from earth to heaven, only a shadow separates them—a narrow valley, and that not dark; for the light from the other side pierces through it, sometimes with a brilliance which makes it surpassingly beautiful; and the spirit goes away from this world to that as the sun often sets in the midst of clouds gloriously illuminated. Our natural perception can see only the blackness of darkness. A little faith sends a faint glimmer athwart the dismal passage. But let a Christian gaze by faith upon this light while on his pilgrimage, while still dealing with the labors and cares, the joys and sorrows, the ups and downs, the rough and smooth of life, and by degrees the feeble and far-off glimmer will grow into a stronger and all-surrounding glory, and the dark valley will be more luminous than earth ever was. This is what Peter means when he talks about having an abundant entrance into that higher and better world beyond the river.

Let us not forget that the veil was rent from top to bottom, and that now we can come, each one for himself, with no obstructing veil, no intervening priest, “boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace, to help in time of need;” and that we can walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil, and shout with David as we go, “I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.”

Charity.

WE never feel the poverty of human language more than when pondering the weighty and burning words of the apostle, where he labors with human power to set forth that principle which links the human to the divine, and which the English translators have expressed by the word Charity—a word which to most minds conveys the idea of benevolence or generosity—liberality in giving or magnanimity and kindness in judging. Hence we have the word often applied to institutions and to acts for the relief of destitution and suffering. But it is plain that this is not what Paul is talking about; for he declares that a man may give all his goods to feed the poor and yet be destitute of charity.

Some contend that the word would have been better translated Love. Perhaps so; but that also is too narrow to convey a conception of the grace or principle here set forth. Love is a single grace; but that which our translators have called by the single word charity, seems to be the sum of all graces. Even Faith and Hope are swallowed up in it, or, rather, so blended with it that its absence would be death to the other two. Whatever it may be, and however we may labor to define it, we feel that it is the Alpha and Omega of the Christian spirit and character. I think the best definition we can give is, that it is the Spirit of Christ; for it is written, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.”

Now let us examine its characteristics, as it is set forth in 1 Cor. xiii.

“*Charity suffereth long, and is kind.*”—The whole life of Christ from the manger to the cross is but one spotless commentary upon these words. Where can we find such long-suffering and kindness as he exhibited?

“*Charity envieth not.*”—Of him only who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners can this be said with absolute truth.

“*Vaunteth not itself.*”—Christ solemnly declares that he came not to seek his own glory, but the glory of Him that sent him. Meek and lowly in heart, he came not to be ministered unto but to minister. “I am amongst you (he says) as him that serveth.”

“*Is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly.*”—Conscious as he was of his infinite dignity, and clothed with almighty power, who of all the sons of men gave such a pattern of meekness and humility as Jesus? The poor and the despised could and did approach him with glad confidence, and were never rejected. Look at that woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, at poor Bartimeus by the way side, and at those mothers with their little children!

“*Seeketh not her own.*”—Here, in these four words, is the great distinguishing trait in the character of our Redeemer set forth. He “was rich, but for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.” Such disinterested benevolence as he showed is infinitely beyond parallel.

“*Is not easily provoked.*”—Of this grace Christ stands as the unapproachable exemplar. “When he was reviled he reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not,” but bore the contempt, the revilings, the contradiction of sinners with meekness and unruffled temper. Yet he stood in the world the most firm, unyielding, uncompromising and intrepid defender of truth and righteousness that ever appeared among men. Amid all the opposition that was shown him, and with all his meekness, he ever maintained the dignity, the majesty, the grandeur of his character. It is a great and dishonoring mistake to think of the meek and lowly Jesus as of a person of innocent and amiable pusil-

lanimity—as one who was too good to quarrel. It is not true. He did quarrel. His life was one protracted warfare with wicked men and wicked devils; with darkness, falsehood and sin; and most wonderful of all, he passed through that awful battle holy, harmless and undefiled.

“*Thinketh no evil.*”—Hear Jesus pray for the men who were at the moment murdering him—“Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.” I think these words had reference to the soldiers; for of them only could this kind apology be made. It may be that they were acting barbarously, and putting him to unnecessary torture. But whether that prayer terminated on them or not, his words show that he viewed every wrong in the most favorable aspect. In other words, that he was eminently “charitable” in his judgments.

“*Rejoiceth not in iniquity.*”—It is needless to say that this is like Christ. It is very possible and very common to condemn and denounce with vehemence whatever is wrong, and yet rejoice in iniquity. Pope, in his Universal Prayer, has one beautiful stanza:

“Teach me to feel another’s woe,
To hide the fault I see;
 That mercy I to others show,
 That mercy show to me.”

If we are not inclined to hide the faults we see, then we do rejoice in iniquity, however vociferously we may denounce it. The grace of which the apostle is speaking, where it is operative, tries to throw a mantle over others’ faults or failings so far as duty will allow; and if the faults of others must be spoken of, it is done with pain and regret, and all mitigations which truth will warrant are thrown in. I have often been pained, when the good qualities of an absent person were spoken of, to hear some charge needlessly

sprung upon him or her at the moment. Whoever will do such a thing has good reason to search his own heart to see whether he has the Spirit of Christ, whether he possesses this clarity of which the apostle is speaking, without which he can be none of his.

“*But rejoiceth in the truth.*”—I think the word truth here is expressive of all that is true and good, whether seen in the abstract, or in individual character, or in the progress of truth and righteousness in the world. The opposite of this quality is described negatively in the preceding clause.

“*Beareth all things.*”—This embraces the grace of patience, of which Jesus was the supreme exemplar.

“*Believeth all things.*”—The grace, thus strongly but not very specifically portrayed, is simply the opposite of suspicion and distrust. As Jesus knew all things, we can hardly say that he was an exemplar of this trait of Christian character.

“*Hopeth all things.*”—This blends intimately with the immediate foregoing trait, and is the opposite of despondency and discouragement. Both prompt the Christian to cheerful and joyful obedience. Both are linked with the great principles of Faith and Hope. As making up elements in the supreme grace of charity, believing all things and hoping all things have reference to other persons rather than to ourselves.

“*Endureth all things.*”—Christ endured the contradictions of sinners, the toils and privations of life, and the ignominy and agony of the cross, willingly and patiently; and when he says, “Take up thy cross,” whether it be a cross of active service or of trial and affliction, he but invites us to become like him in these things. Thus the Spirit of Christ is finished and made perfect in his people through suffering. He calls us to endure all things, not because we must, not because we cannot resist the omnipotence of God;

but willingly, because it is the will of a loving Father, and will work for good. If this enduring be not cheerful, it is not enduring at all in the sense of the passage.

But the subject cannot be exhausted. Follow on to know more and more.

“All Things are Yours.”

THESE are very simple words. A child can understand them. Taken together, they express a truth which cannot be misunderstood. *All* things do not mean *some* things; but, as the words import, everything. The apostle (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23), in order to give clearness, force and emphasis to this simple truth, sweeps round the circle of all possible things to which the man, the believer, the Christian can bear any relation, and exclaims, “Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s!”

The difficulty with this passage is not in understanding it; for it is so plain that no words can make it plainer. I should as soon think of bringing out a lamp to enable myself and others to see the sun, as to attempt, by any language I could use, to make it clearer. The trouble is that our hearts are too small to let in so vast and glorious a truth. Hence, many who hear it or read it, give a kind of intellectual assent to it; but they do not readily believe it.

But abstract reasoning upon such a subject as this is useless. So let us try what we can do by way of illustration by examples.

When Joseph made himself known to his brethren, all they could claim as their own were guilt, and shame, and

confusion of face. They were troubled at his presence. That was all right, for it was perfectly natural; and this feeling made them fit subjects of the grace of their illustrious brother, just as the same kind of feeling makes us fit subjects of the grace of our still more glorious Brother. Let us hear Joseph :

“Come near to me, I pray you ; and they came near. And he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.” Thus, first of all, he gave himself, as Jesus, first of all gives himself, saying : “ I am Jesus, your brother, whom, by your sins, ye hanged on a tree. Come near to me, I pray you.” Observe, it is not come to me—for this Joseph’s brethren had already done—but, “ Come *near* to me.” How near did they come? At first a few trembling steps nearer, until, finally, in fond embrace, they wept upon his neck. Thus he gave himself; and while mingled tears of joy and penitence flowed copiously, each would feel and say in his heart, “ This is indeed my brother.” So far the possession was complete.

But Joseph did not stop here. He was rich and powerful, and all Egypt was at his disposal. Pharaoh had given to him all power in his dominions; but to Jesus is given “all power in heaven and in earth.” Joseph gave to his father and his brethren the land of Goshen, saying : “Thou shalt be near unto me, thou and thy children, and thy children’s children, and thy flocks and thy herds, and all that thou hast, and there will I nourish thee.” Thus he gave them the best of the land for a possession—he prepared a place for them. Jesus says to his brethren, “ I go to prepare a place for you ; and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”

But it may be said that this is one of his promises of blessings in reserve for another and a better life. True,

but he has gifts for the present as well as the future. He says, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." And again, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." And again, "Take no thought (have no anxiety) what ye shall eat or drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed; for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Will not God clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

In view of all these examples and promises, may not the Christian confidently say: "All things are mine; for Christ is mine, and I am joint heir with him. His Father is my Father, his God is my God, his heaven is my heaven, his earth is my earth—all that he has is mine, so far as I am able to appropriate it; mine as much as my life, my soul, my hands, my eyes, or my entire self are mine; mine by right, for he gave this right." It is written, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have *right* to the tree of life."

Now let us get back again to the concrete. When the returning prodigal came back in his wretchedness and rags, he was poor indeed. All that he could call his own was his sin, with its miserable consequences. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," was his humble confession. He had it in his heart to ask only a servant's place, and he would have done so had not the abounding grace of his father stopped him. He ran to meet him, and to embrace and kiss him. To have talked after that of being made a hired servant would have been an offense and an outrage. He instantly became a beloved child, and he knew it. "Bring forth," said the generous father, "the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes

on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost and is found.” Wearing that best robe and that ring, the token at once of pardon, of honor and of sonship, and those shoes, the evidence of his now exalted rank, he would enter the banqueting hall with a heart full of joy and gratitude; and that joy and thankfulness would make him the gladdest, the brightest, and the pleasantest member of the festive party, and in no way could he so much honor and gratify his father as by being so.

But suppose this pardoned and honored son had, through a morbid view of his father’s goodness, and through a false and spurious humility, crept into some shady corner of the festive hall, divested himself of his beautiful garment, and again put on his old rags, took the ring off his hand and the shoes off his feet, and then, from that dark and distant place, had raised once more his old mournful cry, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants,” would he not have acted as many Christians do? Not worthy to be called thy son! To be sure he was not; but who had talked about worthiness? Did the father contradict the assertion of his erring boy? By no means; but he pardoned him and restored him to a place in his heart, his family, and his estate, notwithstanding his unworthiness; and, having done so, that son could have offered no greater insult to that good father than to have kept on whining about his unworthiness. But he did not do that. He put on his beautiful garment, wore it, and was glad. He wore his shoes while walking in paths of duty and new obedience; and in the light of his reconciled father’s countenance he rejoiced all the day long. He honored his father by living up to his privileges; and how

easy it is to feel that he would have grieved and offended him by doing otherwise !

But until that wanderer returned and received the pardoning kiss and that best robe, it would have been presumption on his part to have claimed the rights, the privileges and the honors of a son. How is it with you, dear reader ? Are you sure that you have returned, that the seal of pardon represented by that ring is upon you, and that the best robe, the perfect righteousness of Christ, covers you ? Is your father's kiss still warm upon your cheek ? If so, fear not to rejoice with exceeding joy, and take as your own all things, for all things are yours. But if not, then you are where the prodigal was in that far country. Do as he did—arise and go to your Father. He will meet you and receive you as the prodigal was received. Thousands and millions have met the same reception, and so will you. Go, and all will be yours. Refuse, and nothing is yours but a heritage of wrath and fiery indignation. Arise and go to your Father, and then your greatest wonder will be, that you had not gone long ago. Then, and not till then, will you understand what the apostle meant when he said, "All things are yours."

What will He do with Them ?

"THOU shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins," said Gabriel to Joseph, when he announced to him the great fact that his betrothed wife was to be the mother of the Messiah by miraculous conception.

Our first business is to notice the limitations of this salvation.

He did not say that he should save all sinners, but only

“his people.” Who are they? What are the marks by which we can know them from other people? To this question God in his word is alone competent to speak.

Let the Saviour himself speak first: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, *that whosoever believeth in him* should not perish, but have eternal life.” Here salvation is plainly limited to believers; and the inference is irresistible that all who do not believe in him perish, as the entire race must have done had he not interposed. But we find no other limitation in this text; for that grand and all-comprehending word, “WHOSOEVER,” embraces every condition and every possible grade of intellectual and moral character, and agrees with that glorious proclamation of grace which we find in the last chapter of the inspired volume: “And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” This again agrees with the proclamation with which the 55th chapter of Isaiah opens: “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.”

Again Jesus says, “*Him that cometh unto me* I will in no wise cast out.” Here the universality of the offer is the same, and the limitation the same; for the inference is as strong and clear as if it were declared in the most emphatic terms, that whosoever will not come shall be cast out; or, as it is expressed in another place, “is condemned already.” In another place the Saviour complains, “ye will not come unto me that ye might have life;” and with flowing tears he said: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not!*” How beautifully does this affecting apostrophe har-

monize with God's mournful language in the first chapter of Isaiah: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider!"

These few solemn declarations, with many others which harmonize with them, teach us that in order to be saved the sinner must be willing to be saved, and come to Christ for salvation—to Christ as he is offered in the gospel. They teach us, moreover, that it has pleased God to give to every soul who hears the gospel the fearful power to accept or reject the offer of salvation as he pleases. The Holy Spirit, in his operations upon the human soul, is a persuasive, not a constraining power. He calls, he stretches forth his hands, he reasons, he entreats; but sinners may set at naught all his counsels and refuse. They have refused, they are refusing in countless numbers this day, as they did in the days of old.

Is it so, that men and women, capable of thinking and of reasoning correctly on most things, are not willing to be saved—men and women who believe in a future existence, and in a heaven and a hell? Not at all; but they are unwilling to be saved in the way in which Jesus saves. He saves his people *from their sins*; while those unwilling ones only desire and hope to be saved from hell, and taken after death to some happy place known by the term heaven. Jesus did not come into the world to save his people from perdition so much as from sin. His object is to make them holy by a union with himself, having given his life as a ransom for them, and washed away their sins in his atoning blood. Their desire is to be happy, and to escape punishment. God in his word tells us that it is impossible for us to be happy while sinful; and as plainly does he assure us that it

transcends even his power to make us holy without our consent. This great law, with which it has pleased him to bind both himself and us, ought to be kept ever before us.

“Without holiness no man can see the Lord;” and as the absence of holiness, which is sin, debars men from the presence of their Maker, the question is narrowed down to this simple, yet awful one: What will he do with them? As they refuse to come to him in the only way in which it is possible for them to come—a way which infinite wisdom devised and infinite goodness and mercy opened up, at the cost of the blood of the Son of God—what can he do with them? To take them to a holy heaven, where the key-note of all the rapturous anthems is the atoning death of Christ—“Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”—would be worse than any other condition in which they could be placed. The undying worm would gnaw more fiercely in heaven than in hell. Were heaven’s portals thrown open to them they would not, they could not, enter. Those gates are open to them now, through Christ. God is calling earnestly and beseechingly to them to enter and have eternal life; but the time is at hand when those calls will cease and those doors be shut. What will God do with them then? He will leave them out. Jesus speaks of this under the tremendous figure, if figure it is, of “outer darkness.” To be removed from earth, and left out of heaven, is hell; for sin adheres and grows, sinking the soul deeper and deeper in pollution and wretchedness. This is the worm that dieth not, the fire that is never quenched.

Think what salvation is. It is not a restoration to some degree of holiness, but to perfect holiness. It is more than a creature’s holiness—more than could result from a life entirely blameless—more than Adam enjoyed before the fall—more than that which gives glory to the angelic host; for

the blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin, absolutely all. But that is only the negative side of salvation. The crowning glory of salvation is vital union with Christ, oneness with him, so that his righteousness becomes the righteousness of the perfected saint. The redeemed soul is as pure as his Redeemer, for they are one. He saves his people from their sins, not partially, but wholly; and because he lives, they live. Their "life is hid with Christ in God."

To be saved we must come to Christ, renouncing all claim to merit of our own. Salvation is all of grace. We must come, anxious rather to be saved from sin than from its punishment. Our desire must be for holiness more than for happiness. But when we can so feel, the truth becomes clear to our minds that holiness and bliss are inseparable; and when that point is reached, the converse of the proposition is seen with equal clearness, that sin and misery are inseparable. The great difficulty is that in the unrenewed heart the notion is entertained that Christ's yoke is a yoke of bondage; hence sin is cherished as a condition of greater freedom, and as conducive to happiness.

But the question recurs respecting those who will not go to Christ that they may have life, what will he, what can he, as their final Judge, do with them? As immortal beings they cannot cease to exist. The sinful nature, which they would not permit the great Redeemer to cleanse, will adhere to them for ever; and even that good which they seemed to have will be taken from them. So, in the awful language of God himself, shall "the wicked be driven away in his wickedness," carrying with him the undying worm, the unquenchable fire, and all the tremendous elements of damnation, no matter by what imagery they may be set forth; and, worse than all, these elements inherent in himself—earth-born—inseparable from his nature.

Oh! that those who neglect this great salvation would

remember, that with all their real or imaginary good qualities, they must meet this awful doom, unless they flee for refuge to the hope set before them in the gospel; for it is written, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

Success and failure.

SUPPOSE we inquire how some man of our acquaintance has succeeded in a new and distant locality, beyond the range of our own observation, and the answer comes in brief and general terms, "Very well," what do we understand by it? Why, simply, that he is prospering in his worldly affairs. To this state of things, and to this alone, we give the name of success. Or should the reply be, "He is not doing very well—he is poor, and finds it difficult to make both ends meet,"—we call that failure. In worldly goods the one is well off, the other is not; and, in the low channel in which men's minds habitually run, these opposite conditions of wealth and poverty settle the whole question of success or failure.

Viewed from that standpoint, the greatest, the grandest, the most beneficent life this world ever saw, was a disastrous failure. Foxes had holes, and birds of the air had nests, but He who lived that life had not where to lay his head; and his short and troubled career of privation and sorrow, of toil, conflict and reproach, closed in an ignominious and agonizing death. No greater failure—if estimated in accordance with the usual standard of success and failure—ever happened among men.

But all who know anything about him—saint and sage, those who see in him only the purest and wisest of men, and

those who look higher, and discern in the Man of sorrows the grandeur of Deity—know that that life was not only not a failure, but an infinite success. The whole world, with all its wealth and power, and pomp and pretensions, was utterly and absolutely bankrupt; but he redeemed it, and out of his unlimited stores he has made many rich—not with perishable wealth, but the true riches—treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

But suppose some being whose eye embraced the life and experience of all the race, yet whose ideas rose not beyond the material and the present, had been called upon at the time to give us his report of the lives of Jesus of Nazareth and his immediate followers, he could not have done otherwise than say that they were all failures. He would have seen lives of suffering from poverty, from painful and toilsome wanderings, from opposition and bitter persecution, and ending in violent deaths. What could he say, from his point of observation, but that they were of all men most miserable?

Now it is true that people of enlightened views, especially professed Christians, do not so judge of Jesus, and Peter, and John, and Paul, and their companions; but they do judge their fellows of their own generation by just such a standard as that supposed. By almost universal consent—thoughtlessly, to be sure, but rank with infidelity—we think of the men who amass wealth as successful, and of those who are poor as having failed in their lives. Their character as Christians—whether they have treasure in heaven or not—is not taken into consideration. As if to correct this injurious habit of thought, James asks, “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith?”

Who fails in life? Clearly he who, whatever may be his success in amassing wealth, loses his own soul. Whose life

is a success? He who, however destitute he may be of worldly goods, lays hold of the hope set before him in the Gospel, and thus secures to himself eternal life. The life of the rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, of whom Jesus tells us, was a most disastrous failure; while that of the very poor man who lay at his gate was a grand success. He, in all his poverty, had the pearl of great price. The other had it not, because he neither desired it nor sought it.

“He builds too low who builds beneath the skies,”

is a truth which harmonizes perfectly with these solemn words of our Lord: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.”

Here the last clause is a key to the true meaning of the entire precept; for it is where the heart is that fixes the place of our treasure. One man may possess much of the wealth of this world, and yet have his treasure and his heart in heaven. Another may have but very little, and yet that little so engross his heart as to leave no room for what our Saviour calls the true riches.

To make the acquisition of wealth the great object, the chief end, of life, however successful the man may be, is to fail,—fatally, miserably, disastrously—to fail as the rich man failed, who died, was buried, and then opened his eyes in hell. But, on the other hand, to have a part in the inheritance which Christ offers to all who will accept of it—no matter how poor and destitute they may be in other things—makes life a great success. Life to such men is an inestimable boon.

The Natural and the Supernatural.

WHILE yet a boy I was present in a room while a venerable and highly gifted divine, Rev. Joseph W. Henderson, led a little company in prayer. We stood. My eyes were fixed upon the solemn and expressive face of the white-haired man as he led us into that awful presence. With a voice slow, tremulous, and profoundly reverent, he began with these words: "Infinitely great, incomprehensible God." Of the remainder of his prayer I have no distinct remembrance; but these words were engraved upon my memory and heart, and lifted me to a higher plane of thought than I had then reached, and they have been an anchor to the soul through sixty stormy years. While I have been enabled by grace to grasp this Being as my Father in heaven, they have kept me from bringing him down in conception to such a level as the consciousness of such a relation is only too apt to beget. At once he became the nearest and dearest of Beings, and yet the infinitely great, incomprehensible God.

Although "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork," yet God himself is beyond the reach of the profoundest science. This handiwork is what we call Nature; but the Worker, the great Intelligence which guides that working hand, is infinitely above the range of our investigation. The sublime challenge of the inspired volume, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" remains just where it did in the days of Job, and will bid defiance to mere thought and research to the end of time.

The familiar apothegm, "the stream cannot rise higher than the fountain," applies here with great force, and compels us to look higher than to mere matter for a solution of

the problem as to how the things with which science can deal arrived at the condition in which we find them. That they have been moving through periods of incalculable duration from lower to higher, from simpler to more complex, is a fact so manifest, that theists and atheists alike accept it. This progress, and the order and beauty seen both in the orbs of heaven and in the minuter things of earth, proclaim with an eloquence perfectly irresistible that there was and is a design. But to talk of a design without an intelligent Designer is as absurd as to talk of an effect without a cause. It matters not what process the Designer saw proper to employ in the production of the things of which science is able to take cognizance. It matters not what laws he saw proper to establish and maintain in ever-during activity; these laws are but the expression of his will. At what period these laws began to operate we know not, for very likely we should be unable to comprehend the matter even were it revealed to us. One thing we can do, so far as this planet which we occupy is concerned, and that is, that we can trace back, very dimly, it is true, over a few of those stupendous ages, and see a little of the progress of Nature from simpler to more complex organisms both vegetable and animal. We can see a little of that upward progress to which there will probably be no end; and we can see, if we permit Christian faith to come in where reason and science are obliged to stop, the infinitely great, incomprehensible God putting himself into personal relation with the only being in this world of ours capable of bearing such a relation—a relation analogous to that between the sun and the living organisms which we see all around us. When we speak of this last and highest relation between the Creator and the creature, we do not pass from the natural to the supernatural; we only pass from the domain of the visible and tangible to that which lies above and beyond the field of scientific investiga-

tion. The one is as natural as the other. The only difficulty is, that the field in which demonstrative science can operate at all is exceedingly limited when compared with the unfathomable ocean of truth which lies beyond it. We would not undervalue the knowledge sought out by these searchers after truth in Nature. That a being whose active existence is limited to half a century should be able to achieve so much is a greater marvel than all the things which he reports from the stellar regions, from the geologic periods, and from the multitudinous existences now passing before our eyes in ceaseless procession.

But the great trouble with many of the votaries of science is in the very first step in the process of forming a notion of God. We know that he is incomprehensible, and that he is infinitely great. But these men speak of the Almighty, when they speak of him at all, as a being who has a past, a present, and a future as we have; and that in an age long past he impressed upon inorganic matter certain laws so perfect and so energetic that all the sequences we now find resulted without any further supervision on his part. Such a notion necessarily pre-supposes that God has a past—that he acted once, but is inactive now; and whether he will ever act again in the boundless future is a problem in the domain of the unknown.

Difficult as it is for beings like us to conceive it, we know that with God there can be no such thing as progress either in space or duration. With him there is necessarily no past, no future, no here, no there. This is as sound in philosophy as it is in revealed theology. The Bible speaks of him as inhabiting eternity—filling it at once and always; and the Psalmist exclaims: “Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the

sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me!" Human thought and language can go no farther. "In him we live and move and have our being," said Paul to the learned men of Athens, who, like some of our scientists, were puzzling their brains about "the unknown God."

It is one thing to make an ideal Deity and set him away up on some imaginary throne above the stars; but it is a far pleasanter, safer and more rational thing to recognize him as in every place, giving energy to his own laws, feeding the fowls of the air, clothing the vegetable kingdom in glory and beauty, and saying to the poor who believe in him, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things."

Is it not an error to set up a boundary between the things which men can touch and handle, or observe with the telescope and microscope, or analyze chemically, and those other things which cannot be thus investigated, and assign the first to the domain of the natural, and the other to that of the supernatural? Is it not putting asunder things which God has joined together? Is it not thrusting the Creator out of his own creation, and giving to blind impersonal forces the place in the government of the universe which he claims for himself? A sparrow, says the great Teacher, cannot fall without your Father; and could we get rid of this miserable notion of a local and progressive God, the soundest reason would tell us that this must be so; and it would tell us, moreover, that in the far-gone geologic periods God was working for man as immediately, in laying up vast stores of metals and fuel, and in pulverizing a soil for his use, as he is this day in giving us rain and fruitful seasons.

Let us not undertake to draw a line of separation between the natural and the supernatural. Jesus forbids any such division of the works of creation and providence where he

points to the lily and tells us that God so clothes it, and to the fowls of the air and says; "Your Heavenly Father feedeth them." Here the extremes of what scientists call the natural and the supernatural are joined together by the only being that ever wore the human form who perfectly understood both. In view of these things let his solemn interdict, uttered on another occasion, sink deeply into our hearts: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

The Personality of Satan.

"SOME people say there is no devil," was the abrupt utterance of Dr. Lyman Beecher, in opening one of his week-day evening lectures in his church in Boston; and it is true that there are many who truly and sincerely receive the Bible as the word of God, who have doubts as to the personality of the devil. They regard what is said of him in the Scriptures somewhat as they do some of the characters in Bunyan's great allegory—as principles personified—such, for example, as Giant Despair, the representative of one form of unbelief, or of Avarice, personified in Demas at his silver mine.

But the teachings of the inspired volume on this subject, taken throughout, will not, I think, warrant us in coming to any such conclusion. They speak too plainly of this evil spirit as a real personage to admit of the idea that it is but an allegorical setting forth of some all-pervading principle of evil and antagonism, whether within or without the heart of man.

If this being or thing which we call Satan be but an impersonal principle, whence came it? It were impious to hold that it is self-existent; and if it be impersonal, then is

it irresponsible, and the responsibility of its existence rolls back upon the infinitely holy Author of all things. But if, on the other hand, Satan was originally an angel or archangel, created upright and pure, but free, and who subsequently rebelled and became the enemy of God, as the Bible plainly teaches when we take it in its simple verity, and do not strain it with our transcendentalism and metaphysical interpretations, then the responsibility rests elsewhere, and the throne of the Most High is stainless. If it was God's pleasure to make the angels of heaven, as he made man in Eden, upright, yet free—free to stand or fall, free to obey or disobey, free to render to their Maker the homage and service which were his due, or to withhold them—and there could have been no real integrity, nor uprightness, nor homage, nor obedience, without freedom—then the solution of the question of the origin of evil and the existence of an active malignant spirit becomes easy, and is at once consistent with the highest reason and with the teachings of the word of God. Sin sprung out of the freedom of rational moral beings; not necessarily it is true, but it did. Had it *necessarily* done so, then were the creature or creatures with whom it originated not free. That God permitted it, we know from the event. Why he did so, is a question too deep for us. Of one thing, however, we may be sure, and that is, that it was better that he should permit it. Infinite goodness, wisdom and power will always do that which is best. God makes no mistakes.

Satan, then—we say nothing at present about his angels, as Jesus calls them, or his associates in rebellion and his subordinates, as we cannot but regard them—is a powerful, personal, intelligent, responsible and active being, whose energies are all set in direct antagonism to that Supreme Being against whom he rebelled, and with whom he has

neither the power nor the desire to be reconciled. In his character and aims he is as far the opposite of the supremely good God as it is possible for the finite to be opposite to the Infinite. Shut up in absolute despair, the depth and darkness of which no finite being can understand as he does, he is miserable to desperation and madness, and recklessly drags down upon himself mountains of guilt by the perpetration of all the evil of which he is capable. "Evil, be thou my good!" are the words which Milton puts into his mouth while in a paroxysm of remorse and anguish; and they well express the hideous thought, the dreadful purpose, born of despair.

Paul calls the wicked one "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience," and in another place, "the god of this world," all of which are expressive of great and extensive power. But God holds him in check. When he accused Job of hypocrisy, his object was to obtain permission to plague and afflict him, and if possible, to destroy him; and he was permitted to go to a certain length, but no farther. He went as near destroying him as he could; but "hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther," was the law to which he was obliged to submit on that occasion; and that much God overruled to his own glory, to the good of Job, and to the profit of his people of all ages. Earth has more light, and heaven brighter glory, because of that malignant assault upon the man of Uz.

Satan acts his part according to the dictates of his own malignant nature. No restraint seems to be put upon the freedom of his will, although there is upon the extent to which he carries out his designs. He is permitted to work in the hearts of the children of disobedience, and, with their concurrence, lead them captive at his will. He is allowed to assault God's own children, as he did Job, and as

he desired to have Peter that he might sift him as wheat. Yet over men he has no power without their consent. He can entice them to sin, but that is all. Eve said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat;" but her plea did not avail. Satan entered into the heart of Judas just before he went out to sell and betray his Master; but he did so only because Judas had thrust Jesus out and left the door open to him.

The extent and the limitations of the power and range of Satan are subjects as instructive as they are curious. When Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh to demand the release of the Israelitish bondmen, they showed a sign by casting down a rod which instantly became a serpent. But the wise men and sorcerers of Egypt did the same thing, whether by infernal agency or jugglery, it matters not. Their sign was antagonistic to the other and broke its force, until Aaron's serpent devoured theirs. The same thing happened in one or two further signs on that occasion; but when the more tremendous plagues came, Satan and his ministers were powerless.

Then again, in the days of our Saviour, when God in very deed dwelt with man—when the Son of God came, (to use the language of the book of Job but slightly varied,) Satan came also. He was permitted by his subordinate evil spirits to take possession of the persons of many people, dominating their mental powers, and using their bodies to torment themselves and their friends. Nowhere else in all the Scriptures do we find such accounts of diabolic power as are given by the evangelists. It won't do to say that these demoniacal possessions were some peculiar form of mania, mere derangement of the mental powers; for Jesus invariably addressed the in-dwelling demon or demons as evil spirits, personal and conscious, and distinct from the persons possessed.

But now, since Christ has withdrawn not only his person but his miraculous power from the earth, he has taken from the devil and his angels the power which they then had. All their power over the minds and bodies of men, such as they seem to have exerted in the days when the Son of God was a man amongst men, and himself exposed to his assaults, has been taken away or restrained. But mark: Jesus, just before he offered his own great sacrifice, and then ascended to his throne in heaven, promised to send the Holy Spirit to abide with his people for ever, and to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come. That state of things continues, and will to the end of time; while at the same time Satan is permitted to exert his baleful influences in a similar way upon the hearts of men, in direct antagonism to those of the Holy Spirit. Thus it would seem that when God comes near by miracle, and nearer still by incarnation, Satan is allowed to come equally near; but when these cease, he is kept back, and permitted to do nothing more than to exert a bad influence upon the hearts of the children of men.

Antagonism is essential to development in all things, whether material or moral, in nature and in grace; and we may be perfectly sure that that great but wicked being of whom we have been speaking is and ever will be so restrained, so governed, and so overruled, that what he designs for evil to the church and people of God shall be made to work for the furtherance of the Gospel, for the everlasting good of God's children, and for the glory of Him who "came to destroy the works of the devil."

Judas Iscariot.

WE are apt to think of this wretched man as the worst who ever lived. It may be that he was; or possibly there may have been, or there may be now, or in the centuries yet to come, men more wicked than he; although none ever did or ever can sin just as he did.

Of the call of Judas as one of the chosen twelve we know nothing; but that he was called we do know, for Jesus himself said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" This shows us that the Lord knew Judas when he called him—what he was and what he would do.

But if Judas was a bad man, a devil, why did he obey the call? for certainly he was not forced. Doubtless he was a deep, shrewd, intelligent, calculating man, one who was able to reason clearly, and, on his low plane, accurately. He saw the mighty power of Jesus of Nazareth, and under the deep disguise of his humility and poverty he discovered the long expected Messiah. So far he reasoned correctly. He doubted not that in due time Jesus would ascend the throne of his father David, restore the kingdom to Israel, break the Roman yoke, and lift himself to universal dominion. The greatest and grandest of earthly potentates was his ideal of the Messiah; and in this notion he did not differ much from his fellow disciples. His selfish and ambitious soul would be filled with visions of the dignity, wealth and grandeur which was sure to be his own portion in that magnificent coming kingdom. With such notions, it is very likely that not one of the twelve obeyed the call more gladly than he.

But month after month the Master itinerated over the land, in humility and poverty, teaching, healing, blessing, and putting forth almighty power over Nature, over men and evil

spirits; even calling the dead to life; and talking every day of that kingdom of which he was the unquestionable head. But never for a moment did he cast his eye towards a visible throne, or lift a hand against the outside oppressors of his country. The ruling classes with almost entire unanimity arrayed themselves against him; but Jesus continued his work apparently regardless of their enmity and opposition.

Judas could not understand it. Hope deferred made his heart sick. Disappointed ambition soured him. But he seems to have kept his thoughts to himself, and he was not distrusted by his fellow disciples. He was their treasurer or purse bearer, which showed that he was regarded as the best business man among them, and that he was trusted. The seeds of disaffection towards his Master, sown there by the evil one, germinated and grew. His low, sordid nature began to rise in disgust and rebellion against this strange Being who manifestly possessed almighty power, yet year after year refused to put it forth to lift himself, his followers and his country to honor, power and dignity. Pride of heart and greed of gain had taken such full possession of his soul, that the heavenly truths uttered in his hearing made no impression upon him.

He finally concluded that he had made a mistake; for it had become more and more plain that Jesus had no intention of setting up a visible kingdom—that he was not a politician at all; while Judas was nothing else. He discovered that he and his Master had no aims in common. Then he began to plan how he could get out of his false position as easily and as profitably as possible; and full of this thought he went to the chief priests and captains and covenanted with them to betray him for thirty pieces of silver. Doubtless he made the best bargain he could. The act, of course, would sever his connection with Christ, as he intended that it should. That he thought it would lead to the terrible

tragedy which followed the betrayal is not at all probable. Although he knew nothing of the grace of Christ, or of the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and cared not to know, he had full confidence in his power. But as soon as he saw that that power was not put forth to deliver him from death, but that he was condemned, and would certainly be executed, he was so filled with remorse and horror that he returned to the men who had bribed him, confessed his guilt, testified to the innocence of his victim, cast down the money, rushed out, hanged himself, and "went to his own place."

What a fearful warning is here to any who may enter Christ's service through the base and sordid motives which actuated Judas—ambition, personal distinction, hope of gain, or power, or ease, or anything else which terminates in self. Had Jesus been what Judas supposed he was, his ambition would have passed in the world without blame or dishonor. He would have simply been one among many thousands of fortunate politicians.

But why did Christ choose this devil? for certainly he was not deceived in him. All we can say is, that so it seemed good in his sight. Judas had his mission. He did his work, and he found his reward. He acted freely in what he did. He had abundant opportunity to learn his mistake; but he would not. He became a soured and disappointed man, and ended his miserable earthly career in black despair. We cannot measure his guilt; but we know that he who could measure it said of him, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born!" And the same may be said of every man who prostitutes a holy calling to selfish and worldly ends.

The True and the False.

THE great adversary of God and man is limited in his powers; and all his knowledge, like ours, comes, primarily, through the medium of observation. As God gradually enlightend the human race with a revelation of himself, Satan followed along his track. As the great system of Truth, as disclosed in the sacred records, was evolved, Satan worked out his own dark systems on the same model. An illustration of this fact is found in the incident of the magicians of Egypt imitating the miracle of Aaron's rod when it became a serpent.

But the most striking example of this imitative work of Satan is found in the system of Brahminical theology as set forth in the Vedas, which are the sacred writings of the Hindoos. The Shasters are but a set of rules of worship and conduct.

The Brahm, or Brahma, of the Vedas corresponds with the Jehovah of the Hebrew Scriptures; but so awfully high and exalted, so remote, so abstract and cold, so utterly unknowable, that the book speaks of him by a term which, in the English language, can only be rendered into the most indefinite of all words—"THAT." Correctly enough he is represented as infinite, eternal and incomprehensible; but, unlike our God, our "Father in Heaven," he is also unapproachable. Although the Creator of all things, he is represented as too exalted to take any interest in the affairs of his creatures. In a word, the great God of the Vedas is a being who cannot be loved, and need not be feared. To him some of the characteristics of the Lord God of the Hebrew Scriptures have been transferred with almost perfect fidelity and undiminished grandeur. Still he is but an

awful abstraction, a being with whom man can have no intercourse, and to whom he can bear no relations. The idea of God, as there found, is only a cold abstraction, which cannot be known or loved, having in it neither light nor life, exciting neither faith nor hope. It is merely "That,"—a something enshrouded in darkness inaccessible and impenetrable.

So much for the absolute God of the Vedas. But the theology of the Hindoos is not unitarian. The system rests upon a kind of trinity, Vishnu, the Preserver, and Siva, the Destroyer, corresponding to our Saviour, and to our great adversary, the devil. These antagonistic deities rule the world which Brahma created. Vishnu, who is supposed to be ever inclined to be propitious, has few temples, and is but little worshiped; while Siva, whose wrath is dreaded, is propitiated by perpetual, painful and costly offerings.

Thus the two great religious systems of the world—each possessing hundreds of millions of devotees—the one the dark shadow of the other—nearly the same in the outline, yet as different as light is from darkness, or life from death, or Heaven from hell,—seem to have grown up side by side. But in the one inspired by the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, its author has thrust out the Spirit of all truth, and thrust himself into his place in the trinity. Brahma, in his infinite and sublime attributes, corresponds with some degree of fidelity to the first person in the true Godhead. Vishnu, the Preserver, the friend of man, corresponds, as far as the system goes, with our blessed Redeemer. But the third, the Destroyer, is a horrible departure from the Christian idea of the Triune God, and renders the whole system absolutely false and diabolical. And the obscene worship, the horrid rites, the deep social degradation and depravity of its devotees, and the absence of all progress, whether material, social, political or religious, attest the

source whence the system sprung. It bears the signet of the devil, as distinctly as the religion of the Bible bears that of the God of truth. By their fruits they are known. The one is a monstrous imitation, a gross counterfeit, of the other. The one is a living, active substance; the other, a dark shadow. The one brings poor sinners into the presence of a pardoning God, through an atoning Saviour. The other leaves them to wander in darkness, and to work out their own salvation by self-inflicted tortures, or by sacrificing the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls. The wretched mother casting her offspring into the sacred river; the tortured wretch swinging in the air by hooks thrust through his ribs, and the frantic worshiper casting himself under the ponderous wheels of Juggernaut, mark the lands over which this system bears rule as among "the dark places of the earth, full of the habitations of cruelty."

Agur's Prayer.

APPENDED to the Book of Proverbs are two chapters, the 30th and 31st. The first of these is composed of the words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, the second the prophecy which the mother of king Lemuel taught him. Both are rich in aphoristic wisdom and exhortation, and are fine examples of the sententious teachings of the ancient sages of the East. The characteristics of a virtuous woman, as uttered by an inspired mother, in the closing chapter, are surpassingly beautiful, and might be pondered with profit by that sex in the present day.

Agur, in his chapter, sets out with expressions of the profoundest humility and self-abasement. He looks up to God, the high, the holy, the unsearchable, whose every word is

pure, and who is "a shield unto them that put their trust in him." He then solemnly protests against adding anything unto his words, "lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." This solemn admonition ought to be kept ever in mind by all religious teachers, whether orthodox or otherwise, together with the awful warning with which the inspired volume closes: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

Agur then turns to God in earnest supplication; but his prayer, in express terms, reaches not beyond the present life. Yet he most clearly recognizes him as the Giver of everything, down even to the quality of the food we eat. Let us hear him pray.

"Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die."

The second clause is a strong form of expression that the two things for which he asks shall be continued to him all the days of his life. We then have his two petitions in the briefest terms:

1. "Remove far from me vanity and lies."
2. "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me."

He then goes on in exceedingly brief but comprehensive terms to give his reasons why he prayed thus, saying, "Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

What does Agur mean by vanity and lies, which he desires shall be removed far from him? When the prosperous man spoken of by our Lord in one of his parables, whose lands brought forth so abundantly that he resolved to build larger barns, said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry," he was hugging to his heart vanity and lies, and for so doing God

told him that he was a fool. The notion which finds a lodgment in so many minds, that the possession of wealth will make us happy, is a lie ; and when the object is attained it is found to be vanity. The desire of fame and popular favor, and the pursuit of these objects, are the opposite of Agur's spirit; for they too are vanity and lies. Jesus, in words of awful earnestness, warns his people to "take heed and beware of covetousness ; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Then having spoken the parable of the rich fool just alluded to, he added, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Now it is perfectly true that God can, and often does, bestow upon men large possessions, with grace sufficient to keep their wealth in its proper place in their affections ; while covetousness and selfishness of the rankest kind may, and often do, find lodgment in the hearts of the poorest. Our Divine Teacher does not tell us that he who lays up treasure is a fool ; for he may do that, and still be rich toward God. It is only he who is laying up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God, that is so denounced.

But Agur prays that riches may not be given him. He knew, for his God had taught him, the danger of wealth ; and Jesus teaches us the same thing in these fearful words : "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Still it is possible ; for he adds, "with God all things are possible."

This expression of a camel passing through the eye of a needle was proverbial, and probably had reference to narrow passages through the walls of defended cities, through which a man, unincumbered with a bulky burden, could pass, but

not a camel with its usual cumbrous load. Such openings were then popularly called the "needle's eye." This gives great force and impressiveness to the proverb; but to understand it as the eye of a needle with which we sew, carries it into the domain of the extravagant. So a man, however wealthy, under the power of the Holy Spirit, may come to this needle's eye as poor in spirit as the poorest, and pass in and find mercy. Still Agur prays against riches, and Jesus' words show us that he was right. He prays also against poverty, and gives weighty reasons for so doing. Poverty here means that degree of destitution which debases the soul and leads down to the grosser vices, a condition which he expresses in this vigorous and concrete phrase: "Lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." He dreaded that degree of fullness which might lead him to deny the Author of all his mercies, and to ask, as Pharaoh did, "Who is the Lord?" and as much did he deprecate that abject poverty which would drive him to profanity toward God, and to acts of dishonesty toward men. "Feed me with food convenient for me," is his prayer.

Here is Christ's endorsement of this prayer of his ancient and almost unknown servant—this prayer, inspired by his own Spirit, and recorded in his own Word, for every one of us.

"Take no thought for your life—(he means anxious, distressing, disturbing thought)—what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; 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. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'Wherewithal shall we be clothed?' for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

The power of human language can go no higher than this, and assurance cannot be made stronger than no one who complies with the conditions here expressed can sink to abject poverty. His word is sure and abides forever; for he says in another place, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." They are ever fresh, ever new. Although first uttered in the hearing of the people who gathered around him on the mount more than eighteen hundred years ago, they come to us in our homes, and amid our toils and troubles, just as if he had uttered them for the first time.

In speaking of the birds, the Saviour says, "They sow not, neither do they reap." To do either is beyond their power. Still their Maker requires of them to do what they can. As the Psalmist beautifully expresses it, "That thou givest them they gather." In like manner he requires of his children to do what they can. The birds obey him cheerfully and without anxiety, and so must we, if we would embrace the promise and enjoy the blessing. David, in the 37th Psalm, bears cheering testimony to the providential care and kindness of our Heavenly Father who knoweth that we have need of these things. He says, "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous

forsaken nor his seed begging bread." The Bible is full of declarations and promises to the same effect.

So we see that Agur prayed for just what Jesus promised, which shows us the wondrous harmony of the inspired Scriptures. He prayed for things calculated to make him a good and happy man. He prayed for that condition best adapted to a life of faith and a perpetual trust in God, and one in which he could best glorify God in this life, and enjoy him forever in a life to come.

The Bible is rich in expressions of faith and trust in regard to the commonest things of this life ; and could people only go to God in a simple, child-like confidence for everything that they really need just at the time—not for a distant old age or a possible contingency, but for something needed just then—there would be much less anxiety, much less greed and covetousness, much less contention about property, much less of those things against which Agur prayed—poverty and riches. More faith about common things would cause more contentment, more happiness, more prosperity, more brotherly kindness, more clarity. It makes us feel the fatherhood of God, and leads us up to those higher and more blessed hopes which take hold on eternal life and on the great atonement. It enables us to toil with cheerfulness, to wait with patience, to receive what our Father is pleased to give with thankfulness, and to submit to crosses with the glad assurance that it is well, and that the Lord chastens us because he loves us.

Socrates.

THIS purest, wisest, and simplest of the philosophers of ancient Greece lived at Athens between four and five hundred years before the birth of Christ. That city was then at the zenith of its intellectual supremacy; yet its moral and political degradation was never greater. The Sophists reigned supreme in the domain of philosophy and morals; while, for a time, the thirty tyrants outraged in every possible way the rights and liberties of the people. It was at this epoch that Socrates appeared as a reformer.

In person he was extremely uncouth and ungainly. Alcibiades compares him to a satyr in his outward appearance. "But I know not," says he, "if any of you have ever seen the divine images which are within, when he has been opened and is serious. I have seen them, and they are so supremely beautiful, so golden, so divine and wonderful, that everything which Socrates commands surely ought to be obeyed, even like the voice of a god."

Socrates founded no school, no system of philosophy. He delivered no set discourses, and had, strictly speaking, no disciples. He went about the streets, the markets, and other places of concourse, and talked with all who would listen to him. Rich and poor, single individuals or multitudes, were treated with equal consideration. His sole object was to guide the minds of his hearers into truth, and to deliver them from the dominion of error both of doctrine and practice.

In early life he was a soldier, and, as such, none surpassed him in bravery or endurance. He was a senator, and alone braved the wrath of the thirty tyrants in a noble effort to save the lives of some men unjustly accused, and

only failed because he himself was deposed. He never sought wealth or position, but led a humble and frugal life; yet he was by no means an ascetic, much less a stoic. Eminently urbane, and gifted beyond all men with high social qualities, he devoted his powers as a conversationalist to the sole purpose of imparting wisdom and leading those with whom he held intercourse into the paths of truth and virtue, and into a higher and purer religious faith.

It is not probable that Socrates had any knowledge of the teachings of Moses and the prophets; and as he lived several centuries before the incarnation of the Son of God, he, of course, had no knowledge of that Greater Light. We may ask, therefore, as did the neighbors of our Redeemer, "Whence had this man this wisdom?" It is a remarkable fact that Socrates believed himself to be the subject of supernatural guidance or instruction. This impression has led many learned men into the belief that he supposed himself to be accompanied by a demon, or good angel. But this is an error; for Socrates, according to the best authorities, did not believe this to be a distinct being, but a spiritual "something," a *sign*, a *voice*, a *divine sign*, a *divine voice*." "This divine voice," says Mr. Lewes, in his Biographical History of Philosophy, "was only an *occasional* manifestation, and exercised only a *restraining* influence. On the great critical occasions of his life, if the voice warned him against any step he was about to take, he unhesitatingly obeyed it; but if the voice was unheard, he concluded that his proposed step was agreeable to the divine will. "This (continues that excellent writer,) is his own explicit statement; and surely in a Christian country, abounding in examples of persons believing in direct intimations from above, there can be little difficulty in crediting such a statement. Socrates was a profoundly religious man. . . . Unless we conceive him a profoundly re-

ligious man, we shall misconceive the whole spirit of his life and teaching."

Socrates, in the midst of polytheism, plainly and distinctly avowed his belief in one supreme Deity, the Creator and Upholder of all things, and spoke of "those divine secrets which may not be penetrated by man, and are imparted to those alone who consult, who adore, who obey the Deity. Then shalt thou understand there is a Being whose eye pierceth throughout all Nature, and whose ear is open to every sound; extended to all places; extending through all time; and whose bounty and care can know no other bound than those fixed by his own creation." This noble sentiment exactly corresponds with that of the Psalmist: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Again he says: "He who raised this whole universe, and still upholds the mighty frame; who perfected every part of it in beauty and in goodness; suffering none of those parts to decay through age; but renewing them daily with unfading vigor, whereby they are able to execute whatever he ordains with that readiness and precision which surpass man's imagination; even he, the Supreme God, who performeth all these wonders, still holds himself invisible; and it is only in his works that we are capable of admiring him." Now who shall assert that in this almost divine philosophy there is *no* divine inspiration, or that its author was not a true worshiper of God?

Until the age of forty the character of Socrates was extremely dissolute; but whether his change may be termed a conversion, or only a reformation of manners, is a question I shall not undertake to determine. He was what we are pleased to call a Heathen; but he was a sincere lover of, and searcher after, Truth. And so was Cornelius. Socrates had access to no written revealed truth: Cornelius had some. The prayers of Cornelius, while yet unenlightened,

came up with acceptance to the throne of God. Dare any man assert that the prayers of Socrates were not accepted? Of each it may be said, "He did what he could."

It might be both interesting and profitable to trace the resemblances and the contrasts between Jesus and Socrates. Both were teachers of truth. Both instructed the people wherever they met them. Both went about doing good; and both came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Both were meek and lowly in heart; yet both were fearless in the utterance of truth, whether men were pleased or displeased. Both excited the bitter enmity of those who did not love the truth; and both at length became martyrs to the truth they taught. Both were heard gladly by the common people; and both, while they lived, had a few devoted followers. So much for their points of resemblance. Now for the contrasts.

Socrates was a mere philosopher, and he took his place amongst men in the midst of superstition, darkness, error and corruption, with no light, no guide, so far as we can see, except human reason. He groped in the dark after truth, and it came to him, first as conjecture, then as opinion, then as conviction; and, considering the circumstances, his success was wonderful—so wonderful that many are constrained to believe that God was pleased to give him light that he himself knew not of. Jesus, on the other hand, came from Heaven to earth, not to seek light, but to give light. He was the light of the world. He came not to find Truth; for he himself was the Truth. Socrates reasoned; Jesus did not need to reason. Socrates, by laborious mental processes, formed theories, and then uttered them as opinions; Jesus never uttered an opinion—with him nothing was conjectural. Socrates was among the humblest of men, and claimed no superiority over others; for he knew and felt that he was nothing but a weak

and sinful man. Jesus boldly claimed equality with God, and demanded of men a degree of love and devotion which only God can rightfully claim. And finally, "Socrates died like a philosopher, but Jesus Christ like a God." As far as the Divine rises above the human, so far does Jesus rise above Socrates.

Jonah's Gourd.

"THE fashion of this world passeth away," says the apostle. Man's works, like himself, are destined to sure, and often rapid, decay. We dwell in the midst of a revolution, change succeeding change with kaleidoscopic swiftness.

"My days," says Job, "are like a weaver's shuttle;" and James asks, "What is your life?" and, in answer to his own question, says, "It is even a vapor, which continueth for a little while and then vanisheth away." And as a man's days are, so are his works, so are his earthly possessions, and the things on which he has bestowed his utmost wisdom, his best skill, and in which he places his greatest confidence. When compared with the days of eternity, what is the difference between the pyramids of Egypt and Jonah's gourd? Nor was there much difference in the estimate put upon them by their several proprietors.

The gourd perished quickly; but Jonah remains among us, a familiar personage, perverse and fretful, it is true, but still a true prophet, one of the redeemed, and one in whose truly imperishable history God has traced many of the glorious lineaments of his own character; and shown us how much perverseness, selfishness, and even cruelty, may still lurk in the bosom of a true believer. The pyramids remain; but where are their builders? Their inward thought was that

their works should continue forever and their dwelling-places to all generations. They called their lands after their own names. But, although their works remain, their history—nay, their very names—have perished. And although the labors of archæologists have thrown a little light upon Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities, it is only sufficient to render the darkness visible, the oblivion more appalling.

Joseph lived in Egypt about the time that the pyramids were built; but he built no pyramids. He did not write his name upon marble; but God stamped upon him the seal of immortality by causing Moses to write a few words in a book. Joseph still lives in that inspired record. He seems to mingle with us at our firesides. We see the anguish of his soul when he pleads with his cruel brethren. We follow him through his trying fortunes in Potiphar's house and in the prison. He stands in our presence before Pharaoh. We feel honored in his advancement to honor and power; and when his brethren come, we too, like him, feel as if we would fain seek a place to weep; and before the story is over, Joseph has ceased to be regarded by us as a great man who lived and flourished more than three thousand years ago. Our hearts become knit to his heart, and almost unconsciously we enroll him among the number of our intimate and beloved friends. How flat, cold, perishing, and dead are all the records of Thebes, Palmyra, Babylon, Nineveh, and Rome, although laboriously sculptured in marble, when compared with the records of the pen of inspiration! Those, like their authors, appear and are admired for a little while, and then vanish away; while these remain in imperishable lustre, ever fresh, ever new.

In the short but impressive history of Jonah there is much that, properly considered, comes home with power to our own hearts. It is a mirror in which we may see ourselves. His reluctance to bear the testimony which God gave him

to proclaim is well calculated to remind us of our own backwardness to rebuke, exhort, and warn those by whom we are surrounded, and who we are persuaded are yet unreconciled to God and exposed to his wrath. His unfortunate voyage to Tarsus, in direct disobedience to the divine command; the severity of God in sending a tempest to arrest his progress, and his wonderful deliverance from death, all attest the goodness of our Heavenly Father in his dealings with his wayward and disobedient children. Happy are they whom the Lord chasteneth, because it is an evidence that they are the objects of his love. Even in the belly of the fish Jonah experienced this delightful truth; for after he had uttered his complaint and prayer, he exclaims, "I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that which I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

A second time the Lord sends Jonah to Nineveh to denounce against it the sentence of destruction within forty days. This time Jonah went. His prophecy was uttered in a few ungracious words; but God accompanied his own word with power; and, contrary to Jonah's expectation or wish, the people humbled themselves and repented, and God had mercy upon them and spared them and their city. "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry."

In this bad temper Jonah went out of the city to a place where he supposed he could watch the event in safety, and where he could indulge in solitude his chagrin at the failure of his prophecy. But, while dwelling in his lonely booth, one of those hot, scorching winds, common in the East, prevailed, and distressed him greatly. To mitigate his sufferings, God caused a gourd to spring up in a single night; so the next day Jonah reposed with some comfort under the refreshing shade of its broad leaves; "and Jonah was ex-

ceedingly glad of the gourd." He loved his gourd and set his heart upon it, just as we set our hearts upon objects almost as transient, and perhaps really not so satisfying. Jonah's regard for his gourd was the offspring of unmitigated selfishness; so was his chagrin at the mercy of God in sparing the city. Having proclaimed that in forty days Nineveh should be destroyed, his credit as a prophet was concerned in having it come to pass; and rather than that should suffer, he was willing to witness the death or captivity of two hundred and fifty thousand people. Is there any trace of this bad feeling in our hearts when we think and talk about certain nations which we regard as ripe for destruction?

But, as the people of Nineveh repented, the Lord suffered not the destroyer, whatever it might have been, to visit the city; but he prepared a worm to smite the gourd. It was not done to punish Jonah, but to teach him an impressive lesson; to teach him how frail and transient are the things of earth; to show him how selfish and cruel he was, and how merciful and gracious God was in sparing Nineveh; to wean him from the perishing objects of earth, and lead him to seek a better rest than he could find under the shadow of his gourd. Are we not continually receiving similar practical lessons at the hand of our heavenly Guardian and Guide? Mercy spared Jonah as well as Nineveh; but smote the gourd of which he had made an idol.

We, too, are often "exceeding glad" of a wife, or child, or house, or office, or calling, or some object,—an object good in itself, as Jonah's gourd was—but upon which we bestow inordinate affection. Now, if we are so happy as to be of the number of those whom the Lord loveth, he will be likely to send a worm to smite our gourd, whatever it may be. In no way does God more richly bless his people than in blasting their gourds. It was good in him to cause the

gourd to spring up to shelter and comfort poor Jonah; but it was better, seeing that it had become a snare to him, to take it from him.

But Jonah's gourd may serve as an emblem not only of our possessions, but of ourselves. "We all do fade as a leaf." "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men." But in this he is good, seeing he has prepared for us a better and a more enduring inheritance. In man, and in everything pertaining to this life, our Maker has sown the seeds of dissolution. "Passing away" is inscribed upon all things with which we are surrounded. Man himself, his institutions and governments, his earthly possessions, and the most perfect and stable of his works, are all, like Jonah's gourd, tending to decay and death.

"The fell disease, which must subdue at length,
Grows with their growth and strengthens with their strength."

Spiritual Stores.

WE cannot all become rich in a worldly sense. Many seek to become so, but are not able. It is not so with regard to spiritual riches. Here, whosoever will may become rich by taking of the water of life freely. "Let him that hath no money come and buy wine and milk, without money and without price."

Come where? Where is this wine and milk,—this water of life? Ah! we all need the admonition that Paul gave to the Romans:—"Say not, Who will ascend up to heaven—that is to bring Christ down from above? . . . but . . . the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart." Nothing is nearer, nothing more accessible, than this rich

supply so freely offered. It is not away up in heaven, beyond our reach; it is not afar off, in some vague, dreamy region, of which we can form no definite conception; but in our hands,—in that blessed book whose treasures of wisdom and grace can never be exhausted.

But if we only look at a richly-spread table, it will not satisfy our hunger; nor will the mere report of wealth make us rich; so the mere reading of the Scriptures will never satisfy our spiritual wants. We must appropriate them in humble, child-like faith. The bare knowledge that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life," will do us no good. We must comply with the condition. The affecting narrative of blind Bartimeus will profit us nothing unless it causes us, as poor, blind creatures, to run to the same Saviour with the same cry. What benefit is it to me to know that Jehoyah was David's Shepherd, unless I am able to adopt David's language as my own? By that appropriation I am placed beyond the reach of want, or fear, or any evil. I too may look forward to a comfortable life and a happy immortality. When I read the gracious words, "I am the Lord thy God," and can feel that he is speaking to me, then I drink of the water of life freely.

How rich, how blessed, is he whose memory is well stored with the words of eternal truth! It is a treasury from which he can draw in every time of need. While engaged in the duties of his calling, they will be floating through his mind, exerting a sanctifying influence, even when he is almost unconscious of it. They will enable him to resist temptation, to bear up under the trials of life, and in his most sequestered hours they will be with him, as friends and companions, to give form and expression to his holiest thoughts.

We think in language; but, unless the words of inspira-

tion come to our aid, how cold, feeble, confused and indefinite are our spiritual meditations! Well, then, if the words of God are not in our memories, how can we meditate? Nay, how can even the Holy Spirit operate upon our souls? The Saviour says, "My words, they are spirit and they are life." And again: "He (the Comforter) will take of mine and show them unto you." But where shall he get them, if they are not read, or not treasured up in the mind? Here, then, we are to come. Here are the wine and milk. Here is that which will make your soul delight itself in fatness. These are the words of God, upon which the soul feeds, as the body feeds upon bread. This is the great storehouse from whence we must draw our supplies. It is not enough that we look in and admire its fullness. We must draw upon it for ourselves,—continually, diligently, earnestly. Like Bunyan's Pilgrim, we must carry the roll in our bosom, so as to have it always near, always ready.

Types.

God, in all his works, points upwards, through an almost infinite range of being, beginning in the rudest and lowest forms of organic matter, and rising through order after order, until the line of progression terminates in himself. In the lowest orders of animal existence we find some of the rudimental lineaments of man, who is the head and crown of the animal series; so in man we behold the image of God,—rudimental, it is true, and but feebly developed; still real and unmistakable.

We may go to the lowest orders, and there we shall find not only analogy in structure, but some traces of intelligence, faint shadowings forth of mind, the power of choice

and of design, and the possession of as much skill as the necessities of the creature require ; all of which teach us that in the fullness of life, as well as in death, we may, with Job, say to the worm, "Thou art my mother and my sister ;" for we are all made on one common plan ; we are all links of the same chain ; we have one common type ; we are the creatures of one common Father, who is of one mind and changeth not.

The man Adam was the type of man in every age and condition. In his primitive state of innocence he stood as the type of Him by whom and for whom he and all things were made. Having sinned, he fled from the divine presence ; and there we see him as the type of a fallen, rebellious and ruined race. Being recalled, we behold in him the type of all penitent sinners ; the lineaments of the saints of all ages.

In the quarrel of Cain with Abel we have a striking type of the opposition which the world has ever shown to Christ and his kingdom ; and the terrible cry heard four thousand years afterwards in the streets of Jerusalem, "Away with him ! Crucify him !" was but the utterance and culmination of the same spirit. In Adam we see a type of all the world ; but in his two sons we have an emblem of the world divided.

The Ark is a striking figure of Christ, and Noah and his family of the great family of the redeemed. In the whole story of the flood, as given in the Bible, we have not only a simple and graphic narrative of facts, but these facts are themselves allegorical, setting forth, as in a parable, the great work of salvation.

In the call of Abraham we have a lively type of that call which brings us from the kingdom of nature to that of grace,—from Satan to God. At once the father and the exemplar of the faithful, his history is an ever-brilliant index to direct pilgrims of all ages in their path to heaven.

The exodus from Egypt is a vivid type of our deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan, and of our introduction to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And the journeyings of the Israelites in the desert, their wanderings, their rebellions, and the many mercies and chastenings of which they were the subjects, are all wonderfully emblematic of the Christian's life, from the moment of his espousals to the close of his conflict with temptation without and corruption within, until, crossing the Jordan of death, he arrives safely in the Promised Land.

In the history and writings of David we see, as in a mirror, every phase of a believer's life and experience. We see Faith—beautiful, simple, child-like Faith—embodied, and living and acting before us. We listen enraptured to his lofty praise, and sympathetically catch his fire. In his grievous sins we discover the frailty and the hidden evils of our own hearts; and in his deep penitence we learn how to repent of our own sins. In sorrow and in joy, in the gloomy vale and on the sun-lit mount; whether lying at the portals of hell or standing at the gate of heaven, this man after God's own heart, this impulsive creature of circumstances, this pilgrim whose path to glory traversed the utmost extremes of Christian experience, is at once our most prominent exemplar and beacon; and his words are to all ages the common property of the church.

In the history of the long line of subsequent Judean kings, the thoughtful Christian will not fail to discover a type of his own alternate lapses and restorations; and in grateful remembrance of the goodness and faithfulness of Him who is his Guardian, Guide and Keeper, he will exclaim, "He restoreth my soul; He maketh me to walk in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

In all the history of man, as drawn by the pen of inspiration, the careful student will not fail to perceive that the

pictures are general as well as special ; that the characters are types of classes as well as individuals ; that God in his providence and his word has revealed to us more truth, more knowledge of himself and of ourselves, by means of living examples, than we could possibly receive in any other way. Faith, hope, and charity, joy and sorrow, benevolence and selfishness, truth and falsehood, fidelity and perfidy, patience and fretfulness, are set before us in living, breathing verity. And in the great centre of that system of grace and truth—JESUS CHRIST—all that is glorious in God and good in sinless humanity meet and blend, and shine with a lustre as far surpassing that of the greatest and best of men as the sun surpasses the dew-drop that glitters in his beams. Yet, glorious as he is, he is clearly and plainly set before us for our contemplation,—the God veiled in the man,—so that “we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

A Few Thoughts on Psalmody.

[The following was addressed several years ago to the editors of the *United Presbyterian*, and published in that excellent paper.]

MESSRS. EDITORS:—Will you permit an old correspondent, and a layman, who is outside of your particular communion, but who loves it nevertheless,—one who can and does admire your quaint old version of the psalms, yet who is at the same time persuaded that any sacred lyric which is in harmony with inspired truth may be sung with acceptance in the worship of God,—to have a little talk with your people on the much discussed subject of psalmody ?

I have seen evidences of dissatisfaction among some of you with your old metrical version of the psalms. This discontent is showing itself, not directly, but indirectly—not in finding fault with that version, but in efforts to get up a new one which is probably intended to supplement it—I shall not say to supersede it—one which shall be more in accord with language as we now use it. Will you allow me to say that, after careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the man is not now living who can make anything like as good a literal measured version as that. When that rendering of the Book of Psalms into metre was made, the English language was much more flexible than it is now, and could, without offense, be twisted into almost any form that the sense would admit of. That cannot be done now; and any attempt to do so by a writer of the present day would be simply ridiculous. Well, then, all that remains, in order to throw the psalms into the form of verse, is a resort to paraphrase; and who does not know that a close paraphrase is about the poorest stuff that ever a writer threw off? Milton, Burns, and other eminent poets tried their skill at rendering some of the psalms into verse; but not one of these versions ever found a place in any collection designed for use in public worship, or ever will. Addison wrote a free paraphrase of a part of the 19th psalm, which is a grand production; but so far is it from the words and ideas of the original, that we can hardly trace the one to the other.

I have seen a few recent productions which are intended to be literal renderings—first fruit of this much-talked-of effort to get up a new version; but really I have seen none that would bear criticism for one moment. Some of them are smooth enough—their rhythm is faultless; but the spirit and grandeur of the original are sacrificed in the process. Not so with the old version. I know that the “king’s

English" is somewhat distorted; but the magnificent spirit of the original is well preserved. Let us take the second stanza of the 15th Psalm, descriptive of a good man, and throw it into the form in which the writers put it:—

Who doth not slander with his tongue, nor to his friend doth hurt;
 Nor yet against his neighbor doth take up an ill report;
 In whose eyes vile men are despised; but those that God do fear
 He honoreth; and changeth not, though to his hurt he swear.

Take another. I need hardly tell any of your readers where to find it:

Such pity as a father hath unto his children dear,
 Like pity shows the Lord to such as worship him in fear;
 For he remembers we are dust, and he our frame well knows:
 Frail man! his days are like the grass, as flower in field he grows.

Can anything, in either prose or poetry, be more vigorous than the first, or more touchingly beautiful than the second of these quotations? The quaintness of the expression is a beauty rather than a deformity, and the spirit of the original is wonderfully preserved, although the exact order of the words is not slavishly adhered to. I tell you, friends and brethren, if you want a severely literal rendering of the Book of Psalms into English verse, you have it, and such a one as can never again be made. That version is something like Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, in that it never can become stale or antiquated, but will stand its ground from generation to generation, and be more and more admired as people advance in true taste and literary culture. Moreover, like Bunyan's matchless allegory, it can never be successfully imitated. I believe that in these things we can see God's finger,—that both these productions were brought forth just at the moment when our noble language had become rich, but was still sufficiently plastic.

You will observe, in the above quotations, that I have

thrown two lines into one. I believe that was the way in which the common metre Psalms were originally written ; and that subsequently the editors or printers of little psalm books broke the lines into 8's and 6's for convenience sake, leaving the alternate lines to begin with a small letter, a custom still adhered to, and which is peculiar to these psalms. This, however, is a matter of little importance ; but the two verses I have given above will show how they looked in the original form. In old times, when the custom was to "give out the lines," one of these long lines was read at a time, which was right. I remember an old gentleman who many years ago sometimes led the singing of the congregation of which he was a member, and who was such a stickler for old usages that nobody could persuade him to give out more than one line at a time. The effect of "giving out" the more modern short lines was almost ludicrous.

But much as I admire your venerable version, and much as I should wish to see it embodied in the collections of all true Christian churches, I think you err in confining yourselves altogether to it in the worship of God. If, however, a divine command can be shown for the exclusion of all uninspired compositions in this part of worship, let that be the end of all controversy ; but if any such command exists I confess that I have been unable to find it ; and therefore, in that liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free, I feel perfectly clear in embodying my desires or emotions in such language as this :—

Oh! for a closer walk with God,
 A calm and heavenly frame,
 A light to shine upon the road
 That leads me to the Lamb!

Or this :—

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
 Let me hide myself in thee;
 Let the water and the blood,
 From thy riven side which flowed,
 Be of sin the double cure—
 Save me from its guilt and power.

Or this:—

Just as I am—without one plea
 But that thy blood was shed for me,
 And that thou bidd'st me come to thee—
 O Lamb of God, I come !

That such words as these, gushing in song from contrite and earnest hearts, do not come up with acceptance into the ear of Him who delighteth in mercy, is what I find it impossible to believe. Our language is rich in such glowing devotional utterances, and I believe they are part of that living food which the Good Shepherd has strewn over the green pastures where he leads and feeds his flocks. So are the Psalms, so are the prophetic writings, and so, in a pre-eminent degree, are the words he himself spoke when he tabernacled amongst men. We cannot sing his precepts, nor his parables, nor the narratives of his life and death; but we can embody the spirit of them into song. This has been done; and dare any one say that it was done without his approbation and supervision, so far as the doctrines are true and the sentiments pure? Will any one say that He “from whom all blessings flow” had nothing to do in giving *Pilgrim's Progress* to the world? Yet who claims that it, in the strict sense of the word, is an inspired book? I think we may, without fear of error, thank God for *Pilgrim's Progress* as one of his good gifts; and if we can go that far, shall we err in feeling grateful to him for such a matchless English lyric as “Just as I am?” Pardon me,

then, for saying that I think the interdiction of the use of all human compositions in the praises of the sanctuary and the family is man's work, not God's; that it stands this day a lamentable bar to Christian cõmmunion and fellowship; and that, were it relaxed, the Psalms of David in metre—that good old version of which we have been speaking—would be more generally appreciated, and be more used than they are now. They would cease to be regarded by many as a mere shibboleth, the criterion of a party, and as such the objects of ignorant, unfriendly, because prejudiced, criticism.

I often write for the organ of my denomination; but I have never said anything through that medium on the subject of Psalmody, and I think I never shall; for I hold that if what I have said be true and right, that it is to you I ought to say it, and not to others. Let what I have said be tested, as the Bereans tried the preaching of the apostles—they searched the Scriptures to see if what they said was true.

Toplady and Wesley.

THE nearer Christians come to God in devotion, the nearer they come together in heart and sentiment. Two of the noblest and most imperishable hymns in our language attest this fact. I allude to "Rock of Ages," by Augustus Toplady, and "Jesus, lover of my soul," by Charles Wesley. These distinguished men, as is well known, were leaders of the two great schools in the Protestant world known as Calvinists and Arminians. Both were zealous in the support and defense of their respective views, and both abundant and successful in their labors to win souls to Christ.

They were contemporaries, and in the midst of their

labors just about a hundred years ago. It is said that they met one evening and debated with much earnestness and warmth the theological tenets upon which they differed, and that, after they had returned to their own homes, each composed a hymn. Toplady's soul gushed out in the sublime strains of his magnificent lyric; Wesley's, in the grandest and most melting verses to which his fine genius ever attained. They differed in debate; let us see how they flowed together in song. At the same time we may judge in what excellent spirit they must have debated.

Let Wesley speak first :

Jesus, lover of my soul,
 Let me to thy bosom fly,
 While the raging billows roll,
 While the tempest still is high.
 Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
 Till the storm of life is past;
 Safe into the haven guide;
 O receive my soul at last.

Now hear Toplady sing :

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
 Let me hide myself in thee;
 Let the water and the blood
 From thy riven side which flowed,
 Be of sin the double cure,
 Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Both these stanzas are fitted to express the highest devotion to which Christians may hope to attain on earth, and both are still sung with tears of penitence, hope and joy by both Calvinists and Arminians a century after Wesley's ransomed spirit flew to the bosom of Jesus, whom he loved so ardently and served so faithfully, and Toplady had "soared through tracts unknown" to his eternal rest. Yet they differ a little, and that little is characteristic of their respective

schools to this day. The Calvinist yearns for holiness, the Arminian for heaven.

Let us hear Wesley again :

Other refuge have I none,
 Hangs my helpless soul on thee ;
 Leave, ah ! leave me not alone,
 Still support and comfort me ;
 All my trust on thee is stayed,
 All my help from thee I bring ;
 Cover my defenseless head
 With the shadow of thy wing.

Glorious confession of the sinner's only refuge ! It is remarkable that the mind of the Calvinist should have been led to the same thought in the composition of his second stanza. Hear him :

Not the labor of my hands
 Can fulfill the law's demands ;
 Could my zeal no respite know,
 Could my tears forever flow,
 All for sin could not atone ;
 Thou must save, and thou alone.

There is but a shade of difference between these two impassioned utterances ; but the difference is the same as that already noticed. The cry of the Calvinist is still for righteousness, for salvation from sin ; while that of the Arminian is for support, comfort, and defense. In reliance upon Christ they are alike.

Now let us have Wesley's third stanza :

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
 All in all in thee I find ;
 Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
 Heal the sick and lead the blind.
 Just and holy is thy name ;
 I am all unrighteousness ;
 Vile and full of sin I am ;
 Thou art full of truth and grace.

Toplady, in his third stanza, expresses almost the same thought, but in more terse and vigorous phrase. Nothing in the English language surpasses it :

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

Now let us hear Wesley's closing verse :

Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to pardon all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of thee;
Spring thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity.

The introduction here of the figures of a fountain of life and of healing streams is not as happy as the more direct pleadings found in the preceding portions of the hymn, and are too declamatory for the profound devotion of the first three stanzas. Still these figures come home with power to many hearts, especially in that great communion of which the author and his illustrious brother were the founders. Toplady's close is surpassingly grand and impressive, especially where he returns so gracefully to his initial figure :

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eye-strings break in death;
When I soar through tracts unknown,
See thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

Thus we see how Calvinists and Arminians can harmonize

in prayer and songs of praise, although they may differ on some points of dogmatic theology, Toplady adheres to his one grand figure of Christ as the Cleft Rock, as his Hiding Place, his only refuge. He clings to him as the smitten Rock whence flowed the water and the blood which cleanse from all sin. Herein lies the power of his inimitable lyric. Wesley's more exuberant genius flits from figure to figure, and by so doing weakens his hymn, which, notwithstanding, is one of the sublimest in our language. I often think, if such be the songs of imperfect, sinful, dying men on earth, what must be the grandeur and devotion of the songs of the just made perfect in heaven!

In the foregoing article "Rock of Ages" is printed exactly as Mr. Toplady wrote it; not as it has been altered to its own hurt.

Mutilating Hymns.

IF the compilers of hymn books knew how much they vexed and annoyed people of good judgment and taste by the alterations they make in the phraseology of hymns—which not in one case out of twenty are improvements—they would forbear. What right have they to mutilate and change a hymn, and then put the name of the author to it? It is neither Christian, gentlemanly, nor honest, to say nothing of the outrage upon the original beauty and propriety of the language. Even "Rock of Ages" has not escaped the vandalism of these unpoetical spoilers. I shall mention a few cases as examples.

Montgomery's beautiful hymn on Prayer stands in many of our books—

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed;"

but that sweet and devout author was too fine a poet to put words together in such unnatural order. As the couplet fell from his hand it read thus :

“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered, or unexpressed.”

This, however, is but a mild example of these literary outrages.

Still more objectionable are the alterations in the original texts made by compilers of those little ephemeral music books for Sunday schools with which the country is inundated.

There is a hymn widely known, and very popular, beginning,

“One there is above all others,”

which stands in our books in four-line verses, and the same in thousands of memories. To me it always sounded disjointed and incomplete, as if the author had high devotional thoughts, but did not know how fully to express them. Yet the name of John Newton is appended to it. Here it is as Newton wrote it :

One there is above all others
Well deserves the name of Friend ;
His is love beyond a brother’s,
Costly, free, and knows no end.
They who once his kindness prove,
Find it everlasting love.

Which of all our friends, to save us,
Could or would have shed his blood ?
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconciled in him to God.
This was boundless love indeed ;
Jesus is a Friend in need.

When he lived on earth abased,
Friend of sinners was his name ;

Now above all glory raised,
 He rejoices in the same :
 Still he calls them brethren, friends,
 And to all their wants attends.

Could we bear from one another
 What He daily bears from us ?
 Yet this glorious Friend and Brother
 Loves us, though we treat him thus :
 Though for good we render ill,
 He accounts us brethren still.

Oh! for grace our hearts to soften !
 Teach us, Lord, at length to love !
 We, alas ! forget too often
 What a friend we have above :
 But, when home our souls are brought,
 We will love Thee as we ought.

The reader will perceive at a single attentive reading how essential the final couplet of each verse is to a full expression of its sentiment. Yet this spirited hymn has been sent down, shorn of these couplets, and otherwise mutilated, to all our churches and Sabbath schools, by men as destitute of poetic genius and taste as they are of honor or of fine moral sense ; for I hold that it is a violation of honor and of truth thus to tamper with and mutilate the priceless productions of such men as John Newton, and still continue to append their names to the tattered fragments they have given us.

I have said that even "Rock of Ages," has not escaped this vandalism. As Toplady wrote it, the fourth line of the first verse reads,

"From thy *riven* side which flowed,"

thus maintaining the figure of a cleft rock with which he sets out ; but these tinkers have changed *riven* to *wounded*,

and thus confused the figure; for a wounded rock is an absurdity.

In the third verse Toplady wrote—

“*Foul*, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.”

Our compilers, in their superior wisdom, have changed *foul* to *vile*, again marring a fine and appropriate figure.

Two alterations have been made in the last verse as it stands in our books. The author, in the second line, wrote—

“When my *eye-strings* break in death.”

At the time he lived there was a popular notion that, in the article of death, the eye-strings broke, and the dying person lost the power of vision; and hence Mr. Toplady so expressed the last moment of mortal life. The word, in some books, reads “*heart-strings*.” Others make it read,

“When my eye-lids close in death.”

I am not inclined to quarrel with these changes; for no sense, no figure, is marred by them. But in the very next line the whole sense is changed, degraded, and thrown out of the province of Christian faith by the change of a single word. Toplady wrote—

“When I soar *through tracts unknown*,”

which is one of the sublimest expressions ever penned by an uninspired man. He contemplated the flight of his disembodied spirit through the unknown, immeasurable tracts of space which intervene between this lower world and that other world where Jesus sits on the right hand of God, on the throne of judgment and of empire—that place which Stephen, the martyr, saw in vision; that place, that world, to which Paul was caught up and heard unspeakable words, and which was revealed in splendid vision to John on Pat-

mos. It was the journey, the soaring flight, which the author had in his mind when he wrote that magnificent line, and not his place of final rest. He knew where he was going. But these tamperers with things too high for them have made him say,

“When I soar *to worlds unknown* ;”

giving us the idea, in spite of any effort we can make to the contrary, of a wanderer among far distant and unknown worlds, “in painful search of what he cannot find.” Of course the man who made the alteration had no intention of making the words convey any such impression ; but why did he tamper with the original at all ? As the author gave it, it exactly suited the views and feelings of the most devout of Christian philosophers ; as *amended*, it would agree with the notions of an infidel philosopher ; for he would send the disembodied spirit as an explorer among “worlds unknown ;” while the Christian, in thought, sends him a redeemed and glorified child, to “the bosom of his Father and his God.”

In the Episcopal Hymnal this much-abused line is printed as the author wrote it. In the Presbyterian Hymnal it reads, “When I soar *through* worlds unknown,” which reminds one of Napoleon’s famous saying—“From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step.” In other respects the hymn is given correctly in that collection.

Use and Abuse of Sacred Song.

LONG before I reached the age of manhood my memory was stored with many of the choicest sacred lyrics, in which our language is so rich. Among the first that I learned—not as a task, but because its inimitable simplicity and beauty commended it to my affections and my taste—was the old rendering of the twenty-third Psalm :

The Lord's my Shepherd ; I'll not want.
 He makes me down to lie
 In pastures green ; he leadeth me
 The quiet waters by.

These devout expressions of penitence, desire, faith, hope, love, joy, peace, supply our own lack of utterance, and concentrate to a focus what would otherwise be vague and confused. When the soul is hungering and thirsting after righteousness, what can better express the desire than these words in which Watts renders one of the verses of the 119th Psalm :

Oh ! that the Lord would guide my ways
 To keep his statutes still ;
 Oh ! that my God would grant me grace
 To know and do his will !

This simple verse has been to me a priceless treasure ever since boyhood, and has many times expressed the most earnest aspirations—sometimes as the words floated in silence through the mind, sometimes as murmured audibly to a simple air.

“ When I can read my title clear
 To mansions in the skies,”

has been to me a fountain of living water since early life. One night, long ago, I embarked on a steamboat to return

home. My mind was full of anxiety, for never was I in the midst of darker adversity. The noise of the wheels and the quivering of the vessel, as it stemmed the strong current of the Allegheny, seemed to be in unison with my own brain as it struggled with its adverse surroundings, and together drove sleep from my eyes. Some time after midnight one of the firemen sung the entire hymn in a strong and melodious voice, to the good old air of Pisgah. Never before or since did I hear music so sweet and soothing as that; never did I taste such balm. It was like the voice of Jesus stilling the tempest. At once there was a great calm, and soon both mind and body found rest in sound and refreshing sleep. Whether the singer shared in the soothing influence of the blessed song I know not. I only hope that he did. But, whether he did or not, I thought then, and I think yet, that it was the Lord's ordering that the man should sing, and that I should be near enough to hear. I might write page after page of similar recollections; but I shall only speak of one more.

Nearly forty years ago I was living on a farm, and it required hard work and good economy to make both ends meet, as is the case this day with many a man who will read what I am now writing. We had a little church in the country, weak in every way. Our good pastor and the rest of us established an afternoon prayer-meeting. It was held in the afternoon, because a people so scattered could not well assemble after dark. One day, in harvest time, when the hour to meet came around, I was weary and exhausted; and although I felt that I would rather stay at home than walk two miles, still I felt that I must go, for I would be needed to bear a part in the service. I started. As I walked my heart grew hard and rebellious, and the evil one whispered that I only went to please the minister—that I was not going because I desired to worship God. In that

frame of mind I entered the house and took a seat among the few present. The minister soon after rose and read impressively the following hymn, which was then entirely new to me, although it is found in several collections published at a later date. Read it carefully, and see how admirably it met my case. As in the case of the fireman's song, God spoke to me through it, and gave me bread to eat, the strength of which I feel to this day.

I asked the Lord that I might grow
 In faith and love and every grace;
 Might more of his salvation know,
 And seek more earnestly his face.

'Twas he who taught me thus to pray,
 And he, I trust, has answered prayer;
 But it has been in such a way
 As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour
 At once he'd answer my request,
 And, by his love's constraining power,
 Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, he made me feel
 The hidden evils of my heart,
 And let the angry powers of hell
 Assault my soul in every part.

Nay, more; with his own hand he seemed
 Intent to aggravate my woe;
 Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
 Blasted my gourds and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this?" I trembling cried,
 "Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?"
 "'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
 "I answer prayer for grace and faith.

“These inward trials I employ
 From self and pride to set thee free ;
 And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
 That thou may'st find thine all in me.”

Immediately the peace which Jesus gives flowed into my soul like a river. I saw everything clearly. I saw why I had been thwarted in schemes which were well enough in themselves. I saw why the Lord had “blasted my gourds and laid me low,” and then permitted the adversary to assault me, and get up a tempest in my heart that had well-nigh wrecked me. I saw that all was well, and instantly I became one of the happiest of men. I was the first who was called upon to lead in prayer, and never was I better prepared to do so. The feeling was not so much one of exuberant joy, as of quiet peace and gratitude.

So much for the use of sacred song. Now a few words as to its abuse. In social circles of Christian people the singing of hymns is often introduced. It is a beautiful custom where it is done devoutly and with proper reverence ; but it becomes shockingly profane when it is intermingled with levity and giggling—when the missing of a note will cause a laugh to break out around the whole circle. It is dreadful to hear the name of God profaned by wicked men in their places of carousal, or in their broils ; but worse still

“To mock him with a solemn sound
 Upon a thoughtless tongue.”

Equally bad is it to degrade it to a mere artistic performance, as is, I fear, too often done by professional singers. Take, for example, the hymn last quoted, and sing it without proper thought and feeling, and it becomes a huge lie, an insult flung into the face of the Almighty.

I trust the reader will pardon the egotism of the above ; but it seemed to be unavoidable in this case. It is the testimony of an old man.

Rev. Joseph W. Henderson.

AMONG the pioneer ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Western Pennsylvania, there was one around whose memory cluster some of the earliest and fondest recollections of the writer of this sketch—I mean the Rev. Joseph W. Henderson, of Indiana county, Pa.

When that part of Pennsylvania was still known as the “Back-woods;” while Indiana county still formed part of old Westmoreland, (Westmoreland originally embraced all the south-western part of the State lying west of the mountains;) before the pack-horse had given place to the wagon in the transportation of supplies; when the log cabins of the pioneer settlers were scattered few and far between in that part of the country, Mr. Henderson, then in the prime of life, came at the call of two recently organized congregations and became their pastor, and never afterwards changed his place during life.

Mr. Henderson was born in Franklin county, Pa., in 1752. He was educated in the College of New Jersey, of which John Witherspoon, D. D., was then president, and graduated in 1776. The certificate of his graduation, bearing Doctor Witherspoon’s signature, is still in the possession of his daughter, Mrs. Lintner, of Blairsville. While he was yet in college, George Washington was called to the chief command of the army of the Revolution, and on account of some peculiar excellence in young Henderson, his fellow students, it is said, gave him the cognomen of Washington, and hence the W. in his name. This I have from a brief biographical notice of Mr. Henderson by the late Rev. Dr. Elliott.

Where or with whom he studied divinity I know not; but

he was licensed by the Presbytery of Donegal in 1779. He was one of the original members of the Presbytery of Carlisle, erected in 1786. In 1795, sixteen years after he became a minister, he crossed the mountains for the first time, and traveled westward as far as Kentucky, then just admitted to the Union as a State. After his return to his home in York county, Pa., he applied for a dismissal from the Presbytery of Carlisle to unite with that of Redstone. This was in 1798. He soon afterwards set out with his family for his future home, and in the year following accepted a call from the congregations of Bethel and Ebenezer, as before stated.

Bethel was about six miles south-west of where the borough of Indiana now is; Ebenezer was some seven miles south of Bethel. Each of these congregations, at an early day, erected a plain but substantial log "meeting house," and in these Mr. Henderson labored without thought of change, until the infirmities of age came as the Master's token that it was enough.

He purchased a farm near the Bethel church, upon which he continued to reside until his death, and from which he mainly drew his living. It was a good farm and was kept in excellent order. His family consisted of several daughters and only one son, with nearly all of whom I was well acquainted in early life. When I was there—and I was often there—the family occupied a commodious and rather handsome farm house, well and tastefully furnished, and a more intelligent, refined and agreeable family I have never seen. All his children became heads of families, and were distinguished for eminent piety and usefulness.

Mr. Henderson was a man rather above the average height, of delicate organism, well-formed and handsome. I only knew him as an old man; and that beautiful and benevolent countenance, with his silvery locks as a crown of glory, is so enstamped upon my memory, that I can set him before

me yet as clearly as ever. He was one of the most elegant and accomplished men I ever knew—a gentleman of the old school, of the Washington and Witherspoon type. He was one of those rare men who at once attracted and awed; in whose presence one felt at ease; and yet with whom no man would dare to take a rude liberty, or feel any inclination to do so. Pleasant, social, and at times playful, there was yet a dignity, a something so pure and sacred about him, that the very atmosphere which surrounded him seemed to be holy.

Mr. Henderson was a fine scholar, and his mind well stored with knowledge. His eloquence was chaste, not florid; but in his intense earnestness and tenderness of feeling lay his marvelous power over the hearts of his people. When I knew him his voice had become slightly tremulous, which improved rather than marred its music; and whether he prayed or preached, every fibre of the soul seemed to vibrate in unison with his solemn, silvery tones.

About 1823 his voice failed so far that he could no longer be heard in an ordinary sized church; but occasionally, for years, some of those old devoted friends who had grown up in spiritual life as his children, would prevail upon him to give them a discourse in a comparatively small room.

One winter day, about that time, traveling near his dwelling, I stopped, intending to make only a brief call. But he insisted that I should remain over night, which, not very reluctantly, I consented to do. I was at that time just about entering manhood. As I sat that afternoon, and that long evening, and part of the next day, listening to my venerable friend, as he narrated the incidents and trials of his early ministry, and related one instructive anecdote after another, drawn from what appeared to be an exhaustless store, I seemed to live a year in less than twenty-four hours. It was, I think, the richest moral and intellectual treat I ever enjoyed.

The most interesting part of his conversation was that in which he related his own experience in the extraordinary religious awakening, which passed over all this country like an epidemic, about the year 1802, accompanied by violent physical effects—tremblings, faintings, fallings, and strange nervous contortions, commonly called the “jerks.” Mr. Henderson told me that the first symptom of that great revival was a profound feeling of solemnity and earnestness, in which he and his people alike shared: He was enabled to preach and pray as he had never done before. Soon afterwards came those more violent manifestations of feeling, which sometimes found expression in passionate outcries, sometimes in total prostration, and sometimes in those spasmodic movements which in some cases carried those affected from one side of the church to the other. At times the tumult would become so great that he would be obliged to stop in the midst of his discourse.

At first he tried to check these strange manifestations of emotion; but this was impossible. He then did all in his power to moderate, and, as far as possible, regulate them. He was puzzled, perplexed and distressed. Whether the strange influence was from above or from beneath he could not tell. The subjects, however, manifested in their moments of calmness all the evidences of a genuine work of grace in the heart—true penitence and an earnest desire for pardon and salvation. Many found peace and joy in believing, and lived long afterwards as humble and consistent Christians, whose first religious impressions began in this strange manner.

In a condition of things so novel and so wild, it was to be expected that many irregularities would occur, and that persons of more zeal than wisdom would become intensely excited. Among the latter was a weak-minded, loquacious, but, I think, sincere man. I knew him well. One day,

while Mr. Henderson was making one of his most earnest appeals to the unconverted, he sprang to his feet and cried out, "That's for you, sinners!" "If Mr. — is going to preach, I'll sit down," quietly remarked Mr. Henderson. "Go on, sir! go on, sir; you're doing very well!" was the unembarrassed reply, and then he sat down. It is but right that I should remark that I had this anecdote from another source.

"He, being dead, yet speaketh," is written of one good man; and the same may be said of the good man of whom I am writing; for I verily believe that no man in the western part of Pennsylvania ever exerted a more powerful influence for good in the humble and comparatively limited sphere of his operations than did Joseph W. Henderson. To this day the impress of his gentle yet lofty spirit is traceable in that intelligent and Christian community to whose fathers and mothers he ministered. Well do I know the veneration in which he was held; the child-like confidence with which his teachings were received. I know how eloquent, how earnest, how loving were those messages; and I thank God that I was permitted to know, as a beloved father and friend, one who bore so bright and unblemished an image of Jesus.

Of the date of his departure to his everlasting home, to his crown and his great reward, I cannot speak with certainty, but I think it was about 1836. I left that part of the country in 1824. In January, 1826 or 1827, I met him for the last time; but his memory had so failed that he did not know me; and even when I was introduced I perceived that his recollection of me was confused. Thus partially withdrawn from earth, he continued until 1836, when the last trembling flicker of mortal life went out. I never was a member of either of his congregations, being geographically "outside of his bounds;" but I knew him well, and received many tokens of his paternal regard. I am glad,

therefore, that I am able, now after the lapse of more than half a century, to pay this tribute to the memory of a beloved and venerated friend of my youth.

Albert Barnes.

[Written just after his death was announced.]

THE brief but expressive record of the earliest of eminently good men is in these words: "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him." Almost the same record might be made of him whose name heads this article. Through a long and laborious life he walked with God, and now he is not, for God has taken him. In a moment, without pain, or any of the usual concomitants of death, he was called from the scene of labor to his everlasting rest; from a house of mourning on earth, to which he had gone as a comforter, to heaven where are fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore. It was very much like a translation. The earthly house of that beautiful spirit is left behind, it is true; but who can think of Albert Barnes as dead?

I esteem it one of the privileges of my life that I enjoyed, for a time, relations of close personal intimacy with this good man. I might say great man, for such in truth he was; but I prefer the other term; for I always felt, when in his company, or when recalling our pleasant intercourse, that his goodness far transcended his greatness. I first knew him in 1831, when the ecclesiastical storm which ruptured, for a time, the Presbyterian Church, was just beginning. For weeks I had been listening to the discourses of an eloquent champion of what he believed to be orthodoxy,

in which Mr. Barnes was fiercely denounced as a teacher of error. After a time I thought it but right that I should go and hear him myself and judge for myself, as to his erroneous utterances. I did go again and again. Never did I listen to sweeter, purer, or more persuasive gospel sermons. Not the slightest allusion was made from that pulpit to the storm that was raging around him. Soon afterwards I made his personal acquaintance, but did not become a member of his church.

In social life, Mr. Barnes was somewhat diffident—rather inclined to hear others talk than to talk himself. It was necessary to draw him on; but when once started he was one of the finest and most fascinating conversationalists I ever knew. Still his talk excited in kindred minds a feeling of love rather than of admiration, and this I attributed more to the expression of his countenance than to his words. I have often met him on the street and received his unspoken salutation, accompanied with a smile such as I never saw on any other countenance, man or woman. I suppose he was not conscious of it; but often has that smile so impressed itself upon my heart that I carried it as a sweet memory for days; and even yet I feel it. It made one think of heaven, for it was not like a thing of earth; and it helped me to think of the One who is altogether lovely.

It is not necessary for me to speak of his abundant labors as an author. Of his rising before day on winter mornings, walking several squares to his study in the First church, making his own fire, and then going to work with his books or his pen. Perhaps he overtasked nature. His health, however, did not fail, but his sight did. For a time he was nearly blind; but afterwards he so far recovered as to be able to move about and see his friends; yet not so far as to be able to read or write. Less than

three years ago he gave up his pastoral charge of the First church; but continued his labors as a preacher of the gospel up to the time of his death. His voice was still clear, although his eyes were dimmed; and his natural force was but little abated, although three-score and twelve years had passed over him.

He resided, for some years before his death, in a pretty retired dwelling, almost at the extreme western limit of West Philadelphia. It was there I last saw and conversed with him. His powers were in full play, and he seemed to be cheerful and happy. Before I took leave, he took me out to see his "farm," as he called it—about an acre, perhaps less. Part of it was nicely shaded, and all in good order. I congratulated him upon having so pleasant a place in which to spend the evening of a laborious life. He smiled sadly; admitted the beauty of his home; but remarked that being unable either to read or write, time often hung very heavy upon him. Active life had become to him a second nature, and it was plain that the deprivation of sight sufficient to enable him to continue his work as an author was a sore trial.

Mr. Barnes was slightly above the average stature of man, erect and very graceful in person. As a young man and as an old man, I thought him singularly handsome. The disease of his eyes was not at all apparent to an observer. As a preacher, he was plain and simple, although clear and powerful. His voice was not strong, yet so well modulated that he could be distinctly heard in all parts of the house. It was plain, earnest talk, rather than eloquence. Never have I heard prayers more humble and child-like than his.

Soon after my last interview with him, I received from him, by mail, two neatly printed discourses, published at dates ten years asunder—one entitled "Life at three-score," the other "Life at three-score and ten." Both are singularly impressive and touching—more cheerful than sad—

fuller of the joys of heaven than of the infirmities of earth. A few kind words in each, written with his own hand, to which his autograph is appended, render them now precious mementoes of my departed friend. They will doubtless now be republished, and I warmly commend them to all Christians, especially to those who have seen that length of days.*

Rev. John Black, D. D.

TRAVELING one day on a canal packet in the summer of 1848, I met for the first time the venerable John Black, D. D., of Pittsburgh. We had never met before, nor had we that day any introduction; but we soon drew together by a sort of mutual attraction. The doctor was a fine looking man and very genial, while his conversational powers were of the first order. Beginning with common-place remarks, as is usually the case with strangers, we soon glided into matters of the deepest moment.

The reader will remember that in the early part of that year (1848) there was a tremendous political commotion all over Europe, particularly in France. Louis Phillippe was driven from his throne, and was obliged to take refuge in England. The Pope fled from Rome, and became a refugee in one of the more southern cities of Italy. All the petty sovereigns of Italy and Germany were either deposed or compelled to give their people liberal constitutions; and the imperial throne of Austria was very nearly overturned. So fierce and so widespread was the storm that everybody thought the world had taken a new departure politically, and that democracy had triumphed over monarchy; while many

*Those two discourses were republished soon after his death.

were apprehensive that anarchy and wild misrule would ensue. Things were in this condition at the time I met Dr. Black. He was intensely interested in the situation; and well he might be, for it seemed to be a complete confirmation of the correctness of his interpretation of the prophecies made and preached thirty-two years before that time.

In 1816 he prepared and delivered in his church in Pittsburgh a sermon on that remarkable prophetic period of twelve hundred and sixty days (years) mentioned in the prophecy of Daniel and the Revelation under various phrases—"time, times, and a half"—(time, 1 year, 360 days; times, 2 years, 720 days; a half, 180 days, which, added together, make 1260). In Revelation this period is plainly stated to be 1260 days, and also "forty and two months." Assuming, as most commentators do, that this period began A. D. 606, it would close A. D. 1866, which was the year most Bible students had supposed that that period of "time, times and a half," "forty and two months," or "twelve hundred and sixty days," would expire. ($606 + 1260 = 1866$.)

This calculation is based upon the Julian year of 365 days and a fraction; but Dr. Black took the Jewish year of 360 days, which exactly harmonizes with Daniel's time, times and a half, as well as with John's "forty and two months." This taking off of five days from each year reduced the whole period, as the world now measures time, eighteen entire years, and brought the prophetic period to a close in 1848.

Well might the good old Doctor, in view of the events at that moment transpiring, be both excited and elated. As we sat by the table in the cabin of the boat, he gave me his argument in detail, and then invited me to call at his house the following day and he would give me a printed copy of that famous sermon preached thirty-two years before. I did call, and had another pleasant interview. He gave me a

copy of the pamphlet sermon, printed by John M. Snowden, with copious notes and references. I subsequently loaned it to a friend, and he, I suppose, to another friend; for it never found its way back into my hands.

“Now, Doctor,” said I, “on the assumption that you are correct in your interpretation, may we hope that we are in the dawn of the Millennium?”

“Oh, no,” he replied; “it will require a period of not less than thirty years of turmoil, uproar and war to sweep away the rubbish. But things will never again be as they have been.”

These are very nearly his words. He did not live to see the apparent reaction of despotic power as we saw it, but died in the full persuasion that his interpretation was correct; for in the fall of that same year he passed over to where men do not “see through a glass darkly.”

But was he not right after all? That was a very remarkable year, and things then got an impulse which is not yet expended. That first sudden and tremendous wave of revolution rolled back, as waves always do; but others followed, and mighty changes have taken place since that year in both Europe and America. His thirty years are not yet up, and the world is moving rapidly, and reeling to and fro like a drunken man. I think he was right; and that that remarkable prophetic period did terminate in 1848. Up to that time the strong man armed had kept his goods in comparative peace. Rome then sat as a queen apprehending no sorrow, and the shackles which bound the slave were very strong. Now the slave is free, and the Pope, if we may take his own word for it, is a prisoner. At all events he is no longer a prince. The rubbish, as Dr. Black expressed it, is being swept away as fast as the world can well bear it.

In this work of sweeping away rubbish every man and every woman can do something, either in the State, the

Church, or in social life. Fifty years ago sectarian jealousy and exclusiveness constituted a formidable pile of rubbish over which Christians were hardly able to climb. Now that has nearly all been swept away. The same is true of national exclusiveness the world over. War is not the only great force in this world. God alone is able to estimate the power of the quiet but multitudinous influences now at work.

Working Together for Good.

[Written by the author, as editor of the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, in 1865.]

THERE are times when the Supreme Ruler seems to leave nations for years and generations to work out their own destiny and shape their own policy, without any manifest interposition on his part—bestowing upon them the common blessings of his providence, and affording all mental, moral and physical power needful for their prosperity and happiness—and then permitting them to exercise their powers wisely or unwisely, righteously or unrighteously, as they please.

This was the condition of the United States, as a nation, from the close of the Revolution until the beginning of this war. Never was there a theatre upon which human wisdom and skill had freer scope, or so grand an opportunity. All that men could do to bring about great and beneficent results was done. Never did the world witness such rapid development, or such marvelous prosperity. Population, wealth, intelligence, science, skill, refinement and civilization advanced together; and not without cause we became self-complacent and exceedingly proud of our glorious country.

But during this time human wisdom was sadly at fault in some things. To secure peace, purity was sacrificed; and principle was made to bend to expediency. Things which in their very nature were antagonistic were bound together and *forced to harmonize*. The Constitution, the prime object of which was "to secure the blessings of Liberty," was at the same time made to be the guarantee of human bondage; and this unnatural commingling of discordant powers was termed, in party phrase, one of the "compromises of the Constitution." These active, undying, antagonistic principles could not and did not co-exist in peace. Men ardently desired peace, and, to obtain it, entered into compromise after compromise, but all in vain.

At first it was hoped that the good principle would overcome and extirpate the evil—that Slavery would gradually die out; but instead of this it grew in power and arrogance until it became the ruling spirit of the nation. To oppose it was regarded as treason to the Constitution; and to ask for its abolition was tantamount to open rebellion. From the clear, beautiful light in which we now stand, it makes one shudder to look back to the darkness and degradation of 1850 to '55, when the Fugitive Slave Law was enacted, when the Missouri compromise was repealed, and the Dred Scott decision pronounced. We had then sunk as deep as we could sink and yet retain vitality enough to rise again.

Then it was that God interposed by letting loose upon the plains of Kansas that which the Bible so expressively denominates "the wrath of man," and causing it to praise him, by giving new life to the nation. He permitted the opposing principles of Liberty and Slavery to be both aroused to intense activity and to grapple in deadly conflict. This war, so far as regards physical powers, began in Kansas; and the same spirit which animated the "border ruffians," applied the match to the cannon in Charleston harbor, waged a long

and furious war with the government, systematically tortured and starved our prisoners, and finally maddened the brain and nerved the arm of the assassin who took away the life of Abraham Lincoln. All these things were necessary to evoke a true and living patriotism, and a proper devotion on the part of the nation to the principles of Right, and Justice and Freedom—to raise us up from the depth to which we had gradually and almost imperceptibly descended—to open our eyes to the atrocious wrongs which millions of our people were enduring, and at which, for sake of peace, and in violation of our conscience, we were conniving—to teach us that there was a higher law than our constitution, especially when that constitution was so interpreted as to make it the minister of wrong and oppression.

God knew how to teach us, and he has taught us. He knew what we needed, and he has given it. He knew how to give the nation a new life, and it now rejoices in that life. He knew how to abolish slavery, and he has done it effectually. He knew how to lay the nation at his feet in sorrow, contrition and humble dependence, and that too he has done. Through all the way in which he has led us, his everlasting arm has been beneath us; his good providence has been over us; his counsel has guided us, and his Holy Spirit he has not taken from us.

A Strange and Touching Scene.

THE nervous system, as the medium for the conveyance of knowledge to the mind through what we call the senses—sight, hearing, touch, etc.—is a product of creative wisdom and skill surpassingly wonderful and past finding out to perfection. It seems to be the border-ground between matter and spirit, or, rather, the connecting link.

In the animal frame there are two important instruments, the eye and the ear, as dissimilar as any two things can well be, each of which is a channel through which accurate and well defined knowledge is poured into the soul from the world without. These are small, local and visible organs, fitted with infinite skill for their appropriate work; while touch is spread with greater or less delicacy over the entire sensitive system, without any located or visible organ, and is incapable of such accurate and definite perceptions as are the other two. Taste and smell are but adjuncts and peculiar manifestations of this latter power. To elevate them to places with seeing and hearing, as distinct senses, is hardly compatible with sound classification.

This being admitted, the number of the senses, in the strict meaning of the term, is reduced to three—sight, hearing, and touch, or perceptive feeling. All are parts of one grand system; yet each is distinct and has its appropriate office. It is a kind of trinity in unity; perfectly free from interference, yet harmonious, and, in a measure, compensatory. Let the first be absent, as in total blindness, and the other two, especially the third, are rendered wonderfully acute and efficient. If the second be absent, the accuracy and keenness of vision are so enhanced that the eye can read upon the flying fingers of an expert, in sign language, every word of a sermon as it falls from the lips of the speaker.

But the total absence of both these master senses leaves the soul enshrouded in fearful darkness. There are very few such cases. We have all read more or less of Laura Bridgeman, of Connecticut, who was deaf, dumb and blind, into whose thickly enshrouded soul the light and joy of heaven were made to penetrate. But as the reader probably knows as much of her case as I do, I shall not dwell upon it, but speak of another of the same kind which fell under my own observation some years ago. The vividness with

which that scene has come back to my mind within the past few days I accept as an intimation that I ought to give to the public this article.

On a visit to the asylum for the blind in Philadelphia my attention was called to a little boy about eight or ten years old, the prettiest child I think I ever saw—well-clad, healthy, bright, full of life, and, so far as the expression of his countenance went, happy. He was in the care of a beautiful young lady whose sole occupation was to care for and teach him, and to whom he seemed to be devotedly attached. But how was she to reach his mind, and wing bright thought into that deep darkness? Milton, in his grand lament over his blindness, in eloquent pathos exclaims—

“Wisdom at one entrance quite shut out!”

But here two entrances were hermetically sealed, and had been from birth or early infancy. But one entrance, that of touch, remained; and we all know how vague are the impressions which can be made through that. But never was I so impressed with the great principle of compensation which God has implanted in the human organism as I was as I gazed at that beautiful child and his equally beautiful teacher. There he sat in his chair, with his hand in hers, the open palm up. The fingers of her right hand played slowly over that palm. That was all. There was no speech nor language to bring back a response from the depths of that imprisoned infant soul to the feeble rays of intelligence which that gentle and loving touch sent into it. But still there were responses, quick and bright as electric flashes, the sweet eloquence of which was such that the memory of them, after the lapse of a dozen years, still fills the eyes with tears. The countenance of that boy was marvelously expressive. At one moment it would indicate deep attention and pleased expectation. His teacher would hold him in that posture

for a second or two, then another slight motion of those fingers would bring a glad smile, or a look of pleased surprise. Sometimes a shade of sadness would pass over that speaking countenance, to be quickly followed by a look or expression of peace and rest; and so on through all the gentler emotions known to the human soul.

I observed a correspondence between the expressions of countenance of teacher and pupil; but, as the latter was devoid of the power of vision, it was plain that the touch of the palm of the one by the fingers of the other was the only way by which that correspondence could be brought about.

How much knowledge that young lady was able to communicate to that boy's mind God only knows; for I do not suppose she knew herself. In some way her soul, her spirit, was put into communication with his through this only remaining avenue; and on her wings, if we may so express it, he was borne up and put into union with the Divine. I read in that countenance words which could not be uttered, as Paul heard such in Paradise. Whether thoughts which could be expressed in words had been awakened by those fingers; whether electricity carried emotions from the one to the other, or how the result was produced, we may speculate, but cannot certainly determine. But the fact that there was a lively communication was clearly established.

How Mineral Coal was Made.

THE generally received opinion among scientists is that mineral coal—anthracite, bituminous and cannel—is of vegetable origin. I believe this theory to be partly true and partly erroneous—that coal, as we find it, is in part composed of vegetable matter, but not entirely.

In the far-gone periods, when the sedimentary portion of the earth's crust was formed, especially in what is called the carboniferous period, the growth of vegetables was enormous. Remains of gigantic ferns are found in both rocks and coal. At that age there was probably no frost, for the earth and the sea were both warm. This warmth was in a great measure attributable to the still remaining heat of the globe. Some of it, to be sure, was solar heat. The atmosphere was then heavy and impure compared with what it is now. Evaporation from tepid seas, and from the earth, which was both moist and warm, would be very great, and rains would be heavy in the same proportion. Coarse vegetable growths, under such conditions, would vastly transcend anything known at present. Such copious rain-falls would turn a large portion of the earth's surface—which was less undulating than it is now—into bogs, marshes, fens and quagmires, such as still exist in many parts of the world. Peat beds are the remains of ancient vegetation which have not been covered by subsequent deposits of earthy matter, such as sand and clay. But where such vegetable accumulations were subsequently covered up, they generally became petrified, as is evident from the organic remains found in many sedimentary rocks.

But in some sections we find one or more strata of this ancient vegetable matter converted into coal instead of rock; and we may ask, why is this? Why was it not all converted into rock, or all into coal? Why did this vegetable matter lose all its carbon in one section and preserve it in another? and why do we find in mineral coal a measure of carbon far exceeding in quantity and richness that which is ever found in vegetables?

There are several mineral substances—I think purely mineral—the product, not of vegetation, but of condensed gases arising from the hot interior of the globe. These are

known by the several terms of naphtha, petroleum, maltha, &c., all pretty much the same thing, under different degrees of fluidity, and all of which may be classed under the generic term bitumen. Recent experience has shown us how abundant this product of internal distillation is, and that under the pressure of the gas, in connection with which it is always found, it often rushes up to the surface, through openings made by the drill, in great abundance and with immense force.

In the carboniferous period, when the earth was still warm, and its crust comparatively thin, it is reasonable to suppose that this bitumen, in the form of petroleum or naphtha, would be forced in great quantities to the surface, and saturate the extensive deposits of vegetable matter which filled fens and bogs and quagmires, combine with them, and in time form a stratum of coal. In this way the carbon of the vegetable matter would be preserved, and petrification prevented, and the two substances combined—as we see they are—would together form a seam far thicker than the vegetable matter alone could have made had it undergone petrification. In some coal we find thin layers of bitumen, which shows that there was more in some places than the vegetable matter could absorb.

The three varieties of coal, bituminous, cannel and anthracite, are only several conditions of the same thing. The first seems to be a combination of one of the more viscid of these mineral oils with vegetable matter. The second is vegetable matter combined with petroleum. The latter can, as we know from experience, be separated from the former with great facility by distillation. The third is simply bituminous coal converted into solidified coke by great pressure and long continued but not consuming heat. The volatile matter, which makes smoke and bright flame, is all expelled, leaving only fixed carbon.

In the western part of New Mexico there is a field of anthracite coal of good quality. It is only a few miles in extent; and on the same geological level there is a seam of bituminous coal in continuation with the anthracite. Why it was anthracite in one place and bituminous in another was a question that puzzled geologists, until Professor Le Comte, of Philadelphia, observed that the anthracite district had been whelmed with lava from an ancient but now extinct volcano, and that the heat and pressure of the lava had changed the coal beneath it from bituminous to anthracite.

The study of these things, from the stand-point of science and observation, is very interesting; for in them we see the hand of God laying up valuable stores for the use of man millions of years, it may be, before his foot pressed the soil of this planet—not creating coal by the immediate word of his power, but bringing together and combining things as different in their origin as primitive vegetation and the fumes arising from the internal fires of the globe.

The Gloom and Glory of Human Life.

SOLOMON, with all his condensed and sententious wisdom, was a poet of the highest order. In the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes we have an example of this phase of his genius as terse as it is grand. In such passages we see how the Spirit of God made use of natural genius, as a master of music would draw from the quivering strings of a fine instrument strains which seem to be more than those of earth. God played upon the poetic soul of David, and the sweet music has reverberated through the world for more than twenty-eight centuries, and will to the end of time. And the same is true of Solomon in his peculiar way, and also of the prophets.

Having led his pupils through every phase of life, gathering wisdom and instruction from everything, he leads them back to the Creator, ere the sad days of waning life shall settle down as a thick cloud upon every soul whose hope is bounded by this life. Let us hear him:

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them!”

Well may the wise man call the days of the poor worldling evil, whose powers of acquisition and of enjoyment are over, and to whom no sure hope gilds the undiscovered, the almost unthought of, beyond. Then in a burst of poetic eloquence, and in figures which no other man would have dared to use for such a purpose, he paints the breaking down of the human frame:

“In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves.”—What a picture we have here of an old man’s trembling hands and feeble, tottering legs!

“And the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened.”—Teeth gone, and eyes that have worn themselves out in the service, so dim, that the world, so long and so keenly sought after, is shrouded in deeper and deeper gloom.

“And the doors shall be shut in the streets; when the sound of the grinding is low; and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird; and all the daughters of music shall be brought low.”—Sight, hearing, voice all going or gone. All that remains of the man is but a battered wreck.

“And when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way.”—This is one of the saddest characteristics of the old age of those who have not remembered their Creator in the fullness of their powers. The poor, dried up heart is filled with dread of some impending

evil, real or imaginary—poverty, loss, fire, thieves, or death.

“And the almond tree shall flourish.”—Hoary locks.

“And the grasshopper shall be a burden.”—The last degree of feebleness.

“And desire shall fail.”—Lower and lower goes the descending scale, until the man “goeth to his long home,” the grave; for this sad picture goes no higher, no lower. “The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it.” There is no life and immortality in the fearful delineation of “the evil days” which Solomon has given us. He confines himself entirely to man as a mortal, to man in his natural state, destitute of that undying principle which is found only in union with the Divine Nature through faith. He describes that which Jesus speaks of in these words: “I am the vine, ye are the branches. . . . If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered;” and hence his exhortation, “Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”

Now let us turn to the bright side of the picture. Let us hear the language of Faith as it echoes down through the ages—not in abstract terms, but in the utterances of living, suffering, dying, yet triumphing witnesses. Let us see the life of heaven rising in power and glory over the mortality of earth.

Jacob in Egypt, utterly worn out, and, so far as he was a mortal man, suffering all the evils which Solomon has so graphically portrayed, rises to all the grandeur of a prophet, blesses his sons; and, as the light of a better world flashes upon his enraptured soul, exclaims, “I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!” Compare this scene with anything we know of Jacob in the vigor of his manhood, and how surpassingly better, higher, and grander it is!

Job, crushed under the double burden of disaster and disease, mounts up in the strength of his God in whom he

had long trusted, and exclaims, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God—whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me!"

In these two cases, both of which occurred in the early dawn of revelation, we see, as no didactic teaching could ever show us, how the just live by faith; how the divine life, which comes to man through faith, rises above his natural life, and is only the stronger and more triumphant as the mortal powers weaken and perish. But mark: Jacob and Job were both sincere worshipers in their days of vigor and prosperity. As Solomon expresses it, they both remembered their Creator in the days of their youth; and these sublime utterances are but the fruits of their long continued union with the True Vine.

Asaph, in one of his psalms, tells us how he had been worried and perplexed when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, while he had been plagued and chastened every morning. But confessing that in all this he had been foolish and ignorant, and as a beast before his God, he bursts out in this song of triumph: "I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand; thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever!"

After a long and laborious life, Paul—"Paul the aged," as he himself expresses it—finds himself a prisoner at Rome, and being in the power of a persecuting tyrant, at last falls under sentence of death. So far as outward circumstances

are concerned he is in as deplorable a condition as a man could well be. He has reached his evil days; and if, as he himself remarked, in this life only he had hope, he is of all men most miserable. But how is it really with him? "Out of the depths" he utters a cry of triumph which has astonished the world for eighteen centuries, and sent consolation and joy to millions of believing souls, who have been able, with greater or less strength of faith, to adopt his language when they felt the powers of nature breaking down. "I am now ready to be offered, (he writes to Timothy in all the calmness of well established assurance,) and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing."

Many other examples might be cited, but let these suffice. They are enough to show us that what to the mere worldling are "evil days," as Solomon calls them, are, or ought to be, to the true Christian his brightest and best. To him there are no evil days; for when heart and flesh fail, God is the strength of his heart and his portion forever. As natural life ebbs away, his true life grows stronger and stronger. That old Christian, whose steps are beginning to totter, has lived far below his privileges if he is not happier than when his buoyant spirits cheered him in the days of his youth. With the assured love of his God and Saviour; with his labors and conflicts over; with his crown of righteousness in near prospect; and with his better and endless life just about to commence, why should the good old man—good because of his union with Christ, and because his sins are washed away in the blood of the Lamb—why should the good old man not be happy? Not with the bubbling, outgushing joy of childhood or youth, but with the deep, calm

peace which in the Bible is compared to the flow of a mighty river; while the other is like the noisy brawling of a mountain torrent—both beautiful in their places.

Growing Old.

WHEN a man reaches his seventieth year, the world around him says he is growing old, and he himself feels that it is true. “The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.” This is the mournful language of the most ancient of the psalms.

The writer of this article has reached this stage. As a mortal man he is not far from his end; for the strength which sometimes carries a man to four-score years is probably not his. His has been a life of toil, and trial, and many vicissitudes—cast down frequently, but not destroyed—troubled but not distressed—never forsaken, never in despair. The Lord has been my Shepherd and I have not wanted; for goodness and mercy have followed me thus far through all the days of my life.

But an old adage says, “A rolling stone gathers no moss.” True; but the abrasion which a stone gets in being tumbled about in turbulent waters may be better than moss. So I thought in earlier life and amidst unavoidable changes, and so I think yet. A moss-covered stone may be a cold, dead, rough, angular thing; and sooner or later its perishable covering will be stripped off, and then it stands out in all its native deformity. I rolled, or was rolled, painfully sometimes, and much against my will; but I felt then, and now I know, that this rolling rounded up my character so

that it could pass pretty well without moss. I knew all the time that God was leading me, and teaching me, and fitting me for some kind of service both on earth and in heaven; and that this was the school in which it had pleased him to place me.

Well, am I old? As a mortal man I am; as an immortal being I am not growing old. I never can be old. I think that is the right way to look at it. We never think of applying the term to the sun, although it may have existed through a longer period than any other object that comes within the range of our vision; nor do we ever talk about old angels; although when the Almighty laid the foundations of the earth they were there and shouted for joy; much less do we ever think of using that word when we speak of the Eternal God. The word old is only used when speaking of things which in their very nature are of limited duration and perishable; and we call some things old very much sooner than we do others. When we speak of an old man we limit the idea to his physical frame and powers,—nothing else.

The Old Testament speaks much of old age, and often in mournful terms; but we find nothing of the kind in the New. Christ brought Life and Immortality so fully to light as to leave no place for the term. Good old Simeon, who had waited long for the Consolation of Israel, clasped the infant Saviour in his arms and exclaimed, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant”—die?—not at all, but—“depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!” “He that liveth and believeth in me, (says Jesus) shall never die.” Paul (2 Cor. v. 1) expresses the same truth very beautifully: “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” The part of man which can grow old,

the body, is here called a tabernacle or tent, erected for a temporary shelter, and is contrasted with the permanent abode with which the soul is clothed in heaven; one that is everlasting, and never can grow old. No imagery could be more striking.

When Jesus said to his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," he spoke in accordance with his own view of a good man's death. But when he said, "Lazarus is dead," he accommodated his language to their notions. Both forms of expression are right; but that which he first used is much the more Christian. Paul speaks of "them which sleep in Jesus," an expression as beautiful as it is possible to conceive. Death and the grave are very dark to our minds by nature; but into that darkness Christ has darted his brightest rays.

Well, then, what shall we say? "Heart and flesh fail;" "Man goeth to his long home;" "The dust returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it." So we speak of death; and in so speaking we are not wrong. Jesus himself said, "Lazarus is dead;" but when standing before the tomb of Lazarus dead—more than at any other point in his ministry—he lifted us up to his own higher stand-point, and showed us that a believer can never die. What is called old age is but the loosening of the cords of a temporary tabernacle, and death the taking of it down, that the occupant may move on and take possession of his everlasting habitation. It is solemnly interesting to us old men to note the working of the Heavenly Architect, as we feel cord after cord of this temporary tent, which he gave us as our shelter for a little while, slackening or snapping, and to know that it will soon be prostrate in the dust, and we be carried to a better country where a glorious and ever-during house awaits us—not one house for many, but a

house for each, analogous to this short-lived tabernacle of which we think so much and take such care.

I like that part of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* where he places his pilgrims near the bank of the river, to await, one by one, the message from their Lord to come over to him. To each he sends a token; and these tokens are but the natural giving way of this earthly tabernacle, which is the only thing about pilgrims to the Celestial City which does or can grow old. It is a beautiful picture of Christians who have nearly finished their course, who have fought their battle, who have kept the faith, and who are looking forward to the crown which the Lord the righteous Judge is ready to give. No hope, no joy, no triumph on this side of heaven equals that of the firm believer who knows that he to whom he has committed his soul's salvation is not only able to keep it, but that he has kept it. Now he stands ready to go over the river and enter into the joy of his Lord whenever called. While with Job he says, "All my appointed time will I wait till my change come;" yet, with the same ancient saint he exclaims, "I would not live away!" and with Paul, "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better!"

An aged Christian should think often—not of death, for he has nothing to do with death—but of that call which is coming nearer and nearer from a good to a better life. He should bring the hopes of the gospel to bear upon it till it shall become to him the gate of heaven, not a descent to the darkness of the tomb. To him who believes in Christ there is no death; for Christ himself says so. To him death is swallowed up in victory. It has become a departure, a going home, a rest, a glorious triumph, an entrance into the joy of the Lord. So contemplated, that gloomiest of all things, that inevitable doom which nature

dreads, becomes the crown of the believer's hope and desire.

Faith does not take away that instinctive dread of death which the Author of our being has implanted in our nature for a wise purpose, and which we share in common with the lower animals; but it overcomes it, as a stronger principle overpowers a weaker. Those pilgrims in that matchless allegory, who were quietly awaiting the summons of their Lord near the river's brink, had no dread; nor ought we old people, who rely upon the merits and the atoning sacrifice of our Saviour, to fear the summons to go over.

What goes over? The pilgrims in their own proper persons went over with all their individual characteristics. Nothing was left behind but their infirmities. Christiana carried her strong and steady faith, her maternal love, and her steadfast piety over to the shining shore; while Mr. Honest's sincerity and truth, with all the sterling qualities which in him were the fruits of the Spirit, went with him into his everlasting home. And so of all the rest. It is not some naked, invisible, intangible, mysterious thing which wings its way from the inanimate body to another world, but the person's individual self, capable of knowing and of being known—unclothed mortally, but "clothed upon" immortally; and, being washed in the blood of the Lamb, becomes as perfect in holiness as his Father in Heaven. In that glorious robe with which the spirit of the believer shall be "clothed upon" the All-seeing Eye can detect neither "spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing."

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations," exclaims the Psalmist (xc. 1). "We have a building of God," says Paul; and in the same place he speaks of this body as the "earthly house of this tabernacle (2 Cor. v. 1). Then he suddenly glides into another

figure to express the same thought, namely, that of apparel or clothing, and for a moment uses the two figures interchangeably, saying, "In this (meaning this tabernacle) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened"—meaning doubtless with sins, and infirmities and imperfections, and outward tribulations and trials—"not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." In another place Paul tells believers that they have "put on Christ."

In all these figures we have the strongest assurance that the disembodied spirits of all who sleep in Jesus are not to go away unclothed, but clothed upon, with every power and faculty in full play, and that God himself shall be their dwelling place, their home, their rest. It was given to the great, laborious and suffering apostle of the Gentiles to see these things very clearly; and through him we have such views of our departure from this life, now to many of us so near, as ought to make us very glad to see the day approaching.

"I will Trust and not be Afraid."

THESE precious words are found in the 2d verse of the 12th chapter of Isaiah. They are part of a triumphant song of praise to be sung in that day when the prophecy with which it stands connected shall be fulfilled in the universal triumph of the gospel. But the words express a sentiment always proper to the truly believing heart. The psalmist, in drawing the moral portrait of a good man, says

of him, “His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; his heart is established, he shall not be afraid.” (cxii. 7, 8.) How beautifully does this declaration harmonize with the prophetic song of Isaiah!

It may seem to us that it was easy for Isaiah and David to exercise and enjoy the trust their language expresses. Somehow the notion often steals upon us that there was something peculiar in the faith of the holy men of old; that they were blessed with higher privileges and admitted to more intimate communion with God than are Christians of the present day. But it is not a correct idea. If, dear reader, you are really a believer in Jesus, then are you as truly beloved by the Father as were any of those good men. Your faith and theirs is the same in kind, though it may differ in degree. Their superior privileges consisted in the fact that God was pleased to make them the mediums of the revelation of his will, and not in any superior blessings of personal salvation. They were washed in the same blood, sanctified by the same Spirit, and thus became heirs of the same inheritance. In nothing pertaining to personal blessings and privileges had they the slightest pre-eminence over the true believer who is now living; nor were they warranted to rest in God with more confidence than any who may read these words.

“I will trust.” I will believe; I will rely upon his promises; I will take him at his word; “I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God: in him will I trust.” The 23d Psalm is all made up of the outpouring of a trusting heart. It embraces everything, from daily bread to the glories and felicities of heaven. Its language covers time and eternity, body and soul, life and death; and there is not an expression in it which the humblest believer may not appropriate to himself and utter with an unflinching tongue. This psalm expresses the language of true faith, of well-founded confidence, of that hope which maketh not

ashamed, and which becomes firmer the more it is tried. It is founded upon that rock upon which Jesus says the wise man builds his house, against which the rain, the floods and the winds beat in vain.

The trust above spoken of is the trust of him who knows in whom he believes. It is not the blind or presumptuous trust in which too many indulge. Some persons presume that because God is good, therefore he will not be strict to mark iniquity. They know and acknowledge that they are sinners; still they hope in some way to be saved, they know not how; still they trust, partly in themselves, partly in the Saviour, and partly in they know not what, and do not care to examine too narrowly. Such trust as this never results in true peace and joy. Its highest achievement is a stupid quietness of conscience, except in some cases, where the mind, being strongly excited by surrounding enthusiasm, is sympathetically aroused, there may be a brief season of lively but presumptuous faith, and a gleam of spurious joy.

We are commanded to be ever prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in us, both to ourselves and to others. "Examine yourselves," says the apostle, "whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." For this great work God has furnished us with abundance of rules and marks and guides; and it is our duty not to stop until we arrive at a certain, unquestionable conclusion; for, until we do so, we cannot trust and *not be afraid*.

When the disciples, together with their Lord, were overtaken in the Sea of Galilee, in the night, with a tempest which threatened every moment to engulf them, they became greatly alarmed. But when Jesus awoke he rebuked them for their fears and their want of faith. "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" But, it may be said, Christ was in the ship; therefore it could not be lost,

and they were really in no danger. This is very true; but the Saviour was no nearer to them than he is to us, and no more able or solicitous to preserve them than he is to preserve us. Jesus slept then; and this doubtless increased the alarm of the disciples. But he does not sleep now. “He that keepeth thee will not slumber; behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.” (Ps. cxxi.) Now, doubting Christian, take these words and respond to them in the language of the 23d Psalm, and then see if you cannot say, with as much confidence as did any of the old worthies, “I will trust and not be afraid.” If Christ be in you, (and he is, unless you be a reprobate,) that is better than merely to be in the same ship with him; if Christ be in you, you have nothing to fear. There shall no evil befall thee.

But, says the trembling soul, I am afraid of myself. That is right, but not quite correctly expressed. You mean, you distrust yourself. In that you are correct, and can hardly run to excess; but you have no reason to be afraid of yourself. “The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul.” Surely when he says he will preserve thee from all evil he does not omit that greatest of all evils, a corrupt, unstable, deceitful heart. By his providence he will develop its hidden evils, but only that they may be overcome and eradicated.

Such brief and energetic sentences as this which we have set at the head of this article ought to be treasured in the mind of all Christians, to be ready in every time of need. They serve at once to embody the thoughts we wish to

cherish, and to suppress the risings of doubts and fears. They are applicable to every possible circumstance of an alarming nature. They furnish the Holy Spirit with the means wherewith he operates upon our hearts; for it is his work to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, and to bring to our remembrance whatsoever he has said unto us. There is not a day but we need to use these words, if we would keep our souls in peace and assure our hearts before him. How beautifully simple are the words, and yet how sublime! How befitting the lips of a timid, weak, but loving and confiding child! How honoring and well-pleasing to our Heavenly Father, from whom we learn to utter them, while we run under his sheltering wings! How soothing in the day of trouble, and how consolatory in those periods, well known to every experienced Christian, when God hides his face and leaves us to walk in darkness! And in view of the last and greatest trial, when the gloom of the valley of the shadow of death rises as a dark cloud before us, and Nature instinctively shrinks affrighted, oh! then to be able to say, with David, "I will fear no evil," or with Isaiah, "I will trust and not be afraid!"

Decline and Death---Moses and Paul.

MOSES left us one sweet and mournful psalm—the ninetyeth—in which he says: "The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away."

We cannot tell when Moses wrote these words. All we know is that the ancient compilers of the book wrote over this psalm these words, "*A prayer of Moses, the man of*

God." From the tenor of the language, I think it was while he was still an exile in Midian, before Jehovah called him to an interview at the Burning Bush. Between his flight from Egypt and that interview, forty years had rolled their sluggish rounds. In his early and vigorous days, the presentiment that God by his hand would deliver his bretherer the children of Israel from bondage, had taken strong hold of his mind; and he supposed, as Stephen tells us, that these poor dispirited serfs would have understood the same thing when he smote an Egyptian for doing wrong to one of them. But at that time they had no share in his generous, perhaps ambitious, hopes. Seeing that they were not ready to strike a blow for their own enfranchisement and feeling that he stood alone, and was liable to be called to account for his rash act, he fled and found a humble home and employment in Midian. Here the rash hero was changed into the contemplative sage, and the royal soldier into a meek, humble, mourning saint.

The children of Israel were left to toil on while their great deliverer was being moulded by the unseen hand of God into fitness for his high commission. It is most likely that this psalm, so sad, so inimitably pathetic, was then and there composed.

In those old times life beyond the grave had been but dimly revealed. Old age and approaching death cast dark shadows before the aged saint. Yet that gloom was not totally dark; for it is written of Moses that "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." In this respect how strong a contrast there is between the aged Moses and the aged Paul. Yet these two great men are but representatives of the dispensations under which they lived—the Old Testament and the New. The one mourns as he sees the shades of age, decrepitude and death gather about him; the other rejoices as he contemplates the

impending blow of a tyrant's executioner. We have his psalm of triumph: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." In this contrast we see the great privilege which we who live under the Gospel dispensation have over those who groped their way through the comparatively dark ages which preceded the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

A good old man need not now adopt the mournful language of Moses, that of "Paul the aged" better becomes him. Moses hoped to be the deliverer of Israel; but year after year rolled round and still Israel was in bondage, and he in exile and obscurity, waiting, waiting, waiting, until he began to bend under the load of four-score years, and in an agony of prayer he exclaimed, "O Lord, how long!" He had, as he thought, reached the extreme of human life, and his work was not begun. But very soon it did begin, and with miraculously renewed vigor he entered upon and pursued the most stupendous work ever given to mortal man for another period of forty years. Then he died as sublimely as Paul died, and like him received the crown. The prayer of Moses, the man of God, is the cry of one who is just bursting into active and heroic life, although he knew it not. His good fight was still before him; Paul had already gone through his, and had won the victor's crown. Both reached it at last; but Moses seems not to have had the same clear view of it Paul had.

"The time of my departure is at hand," says Paul. He says nothing about death. He believed what Jesus said: "He that liveth, and believeth in me shall never die."

Hence he talks about a departure—a departure from labor and sorrow to his exceeding great reward—a departure from a good life to a better. His path was as the shining light which grew brighter and brighter to the perfect day.

That the time of his departure was at hand, was to Paul a matter of great joy, and so ought it to be to every believer whose hoary locks and failing strength admonish him that his course is nearly finished, and that the time of his departure is at hand. Why should it not be so? When we enter upon that decade of labor and sorrow of which Moses speaks—as the writer has—the tokens from beyond the river begin to fall upon us. Gray hairs, failing strength, so that Solomon's strange figure is realized—"the grasshopper is a burden;"—or dimness of sight, or dullness of hearing, all are tokens that the time of our departure is at hand.

Bunyan does well to represent this as the happiest part of the pilgrimage; for, if our faith fail not, it certainly is. I tell you, my dear Christian reader, whether young or aged, that it is impossible so to live that each year shall be better and happier than any that preceded it, notwithstanding the infirmities of age, and the labor and sorrow of which Moses speaks. Bunyan is right in fixing his Beulah near to the bank of the river of death; for nothing is better calculated to make the Christian glad, to make his condition a Beulah, than the knowledge that he is about finishing his course.

Jerusalem.

THIS is a name around which cluster a world of sacred and solemn associations. David and Solomon, and a long line of Judean kings, lived and labored and died in Jerusalem. Prophets and priests, long since numbered with the dead, fulfilled their high missions there, and their writings have given to that ancient city a freshness, an immortality, surpassing that of any other.

There Jesus labored and taught more than in any other city; and there he was rejected, and by wicked hands was crucified and slain. Thus his precious name became associated with that of Jerusalem so closely that we can hardly think of the one without the other.

When Messiah was cut off—when he had put an end to the sacrificial worship by his one great offering—the mission of Jerusalem seemed to be accomplished. It died with him, and soon after it was swept as with the besom of destruction.

Jerusalem was the city of the Great King. His glory was its glory; and when he had finished his work and left it, it sunk into darkness and contempt. No king ever afterwards held his court there; no prophet's voice was ever again heard in its streets; and no sweet singer after his departure awoke its echoes with his lofty praise.

Literal Jerusalem is dead; but there is a living Jerusalem, which is still the city of the Great King. Heaven is called Jerusalem, and rightly so, for it, too, is the city of the Great King. But we are speaking of earth. "Where is Jerusalem?" says the eloquent Krummacher. "Where tears of mourning after God start into the eye; where the knee and the heart are bowed at the throne of grace; where the

hands of faith are lifted to the cross, and lips of sincerity utter their prayers and praise,—there is Jerusalem.

“Jerusalem! Oh, it is good to be within thy walls, to sit together as fellow citizens, according to the privilege of the new birth; to sing together in the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord in the midst of us; to speak one with another upon faith’s bright prospects that lie before us; to number up our joys with which the stranger intermeddeth not; or to place ourselves at the windows toward the east, and breathe the morning air of the everlasting day, and refresh ourselves with thoughts of the blissful futurity that awaits us. ‘Oh, Jerusalem, if I forget thee, let my right hand forget its cunning!’”

Next to the name of Jesus, that of Jerusalem is sweet to the ear and the heart of a believer; for it speaks of goodness and mercy in ages past; it is expressive of the Church, the city of our God, now existing and growing up under the light of his countenance; it is an emblem of the renewed heart, a temple of the Holy Ghost; and it is but another name for that city whose builder and maker is God,—our eternal home. If we are in Christ, then behind us, around us, and before us is Jerusalem. “Here,” says God, “is my rest forever; here will I dwell.” Where? He inhabiteth eternity. He dwells in the high and holy place; but with him also who is of an humble and contrite spirit, and who trembles at his word; and where God dwells there is Jerusalem.

Yes, literal Jerusalem is dead. In its gloomy streets the inhabitants glide about more like ghosts than men, and in its places of prayer are heard only the mummery and mutterings of dead forms. But of the spiritual Jerusalem glorious things have been spoken, and in it glorious things have been and will be done. In that great day of revival, when the Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh, then shall the

entire Church behold what John saw in vision,—the “New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

Christ's Divinity, as seen in his Miracles.

SOME years ago a book appeared, bearing the title of *Ecce Homo*, (Behold the Man,) which, on account of its beauty of style and the peculiarity of its views on the history and character of Christ, attracted the attention of both the learned and the religious world as few recent works have done. Professor Seeley, of the London University, is the author of that work.

The author of this volume, after a careful examination of that singular, and, as he believed, pernicious book, wrote a critique upon it, which was published in four successive numbers of the *Presbyterian Banner*. The fifth and concluding chapter is here given among these “Gatherings”—not because it is now necessary to combat the dangerous fallacies of Professor Seeley's teachings, but because he believes that there are some thoughts here upon the subject of Miracles, and upon the peculiarity of Christ as a worker of miracles, which are worth preserving.

MIRACLES.

THE loose manner in which the author of *Ecce Homo* discusses the subject of miracles, leaving the authenticity of those ascribed by the Evangelists to Christ hanging as it were in mid-air—expressing with ill-disguised reluctance his own belief in the truth of the narratives, but leaving the reader free to take the opposite side of the question with equal claim to logical acumen—is a good criterion of the spirit in which he approaches his subject, and very suggestive of the words of the vain man, clothed with a little brief authority, who said to Jesus, “I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee.” He talks as if he felt that he had power to strike the miracles of Christ

from the list of credible historical facts, and power to let them stand. He has chosen the latter alternative, for the simple reason that those miracles and the Hero of those miracles are so inseparably interwoven in the biographies that they must stand or fall together. Had he denied the miracles, it would have been impossible for him to have called upon us to "Behold the Man." To him this question presented serious difficulties; and with all his skill he has been unable to surmount those difficulties without leaving a weak place in the web of his philosophy; for to admit that a man did possess and exercise both the prescience and power of God, and yet be only a mere man, is a position so illogical and untenable that no sound philosopher would attempt to maintain it.

Miracles are well defined by Dr. Tulloch as "the expression of a higher law working out its wise ends among the lower and ordinary sequences of life and history. These ordinary sequences represent Nature—Nature, however, not as an immutable fate, but a plastic medium through which a higher Voice and Will are ever addressing us, and which, therefore, may be wrought into new issues when the Voice has a new message and the Will a special purpose for us."

God seems to have interposed what we call Nature—those phenomena above us and around us of which our senses take cognizance—as a thick cloud between himself and us, having light sufficient to enable us to see and in some measure to understand them, and obscurely to see himself through them. These phenomena embrace not only things material, psychological and mental, but the laws which govern them, and which we call the Laws of Nature. Beyond this thick cloud is God himself, upholding and governing all things by laws so high, so profound, that all to which the human intellect has ever reached is but as the shallow margin of an ocean, a very small part of his ways, as he serenely does his

pleasure "among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth." Now, if at any time, to subserve some wise purpose in his ever-evolving plan, he puts forth his hand, rolls aside this curtain, and exhibits the operation of some mightier law than we are in the habit of witnessing, he shows us a miracle—something distinct from his ordinary providence and natural laws, and in so doing he says to us, in the most impressive manner that he can say it, "Behold, it is I."

No man ever did work a miracle, and no true man ever pretended to do so. Numerous miracles are recorded in the Old Testament as wrought by Moses and the prophets; but Moses and the prophets are invariably represented as only the *media* through which the Divine energy was put forth. Moses was commanded to stretch his rod over the sea; but who thinks of ascribing to that trivial act, or to him who performed it, the stupendous miracle which followed! As well might the man who washed in the pool of Siloam and came away seeing, claim the credit of the miracle of the gift of sight, as Moses claim to have divided the sea. Both, so far as human agency was concerned, were simply acts of obedience.

We shall take two examples of recorded miracles—one by Elijah and one by Christ—which, being almost identical in kind, and yet so different in manner, will better illustrate and establish the point we wish to make than any abstract discussion could do.

The son of a widow with whom Elijah sojourned during the great drouth and dearth, in the days of King Ahab, fell sick and died. The prophet was greatly distressed, and in the anguish of his soul he uttered a complaint, saying, "O Lord, my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?" "And," continues the inspired narrative, "he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord and said, 'O

Lord, my God, I pray thee let this child's soul come into him again!' " God heard the prayer of his agonized servant, touched the spring of a Law higher than any that our philosophy can discover, "and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived."

Now let us go from Zarephath to Nain, for behold, a greater than Elijah is there. "And it came to pass the day after that he went into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother and she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her he had compassion on her, and he said unto her, 'Weep not.' And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still; and he said, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.' And he that was dead sat up and began to speak; and he delivered him to his mother."

Although the two cases are so similar in some respects, nothing can be in stronger contrast than the conduct of the two principal actors. In the one case we see anguish and impotence prostrate in earnest supplication, upheld only by a strong and abiding faith. In the other we behold the calm majesty of independent Power, the grandeur of Omnipotence. No prayer is needed, for it is the Lord of life himself who speaks—"I say unto thee, Arise." Durst any man, however favored—any creature, however exalted, utter such a sentence as that? And if he should utter it, would he who solemnly declares himself to be a jealous God, and who will by no means give his glory to another, vouchsafe such a result as is here described? But Omnipotence did restore that precious life, and give back to that bereaved mother her lost son.

If Jesus was no more than a man, or anything less than Divine, then his conduct on this occasion is altogether inex-

plicable. Here was a command given to this young man which nothing short of a direct interposition of Divine Power could enable him to obey, or even to hear. But he did both hear and obey; yet there is no recognition whatever of any power or authority higher than his own. "I say unto thee!" Wonderful words! "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Are we not, therefore, logically shut up to the alternative of rejecting the entire narrative as a fable, an idle tale, or of believing that he who walked to the gate of Nain, who pitied the stricken mourner and called that young man back to life, was and is the same Being to whom Elijah poured out his soul in fervent supplication for a similar blessing upon another mourner?

It is beyond the range of human genius and imagination to draw such a picture as Luke has here given; and still further is it beyond the power of any base deceiver to invent such a story and palm it off for truth upon a credulous world. No hand but his who garnished the heavens and arrayed the earth in glory and beauty could produce it—so simple, so perfectly artless, so exquisitely pathetic, so full of tenderness and love, wherein earth's mortality and woe, and heaven's power, and life and joy are blended in inimitable shade and light. We see in the woman an epitome of poor humanity lying in helplessness and sorrow. In the person of her great Benefactor we behold all that is lovely in humanity, all that is glorious in God, so blended, so commingled, as to enhance the beauty and grandeur of each; and from this touching scene at the gate of Nain, the "thinker," be he philosopher or saint, may turn without a sigh and exclaim, "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that"—"The Word was made flesh;" for in that pitying Man of Sorrows, weary and travel-worn, he sees "the Resurrection and the Life." The longer he gazes upon it, the more he sees the Divinity shining through the beautiful veil of Humanity in which it

is enshrined, and the wonders of that mysterious name, IMMANUEL, fill and dilate his soul. Still the proud man, glorying in his superior powers as a "thinker," gazes upon it, and in admiration cries, "Behold the *Man!*" for he sees nothing else; while the humble and devout believer looks upon it, and in adoration exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" So it is; and the fact that so it is, and that these things are hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes, caused Jesus himself to rejoice in spirit and render audible thanksgiving to the Eternal Father.

"Now by this I know that thou art a man of God!" exclaimed the widow of Zarephath to the prophet, when he delivered her son, who had been dead but was alive again, to her embraces. How did she know it? She saw his anguish; she probably heard his agonizing prayer; and both united in convincing her that it was not by his power that this precious life had been restored. She saw that he was not a God.

But the widow of Nain could not have uttered such an exclamation, because her Benefactor did not act as a man, but as a God. Elijah prayed that the dead might be restored to life. Jesus did not. Elijah, by his every act in the case, proclaimed his own impotence; Jesus, on the other hand, in the calm majesty of inherent power, commanded back the departed spirit of the dead man. It were an outrage alike to the reason of a child and of a sage to suppose that any being less than Almighty could speak as Jesus spoke on this occasion, and cause "the dull cold ear of death" to hear his voice. He spoke only in his own name, and doubtless he did so for the same purpose that he bade the man sick of the palsy to arise and take up his bed and walk to his own home—to let those who witnessed the scene know, to use his own language, "that the Son of Man hath power on earth"—not only to forgive sins, a clearly

Divine prerogative, but power to heal all manner of maladies, power to raise the dead, power over all the great blind forces of Nature.

Jesus was much in prayer, but we never hear that he prayed, as Elijah did, that a miracle might be wrought, or for power to work a miracle himself. When "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," as a man among men, yet "the Son of God with power," and stood as the representative of both God and man, and as mediator between them, there subsisted a relation between the Father and himself, the mysteries of which it were impious in us to attempt to fathom. He prayed often and fervently; but yet in his principal recorded prayer the grandeur of the Godhead bursts through the profound humility of the supplicant, and he cries, "Father, I WILL." His prayers and his miracles were alike peculiar to himself, and in strong contrast with those of either prophets or apostles.

Take two other examples. A man in a synagogue where Jesus was teaching the people had a withered hand. Jesus said to him, "Stretch forth thy hand." He did so, and instantly it was restored to perfect soundness. Another man, with crippled and impotent feet and ankles, sat at the entrance of the temple begging alms. Peter, seeing his beseeching look, pitied him and said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Now if Christ was only a good man, why did not Peter imitate him, and merely say, "Rise up and walk"? The reason is perfectly obvious. Jesus spoke as he did to prove to those who witnessed the miracle, and to us who read the artless narrative, that he was "God manifest in the flesh;" and that he did it by an inherent power. Peter invoked the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth to prove the same thing. Jesus claimed the power as his own, and unhesitatingly gathered to himself all the glory. Peter, on the other hand, with passionate ear-

ness, disclaimed the power and the glory, and gave them both to Christ.

“It is not in me: God will give Pharaoh an answer in peace,” said Joseph to the perplexed and troubled monarch of Egypt; but Jesus says to his anxious disciples who were about to enter upon their great and perilous mission, “I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.” Why did he not say, as Joseph did, “God will give”? There is but one answer: HIMSELF WAS GOD. Prophets said, “Thus saith the Lord.” Christ said, “I say unto you.” Why this remarkable difference? “THE WORD WAS GOD.” On no other hypothesis can we account for the strong and uniform contrast between Christ and all other great and good men in this respect. Christ, and Christ alone, of all who ever wore the human form, claimed for himself the faith, the love and the worship of men, and these in measure commensurate with what is due to God himself. “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Christ only, of all who ever were the agents of supernatural power, claimed to have that power in himself. He was therefore either Divine, or he was the most arrogant being who ever walked this earth. But this last hypothesis is impossible, because he received from the Father more and stronger expressions of acknowledgment and approval than any of the sons of men. Twice, in audible words, he spake from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;” and in every miracle which Jesus wrought, the Father’s seal was set upon him afresh.

We have so far spoken of the exertion of supernatural *power* on the part of Christ. Constituted as we are, this is the element in the miraculous which strikes us the most strongly and readily; yet to the profound thinker, there are other elements if possible still more supernatural, superhuman and wonderful,

In an incident related by Matthew (xvii. 25-27,) we find an exertion of several distinct attributes of Divinity in a manner at once so touchingly simple, and yet so serenely grand, that the longer we ponder it the more we are astonished. We shall give it in the terse and artless language of the Evangelist; [although the same passage is quoted in a preceding article in these "Gatherings."]

"And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter and said, 'Doth your Master pay tribute?' He saith, 'Yes.' And when he was come into the house Jesus prevented him, (anticipated him in what he was about to say) saying, 'What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers?' Peter saith unto him, 'Of strangers.' Jesus saith unto him, 'Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth there shalt thou find a piece of money; that take and give unto them for me and thee.' "

Let us calmly and quietly consider what is involved in all this. In the first place it shows that Jesus knew what the collectors of tribute had said to Peter. This was omniscience. He then claimed, but waived his own immunity, his prerogative as a prince, which lifted him above the rank of a tributary. But he was so poor that he had not wherewith to pay. What then? For once, and only once, he levied tribute upon his own all-embracing dominion to supply his own wants, and that only to the small amount which he then needed. In some way, as we call by chance, a piece of money had been dropped into the sea. He knew where it was and sent a particular fish to pick it up and carry it in its mouth—a thing as foreign to its nature and habits as anything could be. Then he directed that

fish to Peter's hook, where it was caught and the money secured. In all this there was not the slightest reference to any power or any knowledge higher than his own. As quietly as an earthly master would send his servant to do any common thing, did Jesus send Peter on this extraordinary errand, and it was done as if neither Master nor servant thought there was anything marvelous about it.

The minuteness of the knowledge of Christ of things future was most strikingly illustrated in his warning to Peter that he would thrice deny him before the cock should crow—a thing so utterly improbable that Peter pointedly refused to believe it. And yet it happened precisely as predicted. Again: when the disciples wished to know where they should prepare the passover, Jesus said, "When ye are entered into the city there shall a man meet you bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in; and ye shall say to the goodman of the house, 'The Master saith unto thee, where is thy guest chamber where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?' And he shall show you a large upper room furnished. There make ready." In all these cases we see absolute Omniscience, Omnipresence, Dominion and Power. The accident of the lost money, the fish, the bird, the man are alike under his control. Thus Jesus, in all his dealings with the bodies and spirits of men, with inorganic nature in its calmest or most turbulent aspects, with diseases in every form, and with death itself, with the fishes of the sea, the fowls of heaven, the beasts of the earth, and, in short, with all things, acted habitually as God, although in the form of man. He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Is it for us to think otherwise?

It is written, "He TOOK UPON HIM the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Here it is emphatically declared that the taking this form was his own

act—which, without outraging all the laws of language, could not be said of any being who was less than divine, as indeed the apostle, in the preceding verse, declares him to have been, saying, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” (Phil. ii. 6.) This amazing declaration is in harmony with the entire history of Christ as given in the four Gospels, and in perfect keeping with the immeasurable claims he made upon the faith, the devotion, the fealty and the obedience of men, while proclaiming himself to be “meek and lowly in heart,” as his entire history as recorded bears evidence that he really was. Eliminate the divine element, and all that remains of Christ is inconsistent, contradictory, enigmatical and discordant. Holding this opinion of him, well might our author say that he felt “constrained to confess that there was no historical character whose motives, objects, and feelings remained so incomprehensible to him.” We repeat the remark just made, that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ can alone harmonize and render consistent or even credible, the account we have of his life and teachings. But this view is totally at variance with the work under consideration, as will be seen by the copious extracts we have given. The Christ of the Gospels is consistent with himself—with his words and his works; with his immeasurable claims and pretensions; with his unlimited and independent power, with his perfect and absolute Omniscience; as well as with his poverty, sorrows, and sufferings; with his life, death, and resurrection—very God and very man united in one person; the invisible God made manifest in the visible man, yet only manifest to the eye of faith. To the Jews, as such, he was “a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.” His enemies, while he was on earth, saw only the man; and this author can and will see no more. Pilate knew nothing about him,

other than that he was guilty of no offense known to the laws of the empire; and in the vain hope of saving the life of an innocent victim of popular fury, he suffered him to be humiliated by his soldiers by being arrayed in a gorgeous robe, and crowned with thorns; and thus arrayed, thus disfigured and disguised, he paraded him before the multitude, crying, "*Ecce Homo!*"

That weak and cowardly magistrate, however, was not so much to blame for what he did—for he knew not with whom he was dealing—as the man who, in the present day, attempts to dash the crown of Divinity from the brow of Christ, strip him of his own beautiful garments—beautiful because appropriate, and then bring him before us, as he has done, crowned with his own tawdry encomiums, of which the crown of thorns was a fit emblem; arrayed in a purple robe, woven out of his own imagination, and full of gaping seams, at once a romance and a caricature; and bearing in his hand the sceptre of a spectral kingdom, of which the reed given by the mocking soldiers was an appropriate type; shouting, as the Roman Governor did, "Behold the man."

Pilate was not successful in his effort to render Christ acceptable to the ferocious rulers and rabble by disguising him; neither will the ingenious author of this book be successful in his effort to get up a Christ with whom the world will not quarrel. Men will look at his work, and wonder at his skill, perchance admire his hero for a while, and then suffer the author and the hero to drift down the stream of time among a thousand other forgotten things. Meanwhile they will take the real and ever-present Christ and do with him as was done eighteen hundred years ago, they will "put his own raiment on him," and continue to treat him as they have ever done. And he will continue to be what he has ever been—to some a stumbling block, to some

foolishness; while ever-growing multitudes will still hail him as God manifest in the flesh—the incarnate LOGOS—the Man of Sorrows, who bare our sins in his own body on the tree; and who, in the weakest, saddest, darkest hour of his mortal life, solemnly declared, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”

Life and Death.

CAN we thank God for the infliction of natural death? Surely we can. Like all his works, it is very good. I love to view it as the first step in the great work of redemption, as the first expression of the loving kindness of our Heavenly Father.

Is the death of the body a blessing? Certainly. Is it a blessing to all? It is, so far as it opens a door of hope to all. But, like all other blessings, it may be converted, by unbelief and impenitency, into a curse. To the believer—to him who has fled for refuge to the hope set before him in the gospel—it is an unspeakable blessing. To him “to die is gain.” The death of the sinful, sinning nature restores him to perfect spiritual life in Christ; and, through death, even that mortal part shall be raised again at the last day in glory, honor, and immortality.

I think these are wholesome and scriptural views of this solemn subject. I am aware that many regard the sentence passed upon man in Eden as the act of a severe and inexorable Judge, rather than that of a kind and merciful Father. But it is a gloomy, cheerless, and, I think, erroneous view. It ought never to be separated in thought from the great work of human salvation; for it constitutes an indispensable part of it. In it Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other.

In the antediluvian world human life was extended to several centuries, and men conversed with their descendants to the seventh generation. As all knowledge, historical, religious, and scientific, had then to be transmitted orally, there seemed to be a necessity for this great length of life. To us such length of days would seem like immortality: But what was the moral effect of that longevity? Although under an economy of grace; although the Holy Spirit strove with them, and a few holy men faithfully warned them to flee from the wrath to come; yet all flesh corrupted his way before God; the earth was filled with violence; and God declared that Noah was the only righteous man in that generation. Bad as the world is now, bad as its state has been at any time since the flood, such universal apostasy never occurred at any subsequent period.

The reduction of human life to one-tenth of what it was before the flood is therefore a merciful dispensation. Although men live but a few years now, yet Providence has surrounded them with such marvelous facilities for the acquisition and transmission of knowledge that they are able to avail themselves of longer and more varied experience than was enjoyed by the antediluvians. Enoch conversed with Adam, and Noah with Enoch; but we can converse, by means of written truth, with Adam, and Enoch, and Noah; with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; with Moses, and Samuel, and David; with kings and prophets, who, though dead, yet speak. We can follow Him who went about doing good, and hear the gracious words that flowed from his lips. We can stand with Paul on Mars' Hill, and share in the wondrous visions of John in Patmos. The great drama of the Reformation we can cause to be re-enacted as often as we please; and the mighty movements of our own time are all brought as it were under our eye. Talk of the great experience of Methuselah! It was nothing to that of the well informed man of our own day.

“I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” When the Saviour uttered these words, he immediately made the emphatic inquiry, “Believest thou this?” And well may we put the same inquiry to our own hearts. The declaration is so at variance with our carnal or natural sense, so different from the common current of our ideas, that few—perhaps none—believe it in that strong, realizing sense which the obvious import of the words require.

What, then, is life,—the life here spoken of by the Saviour? It is not natural life,—the life we live here in the flesh. It is something else. It is more than that life restored to us which was lost in Eden. It is a partaking of the life of Christ himself. It is not only life in a higher sense than Adam possessed it, but a confirmation in it by all the guarantees which infinite faithfulness and power can throw around it. Adam died; but Jesus declares that “he that believeth in me shall never die.” “As I live, ye shall live also.” This blessed state is elsewhere called newness of life; a life essentially different from that of mere creatures; a life not inherent, but derived; not in ourselves, but in Christ.

This life, this spiritual, eternal life, begins the moment a sinner believes in Christ. He eats of that bread which came down from heaven. He drinks of that living water of which the Saviour spoke. He can hunger no more, neither can he thirst any more; for he has within him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. It is not that he shall hereafter be put in possession of the great boon of eternal life; but he is already in possession of it. He will never die.

But putting off the idea of eternal life to a future state of existence, we rob ourselves of much comfort and joy, and fail to glorify God. In nothing is our unbelief more strikingly exhibited than in this. And why is it? It is because

we esteem ourselves to be flesh rather than spirit. We esteem the soul to be an appendage to the body, rather than that the body is an appendage to the soul. We all, to be sure, acknowledge the spirit of man to be the more excellent part; but this abstract acknowledgment is one thing; our habitual thought or *feeling* is a very different thing. The mortal body is always present to the mind; the immortal soul only occasionally. The wants and desires of the one afford the spring to almost all our actions; the other only receives attention when the clamors of its rival are quieted. Is it not so? Is it to be wondered at, therefore, that when I say *me* I chiefly mean my corporeal frame, together with those thinking faculties which it has brought into thralldom? When I say, "I live," I mean my animal life; and when I speak of death, it is hardly necessary to say that I mean the death of the body. Thus we habitually talk, which proves that thus we habitually think. Hence that greater and more excellent life which Jesus purchased is thrust out of mind.

It is not what we know, or what we have learned, or what we believe, that gives character to the mind; but it is that which fills the mind, that which it loves to cherish,—in one word, that which we love. If we are partakers of that new life, it will struggle to bring every thought into captivity to Christ; and it will succeed. The true riches will overcome the perishing things of time and sense; the soul will gain the ascendancy over the body; and thus all be brought into order, harmony, and beauty.

Eternal life is only the continuation and perfection of spiritual life. Even in this life it transcends what eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the heart of the natural man conceived. Peter speaks of joy unspeakable and full of glory. What, then, must that state be wherein we shall be like the glorified Redeemer, and see him as he is; when "the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall lead his people to fountains of

living water, and God himself shall wipe all tears from their eyes;" when every faculty of the soul shall be brought into perfect harmony with the divine will; when all desirable knowledge shall be opened freely to the ever-growing, ever-expanding mind; when we shall dwell in a world of vast population, all holy, all kind and affectionate, all happy and intent on diffusing happiness around them, where heart will knit with heart in ever-during harmony, and all unite in one song of praise "to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever"? The life and bliss of the inhabitants will be as firm and lasting as the throne of God; they being indeed his beloved children, whom he has created, and redeemed, and brought home to himself. Then will the Saviour's prayer be fully answered:—"Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

The Attractions of Heaven.

THE weary love to dwell upon the thought of heaven as a place of rest; the sorrowful, as a place of joy; the troubled soul longs for it as a state of peace and repose; the poor and needy look forward to it as a place where every want shall be supplied and they be filled with all the fullness of God; while the ardent Christian longs for its glory and beauty and lofty praise. These are all right. But there is one other character whose aspirations are more fervent than any of these; it is the sin-burdened soul who longs for it as a place of holiness. To him its rest, its peace, its fullness, and its glory, are delightful thoughts; but the anticipation that there he shall be made pure is the most joyful of all. To enjoy the privilege of joining in that song, "to Him that

washed us in his blood," is to such the sweetest hope that clusters around the thought of heaven. While thinking of it, he loves to sing—

" There we shall see his face,
And never, never sin."

The nearer we get to heaven the more ardent will be our longings for this greatest of all the blessings of salvation. Cowper, near the close of his sweet but sorrowful life, bursts out in triumph at this thought :—

" When that happy era begins,
When arrayed in his glory I shine ;
*And no longer pierce with my sins
The bosom on which I recline."*

When the angel announced to Joseph the great fact that his Mary was chosen to be the mother of the Saviour, he said, " Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." He did not tell him that he should save his people from the wrath of God, from eternal death, from the punishment they justly merited, but from their sins. The great thing in salvation, and that which carries everything else with it, is the change from a sinful to a holy nature. The love of God, the glories and joys of heaven, all follow as necessary concomitants.

Christian, is this your chief desire? Is this the sweetest ingredient in your hope of heaven? Or have you merely some vague idea of happiness, without connecting with it that of holiness? It is a vain hope. There can be no peace, no rest, no joy, without holiness. None but the pure in heart can see God, or dwell in his presence. Let this be your prayer: " Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!" Let this fervent aspiration be the language of your heart, whether you express it audibly or not. Then you may hope to grow in meetness for heaven.

Deadness of Heart.

THERE are few sadder sights than an old man or woman whose affections have died out. Yet how many such we see! Some have become soured through the toils, and cares, and disappointments of life; others have their hearts hardened by a too eager pursuit of worldly interests; others again are rendered unamiable because they can not or will not fully forgive the thousand little affronts they have met with in their intercourse with their families and the world. These are all causes of this unhappy condition; but none of them could produce that effect, were the graces of God's Spirit cherished. These are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Now look at these nine graces, and see if such a rich cluster could grow out of a cold, dead, neglected heart. Well did the wise man say, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." None but a heart diligently kept can yield such fruits as are described in these simple lines—

"A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine."

Love is the central grace in the Christian character. It is not an abstraction, but a living and active principle, through which faith manifests itself both to ourselves and others. It is not, and cannot be, dead to the claims of our fellow beings, while alive to God; hence an apostle asks, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" It is a principle that overspreads the entire Christian character, and lays hold of everything that is attractive, and rejoices in it. Where

the spirit of Christ prevails, it goes out in compassion to the wretched, forgiveness to the injurious, kindness to all.

It is a happy grace. It constitutes the bliss of heaven; and there is no true happiness on earth in which it does not mingle. Where it is found in active exercise, whether in the mansions of the rich or in the cottages of the poor, there is happiness, and there we are sure to find the entire cluster of graces enumerated by the apostle. It is a life-giving grace. Where it is carefully cherished, the heart cannot become cold and dead; nor can the soul grow old, or joy die out. This is true of this principle, whether it springs from natural affection, or is the fruit of God's Spirit. It is the same power in both cases: the Holy Spirit only lifts it higher, and gives it a right direction. Paul complains of the heathen, that they are "without natural affection;" and there is not a more melancholy evidence of the debasing and brutalizing effect of sin than this, that it crushes out this sweetest and most delicate of the attributes of the human soul.

Pride is the great antagonist of love. Where it rules, the heart is dead. Love is gentle, and easy to be entreated; pride is the very opposite. Pride deifies self; love is meek and humble; and while the one cares only for its own gratification, the other is intent upon ministering to the happiness of others. Love is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil; pride is quick to take and resent offense, and ready to suspect evil. But worse than all is that vulgar form of pride which makes a man ashamed to manifest his natural affections, as if it were beneath his dignity. Such people imagine that to be cold and austere in their deportment is more noble than to be joyous, social and affectionate. When the children were brought to Jesus, some of the disciples forbade their approach, supposing that their Master's dignity would be compromised by such familiar trifling. Now,

pride was at the bottom of that, however it may have been modified and disguised; and Jesus was very much displeased at their conduct. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven," said he, as he stretched forth his arms to invite and encourage their approach; and clasping them to his bosom with more than a father's love, he poured forth his all-prevalent prayer for them. Oh, that was not a cold, formal, official benediction, but the warm out-gushing of his heart. He who wept at the grave of his friend in Bethany, and embraced these children with more than parental fondness, was not ashamed to let his affections flow out. Every pulsation of his heart was love, and it fell, gentle and sweet, like manna, upon all around him. He pitied and relieved the suffering, he pardoned the sinful, he patiently instructed the ignorant and the dull, while his affection for his true friends "was wonderful, surpassing that of woman"—greater than was Jonathan's for David. He, in view of all his anguish, with the mighty work of a world's instruction and a world's redemption resting upon him, kept his heart warm—alive to every appeal of woe, and every impulse of complacent love; and in this lay his glory and his strength; this rendered him mighty to save, and enabled him to endure the cross and despise the shame. Is it, thou cold, solemn, austere Christian—is it beneath thy dignity to copy such an example, and follow such a leader?

But there are some who imagine that because they are growing old they must restrain the out-flowings of affection, in order to maintain the gravity becoming their age. Under such an impression, no wonder their hearts soon become dead; and even husband and wife are sometimes seen plodding along the down-hill of life as patiently, and perhaps as peacefully, as a yoke of oxen, and with about the same amount of generous and affectionate emotion. What a sad

mistake this is! The body will grow old and lose the vigor and buoyancy of youth; but the heart ought never to grow old. Age can not, need not, chill it. Nevertheless, it will inevitably become cold and torpid, if we neglect to keep it with all diligence. We must nourish and cherish its beautiful and delicate plants; for, like Adam, we are each placed in a garden, and the task is laid upon us "to dress it and keep it." But alas! to how many such moral gardens would the description of the wise man apply: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well; I looked upon it and received instruction."

My First Communion.

THE 27th of June, 1824, was a day to which I have thousands of times looked back with a serious joy, and the memory is as a well of water springing up into everlasting life; for it is written, "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

I was, I may say, a boy then, having my full share of the exuberant vitality and waywardness of boyhood. Many times I wandered and did "those things which I ought not to have done;" but the Good Shepherd, to whom I had given my heart in childhood, never failed to follow me, to find me, and give me richer bliss even in the tears of penitence than I ever found in the ways of folly and of sin. With no parent to guide or admonish; at the time of life when temptation had its maximum power, he to whom in all the simplicity of childhood I had committed my soul as

unto a faithful Creator, did keep me. He restored my soul, as David beautifully expresses it, and made me walk in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Those sweet lines from the old version often welled up spontaneously from my heart in those early days, and sometimes found utterance in song in my poor way :

“ My soul he doth restore again;
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
Even for his own name's sake.”

At the time now in my mind I was an apprentice to the printing business in the then little frontier town of Indiana, Pa. Rev. John Reed, a stout, heavy man, with more heart and more loving-kindness in that heart than the world gave him credit for, was then pastor of the Presbyterian church in that town and gave to it half his time. He was a plain, blunt man, somewhat humorous in his own peculiar way, and a little harsh and rough at times. I was so fortunate as to gain his good will to a marked degree, and he gave me what nobody else ever had, the free run of his library, and it was a pretty good one. I had, moreover, the privilege of riding his horse, when I knew that he was not going to ride, on condition that I did not ask his permission.

Things were going on in this way when my “ boss ” and I made an arrangement with Mr. Reed to give me a course of lessons in English grammar. He was a good teacher, and as I was then his only pupil, we had a great time. We took a very irregular but effective course of only five weeks. The brief recitation being over, we would go into a free and easy conversation, generally about language and grammar, but sometimes on other subjects, with all manner of illustrations, some of which were exceedingly funny. His illustration of an anti-climax I shall never forget. After a few moments of silence, he abruptly broke out in

his rapid and perfectly grave utterance: "I heard of a great fellow once—he was a terrible fellow—he overturned a mountain, killed a nigger, burnt a house, and ate a worm!" I was both amused and surprised; but he made no explanation. At length I perceived that the ridiculous story was a grotesque example of an anti-climax. At other times the conversation would turn upon the graver subjects of religion, morals, science, or history. But it was always instructive, and never would he allow an ungrammatical sentence to escape my lips without correcting me.

While thus engaged, the day for the administration of the Lord's supper was approaching. I had long felt that it was my duty to obey the dying injunction of my Lord to confess him before men, by commemorating his dying love. But it was then and there a thing almost without precedent for one so young to do such a thing. Without consulting with any one I made up my mind to do it; and one day, at the close of our talk over the grammar lesson, I told Mr. Reed what I thought of doing. He was evidently surprised, and so affected that it was some time before he spoke. Our conversation was then very pleasant and mutually satisfactory. There was no difficulty whatever in the way.

Our usual place of worship was the court house; but with its jury-boxes and other fixtures, it was a very unsuitable place for the spreading of sacramental tables. A short distance below the town, however, there was a pretty grove of fine oak trees, with clear and smooth ground. There the congregation put up a little preaching stand with a roof, and fixed a long trunk of a tree, hewed flat and smooth, for a table, and two others, raised to the proper height, for seats. Nothing could be more primitive and rustic. Yet it was pretty; and in the deep shadows of lofty and wide-spreading branches it was solemn and impressive. Three ministers occupied the preaching booth—one of whom was

the excellent Thomas Davis—while the people sat in front, some on rough benches, some on chairs, and some on the ground. Mr. Wirt, in his beautiful sketch of the “Blind Preacher,” describes a similar scene. Eternity I trust will neither efface nor weaken the sweet memory of that day.

But of the company who sat at the Lord’s table under those umbrageous boughs, I believe I am the sole survivor.

The venerable David Blair, then of the Associate, now of the United Presbyterian Church, was at that time preaching in Indiana; he and Mr. Reed alternating in the court house. From those days to the present time, now stretching over a period of sixty years, he has occupied as warm a place in my affections as any man I ever knew. I was one of his regular hearers, and before I left the place we had become warm friends. He is a large-hearted, generous, noble Christian—one who has fought the good fight and kept the faith, and in the course of nature must be near his crown. He is now over ninety.

Breaking to Pieces.

DANIEL, in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a great image, said: “Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them.”—Daniel ii. 35.

That dream of the image seems to be a peculiar and important political prophecy. I think it has reference solely to governments and forms of government, as they successively arose amongst men, and to nothing else.

The first and simplest of all governments was the patri-

archal. This form we trace in the history of our race, as found in the Bible, from Adam to Jacob and Job. In the history of Abraham we have its fullest and clearest delineation. In the notice given of the "violence" which prevailed before the flood, we have a hint of a departure from the simple and benign system of which we are speaking, and of the introduction of the despotic form, which, indeed, is the next natural step in this department of human progress—a downward step, it is true, but still a step in the direction of an advance, at least in numbers and power. Nimrod, the founder of the Assyrian empire, was a despot; and the kings of Egypt were of the same class, as we learn from the summary manner in which Pharaoh disposed of his butler and baker in the days of Joseph.

Thus we see, at that early day, the patriarchal system changing, by a process perfectly in keeping with the proud and ambitious heart of man, into the despotic. The little family became merged and lost in the huge empire; and fear and fawning supplanted love and veneration in the hearts of the governed. So things moved on for generation after generation. The patriarchal system of government had long ceased to exist as an independent institution; but men had not yet advanced to the era of constitutional limitations and of written laws. Things were in this posture when a strange and terrible vision presented itself to the sleeping imagination of the greatest monarch of the earliest empire, a full and most graphic account of which is given in the chapter from which we have quoted.

At that day but one form of government existed. From the king of Babylon, who held other kings as vassals and tributaries, down to the petty head of the most petty tribe, all were alike despotic.

In the strangely diverse image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, the head of which "was of fine gold, his breast

and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay," he himself occupied the highest place, whether regarded in the order of time or of purity—that is, of unmixed, unshared, autocratic power. Hence, says Daniel in his interpretation, "Thou art this head of gold."

But in the powerful and haughty prince of whom we are speaking that form of government culminated, and thenceforward other elements, limiting and curtailing the power of the monarch, and in the same degree giving liberty and security to the subject, began slowly to creep in. Read the narrative of the casting of Daniel into the den of lions, and you will see a strange commingling of arbitrary, cruel, heaven-daring tyranny with established law. Darius was unable to reverse his own impious decree. We have now got down to the silver portion of the image. The despotism is not quite so pure and simple.

We shall not trace the analogies of this expressive vision down from the Babylonian head, and the Medo-Persian breast, to the brass of the Grecian and the iron of the Roman empires; nor still farther, to the ill-cemented elements of the governments of later periods, and of the present day; but simply point to the significant fact that, although Babylon has long been blotted out as a power on earth, although Greece as an empire belongs to a far-gone antiquity, and the empire of the Caesars is broken into fragments, yet the image, as presented to the imagination of that heathen monarch, was, and is yet, entire. Its head of gold and its feet of mingled iron and clay are now co-existing facts. The mighty structure yet stands as it stood in vision, in all its strange and terrible proportions, and in its regularly descending scale of constituent parts, complete and entire.

This being admitted, how are we to understand it?

Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art this head of

gold;" but when we consider the wide and far-reaching significance of the vision, we cannot but see and feel that it is impossible to restrict these words to one short-lived mortal, who passed away, together with his son and successor, and whose dynasty terminated, all in the lifetime of Daniel. But let us view him as the head and representative of a class of rulers, and the solution becomes easy. He was the most prominent and perfect type of a class that had existed from before the days of Abraham, and which has never ceased to exist to this day. The head of gold still bears sway over, perhaps, one-half of the human race.

And the same is true of the several gradations of constituent elements—the oligarchical, the military, the regal and the popular—down to the miry clay—those incongruous, unmanageable elements which creep into the structure of some of the freest and strongest of social compacts. The image is, therefore, on this hypothesis, standing at this hour in all its completeness.

We come now to the destruction—strange, sudden, simultaneous, tremendous and total. A little stone, cut out of the mountains without hands, smote the image—not upon his head, nor breast, nor legs, but upon his feet, where clay and iron, weakness and strength, were commingled but not combined, as indeed they could not be. The blow falls upon the weakest part; but so resistless is the force, and so mighty the vibration, that the entire structure, composed of the strongest and most tenacious of earthly materials, is crumbled to powder and blown away like chaff. It does not fall prostrate merely, like Dagon before the ark, but is utterly broken, pulverized, annihilated. It falls—not the head in one age, the arms and the breast in another, as the vision has been generally interpreted, but together—"broken to pieces together"—simultaneously, at once; the blow upon the feet being the primary and sole cause of the destruction of the head and every other part.

The destruction of the image seems to be one event, not a long succession of events—one in cause, one in time. This being admitted, it has not yet taken place. But when we consider this most interesting prophecy in the light of events now transpiring in the world, it is enough to make the thoughtful Christian climb higher into the citadel of his strength and into his watch-tower, that he may observe and mark with reverent attention what God is doing. The signs indicate that we have arrived at a momentous prophetic era, and that Christ is about to take to himself his great power and reign.

That the gospel will ultimately triumph over every system of error and delusion; that the power and grace of Christ will overcome every adversary, and bring all nations into willing subjection to his peaceful and gentle reign; and that the Sun of Righteousness will shed his healing beams over all nations, are truths so clearly revealed, and so variously set forth in the Holy Scriptures, that the hopes of almost all Christians take hold of them more or less strongly.

John Stuart Mill.

WHAT HE SAYS OF CHRIST.

THE recent publication of the autobiography of this intellectual giant and bold and daring skeptic made a strong impression upon the reading world. In that and in his philosophical works, he utterly rejects a divine revelation and all belief in the supernatural, even to the existence of a personal God. All his knowledge and all his theories are based upon Nature as interpreted by scientific research. He never renounced his Christian belief, for he never had

any to renounce, but grew up a cold skeptic from his infancy. Such is his own testimony. It is not necessary to speak here of his marvelous precocity—how he read the Greek classics, and in some measure understood them, at four, and at fourteen had reached the status of a mature scholar, and was able to deal with the most recondite questions. From infancy he was led into and strongly entrenched in infidelity by his father, who from the first was his teacher and constant companion. The father had been educated for a clergyman of the Church of England; but soon swerved from and renounced his faith in the doctrines of Christianity, and became a cold and bitter infidel. Father and son together occupied the “seat of the scornful” through life.

The London *Spectator* publishes in a review some extracts from a work by John Stuart Mill entitled “Essays on Nature, the Utility of Religion, and Theism,” which is not yet out of the hands of the publishers. In those essays vain, flippant and superficial skeptics—and the world is full of such—will be staggered to find one of their greatest leaders confessing at once the possibility of the Gospel story being true, and bearing his testimony to the incomparable wisdom, purity and excellence of the character of Jesus of Nazareth, and declaring that “it is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical.” But that he may speak for himself I copy a passage. It is close and vigorous, and must be carefully read:

“Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left,—a unique figure, not more unlike all his predecessors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of

what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of his followers. The tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which he is reputed to have wrought. But who among his disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived, as they always professed it was derived, from the higher source. But about the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality, combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life. When to this we add that, to the conception of the rational skeptic, it remains a possibility that Christ actually was what he supposed himself to be,—not God, for he never made the smallest pretensions to that character, and would probably have thought such a pretension as blasphemous as it seemed to the men who

condemned him,—but a man charged with a special, express, and unique commission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue, we may well conclude that the influences of religion on the character which will remain after rational criticism has done its utmost against the evidences of religion are well worth preserving, and that what they lack in direct strength, as compared with those of a firmer belief, is more than compensated by the greater truth and rectitude of the morality they sanction.”

It is very remarkable that the policemen, who on one occasion were sent to arrest our Lord, and this prince of skeptics, a large part of whose life-work was to arrest and obstruct the cause of Christ in the world, should bring back substantially the same report—“Never man spake like this man!”

That a man like John Stuart Mill should speak in terms of unqualified admiration of the Prophet of Nazareth is equally remarkable; for never, even apart from moral qualities, was there a more marked and striking contrast between two characters. Mill, the moment he got beyond the narrow range of experimental and demonstrative science, found himself in a labyrinth as dark as it was intricate, where all that he could do was to grope his way, with nothing surer to guide him than inferences conflicting with other inferences, (as in the above extract,) surmises, opinions, doubts, probabilities and possibilities. Jesus, on the other hand, never uttered an opinion or weighed a probability. Even belief was below his range; for his knowledge was both perfect and boundless; and what is absolutely *known* cannot be said to be *believed*. Socrates thought and spoke like a philosopher; so did John Stuart Mill, as the foregoing passage attests; but Jesus Christ spoke like a God. Yet different as Mill was from him whom he admired,

like an honest man, as he doubtless was, he was constrained to express that admiration.

Still he is an unbeliever, and only admits the "possibility that Christ actually was what he supposed himself to be." Here he betrays the weakness of his position when he couples such a life, such wisdom, such unexampled moral teachings with a strong probability that he labored under an unparalleled hallucination in supposing himself to be what he was not. I say strong probability, for where there is only a bare possibility on the one side, there remains a strong probability on the other. Mill was too good a logician to entertain for a moment the idea that one whose life and teachings were so immaculate could be an impostor or a pretender.

Mill bases all his conceptions of Christ upon the Gospels of the three first evangelists. That of John he utterly discards. This accounts for his positive assertion in the passage quoted that Jesus never claimed to be God. But this is not the place to combat this error. It is enough to have such a testimony of the glorious character of our Lord from such a source; for it may lift the conceptions even of some true believers to a higher plane.

Resurrection of the Body.

GOD has given to man a being wonderfully complex. In him the natures of the lower animals are found incorporated with those of the highest spiritual intelligences. "A worm! a god!" is the exclamation of Dr. Young, while endeavoring to give utterance to his impressions of the nature of man. In him one nature is found blended with another; and the careful student of man will not fail to find in the human

conformation and character types of almost every species of the lower animated creation ; and when we contemplate the mental and moral varieties found among mankind, we may confidently infer that man, in his spiritual nature, is also allied to all the higher orders of spiritual and intelligent existence.

But a greater and more wonderful fact than any of these is clearly revealed—even that God himself took upon him a mortal body and was “manifest in the flesh.” Well might the apostle exclaim, “Great is the mystery of godliness !” whilst contemplating that glorious Being in whose nature is incorporated all that is in man, all that is in God. This union of spirit with flesh and of God with man ennobles all, glorifies all, immortalizes all. So related, so allied, so blended in being with the immortal spirit and with the Father of spirits, the body of the believer in Christ can never perish. Christ’s body rose and lives, and will live forever. When he was on earth, he said, “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” This certainly has reference to the bodies of his people ; for he says, in another place, “The hour is coming in which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.” This declaration is so plain and emphatic that I shall cite no further proofs of the doctrine, although numberless scriptures might be quoted in corroboration.

That the disembodied spirit of man lives and enjoys or suffers according as its moral character may be, is a truth plainly taught in the Scriptures. Paul speaks of being *absent from the body, but present with the Lord* ; and he says it, not as if he were enunciating a new and strange doctrine, but

merely alluding to a familiar truth. Jesus said to the penitent thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" but certainly his body was not in Paradise, for it only filled a felon's grave. Neither was the body of Jesus that day in Paradise. They, therefore, met Paradise as disembodied spirits. Again: "The rich man died *and was buried*, and in hell he lifted up his eyes." Let these citations suffice to prove that doctrine.

But redemption is incomplete until the body is delivered from the power of death. The disembodied spirit of the believer doubtless will be happy beyond the power of language to set forth. Still that state must necessarily be imperfect; and we cannot believe otherwise than that the soul of the just man in heaven looks forward with earnest expectation to the day which shall reunite him with that other part of his nature which still lies under the curse of a broken law.

Paul lays great stress upon the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. None of the sacred writers so often and so pointedly speak of it. Every Christian reader is familiar with what he says on the subject, so that I need not quote his language, further than may be necessary in the discussion of this subject. "It is sown" says he, "a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." What a spiritual *body* is, is to our present imperfect comprehension a profound mystery; but the apostle throws as much light upon it as it is possible to do, when he says that the bodies of believers will be like the glorious body of their risen Lord. That body was material and substantial; for he said to his alarmed and incredulous disciples, on one occasion, when he appeared to them after his resurrection, "Handle me and see; for a spirit (meaning a pure, simple, disembodied spirit, or an apparition) hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." His hands, his feet, his lips and tongue, performed their appropriate functions as formerly, and "he did eat before

them." All this goes to prove the perfect restoration of the body to all its powers of action, and of course of sensation ; to its capacity for enjoyment or suffering ; and those powers and capacities doubtless greatly enhanced, as well as rendered indestructible and exhaustless.

But the Saviour, on several occasions, appeared in the midst of his disciples suddenly, the doors being shut ; and several times, in the same inexplicable manner, he vanished out of their sight. How a body having flesh and bones could thus appear and disappear we cannot understand. I am inclined to believe, however, that there was no miracle wrought on those occasions ; but that these mysterious movements were designed to afford us some conception of the nature and capabilities of a spiritual body. He had not then assumed the overpowering splendor of his heavenly glory, such as Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus, and John, in the isle of Patmos, saw ; but it was the same body in which he went to heaven from the Mount of Olives, and in which he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Now, when the mind seeks to penetrate to the unseen realities of the eternal world, and endeavors to solve the mysteries of our nature beyond the resurrection, let what we know of the risen Saviour be its guide. He walked, he ate, he held familiar intercourse with his friends and brethren ; he brought every bodily sense and function into its usual activity ; yet he was different from what he was before his death. Though clothed in a substantial, material body, he acted at times as a free, unclogged spirit. Of his body it was emphatically true, "It was sown a natural body, it was raised a spiritual body." Truly, this is a great mystery ; and it may be that in our present state we are not capable of understanding more than it has pleased God to reveal. In the person of Jesus, our great Forerunner and Exemplar,

we have an example of the resurrection; and from it we may gather more unerring ideas than we possibly could do from any abstract revelation.

In the full blaze of this glorious doctrine, how pleasant and refreshing is the thought of death and the grave! Death is seen to be but a temporary sleep; corruption a refining process, a part in that great change which converts mortal to immortal, natural to spiritual, weakness to power.

“Corruption, earth and worms
Shall but refine the flesh,
Till my triumphant spirit comes
To put it on afresh.”

Guided by the example already cited, we may safely indulge in hope of that glorious state which awaits the Christian beyond the resurrection. Redemption will then be complete. The soul, perfectly sanctified, will once more act through the medium of bodily faculties and powers. These eyes will see the King in his beauty, and these tongues hold converse with him, and with all the glorious beings by whom we shall be surrounded. These hands will once more be active in delightful employments; and

“These feet with angel wings shall vie,
And tread the palace of the sky.”

Then we shall be like him who, when he was in our world, was like us. We shall see him as he is,—that is, as God manifest in the flesh, at once our God and our Brother. All that we know in this life of endearing relationships, father, brother, husband, friend, are used by the Holy Spirit to give us as strong impressions as we are capable of receiving of the exceeding nearness and dearness of the relation which will eternally subsist between the Redeemer and his ransomed and glorified ones. Then, when every metaphor and illustration has been pressed into the service to do what

they can to show us the wonderful love of God our Saviour, it is added, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love him."

The habitual thought of death and eternity is very salutary, provided our minds are animated and guided by a true and living faith, and cheered by a good hope. Faith will enable us to get a glimpse of the glory that lies beyond the gloom; and when we see that we shall love to gaze at it. But until we can regard death and the grave in the light of the resurrection, they will only at times force themselves upon us as unwelcome intruders; and it is a fact that we have the power, and are too much inclined to exercise it, of keeping such thoughts out. To do so is bad every way. There is nothing so certain as death; but if we are unwilling to think of it, then it is obvious that we cannot be prepared to meet it. The true way is to be able so to view it that it shall become the most delightful subject upon which we can fix our thoughts. This is a state of mind perfectly attainable, and one to which thousands have attained. Let the gloom of the Grave be dispelled by the glories of Immortality, and the sorrows of Death be swallowed up in the joys of Hope.

Progress in the Life to Come.

To the contemplative mind there is something deeply interesting in the growth of a vegetable from the germ to the utmost development of which it is capable, whether that vegetable be a plant of a single season's continuance, or a tree that lives, and thrives, and expands for centuries. Both are formed on the same general type. Each possesses that

mysterious principle of life which lays all its surroundings under tribute, and compels them to minister to its growth. Each assimilates to its own peculiar character the diverse elements which it draws from the earth, the atmosphere, and the light, in obedience to that law given by the Creator when he said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit, after his kind."

But the herb and the tree are transient, like all things else on earth. One generation of animals, and plants and trees, succeeds to another at intervals more or less brief; and the most enduring may be classed among things which quickly pass away. God has established this as the law of all living things on this earth. But there is a world the distinguishing characteristic of which is everlasting life. In that world there is life without end, growth without ceasing, development without the possibility of ever reaching a point wherein no more knowledge, or power, or glory, or holiness, or beauty, or felicity can be attained. There is but one boundary, and that can never be reached. That boundary is the infinitude of God.

Even in this imperfect state, man has many and great powers. His capacity of knowing and understanding is wonderful. His power over the elements which surround him is equally so. And his moral nature, marred, obscured, perverted, fettered and cut short as it is by sin, is even here, both by nature and by grace, capable of godlike manifestations. The devoted husband and wife, the filial child, the patriot hero, the far-seeing philosopher, the suffering yet rejoicing saint, the Christian martyr,—all attest the power and beauty of those God-given capacities with which we are favored. These we have seen, and admired. These are adapted to the life that now is, to the atmosphere of this cold and stormy world, and in some instances their development has been wonderfully great. But we may confidently

expect that, when the "plants of righteousness" shall be transferred from this nursery to the paradise above, other faculties, other powers, other beauties, of which we have as yet no conception, will be developed from the mysterious depths of our natures,—powers and faculties for receiving and imparting enjoyment too delicate for the rough atmosphere of earth, too glorious to bloom in this cold, dark world, too beautiful for the gaze of wicked men, and too rich to be used in the labors of this lower vineyard. It were vain, however, to conjecture what those powers and capacities are; for it is a law of our being that our experience is the limit of our ideas. We cannot go beyond, however curiously and ingeniously we may arrange and combine our present stock of ideas.

For what we have just said, however, we have the testimony of analogy. You plant a seed,—it may be the seed of a good fruit, an apple or a pear. Now, watch the law of development. At first, two small leaves appear just above the surface of the soil; but soon you perceive that it is advancing. More leaves develop themselves, and a stem. Thus it goes on from day to day and from week to week, until its further progress is arrested by the frosts of winter. Is this death? Yes. Will it not live again? "If a man die, shall *he* live again?" We all say, yes. Will not the infant tree just spoken of live again? Yes, certainly; but not more certainly than man. Does man live more than one season in this world? Does he survive the fall of his leaf, and, after the winter of death and the grave, put forth afresh? No; but, as the tree often is, he is removed from the seed-bed during the period of suspended animation, and transferred to another place more suitable for perfect development. Now, watch the tree again. New life, or what appears to be such, begins to manifest itself; leaves more abundant, more beautiful, put forth. By-and-by, branches

appear; and presently the form and structure of a perfect tree are attained. Thus it goes on, increasing in size and vigor, until at length it puts forth flowers and fruit, and its majestic and beautiful crown, composed of multitudinous branches, is arrayed in glory and beauty. This last crowning development is, as we all know, the result of an inherent power, a power which comes into action at the proper time, and not a new power given to it for a special purpose. It was in it when the two tiny leaves burst through the crust of the earth; but who, without experience, would or could have imagined its existence then?

Behold here an image of man,—feeble and imperfect, but still an image. Among all God's creatures, in their unimaginable variety, there runs a relationship. Having one common Author, they have a family likeness, a common type, more or less traceable; and in one we never fail to find at least some analogy of the nature of all the rest. So in the powers of the mature tree we see what we have every reason to believe are bound up in our natures,—latent as yet, unknown, unimagined, but which will come forth in due time, under the light of God's countenance, and nourished by the vital energy of the True Vine.

THE END.

THE AUTHOR'S CARD.

THE author of this volume is under lasting obligations to an excellent corps of canvassers in this city and some of the neighboring counties for their labors in gathering a large number of subscribers in advance of its publication. It was a work of faith on their part, as well as on the part of those who were kind enough to put their names to the subscription lists. In order to give to these canvassers, or agents, the opportunity to continue the work, now that the book is out, the author will retain the sole control of its publication.

Booksellers, merchants and agents will be dealt with on equal terms, and at the usual trade rates — one-third off the retail price.

The book will be promptly forwarded by mail, postage paid, to any who may see proper to purchase in that way, upon the receipt of the retail price — \$1.50. As the work has been put in stereotype, the supply cannot be exhausted. In districts where the book can neither be had from bookstores nor agents, the mail affords a convenient way of getting it.

Address,

JOSIAH COPLEY,

Pittsburgh, Pa.

VALUABLE BOOKS.

Gatherings in Beulah. By Josiah Copley.....	\$1.50
Jos. Cook's Lectures. (Boston Monday Lectures.)	
BIOLOGY. 12mo.....	1.50
TRANSCENDENTALISM. 12mo.....	1.50
The Christian's Heritage, and other Sermons. By the late Melancthon W. Jacobus, D. D. 12mo. <i>Nearly ready.</i>	
Müller's Life of Trust. <i>New edition,</i> 12mo. Reduced to	\$1.50
Dickson's All About Jesus	2.00
Guthrie's Autobiography	2.00
Guthrie's Life and Works. 11 vols.....	15.00
Hamilton's Select Works. 4 vols.....	5.00
Hanna's Life of Christ. 3 vols.....	4.50
Jay's Exercises. 2 vols. Cloth.....	2.00
Ryle's Notes on the Gospels. 7 vols.....	10.50
God's Word Man's Light and Guide. Lectures on the Bible before the New York S. S. Association. By Rev. Drs. Taylor, Briggs, Crosby, Booth; Porter, Boardman, Washburn and Simpson. 12mo.....	\$1.50
Curiosities of the Bible. With an introduction by J. H. Vincent, D. D.....	\$1.50

THE SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS.

Commentary on the Sabbath School Lessons. By John E. Todd and Matthew B. Riddle, D. D.,.....	\$1.25
Peloubet's Select Notes on the International Sabbath School Lessons. "Explanatory, illustrative and practical,"...\$	1.25
Sermons on the International Sabbath School Lessons, by the Monday Club.....\$	1.50
Scott's Bible Commentary. 3 vols. Net.....	8.00
Clarke's Commentary. Net.....	16.00
Henry's Commentary. 9 vols. <i>Reduced to</i>	20.00

ROBERT S. DAVIS & CO., Booksellers,

COR. FIFTH AVENUE AND WOOD ST.,

PITTSBURGH.



