

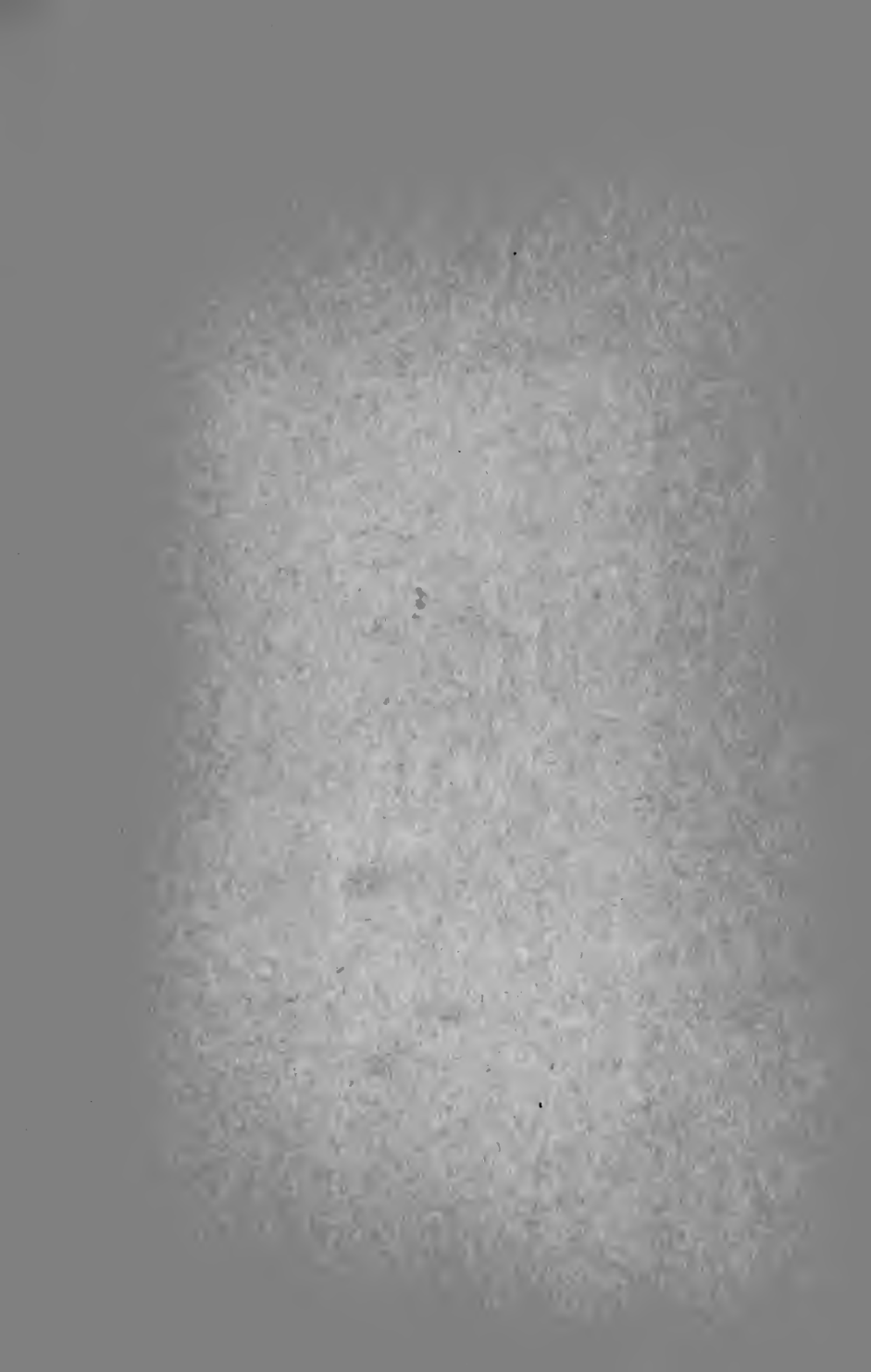


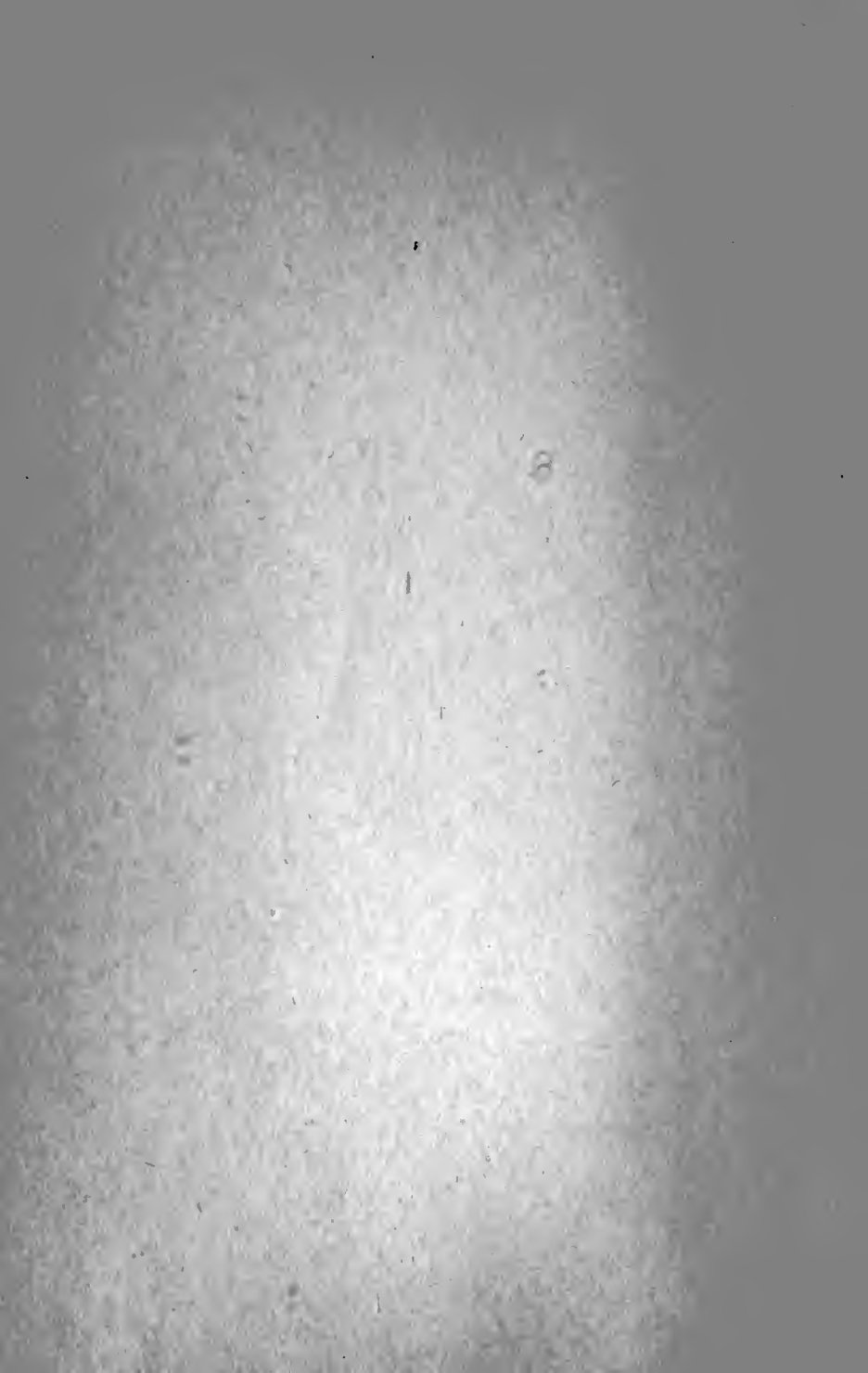
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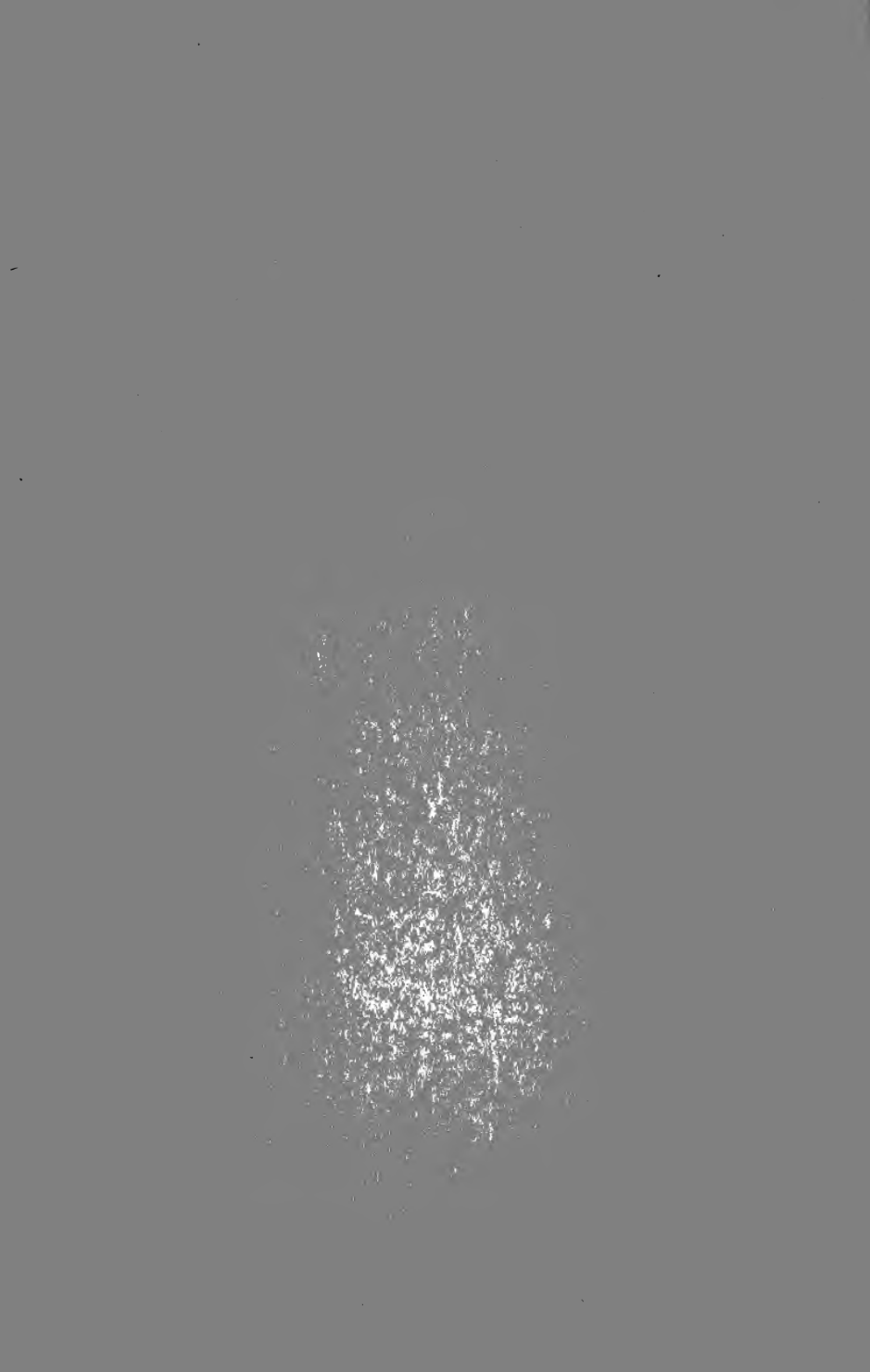
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WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE

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NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

OF ALL BOOKSELLERS

IF YE FULFIL THE ROYAL LAW

By

A. H. W. ^{*Wignmore*} (Canada)

Author of "He Restoreth My Soul," "Which
Temple Ye Arc," etc.

One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

—IN MEMORIAM.

Is there a thing whereof men say,
See, this is new? It hath been already,
In the ages which were before us.

—ECCLESIASTES.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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AN APPEAL TO CHRISTENDOM

INTRODUCTION

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty."

REV. i. 8.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

JOHN i. 1.

"But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

JOHN xiv. 26.

"So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God who giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are God's fellow workers; ye are God's husbandry (or, tilled land), God's building."

I COR. iii. 8, 9.

THE existence of a universal Royal Law presupposes a universal Sovereign. The giving forth of any one or more laws by a human sovereign does not assume that they shall necessarily be obeyed. But in the vast Creation of which we form a small part, and of which we can conceive a very little, in a feeble way, we find an astonishing uniformity of obedience to a regular organized process.¹ Paley reminds us that this is brought

¹ Paley's *Natural Theology*.

about by more than mere contrivance and design. He says that "the laws of nature everywhere prevail; they are uniform, universal. But what do we mean by the laws of nature or by any law? Effects are produced by power, not by laws. A law cannot execute itself. A law refers us to an agent. Now an agency so general as that we cannot discover its absence, or assign the place in which some effect of its continued energy is not found, may, in popular language at least, and perhaps without much deviation from philosophical structures, be called universal; and with not quite the same, but with no inconsiderable propriety, the person or Being in whom that power resides, or from whom it is derived, may be taken to be omnipresent. He who upholds all things by His power may be said to be everywhere present." Besides this convincing reference to the omniscience, the omnipotence and the omnipresence of the Deity, he refers to His Eternal character also. He says, "Eternity is a negative idea, clothed with a positive name. It supposes, in that to which it is applied, a present existence. As applied to the Deity, it has not been controverted by those who acknowledge a Deity at all. Most assuredly there never was a time in which nothing existed, because that condition must have continued. The universal blank must have remained; nothing could rise up out of it; nothing could ever have existed since; nothing could exist now. In

strictness, however, we have no concern with duration prior to that of the visible world. Upon this article therefore of theology it is sufficient to know, that the contriver necessarily existed before the contrivance." He also calls our attention to the proof of the unity of the Deity in the uniformity of the plan observable in the universe. He says, "The universe itself is a system; each part either depending upon other parts or being connected with other parts by some common law of motion, or by the presence of some common substance." Regarding the goodness of God's work, he says, "The proof of the Divine Goodness rests upon two propositions, each, as we contend, capable of being made out by observation drawn from the appearances of nature." The first is, "that in a vast plurality of instances in which contrivance is perceived, the design of the contrivance is beneficial." The second, "That the Deity has super-added pleasure to animal sensations, beyond what was necessary for any other purpose, or when the purpose, so far as it was necessary, might have been effected by the operation of pain." Paley also takes the stand that "the world abounds with contrivances; and all the contrivances which we are acquainted with are directed to beneficial purposes. Evil no doubt rests, but is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance." But we cannot know that there exists evil without allowing that it too may have been within the range of this con-

trivance. That our Creator had power to create us good, and at the same time give us the ability and desire to remain good, is as certain as is His omnipotence. That He had the wisdom to create us with such qualities as fitted us into His design, is as certain as is His omniscience. That He could everywhere direct our impulses and aspirations, is as certain as His omnipresence. That He did purposely create us liable to fall into sin, or into "missing the mark," as Ruskin urges it should be understood, is as certain as His inspired Word; wherein He says, "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil." And He adds for our warning, anticipating that He would be misunderstood, "Shall the clay say to Him that fashioned it, What makest thou?" If our creation was not to be unusual and of universal value, why did the angels of heaven desire to look into it? What made us to be of unusual interest to them? It seems very plain to us, that the contrivance, as Paley calls it, of the experience of our race, was to partake of a period of "missing the mark" first; but that this preliminary evil should prove to be such a lesson to ourselves and others, that ultimately it would prove to be absolutely beneficial. That our Creator designed our experience we can scarcely deny from the evidence of His attributes, added to that of His written Word. That it was to be of a widely beneficial influence we must assume, as the Creator Who is the All-Wise as well as the

All-Mighty, pronounced it to be good. So we are obliged to admit, that had we but the wider vision of even the watching angels, we too would pronounce it to be ultimately good. We are not admitting a dual influential power of half good and half evil, as did some of our earlier religionists, although their idea was less insulting to our Creator than the idea that He could not avoid our fall. But we are contending that it was our kind and pitiful Creator's way of bringing us to know that fire burns by letting us scorch our childish fingers a few times; and that real obedience to our Parent brings joy and happiness and reward, while disobedience to our grieved Parent brings punishment to ourselves and helps to bring disorder to the general process or household of God our Father. So we have been burning our fingers, aye, our very souls; and we have been a riotous and unruly household, and this conduct has not produced in us a happy people. We know of no peoples who were happy, during their earthly experience, excepting those who at times and for a short while were attempting to live up to their highest ideals, the best they knew. The ideal of a soul or nation is its criterion of judgment; and few souls or nations have lived up to this self-imposed ideal. But mostly, we have all been smarting from the fires of forbidden indulgences and weeping noisily over our well-merited punishment. But now we are quite a grown-up race; at least many of our peoples

are, and we had better cease acting like young ignorant children, or we shall not be thought by the watchers to have our spiritual senses; we shall appear as *spiritual* imbeciles, and indeed, *mental* imbeciles as well, if reason is a part of judgment; for it is our minds which decide our attitude and conduct in all things, spiritual matters included. We see that the lesson of our experience is to be a lesson also for the angels, perhaps for the good as well as for those who are disobediently inclined or absolutely rebellious. We learn from Jude, when he is warning those of the faith concerning the danger of their falling into error, that, "Angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, He hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Peter also refers to these disobedient angels who are in darkness reserved unto Judgment. The knowledge that angels fell from the obedient way, proves to us that they had not the strength of character given them to stand their trial. And we find that they are still somewhere held in a state of (we may assume I think) spiritual darkness awaiting judgment. Shall this darkness terminate in death, or shall the Creator say unto these, "Let there be light"? We do not know; nor do we *need* to know. We do know that He has said to us, Let there be light, and we do *need* to know that this fact is our judgment; that we will not to any measurable extent allow this Light to come in and

fully radiate our habit-darkened souls, is our supreme folly. The vista of the Eternal is infinite and His designs are surely right. I think some one has, perhaps wisely, said that evil, or most of that which to us seems to be evil, is only good in the early stages of its making. I think we had better concede this to be true, for it agrees with the Creator's word at our creation. Our individual entities may have true immortality if we be proven to be worthy of so wonderful a gift of experience. If this is so, and it is scriptural to assume it, does not our human experience give us just the lesson that shall tend to keep us in the path of willing obedience so long as our memories retain the knowledge of the terrible results in pain and misery of our wilful sinning? Shall we not in all our future temptations, if such there be, remember the scars of our scorched fingers and the pain of the results of our disobedience? Shall we not be warned by the memory of our natal period, and of how as little ones we "missed the mark" for so many weary days? Paul says to the Philippians, "I press on toward the goal (or mark, A. V.) unto the prize of the high (or upward) calling of God in Christ Jesus." And during these eternal experiences which lie before us, shall we not always be glad, if we have according to our light pressed upward towards the mark; and if we have not spent all our earth-days in wilfully, or it may be carelessly, "missing the mark," in sinning? But if

we do thus err we have no assurance that we shall have entity or memory in eternity; but rather that by some process, either long or short, we shall be destroyed. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The past is in the hands of God, Who contrives and wills all things. The present He gives us with its responsibility and its promise. At this eventful day of separating the evil of the past from the incoming of good for our future Holy City, a human being's only business in life is to be a unit of an advancing army, whose battlefield lies in the difference between good and evil, and usually in our accustomed walks of life. *Just to walk right*, and under Christ's rule, brings each of us, one by one, into this army which is already marching steadily toward the Holy City, the Kingdom of Heaven. Our six thousand years are nearly consummated. Ours is the day of joyful hope, if we love His appearing; or of terrible despair, if our vision is completely occupied with selfish desires and worldly aspirations. We are obliged by the crucial character of the particular period in which we find ourselves to-day, to choose definitely which we individually propose to do. Shall we press upward toward the Mark, or shall we continue to ignominiously miss it, in a base retreat destruction-ward?

There are some inherent and half-latent qualities in the hearts of all men, no matter in what condition of life they may be found. We shall find that

the same quality of observation and conclusion which has led the most religious of scientific minds to endeavour to draw the attention of the less learned or more careless to the evidence for the universality of God's power and contrivance, is the same human quality which led the more darkened minds of the ancient peoples of our Race to see evidence of a power and wisdom outside of themselves which they took to be remedy for any latent desire or need which lay in each man's inmost being. Our Creator bestowed on each of the two classes of men the same gift, although so widely separated in operation by spiritual and social condition. We find that there has always been in both these classes of mind an inherent desire to know more about this Power and Wisdom which both could see as being everywhere dominant. This desire is so universally prevalent, that where you find Man, you shall also find some kind of shrine set up as meeting-place between the soul's desire and its fulfilment, the Great Father of us all. Shrines, beautiful as a dream of heaven, shrines as horrible as a nightmare of Hades, shrines arbitrary and dogmatic, and shrines idealistic; all have been set up just as the soul's conception of God's dominance was enlightened by truth. And shall we who profess to worship at the acme of all these altars, where supreme love to God and man is our sole lawful offering, shall we say that God did not meet His ignorant children at these

altars, if their hands and hearts were clean, as they conceived of cleanliness? Paul, with his splendid vision of the greatness and justice of God, stood amidst the various schools of wrangling philosophers on Mars Hill and addressed them thus: "Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious, for as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, To an Unknown God. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you. The God that made the world and all things therein, He, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is He served by men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He Himself giveth to all life and breath and all things; and He made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He is not far from each of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said: For we are also his offspring." So we must not be too haughty over our advanced civilization and over our increased knowledge of our Father and His designs and their meaning; for with this advance rests a grave responsibility towards those who still sit in darkness; and there are many peoples even to-day who do not even profess to have received

into their spiritual conception the Light of the World. Many conceptions of the Deity have been formulated by the peoples of many ages. Some of these have borne a little resemblance to true wisdom, most of them have been more like the dreams of a disordered brain. The civilization of a people has always corresponded with its real conception of Deity, or the Supreme Cause and Power, as its units found it to be evidenced everywhere. While we find that these always correspond, yet we find no instance in which a people as a whole live in a spiritual state more excellent than that ideal with which they clothe their Deity; and scarcely ever shall we find a people living nearly up to these ideals. No people has produced a conception of a mental or spiritual character for their Deity which they have not somewhere discovered in themselves. In some ancient cults, their many gods were invested by them with the attributes which they found general in their own characters and which seemed to be present in many natural objects; these they considered to be worthy of worship. They found that the heaven above them could rage and weep and flash lightning from its eyes, just like an angry woman; that it could breathe the softest tenderest zephyr to soothe and restore. Because of the versatile, changeable or fickle character of this brooding atmosphere in which they found themselves, and perhaps mostly because of the nourishing and caressing motherli-

ness of it, they worshipped it in the female form as the Queen of Heaven. The sun was strong and compelling in its influence over all the earth; its warm rays were essential to the recurrent seasons of the grains, fruits, and flowers; it was not fickle, but was regular in its rising and setting, in its winter and summer moods and its path in the heavens. It was a great kindly fatherly, beneficial being; therefore it was worshipped as a male god. I believe that in the far Orient some worship, or try to appease, some very petty gods. These are thought to steal and lie and do much petty mischief. No doubt their worshippers found these to be their own general characteristics; else where did they get their strange conception? No matter how crude or foolish may be our understanding, we, as a race, seem to have vested all power and observable attributes in that existence which we term The Deity. It is not to be wondered at that some of our peoples invested their petty gods with evil traits of character, as they found these traits to be both ever present and powerful to hurt. So we come to see that the Natural Theology of to-day lends strong reason for the existence of these strange old cults amongst us when we were in our infant days of ignorance and crude conclusions. We were feeling around in the dark just as a babe reaches out its little hand in the darkness in search of its heart's desire and hope, its loving, brooding Mother. The Race was but—

An Infant crying in the night,
An Infant crying for the light;
And with no language but a cry.

Does a mother not heed her babe because it is young and ignorant and helpless? Does the pitiful Father not hear these appealing cries, or notice the weak hands that try to feel out after Him, if haply they might find Him? The time of our ignorance is overlooked, but when we know more about our Father's plans for us, more is required of us. If we are the wiser children of this great human family in spiritual matters, is it not ours to rise early and assist to give spiritual meat and drink to the younger children, those who are not yet able to help themselves, not yet quite understanding what spiritual food really is? Where much is given, much is required of us. We should remember this warning.

We of the Christian faith have come to be a people of ideals which are immeasurably above the wisest and cleanest of any ancient religious belief, or the teaching of the sanest and wisest of the philosophical schools. Was it by natural development of species that we became a people of these superior ideals? We are scarcely justified in taking that ground without qualifications, as our racial experience does not warrant it. Then how did we come to have these ideals, which, notwithstanding our weakness and sinning, we really hold in our holy of holies, where the soul com-

munes with the Divine Presence? We as a Christian people have come to clothe the Deity of our conception with all the highest attributes which we find to be common in the very best of our human family. Our conception of God is greatly modified from even the Jewish idea of His attributes. How did this modification come about in our faith? How is it that God was by them held to be a God of Power and Justice and Vengeance, more than of loving care in His power, of mercy in His justice, and of forgiveness in His recompensing vengeance? In accepting the teaching of the Christ, we have come, almost unconsciously, to acknowledge that lovingkindness is by far the *greatest thing in the world*. We have come to judge our fellows solely from the standpoint of that testing word which says, "All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them. For this is the Law and the prophets." And rightly so we thus judge; or the scriptures are vain and void. This causes us to see in God only that which we now demand in humanity. But we have come almost to forget that He is still a God of power to fulfil His promises, and of Justice between man and man, and of recompense to us for the good or evil character of our minds and habits. We almost over-emphasize His loving-kindness, at the expense of our fear to disobey His commands. We have come to do this from the uplifting of our own ideals

to the Christ-like standard of forgiveness. We have, in self-indulgent licence, come to think that although we demand a high ideal in our fellows, that ourselves shall be forgiven for any little wicked thing we may desire to do. It is not alone our Roman Catholic friends who have a scheme of self-indulgence in sinning. We should also remember that we ourselves consider it to be justice to punish the slight or great offence against the common law. But we ask, or *demand*, of God, that He should condone all the licence that we take in the breaking of His Royal Law. God has promised to forgive the soul that repents and *turns away* from sin; but we should always remember that He separates and destroys wilful and rebellious sinners. A sinning soul is working towards the end of its own opportunity of eternal continued happiness. It is a dangerous miasmatic vapour, that induces the hope that God will *condone wilful sinning*; it is not the inspiration of truth; for truth says that the soul dies which sins; that God destroys all such. True, sin lives long and reproduces plentifully; but we find by both promises and fulfilments that its end is destruction; and in the experience of our peoples, designed by our Creator, we find that sin was allowed to run a certain course before destruction consumed it utterly. We find that in some cases the repentance of a people destroyed the sin; while in other, and in most instances, the people refusing to repent and thus make an end

of sin were destroyed along with their poisoned environment. In this way a complete end was made, not only of the unlawful practice, but of those who practised it. We have some striking historic illustrations of this. We may conclude that an experience of sin has been given us, in order that we may see its destructive character; and that after the lesson is learned by us, and by others, then there comes the time of the Harvest. *The Great Harvest is the objective point of the experience of our Race.* The wheat and the tares are to grow together until the time of the gathering in, and the separating of the two classes of seed; the one for the Master's future fields of good grain, the other for the fires of destruction. We believe that Christ and His Executive will work out this separating process through the minds and decisions of humanity, in and by our common law, as it is purified and instructed by this Divine Government. Already we see the shadow which is cast before these coming redemptive measures. Does not our common law already segregate criminals, insane persons, and contagiously diseased persons? Is there not a strong movement towards the prevention of marriage between persons who are not fitted, from a physical or mental standpoint, to be parents of the future generation? Is any one's imagination so dense that he could not suggest a passing away forever of the criminal portion of our people? No criminal or drunkard should be left

free in condition or circumstance to contaminate the next generation. Sickness of body or mind is only affliction, and should demand our tenderest sympathy; but drunkards and general criminals should be considered as the true poisoners of our next generation. This class should be made to cease, by the same common law of segregation, etc. A little skilful legislation, and we may in two or three generations be a people fitted by cleanly and healthy minds and bodies to enter the Holy City of the seventh day; a day wherein our Spiritual nature shall have opportunity to develop Godward without the hindrances of hereditary weakness and tendency to special sinning. We should remember that the iniquity of those who hate God's Law is visited "upon the third and fourth generation." We know this to be the case from instances of the reappearance of some special weakness of body or mind in a person's grandchildren, or perhaps not until his great-grandchildren. We doubt not but that holy and wise qualities are also so transmitted. So taking this fact into consideration, the law-makers of our civilized countries cannot hasten too quickly to eradicate the poison of criminal tendencies from the experience of our coming generations. That so much is already done, or is being discussed amongst wise people, is pretty sure proof that this remedial movement is already inaugurated in a small but very real beginning by the Presence of Him whose it is to say what shall

and what shall not be done. So, if we be wise, and of the spirit of true nobility, sons and daughters of God, we shall set out at once to so train the young of our race in mental cleanliness and sinlessness, that these may be approved and fitting forbears of the citizens of the Holy City, aye, some may even have the happy experience of being citizens themselves—if we strive earnestly to shorten the time of preparation. There is no God-given Law against hastening the holy rest of our Sabbath, if we desire to do so; on the contrary, it is invited, even urged upon us. Do, I pray, give these next three generations, as well as the present one, the holy and now rare privilege of obeying—with confident reason—the commandment which was long ago given to the children of the Race, “Honour thy Father and thy Mother; that thy days may be long, and that it may go well with thee in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.” When we look around into the homes of average families we cannot wonder much that the little clear-eyed children do not honour their parents. This command bears heaviest on the parents. Happy the child that honours his parents, because they are always worthy of honour. If some of us have been so blest, let us thank God devoutly that He has given us the great privilege of naturally keeping this law which carries so much promise with it. Happy are those who have to learn the experience outside of home life to know what sin-

ful habits and mental uncleanness mean. And we should remember that where much is given much is required. What are the dear little children learning, morally, to-day? The time is now come when we should see each little one as a soul who shall perhaps help to fulfil the dream of mankind, the Kingdom of Righteousness on earth.

Perhaps there is no phase of religious conception so important as that of realizing accurately our position in the eternal plan. We take this stand because we see it to be a verity that no soul can give his best service to his Redeemer until he have some approximate knowledge of how the eternal plan is progressing, and in just what position his field of labour lies. Will natural improvement of species teach him this? Only in a very restricted measure. Time and racial experience alone will not teach us the importance of some given psychological moment; does not always teach us "Just when and where to strike." We find some very ancient seers who knew just where and when to do their work, and attempted great things in the face of overwhelming odds. Early in our human career some walked with God in obedience, and became a great power for good; and always have a few known the will of God concerning them in their labours for their fellow human souls. God did not wait until we became such a wise people as we think ourselves to be to-day, before He spoke to us or laid down His Law, or

gave forth His designs concerning our lives. The Eternal, who is also the Almighty, did not wait for the English language, or the prevalence of our common education, before setting forth our part of His process to us. Long ago He told us of that which in the distant future should happen to us; and warned us that we must obey Him and not criticize His methods. He has done just as He told us He would do. We know by His prophetic instruction that we are in nearly the last stage of the prophetic period. We are now able to look back over the great page of history, of prophecies and fulfilments, of righteousness rewarded, and of sin and its certain doom. As He has dealt with sin in the past, so He will continue to deal with it. As He has rewarded holy service in the past, so may we expect it to be in the future. He was, and is, and shall be; and His works change not.

Always the Word of God was heard. Always did He speak to men by some method; few people but ourselves have doubted it. To Adam and Eve, to Enoch, to Noah, and to Abraham did the Word communicate the Divine Will. After the call of Abraham, we have constant evidence of the Presence of Jehovah, and His utterances through the prophets of Israel. These it was who foretold to the people that they might at a distant given day expect the Word of God to become incarnate and dwell for a short while among man. This was so plainly foretold to the people that men in

different countries were looking for His arrival at the same time; and were able by the same prophetic Word to trace His natal place, though it were only a temporary home in a manger. God's plans in this process had neither hastened nor failed. Those who were too self-filled and careless did not watch, and did not understand. The Prophet John preceded the Incarnate Word, as a herald might precede the entry of an earthly Sovereign. The old school of prophets had told this people that when this event was imminent they should prepare for it by casting up a highway and gathering out the impeding stones from it. They were to prepare the way for the King. John, *the prophet*, called to the children of these same people to repent, for the Kingdom of God was at hand. The two warning calls are identical in meaning. If we repent and turn from sinning we are making the way clear for the entry of the King of Righteousness. This connexion between Christ's entrance to His Kingdom and our repentance is precisely the same idea as His teaching that this Kingdom is within us, or, in the midst of us; and it places the responsibility for the coming of the Kingdom upon our wills, that is, if it is to come before its fully appointed date; or, if this time of Judgment of the world is to be shortened. When this is clearly perceived our position and responsibility to-day will be seen to be of vital interest and of grave importance. When the new Day arrives, if we

are not ready for the Holy City we shall not enter; we shall be consigned to destruction in some way at some time; for we are assured that no evil can enter there. But we know from Scripture and external evidence that Christ and His Holy Executive are now with us, and are passing all things under the Judgment of the Great Day. We had better turn our attention to this phase of human life, rather than be so fully occupied with selfish aspirations. If we so turn from evil to good, we shall have all this illustrious company to assist us to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and Satan himself.

We find that humanity has always had an inherent instinct which recognized the Domain of the Over-Soul. That the human conception of this Over-Soul is always in keeping with the highest ideals possible to each people is certain, and, I believe, undisputed. Henry Drummond well says, "The protoplasm in man has a something in addition to its instinct or its habits. It has a capacity for God. In its capacity for God lies its receptivity; it was the very protoplasm that was necessary. The chamber is not only ready to receive the new life, but the Guest is expected and till He comes, is missed. Till then the soul longs and yearns, wastes and pines, waving its tentacles piteously in the empty air, feeling after God if so be that it may find Him. This is not peculiar to the protoplasm of the Christian's soul. In every

land and in every age there have been altars to the Known or Unknown God. It is now agreed as a mere question of anthropology that the universal language of the human soul has always been, 'I perish with hunger.' This is what fits it for Christ. There is a grandeur in this cry from the depths which makes its very unhappiness sublime."

We, who call ourselves Christians, believe that in Christ we have reached out after and found the very inmost desire of our longing souls. We know that He meets our hopes and fills our highest ideals. We wonder that we are so unwilling to let Him be *Our Peace* after having found Him. He cannot be *Our Peace* until we agree to let Him raise us up to the level of our own ideals. Our change must come through the purification of our souls according to His law of righteousness. We must be willing for this and make effort towards that end. "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me," He says. He will not coerce us though the time be matured. He will have a few willing souls, but it may be neither you nor me. He can do without us, He can do better with us. But we cannot do without Him in this world or another.

Perhaps there is no more deeply seated doctrinal doubt in the Christian mind than that concerning the fixity of our individual eternal destiny. We agree that both theological parties can quote Scripture which seems to give support to each particular theory. Then are both views true? If not, which

is false? If either is found to be false, then the New Testament Scriptures are not to be relied upon. If these are not inspired and to be relied on, we do not feel sure of anything in our religion of Christianity. Had we no preconceived ideas borrowed from the wrangling "early fathers" and theologians of the middle ages, we might not have had so much quarrelling over this vexed doctrine. We do not love controversy now as we then did. We seem to be feeling out more after the *heart* of the Redeemer than after some new "ism" to wrangle over. We are searching for the old path that He walked in and invited all who were like simple little children to walk therein with Him. That our destiny in some respects is marked out for us who can doubt? That men were and are distinctly called to their special form of service is clearly and frequently taught in God's Word. But, that there is a Universal Call to repentance unto salvation, is equally sure, and cannot be disputed with reason by the fair-minded Scripture student. We find the cause of these two diverse theories to be a misapplication of the Word; as where our Lord tells His disciples, "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you." Here our Lord was speaking of the call to a very special spiritual service, and *not* of the invitation to

eternal life. A few verses further on in this same address He is speaking of those who refused to believe on Him, but who rather persecuted Christ and His disciples. He says here, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin." There is certainly personal responsibility signified here. There is so much call to repentance unto salvation and eternal life in God's Word, that we must accuse God Himself of mocking our misery, if we may not accept the call to repentance because of our predestined destruction. "Come,"—"If ye will ye may," seems to ring out loud and clear and kind all through both Books. If we examine all these seemingly conflicting texts by their grammatical connexions and by the general tenor and teaching of both Books, we shall find, as most people concede now, that all are invited and urged to partake of salvation through Jesus Christ. Amongst these thus generally called to life eternal, are many who are especially called to some special service. This service they must and do perform; but it alone does not assure them of the salvation they may be offering to others. Paul said that he buffeted himself into a holy obedient life, fearing lest after having preached to others he should himself miss the mark. Paul was obliged, was *conscripted* to preach and was prepared for his work by God's foreordination; but he confessed that this call did not include foreordained eternal life. To

this he was obliged to attain by striving after it—or miss it. If we add to this evidence of the chief apostle of the Gospel the teaching of Christ in the Revelation and elsewhere as to the specially appointed Executive of the Lord Jesus Christ's government during His reign, we shall clearly see that the difference in these two theories, i. e. Freewill and Foreordination, is but the difference between the general call to salvation and the special call to special service. We may and must all work towards Holy Citizenship, just as we may and must do so in ordinary citizenship; but we are not, many of us, called to be of His special Executive; perhaps none are so called to-day, though many may be, and certainly are, called to special service in Holy Citizenship in various purifying ways; just as many are not called to share in the direct government of our State, yet in the various avenues for the purifying of our general citizenship, there need be no limit to number; desire to assist, and qualities which are suited to the work being the only requisites. Good citizenship is quite as essential to the Holy City or to a splendid State, as is a good Executive; were this not true Christ would have fully reigned here nearly two thousand years ago. Long ago, it seems, many persons became partly or wholly demented over the awful dread that they might be foreordained to eternal torture in a lake of fire; but we thank the dear Father that this dreadful

fear is passing away, along with much other cruel imaginings of some of the old *wrangling* and *hating* theologians. But had the doctrine been really taught in Scripture as these saw it—we believe honestly—still there need have been no despondency or despair over it, because even these *wranglers* could not deny that those who willed or wished to be saved might attain to it. This would, if ordinary reason and logic had been employed, at once allay all fears; as those who *willed*, must be feeling the *predestined call*; if they cared so much that they became almost demented, they were certainly willing and desiring to be saved; and it is constantly taught that our salvation through Christ is dependent on our wills. So if this doctrine is a verity, it still amounts to the same as the Freewill theory; as in that theory also the careless and unwilling are not saved, as in the other they are not called. Indifference is as death-producing a sin as rebellion, both bring the soul to destruction. But we have this one strong, nay, invincible, point in favour of Freewill, namely, that nowhere are we taught that a repentant soul is destroyed. Therefore, at this late and crucial day, it were far wiser to believe and teach the surest plan of safety. If repentance from all our sinning, and studied obedience to God's law, trusting in Christ to be our Saviour and Mediator, trusting in His sufficiency as best we understand it, to bring us unto Life Eternal, and trusting in the Holy Spirit to

direct our understanding wherein it may fail in accuracy—if this is sufficient to save our souls and make us good people, why not forget the old wrangles and try a little of the truly obedient and simple and saving doctrines that the children can understand as well as we. We had better learn to do the *will* of the Father and then we shall be in a more reasonable condition to know of the teaching. If we become obedient, we become so from our agreement with the Christian ideals, or from fear of the consequence of rebellion. It will take both motives to bring our whole peoples into the righteous citizenship of the Holy City. It takes both motives to keep our civilized peoples obedient to our *civil* Law. Our laws are the ideals of our best thinkers, who would obey them were they not enforced by law; but being enforced they become the cause of evil people also acting within some measure of these ideals. Forced decency is better than indecency. So the idealist should strive, and he nearly always does strive, to bring his ideals of citizenship into the common law, in order that his fellow-man whose standard of ethics is much lower, may be raised by law into a being of holier habits; and so shall we all advance towards a high and righteous condition.

We, as a Race, are called upon to repent as units of a great whole, and we must turn from all our unrighteousness, as units of a great whole; and we must each become absolutely obedient to The

Royal Law. The authority which gives validity to this Law is vested in The Crucified One. Christendom acknowledges this to be true. At the present day we are at the period when we are to become obedient to this Law or be destroyed by some method at some place and at some time. At least, we know that we cannot be *disobedient* and live eternally. This we do know for a certainty. We who intend to obey this Law shall doubtless be divided into two classes as above noted. First and infinitely more honourable are those whose moral status of character is in spirit equal to the Law, and we believe there are great numbers of such; that is, these see in the Law their own unattained ideals and gladly welcome movements which render it more nearly possible of attainment. The second class, and infinitely the inferior, are those who obey the Law from fear of punishment or the opinion of their fellows. Of course, good conduct, even from fear, is better than evil, which is a warning against High Heaven.

As soon as we make attempt at obedience to Law, if we be of the first class, we shall find ourselves approaching the fires and thunders of the Mount of God. We come face to face with our Lawgiver, and we are obliged to consider His words. We come to the Light, where all our aims and works shall pass before the searching judgment of this Lawgiver. They are found *wanting* or *weighing* by this examination; and the verdict

will be right. If we be of the second class who fear to approach the Mount of God's Law, but wait miserably apart, until the Law is brought to us, we shall be very unhappy people; but a wiser and more believing company of souls than those who go on in their habits of sinning, saying, "He tarrieth, and things are just as they always were." We had better, as many as dare, approach the Mount bravely and honestly and hopefully, so that we may write the Law in the stone of the common law for those who fear to search for it.

We shall find that all the Law and the prophets point to but two great trends of thought and resultant conduct. These two are briefly contained in the two commands to love God and love your fellow-men. To love God we are obliged to recognize Him as that Home in which we live and move and have our being; and if we will but let our minds dwell upon it for a moment, we shall see it to be a Home of such infinitely wonderful possibilities, if we be living in perfect unity with Him, that our hearts shall reach out towards Him in tender trust, hoping that somewhere, sometime, we shall be found to be less unworthy of His relationship to us as Father. We feel that we may hope that somehow we shall grow to be a people fitted for His presence. He has told us that if we are to become His true children we must take His reproofs and His chastenings, just as little children do from their parents, and respect and love them

the more. The second thought in the Law is that we are to *love each other*. And Christ has explained to us just what this means, with careful precision, in these words: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets." This signifies that we do not love either God or man unless we keep this second commandment. It is the testing of our standpoint of obedience. Love to God and disobedience to Him cannot co-exist in one heart.

When this high ideal is permanently set up in the hearts of men, and is realized in their conduct, we shall not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. That it is now the standard of ethics for a large and ever increasing proportion of our people is a hopeful sign. It is when we unitedly set up Christ in our hearts, and our conduct becomes holy, that He reigns. He must reign within first, and not from a worldly kingdom. In time all the earth shall be His obedient Kingdom. And it is not wise of us to expect the spectacular; for this reign comes like a thief in the night, or unobserved, unless we be watching for its expected appearance; and it may be in some ways helped on by those who do not confess Him, but are doing work for Him unconsciously, through the children of men. Wherever you see loving-kindness, truth, justice, mercy, and righteousness being introduced, there shall you also see the Kingdom of our Lord

and of His Christ being, maybe quietly, but *surely*, inaugurated.

It has been the destiny of some of our Race to fall away from the truth after having at first received it with pious gladness of heart. The children of Abraham were at first careful to be obedient to the Divine leadings. This brought them great increase of numbers as a tribe, and, in time, brought them the freedom and affluence of a great nation; also, alas, it brought them that pride of heart and evil association which was the cause of their falling away from obedience into a rebellious condition, and from that into homeless oppression and dispersion. The Christian Church also started out with a pious gladness and trust in their Lord. They too increased and prospered, until they too became a great people and a menace of power and prosperity to the Empire to which they were subjected. The Christians also became a great nation, and indeed ruled over many nations; although by a somewhat different method. These, too, became corrupted by evil association and by pride of heart until their spirituality was wellnigh exhausted from starvation or smothered by the allurements of the world, the flesh, and the evil one. Certainly these two fell away; all but the few; as it was with the former religionist. And so in our individual experience, do we not start out full of hopeful zeal, but alas do we not also, many of us, become so mixed up with the idolatrous world

around us, that we fall into actual sin again and again? And to-day, where shall we find many, or perhaps any, who never fall into conscious sin? And yet we think that we love God and desire to keep His Law.

We have warning after warning of the danger that lies in this course of aimless and desultory trifling with the religious life. We have example after example, that what man or groups of men sow, that also shall they reap. We find that even a very few faithful souls can save a whole city from destruction, and that God does not destroy a city of souls, no matter how wicked they may have been, if they do but repent. If they fall away, as did Nineveh, after having partaken of merciful forgiveness, these become so hardened by resistance to warning, that they do not again repent, but rather take licence from God's forbearance and continue in the course of sinning which ensures their ultimate destruction, as was the end of this notable old city of men. She was ultimately utterly swept off the site of her greatly privileged existence. We had better apply these obvious lessons to our individual and national experience, if we wish for an existence in the coming years. The past lies behind us. Its history is ours to read, but not to make. Before us lie only two cities of souls which need to interest us deeply to-day: the City of Eternal Life, and the City of Destruction; the Holy City, and the Wicked City.

We pass into our appointed place in the one or the other according as our work is; and we should remember that there is—to our knowledge—no neutral City for the soul of a man, in which he may avoid these two poles in character and faith. Our work is always governed by our wills. Our wills are influenced by our attitude towards these two main points of the Law, viz.: Our believing love of God, and our consistent conduct one towards another. The Father has appointed His Son to save us from sin and thus from death; and we may take the oath of allegiance to Him and grow from perfection unto perfection under His brotherly and kingly authority, or we may fraternize with Satan and his executive—as we now mostly do—and find our ultimate destruction in some way, at some time. What this weary way is we are not told, except in figure; and God forbid that any of us who confess to His name should ever find out in the future for ourselves from sad experience. Surely the Holy City is more attractive to the moral character of our civilized people than the selfish instincts which lead us directly into Gehenna. It is said, “Bear ye one another’s burdens and so fulfil the Law of Christ.” In no cause is it more necessary to do this than in our mutual attempt at sinlessness. It is so difficult to live the sinless life when surrounded by a tempting environment. If we could unite in our aim and purpose, and unite to destroy all that which now destroys us, should

we not be fulfilling the Law of Christ, the Royal Law? Should we not then have the aid of the Executive of our King and Redeemer? Perhaps if a national and international (each nation in his own way) season of earnest sincere prayer were held for—not our particular “ism”—but for Christ’s reign, throughout all Christendom, it would hasten the day of our obedience, that is if we follow it up by simple, earnest endeavour towards this holy consummation. But to think that we can delay His reign with impunity, is to conclude without one iota of reason. Do not mistake *God’s forgiving mercy* for *licence to sin*. The Harvest is ripe, the day of separating the good from the evil is upon us, the new Sabbath day is not far away, and if we can shorten the time of Satan’s reign, why do we not unite to do so? Each soul must answer for itself; *is* answering for itself even now. Who then shall be *our* Over-Lord?

We are told to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. With fear of sinning, and so missing the Mark; and with trembling, in our earnestness to acquire that soundness which shall allow our Redeemer to save us from death through His sacrificial mediatorship, Paul writes to Timothy concerning this vital point thus, “I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men, for kings and all that are in high places; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness

and gravity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all: the testimony to be borne in its own times; whereunto I was appointed a herald (or preacher) and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire therefore that the men pray in every place lifting up holy hands, without wrath or disputings."

And so I live you see,
Go through the world, try, prove, reject,
Prefer, still struggling to effect
My welfare; happy that I can
Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
Not left in God's contempt apart,
With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,
Tame in earth's paddock as her prize.

Thank God, no paradise stands barred
To entry, and I find it hard
To be a Christian, as I said.

Browning.

If Ye Fulfil the Royal Law

CHAPTER I

THE ROYAL LAW

"Howbeit if ye fulfil the Royal Law according to the scripture, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' ye do well: but if ye have respect of persons ye commit sin, being convicted by the Law as transgressors."

JAMES ii. 8, 9.

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly and to love kindness and to walk humbly with thy God?"

MICAH vi. 8.

"And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face and His name shall be on their foreheads."

REV. xxii. 3, 4.

THE Royal Law: How shall we attain even the most remote conception of what this really means? If we could for a moment join that company of Sons of God who shouted for joy in unison with the song of the stars at the birth of our, as yet, most sorrowful earth, we might catch

some faint glimmer of light on this infinite and universal rhythm of process, which, for want of a more descriptive term, we may call Natural Law. If one might, from some wondrous vantage ground, observe this process in all its intricacy, its infinite variety of method, order, and purpose, we might be brought to that mental state wherein we should find that we *must* term this controlling influence The Royal Law. We should certainly find that there is an existent Super-Lawgiver in the universe whose wisdom and energy is as immeasurable in the minutiae of creation and preservation as it is in the vast and unthinkable whole. We find Him to be as wonderfully wise and active in the microscopic atom of the minutest cell of an organism, as we do in the binding of the sweet cluster of the Pleiades, the loosing of the bands of Orion, or in the guiding of the Bear with his train. It is this same Lawgiver who puts wisdom in the inward parts and teaches the young ravens to cry unto Him for their daily food.

If we are unappreciative of the exceedingly elaborate process which we term Natural Law, perhaps we have not considered it to the extent of our mental ability to penetrate into these intricacies of nature. Many of us have not the time, or perhaps the inclination, for these deeper studies of natural objects, and are well satisfied if they do but fulfil their mission by serving us. But it is a field that is inexhaustible in treasure, as the student finds on

delving into its depths with ever so little time or skill. He finds that all conceivable or observable objects on analysis dissolve themselves into perfect kingdoms, each perfectly organized to fulfil its own mission, be it great or seemingly small. He will also find this peculiarity to obtain in all cases, viz., that the larger and more important the object may be found to be, the more utterly dependent it is upon the perfection of its units; we know this by the many instances which our wise scientists have shown us. There are data in plenty from which to draw such a conclusion. We shall find that all wholes are composed of many units in combination; co-dependent on one another; thus making a conditional completeness. It is difficult to trace a more essential sub-law than this, as it works throughout the various kingdoms in the universe which are embraced by Natural Law. We see a stretch of beautiful landscape as a complete whole; did we but analyze this whole, down to its last and minutest atom or cell, we should find that we were having brought to our attention kingdoms upon kingdoms of animate or inanimate, or what we choose to consider as inanimate, matter, all obeying, with more or less exactness, the Royal Law. The great water stretches of the earth with their ebb and flow, their storms and calms, the gigantic living creatures which are contained in their vast, measureless, rolling beds; is this not a kingdom of sub-kingdoms composed of units, each one living

under a great universal law from which there is no escape? Does not the stellar army above us on its ever cycling march (a very little of which may be observed by us) fill us with awe? Do we ever pause to consider the possible variety of kingdoms contained therein? Do we ever try to estimate what would be the result to them of disobedience? Have we ever tried to conceive of universal chaos? Have we thought of the vital principle of the vast being so utterly dependent on the minute, the great on the small, the whole on the unit, in connexion with this army of giants which rhythmically bestride the dome of the heavens? We draw from science, that there are eons of ages drifting into a receding dreamy past, that there is probably a never-ending future unrolling before us, like a scroll, in the years to come. We draw from the Scriptures and our inherent hopes and instincts, that there is a state of being perhaps in store for us, where life is different, where the density of the earthly body does not weigh us down so wearily with infirmities and care. We have an instinctive hope of this which supports our courage when we falter and almost faint by the way. When we endeavour to think of all these things in their process and ultimate—if there be an ultimate—issue, we feel that we have logical grounds for deducing from such evidence that this Universe is one vast Kingdom and is thought out, or planned, controlled and administered by some Personified Unity of

Mind and Authority. It is surely not an over-drawn conclusion to consider such a personality as The Sovereign, and His system of process in its multitudinous orderings and workings, as His Royal Law; and thus it has been named.

But we do not need to search for evidence of this super-law only in extraordinary objects and processes which may possibly come within the range of our perceptions, but also in the most ordinary and familiar objects and processes of our daily lives. We may have neither the ability nor the opportunity to analyze ourselves or our environment; but our Lawgiver, in His kindly care for our various desires and requirements, has given this ability and opportunity to others, who spend their lives in research, and in putting the results of their skill and labour into such shape that we may learn much of these formations and processes by very little effort and time, if we so wish.

Take, for instance, the human body, as the highest known example of nature's mechanism, and learn of our Sovereign Creator's care for His creatures. Surely it is the fool that hath said in his heart, There is no God, and that our bodies became such marvels of skill without a Designer and Creator. These foolish ones leave a vastly greater proposition to be dealt with than that which they so unreasonably deny. We may try to imagine such a product as the human body evolving from chaos; but we should still be in a

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serious quandary, and we should stand on most illogical ground, because, how could evolution proceed without Law? How could things take symmetrical proportion and shape in chaos and by means of chaos?—a state which we take to mean, Matter in confusion waiting for the Law of order to start it once more into process. We feel assured that to a sane mind there is no escape from the belief that Natural Law is absolutely omnipresent and omnipotent in the Universe, and we cannot imagine a sane mind thinking of this Universal Law as existing in that which was, and is, and is to come, without concluding that this process is being continuously thought out by a Supreme Law-Giver and Law-Enforcer. If this were not true, how should we remain in existence? The very air we breathe must be controlled by this Law. The tiny waterdrops must exist as a little kingdom, under such a Law. The methods employed in the sustenance and clothing of our bodies are so strange and wonderful that it would be insanity indeed did we not recognize in these this same controlling Power. There is such a variety of creations in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, placed conveniently for our use to assist us in sustaining our lives, that we are filled with grateful wonder—or, we ought to be. Are all these serving the creatures, who were made in God's Image, by chance?

We must not weary the reader with endless

descriptions of the many objects and processes with which we are all so familiar, too familiar indeed to fully appreciate them, but I do ask of us all to think a little more minutely on these things at times, as we have opportunity, in order that we may realize the actual presence of this great and Parental Law-Giver, every moment of our existence, and in every object by which we are surrounded in our perhaps commonplace lives. Indeed we have no right to consider ourselves otherwise than as a part of an interesting scheme of our Law-Giver, for such we really are; no more, no less. It is a subject far too difficult for the human mind to conceive of, just how we are formed to appear such absolutely separate physical, mental, and spiritual entities, governed in each conceivable atom by the most careful law of process, and thus be every instant in closest contact with the presence of the Law-Giver who is "Nearer to us than breathing, Closer than hands and feet," and yet not be, as some one has called us, An Atom of the Infinite. We are taught as children to say that God is "everywhere." If this be true—and can we deny it?—then how can we have being outside of God's being? Is this a kind of pantheism? We do not intend to support any particular theory, be it ancient or modern; but we do feel that we are scriptural and reasonable in finding that we cannot possibly separate our process of being or the objects of our environment from a Law that is too minute for our finite con-

ception, and too enduring and all-encompassing for our imagination to dwell upon for long without losing our mental balance. It is amply sufficient for our present requirements, to know that in the Infinite we live and move and have our being; and that we are, every one of us, placed each in his own responsible position in this great universal scheme, by a Super-Law or design from which there is no escape and by which we are preserved from dissolution and chaos. In His infinite kindness He has granted to mankind, who is made in His image, a ray of Himself in that wonder of His creation, *The Human Will*. Through this gift we find ourselves above the lower orders of His earthly creation, and in a position of the very gravest responsibility as regards our career on this planet.

In our observation of the various objects which we consider inferior to the human personality, we find, as we have noted, that these continue in their round of existence in such an orderly process that we must recognize that they too are governed by laws which are observable in their constant working and approximately unvarying results. We also observe some processes so minute and others so gigantically vast and far-reaching that we are obliged to conclude that there is a Super-Lawgiver whose majestic power will be found to be in keeping with this exquisite design and process. All this applies to the approximately perfect specimens of

different types in the many kingdoms which may come under the scope of our very limited observation and comprehension. But when we become quite familiar with any one type of plant or animal, or even of the mineral kingdom, we frequently find that there are specimens which are not quite perfect, which do not accord in some one or more particulars with their fellows of the same genus, and we also find that these specimens which do not quite conform to type are divided into two classes: the one with a tendency toward degeneracy, the other with a tendency towards improvement of species. If the careful seed-grower has a large field of uniform plants, which will in turn produce many fields of just such plants again, these are, we may say, conforming to type. But does he not also frequently find that there are some plants so inferior in quality to the mass, that he is compelled to separate them from the good seed, as being unfit from which to reproduce. On the other hand, does he not, perhaps less frequently, find some plants so excellently developed, that these too must be separated from the mass, but for the opposite reason, viz., that they may produce more like unto themselves without contamination from the inferior. The seed-grower will also probably give these extra care; and thus being separated and cared for, a new and more excellent class of seed comes into being. In the animal kingdom does not this same discriminating care obtain with our

stockmen? And so we find to be already practised among us, this method: that we encourage the development of traits in that which we consider to be the greatest approach towards improvement of that species to which the object in question may belong. We as human beings have the opportunity and also the discriminating talent to do this with more or less success in these spheres, and the kind Lawgiver seems to have bestowed upon us the ability to perform some of these small thoughtful works, like unto His works; as object lessons of His dealings with our own lives, and our eternal soul culture. If we would but *consider*, as the Lord Christ has told us to, we might learn by His methods how to endeavour to harmonize our lives with the great eternal process. In order that we might do this the more intelligently, He gave us—shall we say—*Spiritual Wills*. These Wills are forever manifesting a sort of subconscious, or half latent, hope of an eternal happy existence; forever desiring but oftentimes fearing. We, feeling guilty of sinning, fear the just reward which we know should be ours. This gives us a “dread of something after death” more than a hope of an unmerited happiness. “Thus conscience does make cowards of us all” and we come in time to have a self-shortened vision of our being. As our great dramatist puts it, our consciences are so guilty and our sense of Justice so innate, that we feel a cowardly shrinking from looking out into the

eternity which we believe lies before us. Aye, we are cowards, and our God-given wills are they which prevent us from benefiting by that development of species which obtains by our care of the inferior creation around us. Christ is our Husbandman, our Shepherd, and would quickly redeem us from our fallen condition if our Wills were not warring against Him. Our reasonable minds approve of this holy development, but our Wills have not as yet fully submitted, hence our slow advance on the kingdom of Heaven. If we are, as some of our most scientific theologians have thought, of more than local and present importance, and that our scheme of salvation is to be a lesson to angels and we know not whom else; then it surely is in keeping with the importance of our situation, that we examine these Wills of ours, to see if there be real rebellion in them, or only a sort of weakness which is the result of lack of noble and earnest effort. Our divine Wills get no exercise when we are treading the broad path to spiritual degeneracy. We had better begin to develop them by gradual but constant exercise, for the day of our separation of good from evil is now upon us. The Super-Lawgiver has sown His Law amongst us, He will expect a harvest from us. He is the Husbandman, and will reap and separate.

We are not at liberty to consider ourselves as the centre of the Universe and that all things above and below shall bend to our petty desires and our

selfish aims. Rather let us consider ourselves as living object lessons to other intelligent beings of a more spiritual order. We may stand at the mystical door of the genesis of our Race, but at most we do but find ourselves an event in the great serial process. Perhaps we were not quite an ordinary creation, but certainly not the first and only one. We must also conclude that we are a very interesting creation, as we learn that the angels desired to look into the things which were to be accomplished in the course of our career. It is this career of our Race, which should surely interest us rather more deeply than, I fear, it does. We are apt to look upon our human history from a too provincial or narrow viewpoint. If angels desire to watch us, it must be that there is a greater plan to which we belong than many of us realize.

And very many thinkers of this age,
Aye, many Christian teachers, half in heaven,
Are wrong in just my sense, who understood
Our natural world too insularly, as if
No spiritual counterpart completed it
Consummating its meaning, rounding all
To justice and perfection, line by line,
Form by form, nothing single or alone,
The great below clenched by the great above.¹

We may presume that nearly all people, either civilized or not, Christian or pagan, Moslem or of any oriental religion, have at least a *vague* belief

¹ Aurora Leigh.

in that which we speak of as a future spiritual stage; and also that spiritual beings have existed before our earth was. Granted that this does lie in the background of all our cults; do any of us as bodies of believers, live with the active consciousness constantly in the foreground of our mutual activities, that we live and move and have our being in close union with the very pulse of this great Super-Lawgiver, and are in contact with, and perhaps under the sympathizing care of, this same angelic company that was so interested in our scheme of life? It does not require very profound introspection to notice that our minds seem to be constantly fed from a source outside the usual avenues of information. Whence come the impulses of our minds? From whence comes that which we too often consider to be the result of our own unaided mental activity? Is there actual spontaneity of thought in the human brain? Can a steady and rapid flow of digested thought generate and pour forth faster than the quickest hand can write it, from a brain which a few moments previous seemed to be almost a vacuum? Whence this inflow? Whence comes our impulse to do this or that when our brain had reasoned it out to be otherwise? Oh, we are in the midst of a mental or spiritual kingdom in which we are sustained in some way which we may not yet be granted knowledge of. We feel sure that we are mentally impressed from without both for good and ill and

that we also receive directive and thought-producing impulses. Are we of those whom our Saviour termed "little ones," whose angels do always behold the face of the Father who is in Heaven? Do these ministering angels instruct us "ever so gently," if we will but hear them? Then should we not always obey our holiest impulses and resist those which are selfish? Shall we be inspired by angels of God or influenced by demons of destruction? Is it not better to learn to receive into our spiritual nature those life-giving breathings than to court the miasmatic vapourings of destruction? Shall our impetus of belief and conduct proceed from Christ or Satan? We may choose our source of thought food; but having chosen we must obey. Every day we are called upon to choose whom we will listen to and to whom we will give our allegiance. We cannot choose both God and Mammon, but only the one. In this choice between Christ and Satan lies the disciplinary work of the soul through the human will. The more we consider the teaching of the Only Begotten Son of our Lawgiver, the more we may realize the utter wisdom of every saying that fell from His perfect lips. If He became perfected by the things which He suffered, He has thus shown us that the Disciplinary Law of our being must be absolutely obeyed by us, even as He obeyed it. He said, "For I am come down from Heaven not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent me." Again, He said, "Every

one that hath heard from the Father and hath learned, cometh unto me." The perfection of His living was the result of obedience to the Royal Law. He loved the great kindly Author of his being so greatly that His perfect soul turned ever upwards, even in His most intense suffering, and said, "Abba, Father, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." He knew that in the process of which he was a part, a mystically wonderful part, this cup must be drained. He had learned to abide in the heart of the Infinite, and to remain in absolute obedience to the plans of the Great Designer, until there was a *oneness* between them. No shade of rebellion lay between Him and the regal mind of the Infinite. Thus the Royal Law became to Him a Band of Love that bound Him unreservedly to His beloved Father, and caused Him to stretch out His arms in loving tenderness to those about Him, begging them to take upon themselves this burden of love, the bands of the Law, which He taught was an easier yoke for His fellow human souls to bear than the yoke of a sinful life. I take it, that the mission of Christ was, to save the people from their sins; and our mission is to learn of Him. It does not detract from the simplicity of His mission that the Father submitted the Son to the suffering of the Cross or to the glory of the Ascension to the seat of power at His right hand; as it is taught us that it was all brought about for the sake of our pardon and the ultimate renewing

of our souls unto righteousness through the sufferings and ultimate reigning of our Saviour.

Christ Jesus taught no doctrines other than love and obedience to the Father, and love towards each other. This is marvellously simple and scientific, and if obeyed brings about the highest results possible to the soul of a man, viz., the sinless life, the life that assures us of continuity of being, in some expression of entity and in some condition of environment; but it must be in conscious and acknowledged unity with our Redeemer. If we abide by this Law of Life we are immortal. The soul that sins shall die. Sin is disobedience to the Law, and is brought about by our own unwillingness to love and serve God and to love each other. These two Loves, our Saviour taught us, embodied all the Law and the teachings of the prophets.

As we have previously reminded ourselves, the angels desired to watch our career as a race, and we find it scriptural to assume that they have been, and still are, watching the results of our particular scheme of being.

We are taught by Scripture that our first parents were at the beginning *good*, because *obedient*; then that they fell from this obedient goodness to a state of disobedient, and so sinful, condition. We term this event the Fall of Man. Adam and Eve bequeathed to us this unholy tendency, along with some goodness. Through Cain we have received a sadly sinful tendency towards jealousy, hatred,

and murder; fortunately for us, Seth has preserved and bequeathed to us some of our first parents' personal goodness and wisdom, or ours would have been an evil race indeed. Had there been no law at the beginning, our first parents or Cain had had no sin; but there seems to have been no recorded system of Law at this early era. Perhaps this twofold love was their only creed. As time passed, the descendants of Adam and Eve became very wicked. Few there were who essayed to keep these two commandments. Enoch had walked with God in obedient union, and God had taken him away; but he left no fixed code that we know of. We know that he exhorted and warned, but to little purpose, we conclude; as it was a very few souls who were saved from the great flood, a little later on, through their belief in the warnings which came from God. As more time passed we find God singling out one obedient man, perhaps the only obedient one, from the mass of peoples, to begin a nobler genus of souls, to whom great things were promised. Yet in all this story we do not learn just what was the command of God to the Race; but that there was a Law we know because Abraham had learned to be obedient to God, or he had not risen to the occasion, when he was commanded to set out for a new country, and leave the house of his father, and all the comforts of a fixed home. He believed in God's words of promise to him, and he obeyed His command. But still we find no

fixed Law. Not many centuries pass before we find that the children of this great man have become a vast multitude; but through strange circumstances they had become a people in bondage and were suffering grievously. In the midst of this unbearable slavery, God spoke to them in command, that they must leave this state of bondage, and go forth to where He should lead them, and that they should become a great and free nation. We may follow them through the divided waters right into the wilderness which was to be their wandering pathway home. All down these centuries from Adam's natal morn until the victory and tragedy of the Red Sea, on, until we touch Sinai, we find no code of Law. True we find wickedness and sin, obedience and faith, all of which presupposes commands broken and obeyed; but no set of rules do we find formulated for general use. Still, this people knew both by natural instinct and divine instruction from time to time, that wickedness was, first, want of faith in the One God, in some way which they understood, and second, that hate and injurious action towards one's fellow-being was sin. This we find that even Cain knew. After a period of wanderings in the wilderness these chosen people arrived at Mount Sinai, there to receive from God through their leader, Moses, The Royal Law. Not only did they receive the Ten Commandments, as we reverently term them, but there was also afterward

set up in their midst with great exactness, a code of ethical ordinances which shame our Christian civilization. True, some of these applied particularly to their day, and, perhaps, not to ours so well. But if we lived up to so rigorous a set of moral regulations as these, only more suitable for our day, how our sinful habits would disappear before their cleansing influence. But we have no excuse, because all sub-laws are founded on the two main words which issued from the mouth of Jehovah that eventful day, amid the muttering of thunder and the flashes of the lightnings of the heavens on Sinai. Many, many centuries have passed since then and many prophets have arisen, many generations have come and gone, and these people became the great and free nation that had been the hope of Abraham; some few of them still living up to this high moral standard to the best of their ability. Alas! we also know that the mass of them were not obedient. Alas! we know that as a nation Israel drifted into the most suicidal falling away that history presents us with. We stand in amazement to see her affiliate with paganism, forgetting alike the victories of the Red Sea and the Jordan, and the Voice from Sinai. These people had received so much direct visitation from Jehovah by the prophets, by angels, and by the direct guidance of Jehovah in their sanctuary through the shekinah, that we marvel that they fell. When the Redeemer came to them as was

foretold, the residue, who thought themselves strict Jews and quite unmixed with any pagan religion, He found to be very faulty indeed. He found them very *religious*, and their time and attention quite fully occupied with Temple service and the many obligations in connexion therewith. They had accumulated such a *débris* of tradition and petty laws and customs around the real Law which Moses wrote direct from the mouth of Jehovah, that it was wellnigh hidden from view. He called their leaders hypocrites, and said that they were a generation of vipers, and He told them "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do." John the Baptist had begged of them to repent, telling them that the Kingdom of God was at hand. Christ Jesus came telling them that it had come and claiming that He was able to restore them to their primal purity. The trouble was that Christ Jesus wanted to restore them by the law of Moses, that was the only law that He recognized as essential; and He with His clearness of perception saw that the whole law was entirely covered by the two duties, the one towards their Father God, the other towards their brother man. These men loved and obeyed their ritual and considered their own selves first, rather than "In honour preferring one another." He told the listening multitude that He did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them. We do not know how early in His

life He came to know Himself as the promised Messiah; we are not told. But from His conversation with the teachers, we would draw that His mind was attuned to His mission from early childhood, and at least after His baptism He realized that He was indeed the Son of Man and of God Who should redeem the world. When He preached to, or reasoned with, these arrogant scribes and Pharisees, He pinned them fast to their own belief in their Scriptures and Law, which teaching was all embodied in the two commands He gave. For this they bitterly hated Him.

And if He walked about amongst us to-day would He have a much more kindly reception, think you? Do we wish that He would come and try to purify our religious life? Well, perhaps if He would confine Himself to doctrinal subjects we might welcome Him, but I doubt it, as I judge by His previous words that much of our sectional differences would meet with a swift judgment. Then again, would He confine Himself to criticism of the Sunday service alone, and to the intricacies of orthodoxy and heterodoxy?

We say we must stand amazed at the suicidal falling away of these typical people, the Jews who held as their state belief, a typical religion. Whatever we see befall the type, we shall expect to see befall the antitype, shall we not? Without doubt, we take the great Christian Religion as antitype of the Jewish. Once more we are obliged to stand

amazed, when we see the antitype of Judaism, Christianity, to-day, in all her degradation of corruption and falling away; for surely all will admit, that as a whole we are wofully corrupt in practice as were those of the type. Look carefully into our commercial and social life and see if this is an unjust accusation, or if we can affirm that as yet the kingdom of God is set up among us in such security that we actually obey its dictum. As Moses was the leader of the Chosen People out of the land of bondage into the promised land of freedom and plenty, so is Christ the Antitype, the Leader of the whole race of mankind out from the bondage of the sinful life into the promised land of holiness and into the paths of obedient love to God and helpful love towards each other. The new dispensation was meant to be as much grander, kindlier, larger than the old one, as Christ was and is grander in personal holiness, kindlier in affectionate care over us, larger in the wideness of His redeeming scheme, than was Moses the leader and lawgiver of the Jews. Christ's reign includes in its full scheme, our creation, our fall, the promise of our final redemption, The Law of Moses, the warnings of the prophets, the Church during its period of experience and trial, our present day with its troubled hopes of a glorified earth and our hope of an eternal home for weary souls. Now that we are nearing the redemption of the poor sin-sick earth, it is more nearly possible for us to obtain a

conception of the whole scheme. It is, before all things, our present duty to endeavour to fit ourselves for this redeeming epoch of our history as a Race. We must allow the Spirit of Truth to re-instruct us so that we shall each become one of that blissful company that not only know the law, but gladly obey it. How useless for us to rebel in this final triumph of good over ill, of obedience to the law over disobedience to it. It would be as practical for one water-drop to endeavour to strive against the great tide, as for one of us to oppose the incoming redemptive tide of the plan of salvation for us, the plan of which angels of Heaven desire to take note.

Always when I try to measure the possible profit that may result from the sinful life I hear singing in my ears, throbbing in my very soul, influencing what small reasoning powers I may have, the saying of the Master Law-Giver of the Universe, "Behold, all souls are mine, as the soul of the Father so also the soul of the son is mine. The soul that sinneth, it shall die." I feel this to be inexorably true, and righteous. If after we have become a disobedient and thus sinful people, we are subject to death of both body and soul; it must be that by repentance, followed by obedience to the Royal Law, we obtain the gift of at least long life here, and everlasting life hereafter. Already in our efforts to attain a higher moral and sanitary condition we have secured a little larger percentage

of those who arrive at the century mark. Perhaps we shall soon learn to live so wisely that we shall not sin against the laws of the physical body. Death now comes to saint and sinner alike; as all have to submit to the general conditions under which we in our ignorance, and sometimes in our self-indulgence, exist to-day. Not so with the death of our souls, as we are each one of us personally responsible for the state of our own soul, independent of all influence or environment. We, as believers, know that *as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive*. It is the privilege of each to accept of this Life in Christ at the earliest moment that our consciousness can conceive of it. We may see this life in Christ each a little differently, as we see the landscape, but we must each of us accept of this gift, each with his own consciousness, and from his own conception of that which he finds written in God's Word to us. And as our viewpoints are many and varied, though all drawn from the one source, we should try to understand somewhat better the method of this Salvation which we are all heirs to; that is, we are heirs to it if we are willing to fulfil the required conditions, viz., Allegiance to our Risen Redeemer, *and sinlessness*. Then we may with reason ask, "Why is it that in Christ we shall be made alive?" I think we may take the view from God's Word, that for some purpose, perhaps quite outside our conception, we were allowed to become a very sin-dis-

eased race; and that after a long period we were to be rescued from this horrible loathsome condition; but not until we had made full trial of being allowed to use our volition freely, either towards good or ill; and we have used it more for ill than good.

We have as a race been most disobedient, although there have always been the *few* who have striven valiantly against wrong and have tried earnestly to keep the Royal Law. These few have always been working for the reign of righteousness upon the earth and in the hearts of men, more than from a selfish standpoint of personal salvation. These have known that we should eventually be cleansed from all this sin-sickness, by one of ourselves, who had never been sin-sick because He was always obedient. In His perfect Manhood He did not escape the temptations of the flesh, but He withstood them, and became perfected by the things which He thus suffered. He was fore-ordained for these sufferings, and to bear our sorrows as well as His own. He did not shrink from the shame of the Cross, which was to those who slew Him a proof of the absolute defeat of One who had claimed that He was indeed the Messiah; but He despised this shame which only lifted Him to His Throne and Power and Glory. After His baptism, and temptation by the arch-enemy of our souls, He began to prepare the people about Him for the reception of His cleansing power. He knew that He, in unity with the Father, must

bring the people once more into a state wherein it would be possible for them to continue to live. Some of us in our arrogance of mind think that we may become morally pure and justly kind towards each other, and that we may strive to instil the same aim into other minds, and so, we shall thus become perfect towards the Royal Law; and all this outside of Christ's efficacy. But this *morality* is not our full duty, and even if it were sufficient for cleansing, it still is not lifegiving to the soul; for in the scheme of redemption which the Super-Lawgiver planned out, He has so arranged it that Jesus our Christ, or our Messiah, is also High Priest and stands between us and pardon, and is our present King, and it is high treason to the Father not to recognize Him as our Saviour. In our earthly kingdoms we may not ignore or work against the majesty of the law and authority of our rulers with impunity, nor may we usurp the throne or reign jointly with our earthly sovereign, though we be law-abiding citizens; neither can we be rival Christs, though our morals be spotless. There is but one Christ, and He is such by the plan of the Father; and He has fully substantiated His claim to the Christhood by His unblemished obedience to the known Law, by His power displayed amongst men when He came, and by the circumstance of His coming according to prophecy, by the offering of Himself for our sins, and by the fully testified facts of His resurrection and ascen-

sion. Perhaps to the modern mind, most of all does He substantiate the claim to this high office as He may be observed in the passing events of the present pregnant period. As we note the sad history of His real Church, the *few*, who for nearly two thousand years of sorrow and oppression have followed the Lamb whithersoever He went, we may observe Him as the Man of Sorrows; with joy we may now also note the slow but steady and sure rising of His invisible but all-powerful Presence, passing all the nations and peoples of the world under His Judgment. Men in sympathetic sorrow have lifted Him up to their fellow-men and said, Behold the Man of Sorrows, was there ever Sorrow like unto His Sorrow? But to-day we may look about us everywhere and we shall see, not so much the Man of Sorrows, as the Judge, the Husbandman. He is judging and separating the good from the evil. If we had the voice of the great winds and mighty rolling waters combined, we would cry to a poor sin-sick world to-day, Behold your Judge, your Saviour; and we may be assured that "He is sifting out the hearts of men before His Judgment Seat"; we had better be ready and willing to urge ourselves to "be swift, my soul, to answer Him; be jubilant, my feet."

Everywhere is there evidence of His presence. We may see Him everywhere in the spirit of re-organization which is now developing and working

in our commercial, social and even in our religious systems. He is now leading us out from our bondage of sin into the liberty of a sinless life. As Canaan was superior to the bondage and oppression of Egypt, so shall our new condition be happier for us; only far more so, for the Israelites continued to sin, and we shall have ceased to sin; that alone would bring heaven on earth. Conformity to our type would bring unspeakable joy of being, the joy akin to happy, healthy little children. We know that of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Christ ever taught Spiritual Law from the analogy of natural objects, and we presume that we may do the same, or rather draw attention to His own method of learning about the spiritual from the natural; and by endeavouring to find process in what we term "Nature," we find that the whole Universe is moving under a law so vast and all-encompassing, that every minute atom is as important as any gigantic part, be it so vast as the orbits in which the myriads of stellar travellers do obediently perform their duty of marching through God's infinite spaces; and we find also that ordinary objects with which we are quite familiar and which serve us as a useful environment, that these move as though they were law-abiding citizens of kingdoms particularly their own, and in each of these myriad kingdoms in what we term Nature, we find that the same Voice that has said in irrevocable words, "The soul that sinneth, it shall

die," has said to each minute atom, cell, or system of systems, the unit of such which sinneth against its own law of being shall die, shall cease to be. The fruit tree which receives the blight of its peculiar disease, is useless, it must cease to be a cumberer of the ground. The seed which does not assimilate that for which it has organism and opportunity to incorporate into its being, is not good enough for the seedsman to reserve for future reproduction. The domestic animals which have contracted evil diseases or have succumbed to a tendency to degeneracy, are unfit for use, they must be cured or destroyed. Man willingly learns these lessons where worldly gain is at stake, and tries to profit by his experiences; under this same discriminating revision must all things pass, until the earth shall bloom like a rose. Into the mental region of man's experience must man himself turn this discriminating talent until the thought-world of our Race is revised and the wheat of good and wise thought is separated from the chaff of the evil and foolish, in the designs and aims of our peoples. We cannot have the spiritual first, the earthly must first be dealt with. To do all manner of iniquities on earth and at the same time have a hope of eternal life is absurd, unscientific and certainly not scriptural. Our works shall be the test of our belief in the Mission of the Redeemer. Nor can we do works meet for the kingdom without repentance over our past sinning, and belief in, and

allegiance to, our appointed King, Jesus the Christ. We cannot work as separate units in this great process of the Royal Law; we are obliged to take our commands and instructions from our Super-Lawgiver's One perfected Son. In Him alone are we granted the privilege of the continued life; as works without faith are void of life-giving power, so also is faith void without obedient service. It is worse than void, it is injurious. Ignorant breaking of the Law is not without excuse; but to know the Law, and acknowledge Christ Jesus as our King, and yet not be willing to obey His commands, is quite without pardon while it so continues and induces death to the soul. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life."

Are we ever in our shortsighted foolishness tempted to blame our Creator for the suffering that the plan of our career has entailed? Perhaps most of us do at times feel it to be unnecessarily wearisome and sin-sick in its workings. Do we not shrink from the struggle of the process although we know and see it to be a law which we may observe in all nature? Do we know what is contained in our Creator's full purpose concerning us? Can we not bring ourselves to believe, that in keeping with His beautiful works in nature, we shall be com-

pensated for all our woes, if we be but faithful even unto death. We should believe that for those who obey the Royal Law, and strive after conformity to our living Head, there are laid up unspeakable joys, joys which we at present can scarcely imagine.

Is it wise to find fault with the Infinite? Had we not better address our earnest inquiry to the Lord of our lives, thus, "What wilt Thou have us to do?" had we not better surrender our future to Him, and ask of the Father that we may become one with Christ, even as Christ is one with Him, and thus give ourselves the opportunity that our spiritual organism is capable of receiving, viz., Eternal Life in our Redeemer? May we not wisely learn of nature, that each of us is an important unit of Christ's Kingdom, and that we are, as units, responsible for the excellence of that dear Home towards which all our souls aspire, the Kingdom of God, the Holy City, wherein no evil dwelleth, where all moves in a harmonious rhythm in perfect obedience to that process of which we know so little, the Royal Law?

That each may fill the circle marked by Heaven,
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble bursts, and now a world.

Go, wiser thou; and, in thy scale of sense,
Weigh thy opinion against Providence:
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such,
Say, here he gives too little, there too much;

If Ye Fulfil the Royal Law

Destroy all creatures for thy sport or lust,
Yet cry, "If man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If man alone engross not Heaven's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there,
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge His Justice, be the God of God."

Pope.

CHAPTER II

FACE TO FACE IN THE MOUNT

“Jehovah spake with you face to face in the Mount out of the midst of the fire (I stood between Jehovah and you at that time, to show you the word of Jehovah: for ye were afraid because of the fire, and went not up into the Mount).”

DEUT. v. 4, 5.

“And this is the Judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved.”

JOHN iii. 19, 20.

“Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is.”

REV. xxii. 12.

IT has been said that the scriptural account of the creation of our planet and its process of development towards fitness for a habitation of a human race such as ours, is merely a figurative sketch. It has also been said that this account is nothing more than an inscription of a tradition, a sort of folk-lore of primeval peoples. I do not see why it should not be a tradition, a figurative sketch, and also at the same time God's invincible truth; if we did but read into it all of that which was designedly omitted, and if we do but reconsider

it from the standpoint of newer advances reached in that search after knowledge which we term Science. As regards a tradition existing, it is almost inconceivable that there should be no such tradition current in our young race at that early era when inscribing, by some method, became common. This field is apart from the design of our theme excepting to agree that there might well be such oral story transmitted by men to the dawn of written history. As regards it being God's truth which is so inscribed by our forefathers we, as believers in our Sacred Scriptures, do not doubt but that it reveals at least a part of the real process of Creation. Nor in this work does it fall to our poor efforts to defend the truth of God's Word. But if the account be indeed Truth, can it not also be a sketch illustrative of our progress and destiny as a human race? On this point we would dwell for a short while until we discover if there be any foundation for this view of our story of Creation.

We find that, first, God *created* the Earth, then He allowed it to remain *waste and void* and left its great waters in darkness. But, we find, *He left His Spirit brooding* upon the face of these vast depths. After a while, in God's providence, it became time for a great development in the matter of the Earth, and *the brooding Spirit of God produced light*; then He divided the light from the darkness, and called the light *Day*, and the darkness He called *Night*. There was Evening which

began the Night, and there was Morning which began the Day, and the period of darkness and the period of light, together constituted one Day. Next came the division of the Waters into seas by raising up great expanses of land. The Land was in time to become a fitting abiding place for a race of *human beings* as well as for *inferior living creatures*. These expanses of land were to be clothed in verdant beauty; and were to bring forth *fruit, grain and flowers*, for the sustenance and joy of that part of His handiwork which we are told was made in His own image, and there was to be food in plenty for all the inferior animals and they were to be under the rule of mankind; and after all this was accomplished, *God saw that it was all very good*; and thus were we projected into the angel-guarded process of The Eternal. There was also given us a possibility, which we have no right to believe obtains in other created life, viz.: *the possibility of the continuity of existence*, in some state of being, because we were formed after the Immortal Image.

If we choose to see this all too brief account of the creative process of the earth as illustrative of the spiritual creative process of mankind, we shall quite readily perceive an analogy in the earth's first condition—it being without form and void and enveloped in thick darkness—and the spiritual waste, voidness and darkness which enshrouded our early days as a race of spiritual beings, and which

still hangs heavily over us in parted clouds. Our first parents involved us in this far-shadowing gloom; but we must admit that God the Creator saw fit that it should be so. If we rebel at this thought we should remind ourselves that He Himself said, "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I am Jehovah that doeth all these things." In anticipation of this rebellious feeling in our hearts, He has forewarned us thus, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker; shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?" So we find that in our early spiritual history we were in a state of waste, were void, were in spiritual darkness; and still the clouds hang heavily over our souls. We must believe in the spiritual realm as in the physical, that it was the Infinite's will that it should be thus.

But we also find that as in Mother Earth the Spirit of God *brooded* over Matter, so also has the Spirit of God *brooded* over the souls of mankind. At length, as God gave light to the darkened Mother Earth, so also did He give some light to the souls of men. He separated light from darkness, or good from evil, to some degree, in the hearts of men; and as men received this spiritual light and obeyed or disregarded it, did they obey or disregard the Royal Law. As we know, we are judged. The blind are not expected to search for the hidden treasure; nor are we always able to see

the vision of glory that shines clear and bright behind the clouds that hide the light from us.

It is said that the night and the day together made one complete day. Thus the strange and most disheartening experience of the darkness comes to us first. Afterwards shall the glorious day fully arrive, which has already cast its rosy morning rays over our spiritual world, to dispel the gloomy clouds of our night of sinning and to usher in an eternal radiant joyous day; a day that shall be to the darkness of our sinful state, as ideal a contrast as were the verdure and flowers, fruits and joys, of the typical Eden to the chaos of night which preceded its day.

It is said that Enoch walked with God. His was a very early experience in our history. We must conclude that his obedience to that which he knew to be God's law, or teaching, brought Enoch so much spiritual light, that he not only walked with God by its illuminating influence, but he was able thereby to teach his early fellow-travellers on earth. But we also conclude that his teaching, for the most part, fell on barren ground and produced little lasting good. People generally were not enlightened enough to receive its beneficial rays. We may presume that time had not matured God's plans sufficiently for the good seed to take root and grow and ripen.

After some more generations had passed away, God chose another man to walk in the light of

the obedient life. Abraham came forth from under the clouds and darkness of spiritual obscurity, to walk in the light of faith in the Maker of men's bodies, and that, as yet, the greatest of known wonders, *men's souls*. Enoch's life seems to us as a bright star shining down on us from the dimly lighted ages long passed away; but Abraham's call to the separate and obedient life of faith was the apex, shall we say, of an ever widening ray. At times amongst his children the ray grew very dim and they fell into spiritual semi-darkness. But after God has once said, "Let there be light," then never again shall total darkness reign. So, in due time He sends a Moses, and from this Law-giver the widening ray spreads brilliantly over the chosen people of God, the children of the obedient Chaldean. Success and pride led these, too securely dwelling, people into carelessness and diplomatic affiliation with the worshippers of the various *creations* of God, instead of *Himself*. Again and again do the dark clouds almost close over this typical people. But always God remembered that He had said, "Let there be light," and behold a prophet would arise amongst them to offer the warnings of Jehovah in no uncertain manner. These prophets seem to form a wondrous chain of jewels, perhaps of lesser brilliancy than Moses, but in the infinitely kind provision of our Preserver, serving well to link the Law of God as given from Sinai, to that which issued

from the perfect lips of the Redeemer of our souls.

His was the final and the eternal teaching of the Royal Law of God to His chief creation, Man, who was made in the Royal Image; God duly sent forth His one perfected Son to radiate spiritual light. We are told that "In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness apprehended it not." And His blessed light still shines and is ever increasing in its radiating, pervading, and penetrating qualities, over this still cloud-bedarkened earth. But the radiated glory of the light of the Kingdom of Christ on Earth is drawing near to its full completion in the final redemption of our people from sin, disease and sorrow and all spiritual darkness.

We may already see the light of hope creeping into the by-ways and hovels of the downtrodden portion of our Race. We already see the hated searchlight of truth turned relentlessly on our national customs and laws. We see it turned, without even the appearance of a *false mercy*, on the enslaving and unbrotherly systems, commercial, political, and even religious, which too largely prevail in our midst to-day. Surely the true and unmeasured sunlight of the Sun of Righteousness shall soon cover our physical, mental, and spiritual plane. Then shall we, by its warming and preserving qualities, be made fitting soil for the

plentiful harvest of the fruits, grains, and joy-giving flowers of the kingdom of Heaven, The Garden of God, in which we shall enjoy the pristine innocence of sin of the early hours of our first parents; but in our costly experience of knowledge of the Law of God, we shall not share their liability to rebellious sinning. When this much of our process of being is consummated we shall rejoice to echo the Glorious Creator's pronouncement and cry with one voice, It is indeed good.

Much has been taught us concerning analogous laws. We are taught to draw conclusions about that of which we cannot be assured by corresponding data in that of which we feel fairly certain; yet we are often warned to be careful that we do not strain this law by *comparing things which are not absolutely alike*. But when we see abundant proof that a Law is universal, we are obliged to accept its application to anything which seems to come under its domain.

I think few would care to deny that Chaos precedes Order, that Darkness precedes Light. Then, by this law of analogy had the Scriptures been silent, we should expect that Evil would precede Good. And so the Scriptures teach us. Adam's original lack of sinfulness was not *sterling goodness*, but only *untried ignorant simplicity*. He fell easily from lack of developed powers of resistance. Man needed the experience of passing through long ages of temptation, fall, and recovery, before

he became strong enough to receive and apply the light of God. Occasionally, all down the centuries, some few have attained this desirable status of soul. The reader of history, both sacred and secular, can readily pick out a chain of shining gems from his stored memory of such, who evidently acquired the power to receive and radiate much of the Divine Light; but that we, as a united whole, have as yet acquired the sweet reasonableness of a law-enlightened and happy brotherhood, no sane person would contend.

Then there arises the vision of a race of human souls, few of whom are even aspiring to live and walk in the radiant pathway, but are stumbling along in chaotic spiritual blindness, refusing to see the light that is streaming in upon us from all directions. This is the blindness of them that refuse to open their eyes in the vision of a redeemed people. We may well cry, O Lord, open Thou our eyes. Then we might soon become a complete, and kindly just, brotherhood, Sons of Light, living up to our privilege of being princes royal, children of the King, younger brothers of Jesus Christ.

It may well have been considered a dangerous doctrine to spread, that God delayed our perfection designedly; and it would be dangerous to-day were it not a belief little disputed amongst even merely nominal Christians, that Christ's Kingdom is ripening fast, nay is already increasing in our

midst, that God's term of delay is consummated, and the time has now arrived in which we are obliged to choose whom we will serve. Time has removed the danger which may have lain in this belief. There is left us to-day, only one danger, which is, *the rebellious sin of refusing to work in full self-sacrifice for the new Kingdom.* This is our present and only danger.

As Darkness precedes Light, so Evil precedes Good, in the heart of the individual man. We as human entities are, each one of us, at first, in a state of voidness and waste, or in a state of thoughtless unspirituality. But the Spirit broods in motherly kindness over our unawakened consciousness. Now and again we are startled by the little rifts of Divine awakening, through which we receive the dawning light of the new life in Christ; but mostly we close our darkened eyes and sleep on for another while. At length, a soul has so much strong light cast in upon it, that it is forced to rise with this call from the glad morning, or shrink back into the unconscious lassitude of unrequired and injurious slumber. But when the soul of a man becomes really awakened by the Light of the Divine Spirit, then does his greatest sinning or saving begin. He stands responsible for himself before his Judge. The time of ignorance God has overlooked, but nowhere shall you find that God overlooks *conscious continued sin.* To the repentant one, He says, "Go in peace, *and sin no more.*"

That our darkness was in God's wise purpose in some way useful, we are obliged to admit; but we must also admit that the awakening of a soul to its conscious need of the cleansing power of righteousness, is also in God's wise purpose. This is the call to a life of righteous service towards the redemptive awakening of the more degraded members of our race. As soon as a man's soul is filled, pervaded, and warmed by the Divine Sun of Righteousness, he begins to develop the fruits of the Spirit. This is the test of the awakening of the slumbering soul. By our fruits shall we be tested. When the verdure, flowers, fruits, and grains of Eden are seen blooming and ripening all over and through a man's mind and actions, and his whole being is filled with the desire and effort to assist his beloved Redeemer in awakening and caring for the children of the new Kingdom, you may feel pretty well assured that this soul is living in the light which has been separated from the darkness. *This is our present day test.* Alas, that we, many of us, choose to-day to continue in our gloom and night. The young day is upon us; shame on us, that we still sleep on in this self-imposed darkness when the spirit of the earth is weeping bitterly for her morning food. Our selfish thoughtlessness is reaching high Heaven. Those angels who desired to look into our plan of salvation must be filled with indignant wonder as they watch for our final *dénouement*. They must wonder at our lack of

joy because the morning has come. They must pity the helpless ones so intensely, and they must wonder at the shameful inaction of those who seem to be, at least partially, awake. We cannot hinder the incoming kingdom, but we can do ourselves and others great injustice by making the way as difficult for our Saviour as we in our puny inefficiency are permitted to. But how Christ and His assisting throng of angels, ministering spirits, and spirits of just men made perfect; who are all around and amongst us; how these must pity our foolish loss of opportunity. And this is our pitiable condition to-day.

When we think on these things from this standpoint, we can readily understand Paul's words to the Hebrews, "Therefore let us also, seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every encumbrance (or weight) and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience (steadfastness) the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying against Himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls." After Paul has further warned these people as to their conduct and patience in the chastening which yieldeth the good fruits of righteousness, he continues to tell them

that the Mount that they were approaching was not a palpable mountain, wreathed in flaming fire, darkness and tempest, such as that which Moses had dared to approach, in his burning zeal for the souls of the people; but, Paul continues, "Ye are come to Mount Zion and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable host of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh."

The people to whom Paul so addressed himself were the chosen people of God, the children of Abraham, the forerunners of our Christian Church. If any Scripture applies to us, surely this does. And so we stand to-day before this most judicial Mount of Jehovah, this most illustrious and august company.

When Moses went up into Sinai he went absolutely alone. No other soul in all that people dared to face the unknown terrors of the awful place. Afterwards, he presented them with the first and only fixed code that has, so far, come direct from the mouth of God to us. Moses addressed the people at the second reading of the Law, thus, "Jehovah spake with you face to

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face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire (I stood between Jehovah and you at that time, to show you the word of Jehovah: for ye were afraid because of the fire and went not up into the mount).” And so we may not be willing to face the fire and thunders of the Mount of Christ, His life, death, and His written law, but we are not at liberty to choose whether we will face it or not, for the Mount of judicial inquiry has already come to us. We are now, even this day, face to face with this Court in session.

In this Court we are judged according to what we know to be true law. We are judged also from two standpoints: the one as regards each his own personal obedience to the Light of the World, as we have been able to receive His mission and teaching; and the other regarding how we have endeavoured to radiate this light, which we have received, to others who are still in partial or complete darkness. If all are judged from their obedience to knowledge, some one may say, Then why give knowledge to another which may involve him in possible guilt? But we must remember that darkness is passing away, and it is our chief duty to assist others to prepare quickly for the approaching day. “Go ye into all the world and preach the good tidings to the whole creation” was the command of the ascending Saviour. So we shall find ourselves under grave indictment if we are failing to obey this command. But if we obey, we have the

promise, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age." *With us all the weary days, as long as this age lasts*, He says. We face an indictment of one of the gravest crimes against our fellows; or, we obtain an assurance of the Royal Presence *all the way*, though it may be long and the struggle almost, but not quite, defeating.

We are at the crucial point of the Judgment of the earth preparatory to its near approaching day; and no soul will for long be able to remain in the darkness of spiritual ignorance, for all shall know the law from the least even unto the greatest, though we do foolishly miss our many blessed opportunities of helping in the new order of human history. Jehovah said, long ages ago, by one of His prophets, "By myself have I sworn, the word has gone forth from my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Only in Jehovah, it is said of me, is righteousness and strength; even to Him shall men come; and all they that were incensed against Him shall be put to shame." We shall be put to shame by the just Judge if we are angry at the turn affairs of the day are plainly taking; but oh, what opportunity to win the "Well done" of the King is ours to-day! To-day, every system, whether it be religious, commercial, social, political, or any other, is thrown into the crucible of the burning Mount of

God; that Mount where sit in judgment inexorable, perfect, cleansing, this glorious Court in session, which shall never rest until its purifying fires have cleansed the dross of sin and misery from this poor sin-sick world of ours.

And the Kingdom of Heaven, we are taught, is in the hearts of men. If so this Court is now trying my heart and your heart as to our fitness for this Royal Abode. It is not a new ritual which is being lowered down to us from Heaven, but a state of heart wherein the Royal Law is supreme in the mind and conduct of every unit of the whole Race. This awful fact, when fully realized, brings each one of us, man, woman, or conscious child, face to face with the Lord Christ on the Mount.

Paul urges the Philippians to be like-minded to Christ, and tells them "Wherefore God highly exalted Him and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth (or of the world below), and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." He will judge us whether we bow to Him or not. We had better turn our attention towards promoting this obedience amongst men, for He left us very explicit directions for our preparation for the new régime, and this is that by which we are examined by this judicial assembly.

When the people were receiving the great Law

through Moses from Jehovah on Sinai, they utterly refused to go up with him and share in the honour which it was their privilege to partake of with their illustrious leader. Afterwards, they found themselves to be as much bound by its restrictions as though they had been brave enough to face the fire and tempest of the presence of Jehovah, and so it shall be with us. Though we may not willingly approach to the fires and raging tempests and dark storm clouds which the Lord Christ is now stirring up amidst all our habits and systems, spiritual, mental, and physical; still, we shall find ourselves to be absolutely enveloped in this revolutionary and progressive cleansing process. We may storm angrily at the Law and the fires of cleansing like disobedient young children—which we truly are—but the Law will still stand in God's invincible keeping, and the fires will continue to burn and cleanse until we be in truth children fitted by purity to live in a sane and obedient condition in the Holy City of Christ Jesus on Earth; and if called into a more spiritual state of being by that process which we call death, we shall find ourselves placed in that most honourable of all positions before the throne of our Hero Sovereign receiving a well merited "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." That means, I take it, that He will enlarge our sphere of usefulness. So if

we be truly obedient to the Law and invite the fires of purification, we shall know, by the assurance of our God-given soul's approval, that to live in this world as we should, *is Christ*, and to die and have our usefulness extended *is gain*.

We must, to attain to this assurance, give ourselves to the Godlike service of separating the wheat from the chaff, until all wrong has been consumed as chaff in the fires of this crucial day. The time of our ignorance God has overlooked, we are told, but now that we have received the knowledge of the teaching of the Redeemer, we are commanded each and every one of us to repent. We have been told that God has appointed a day in which He will judge us all in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; the divine Man whom we know as Jesus the Christ. Few, who are not thoughtless, or who are not too much bound up in dogmatic shroudings, will deny the probability that the judgment of the world is now taking place. If one be not much mixed up in social, commercial, or even religious affairs and yet awake to the various strange movements in all these, he will perceive, as in a panorama which moves steadily along, this process of Judgment sifting into the causes and effects which tend to keep sin and pain so much in evidence amid the nations, our own not excepted. We may well echo the stirring lines of that glorious American battle hymn—

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is tramping out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are
stored,
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible quick sword.
His truth is marching on.

To say that the judgment is now in session, is only to draw attention to that which all *may* see, and *do* see, it may be quite unconsciously, just as we see the streets of a city through which we are passing, while our minds may be otherwise occupied; but which we can recall much of afterwards; and so if we call your attention to these passing events, we shall be but refreshing your memory, to aid you in realizing that we are indeed passing under the judgment of the Most High and of His Christ.

We desire also to draw your thoughtful attention to an indication of the judgment being upon us, other than that of public movements, or, it may be in God's wise providence the cause or impetus of all public, national, or international, reforming movements; indeed on more careful analysis one must find it to be the real cause of all betterment of human conditions which is brought about by noble effort of men amongst men. The feature to which we refer is the evidence of an awakening amongst us of a critical attitude regarding the moral status of mind and conduct of our fellows by whom we are surrounded and with whom we mingle in a social, commercial, or religious way. It has taken me long years to see the true meaning of our Lord's

teaching when He said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you." But these words grow strangely clear and scientific as one perceives that, as we receive the spiritual light which teaches us to discriminate between good and evil, between wisdom and foolishness, so do we judge our brother; and so are we forced to separate in our brother's character and conduct that which we see to be good, from that which we see to be evil, that which we conceive of as wise, from that which we consider to be foolish. Christ Himself so judged those whom He knew to be hypocrites, and publicly denounced them in strongly bitter vehemence. Then why did He warn us against doing the thing which He so frequently did Himself? If we note the next verse to the above-quoted words we shall see why He felt it His duty to do that which He warned *us* against doing. Christ continues thus, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye? or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me take the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." We are not for long left in doubt about Christ's reason for thus differentiating between Himself and His hearers, after considering this latter quotation in its grammatical connexion

with the first. We find our Master always consistent in His word and works; so we look about us for His logical reason for doing a thing Himself which He warns us against doing. We find it plainly enough in one of His recorded conversations, thus, "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him (the Father)." He had full light, in fact was The Light of the World. He was perfect in His obedience to the Light which He carried; therefore He was in the unique position of having a right, and being perfectly able, to judge the minds and conduct of His weak and erring brothers, the other children of our Race. But how do we stand in this testing fire? We say that, as we become critical of the actions of others, so do we judge ourselves. This critical attitude forces us to look about us and see many persons doing things which are evidently extremely injurious to one or many of us. We desire to draw their attention to these iniquitous habits; and another in his critical zeal turns his searchlight on our poor petty, unchristlike state of mind and conduct, and we are hushed into humble inactivity for a while, when perhaps again will our critical zeal towards our brother's shortcomings break forth; and it is a very weak and unfruitful effort which proceeds from us on account of our beam-blinded eyes.

Christ was and is so wisely scientific, we marvel that we do not mutually agree to obey Him. In

this scientific age we are willing to adopt all other scientific schemes but that which He has so clearly laid down for the preservation of our souls. In His far-seeing wisdom He has admonished us for our own security to *love one another*. And so Paul urges us in all our reproof to one another to be gentle and to bear each other's burdens; he says: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone and not of his neighbour. For each man shall bear his own burden." We must each one of us bear his own burden of striving after perfection of faith and character, and at the same time we must bear each other's burdens in this same laudable and necessary striving; and so shall we fulfil the law of Christ. Some one has taken exception (in a review of a former work) to the term, *The Code of Christ, used by us*. We think that if we go carefully into the recorded addresses of our Redeemer, we shall find ample material to select and formulate into the most exacting Code of Laws that has ever been or can be presented to the human family. It is the only Code which, if obeyed, will

give us the spiritual status of the Sons of God. It is the only Code which He Himself obeyed; and that without the shirking of one of its severe restrictions, or the lack of one iota of the spirit of measureless brotherly magnanimity which it enjoins. It is the Code which, the Court of the King is using in its present session of Judgment on our poor sin-sick world; and its children are being examined before this Court one by one, each standing alone, but an important unit of a whole people on trial for fitness for life.

If we are really striving after the redemption of the poor old Earth from her chaos of disease and death, physical as well as spiritual, we shall study these laws more carefully than many of us have done, and doubtless our now too critical attitude will be changed into one helpful, energetic, self-sacrificing, humbly teaching and teachable, receiving assistance and giving it, until we unitedly arrive at the state of spiritual cleanness and sane courage where we may consider the question, Dare we come up face to face on the Mount with Christ our valiant Leader?

The Children of Israel could not bring themselves to go up into the Mount and stand by their leader while he received the commands of Jehovah. Our Leader long ago urged us thus, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is

light." Do we not believe that the burden of the obedient Christ-directed life is light, even after the Master has so sweetly assured us? And right here lies a grave weakness which is a cause of so much of our spiritual inconsistency. We seem to believe that which appears to suit our condition, not sufficiently taking into consideration the fact, that our condition must be made by us such that it shall be possible to follow Christ's teaching, and to take His yoke of implicit faith and obedience upon us.

His Law requires that we be perfect in our heart and conduct one towards another. Too much are our hearts shambles of murder, bitterness, envyings, and malice. If we are on trial by this Code, we shall be obliged to put ourselves at once into training for this civil war of the soul of man, and pray earnestly for the aid of the Spirit, the Comforter, Whom Christ will send to assist us to keep this Law, so that we shall at last become the honoured sons of the blessed One, joint heirs with our Saviour.

We have noted that the spirit of criticism, or of judging one another as to right and wrong conduct and mental attitude, is very prevalent amongst us. The "Zeitgeist" no longer gives loud plaudits to brute force, but to the wisely scientific spirit of brotherly magnanimity. This alone must, we think, cause a ceaseless chorus of joyful Hallelujahs among the patient waiting angels of God, who

have us in their keeping. May we not feel assured that this growing tendency to judge each other, is induced by the influence of this brooding Holy Spirit, this waiting, working Executive of the Redeemer, in its benign searchings within our souls to awaken us to our position of guilt or obedience, as we stand before this Royal Law. We pray God for a deeper awakening within our souls that we may receive more clearly and fully the Light of Truth; and we feel a hopeful security, that soon this benign influence will arouse us still further until we who are believers in the atoning and reigning power of Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God shall throw off all old cumbering doubt in the verity of the present conquering Kingdom of Heaven; and be ready and willing to sacrifice anything which may impede our highest usefulness, and cry unitedly, as one voice, to our Redeemer, Lord, what wilt Thou have me do? And when He grants us the privilege of doing some small, or greater, service towards this holy consummation of all things earthly, we shall as one man move each to His service, joyously, thankfully, and in glowing, but humble pride, to be co-workers with the Saviour of men in His now maturing operations.

Hitherto we have bestowed much indignant criticism, or rather censure, upon the spiritual state of mind and the resulting conduct of our neighbour, to the blindfolding of our sight of our own individual state of mind and conduct. This

error is to our serious hurt. But we are glad to know that it is becoming essential to true and respected citizenship amongst us, *that we do not ourselves do those things which we condemn as being wrong in others.* Not so long ago but that the shadow of this unholy method of judging is still upon us, interfering to a marked extent with just criticism to-day, there was considered to be a difference between certain sins if one person did them, and those same sins if another committed them. This difference arose (or arises), not from extenuating circumstances, but is quite opposite in its working, viz.: if a man were of high and powerful position, the sin were reckoned as less in guilt than if a man were poor and friendless. This is the Judgment which is controlled by the Spirit of darkness; it is strictly Satan's doctrine, as opposed to Christ's. Christ was ever the most pitiful to the weak and needy and those whom He considered to have had little spiritual privilege for soul culture. We see with joy that this error is also passing away.

The world-spirit of to-day is looking with an exceedingly searching eye upon the spirit and conduct of the great and privileged ones of the Earth. The brooding Spirit of Light is inspiring the World-Spirit to demand that the saying of the Lord Christ be verified, that "To whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask

the more." That law is held to be true in all other processes of the universal order, why not in the career of a human soul? How could it be otherwise? It follows that when we have sufficient spiritual insight to precisely judge our brother, we have at the same time and by the same exacting process judged ourselves. We are self-convicted, in so far as we are guilty. So, we find it to be logical, that each soul shall take for his criterion of mind and conduct the most exacting standard of wisdom and holiness with which he criticizes his brother. If we each perform this office faithfully on ourselves, we shall find ourselves approaching no peaceful Sinai. We shall, I fear, many of us, approach fire and tempest which shall terrify our very souls. But this must come to each of us before the Holy One can set up the Kingdom of Heaven within the hearts of men.

Jesus Christ in prophetic warning tells us thus: "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light and cometh not to the light lest his works should be reprov'd." This facing the enlightened judgment of the World-Spirit is the secret of the cleansing process of our sin-sick and disease-stricken race to-day. Ye cannot serve at once the spirit of chaotic darkness and the Spirit of Light, "We cannot serve God and Mammon." Mammon is

still largely the ruling power of commercial and social life; and may we not fear that he still has far too great influence in formal religious life? In national and international life? Mammon is usually at the basis of all complexities which give rise to quarrels. True, often questions of humane and brotherly interests are mixed into these disputes in degree of more or less. But if the Master sorts out all our actions, personal, national, or international, into but two classes, viz., those who serve God, and those who serve Mammon, we are obliged to do the same. If a people, to a man, stand up for the defence of a weaker nation, or of their own nation, that she may unmolested become a session of Judgment first on herself, and afterwards in her purity on others, is not that serving God? If a nation stand up to injure a weaker nation, or to defend herself that she may continue to carry on iniquities unmolested, is that not serving Mammon? Do we not see the nations thus groping about in the lifting darkness, and see that some are awakening slowly in the rosy dawn? Perhaps almost unconsciously, but still beginning to gladly welcome the breaking of the new day. We have been warned about judging one another; so we feel it were safer for us to believe that all our nominally Christian states are in process of absorbing and reflecting the radiance from the Throne of God in more or less degree. Mistakes and narrow vision are the common experience of

man or State. Complexities arise which try men's brains and souls to solve. Sacrifices are at times demanded by the occasion which try men's consciences and souls. Great complexities demand great effort of mind and conscience. When we present ourselves before the Mount of God's Law in our Christian states, our sittings of parliament are sessions of grave issues. Do we not already see this in our own state, although we be not yet quite fully awakened to the presence of the searching light which is sending its penetrating morning rays into our highways and byways relentlessly?

There are so many different subjects for the judgment of Christ to pronounce upon, that we should make all haste to obtain and try to understand His teaching on these various phases of our national or personal life.

There can be no one subject more difficult or more prominent amongst the nations, great or small, than to decide on all occasions just how we should act and feel towards each other as though we really believe that we are all children of one common Father and all brothers of one Christ, Who shall redeem us. This subject involves most, if not all, of our great issues. If we run our mind's eye over the many nations and peoples of the earth, and compare our privileges with those of the vast majority of our brother human beings, we shall perhaps realize that we are not quite so Christlike in our qualities as we should be,

to be in keeping with our unique spiritual and temporal privileges. Where much is given, much is required. We may, like Cain, cry back to High Heaven, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But that will exonerate us but little before Christ and His Assembly. When our Judge walked on the earth amongst men and taught His commands to the people, "a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of Him saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And He said unto him, What is written in the Law, how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right, this do and thou shalt live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, Who is my neighbour?" Then Jesus told him in a parable, that he that showed mercy on the poor fellow human being who had been so shamefully ill-used by robbers, and just as shamefully neglected by the self-righteous priest and Levite, was acting as a true neighbour to the unfortunate man; and the man who needed his help became his neighbour because of his need. So we learn that our neighbours are those who help us, and those who need our help. This test of neighbourliness was the test of this man's soul as to its fitness for eternal life. It was Jesus' answer to the lawyer, it is His answer to us.

Jesus, in warning some disciples of the things which should come to pass in the later day, bade them watch for the signs of His coming kingdom, and He adds the significant remark, "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." If our Redeemer's words of command and promise were for none but contemporaries, then our Faith is a misplaced delusion and fruitless utopian dream. But we do believe that His Words were for us also, and we find that some were particularly for us *only*. So we had better watch human affairs closely. If we do so we shall see that the fig-tree is already putting forth its leaves.

When we personally perceive that the trend of affairs is towards neighbourliness and brotherly kindness and that all other is considered by general consent to belong to the old barbaric and cruel ages of our Race, that moment do we become a unit of responsibility in the developing Kingdom of Heaven. That moment do we arrive face to face on the Mount of kindness, mercy, and truth. The poor friendless, starving, disease-stricken, or oppressed peoples can become Children of the Holy City, while we more privileged ones must remain outside the open door, unfit to enter with them because we knew their need and ministered not unto them. We do strenuously claim that good hygienic conditions, good food, good opportunity for mental culture, etc., should give beauty of character and fitness for a more highly developed

spiritual mentality; but we also know that these often fail to produce other than mere physical and mental betterment. But is not even this sort of betterment the right of all God's children equally? Many of these benighted peoples, when given the light of the Gospel of Jesus, have shamed our civilization. These can enter into the fold of the kind Shepherd without us, but we cannot enter in without having helped them, both into the fold of Christ, and into their rights of comfort and culture equally with ourselves. We are rewarded according to our work, punished according to our selfishness. Our work is examined by the watching hosts in all its phases amongst men; our social, commercial, national, and international actions are all passing through the judgment of Christ and His Executive.

Once in Christian history the question was asked, "What then shall I do unto Jesus Who is called Christ?" They (the people) all say, Let Him be crucified. Then said Pilate, Why, what evil hath He done? But now the people are on trial before this Crucified One for *their* lives. The chosen people were afraid to go up with Moses to obtain the Law: but Christ brought the Law down to us and forces us to face this Law and the fires which shall consume our selfish wickedness. *What will He do with us if we do not desire to walk in His way?*

Some very religious persons object to the

doctrine that the Eternal Life of a soul is dependent on the quality of its works. We are much safer and saner to listen to the teaching of the Founder of our Faith.

Granted that we believe in Christ as our Saviour from sin unto Eternal Life, and granted that we acknowledge that He alone is able to bring peace between ourselves and the Father; what else, doth He teach us, is the Way but to love the Father supremely and our brother as ourselves? Christ loved His younger brothers better than Himself. That alone is the Christlike principle. He is constantly urging us to be pitiful to the weak, to restore the erring, to supply want, to remove oppression, and destroy pain and sin in our midst and lead all to Him by love.

The words of warning and promise which were uttered by Him from out His seat of Power, have been ringing down the ages to a disobedient and rebellious people. Never more than to-day was this warning and promise more timely. He says, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is."

May the Holy Spirit help us to conquer our evil, selfish, rebellious natures, as we approach the fires of purification of our people.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
 He is tramping out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are
 stored,
 He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible quick sword.
 His truth is marching on.

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He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His Judgment Seat;
O, be swift, my soul, to answer Him, be jubilant, my feet:

Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me,
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

Julia Ward Howe.

CHAPTER III

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

“And now, O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them; that ye may live and go in and possess the land which Jehovah, the God of your fathers, giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that shall hear all these statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there that hath a God so nigh unto them as Jehovah our God is whensoever we call upon Him? And what great nation is there that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this Law, which I set before you this day?”

DEUT. iv. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8.

“Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have had respect of persons in the law. Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of your fathers?”

MAL. ii. 9, 10.

“All things therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

MATT. vii. 12.

I T is a weird and mystical story which brings us some few mental pictures in the history of the “chosen” people of God. Chosen, perhaps,

more as an object lesson to humanity, than for their fidelity to the best they knew. True, we find Abraham, the progenitor of these children of promise, to be a man of great faith in and obedience to Jehovah's teaching as he received it direct from Him. But taking these children of his as a whole, they can scarcely be considered by us as having lived in a spirit of true obedience to their light. We cannot but see it to be likely that they were chosen to fill out a plan of Jehovah's wherein their strange experiences might prove to be striking and illustrative lessons of warning to the generations that should follow; and unless we are prepared to take a wide and long view of God's wisdom in His works we shall probably be guilty of judging the Infinite and Eternal by our own pitifully narrow and short ideas of human things. If a few short years of some pleasure and gladness, mixed with much wearisome pain and sadness, were the end of all, then truly, we should have some excuse for feeling aggrieved that we had formed a part of this particular manifestation of the Infinite and Eternal Creator. But our vision widens when we remember that countless cycles of time have been flowing, ever flowing from some inconceivably remote, infinite source; that Eternity and Immortality are the assuring words of hope from the Infinite; and that those words lead us to hope that if we be found worthy, we shall, after cycles of cycles have passed away, still be looking with

expectant eye to the further and still further unrolling of the scroll of the wonderful workings of the creative mind of the Omnipotent in connexion with the perfecting of our souls. Unless we refuse to conform to type and cease to be, we shall doubtless see that He has prepared something beautifully satisfying and compensating for our unhappy initial experience as a Creation. I think we may rest assured of this, because we were made in His Image, and Himself saw that it was a *good* creation. And so, it must be ultimately *good*, as sure as God is God. "For He satisfieth the longing soul, and the hungry soul He filleth with good." Of this we are assured in His Word; so that no matter what our experiences here may be, we are not in a state of prophetic intellectuality to attempt to judge the wisdom and mercy of our Creator, as they bear on our future development and satisfaction of being.

If we do but look around in Nature, we shall see that much development is attained by the newer forms of life being released from the decaying or obsolete. Do we not also find that stern trial tends to strengthen courage and purity of character in the human soul? So, unless we take the long, wide, unmeasured vista, we shall never approach to a beginning of the hopeful joy which may be ours, even when beset by seemingly overwhelming difficulties. We urge attention to this larger, timeless, outlook; in order that we may justify

the position taken, that we, so far, as a creation, have only been learning, in our earth-life, kindergarten lessons for a future education and maturity, analogous to the children's experience in kindergarten days, compared with the highest development in education and culture of all kinds to which they may afterwards attain.

When we look upon all racial experience from this larger standpoint, we may with reason proceed to consider the children of Abraham as a people chosen specially to show forth the design in God's dealing with man in general. Among the lessons that we shall doubtless learn, is, first, that God is Life. We shall find that all Godlike qualities are life-giving qualities. Also we learn that we grow Godlike only by obedience to the light which we have been blessed with, and that we cannot become obedient in human strength alone; that we need extra strength for the hour of sternest trial. But we also learn that we have no right to expect aid towards this obedience until we have put into energetic exercise all our God-bestowed faculties of resistance to evil. We must fight the good fight of faith and then we shall receive the strength that shall prove sufficient for us. We shall find that we need these troublesome temptations that come to us, which develop our ability to resist and to attain, and thus grow strong in our progress Godward. We must, at times, have temptations which are too much for us to withstand, in order that

we may in our fall find that humility which seeks earnestly by repentance and prayer for forgiveness, and that strength of resisting quality which shall bring greater victory through obedience, afterwards. We learn that to fall easily and carelessly into temptation is to commit sin, and is not by any means the same innocent act as the falling of the weak through overwhelming and overpowering influence. While we easily and carelessly offend the Law of God, we induce spiritual disease and death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." We struggle upward, we fall easily and carelessly downward. This also is general natural law.

If the lesson of God's dealings with His "chosen" people were not intended for our instruction, in after life as well as now, it would not seem to us to be of much use, as, so far, we have to but little extent profited by it. If we are nearing the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth, it may well serve as a lesson for those who are fortunate enough to become citizens of that Kingdom; but would even that be of real use, if the Kingdom is but to be on earth for a thousand years as spoken of in the vision of John. But if we take that one thousand years as the seventh day, the complete day, the day when we shall rest from the constant struggle against temptation in a Sabbath of rest, then we have a complete picture of our *Lesson* but not of our *Eternal Career*. But for whom is this long-drawn sketch meant as a lesson if all our

efforts towards Godlike service cease as we pass into the next stage of our being? So we have come to hope, that the complete whole of the Creator's Earth-scheme is, "One far off divine event to which the whole creation moves." And so extremely important are we in this divine process, that our career is being watched over by the heavenly hosts as to its results. Thus the "chosen people" are still in evidence and are still fulfilling prophetic *dénouements*, as is generally conceded.

There have been many tribes and peoples other than this, but all have differed from it in this one particular, which seems to stand out in distinct relief. This people seems to possess, if I may use the term, *an inherent immortality*; while all others seem only to have the *possibility of attaining immortality*. (I use the word in a restricted sense.) The doctrine of the predestined life or death of the soul surely gains some colour through this people's inherent quality of continued life on the Earth, when by their shameful disobedience to their light they had merited the death which in other peoples is induced by death-producing sin. This people sinned constantly and impudently in the face of their boasted law and yet lived on and on; punished often and ultimately wrecked as a nation, yet today they live, though in a strange desperation. It would seem, from history, that all other peoples had a natural course to run. If they acted wisely, they lived longer, if unwisely, then shorter would

be their experience. And so we see empires and states rise, mature, and pass away into almost forgotten history. But the children of promise have a strange story, which is not yet ended. From the time that God called Abraham out from Ur of the Chaldees, many splendid empires have come and gone. These have followed each other into oblivion, like a procession of phantom but apparently stately and exceedingly handsome mammoth animals, that follow each other at intervals over the dunes of time and pass into the deep sea of oblivion which lies far beyond, at the limit of our horizon. But the soul of this people still wanders about amid all the nations and peoples of this planet to-day, asking for a place among men where it may lay its weary body down to rest in peace. Hope on, ye deathless tried ones. He Who had not where to lay His head shall soon give thee thy place as a restored people, this we have reason to hope. Soon thy Sabbath shall come, God has promised it to thee!

Then do we conclude that some souls shall live, though disobedient, while more must die though fulfilling the Law? That conclusion does not reasonably follow from their history. Has not this people been in constant punishment for her sins? Has she escaped the result of the breakings of the law? Is it not repentant and purified Israel that shall be restored? God is not mocked, what a people sows that also shall it reap. Was there

no hope of life in Babylon, had she not been weighed and found wanting? Had she been found to be following her highest light, would she have perished miserably in her drunken imbecility? Never! Did God destroy Nineveh when she earnestly repented? We have no evidence either in reason or in the Word of God that a repentant and obedient man or nation is destroyed. It is the sinner who dies, because he is always in a state of dying. In the Jew, we shall find repentance and obedience sufficient to preserve his life. And so we find this people to be the type of a Christian's soul; at first warm in its obedient love for the Master and His holy service; but afterwards a strange medley of selfish actions and unholy qualities. Ofttimes rebellious, oftener careless, and more than any other sin, is he subject to the worship of other gods than the One True God. The wandering Christian soul often receives its well-merited punishment and disciplinary chidings from its great Head, with repentance and soul-sorrow, but alas, like its prototype, only to fall into sin again. But the soul of the Christian is a repentant one always *or he is not Christian*; he must be repentant until he attains his home of peace and rest in the purity of the Kingdom wherein no sin lingers.

We may conclude that this child of Chaldee was called out from amongst his old associates that he might not be hindered from the purpose for which

God had chosen him. He was given much light, and was also granted strength to, in large measure, obey that light. He was given wonderful promises to be consummated in his posterity. He was given a land of plenty to live in, and all was well with him and his family. Then comes their long sojourn in Egypt and the burden of the oppressor.

Next we find God calling Moses out from this now oppressed people to prepare himself to be their deliverer. We may then trace their wearisome journeyings between Egypt and the land of promise, Canaan. It was during this most trying journey that God saw fit to bestow upon the human race, through these people, His Royal Law.

It is strange that this Law should have been fitted to the needs of this almost hopeless band of nomads; that it should stand good in the day and teaching of Jesus Christ, which succeeded the philosophical culture of Greece and Rome; and stranger still, that no modern cultist, whether he be philosophical, rationalistic, or superstitious, has been able to overthrow its basis of scientific reasonableness. Nor shall ever such an one arise. God alone can change His own Law, and we are assured by Him, that this Law of righteousness is forever. The keeping of the Law brings that soundness to a soul which excludes disease and death. This is a universal verity, had it not been written.

We find that these people were "chosen" to carry the Law for us through many years and through the rise and fall of many empires. It has been justly said that they were, but in small measure, obedient to this divine charge which they carried. One may easily know this, from the most careless reading of Scripture. But the Jew was a Jew, and refused to be aught else. God, doubtless, put this instinct in him that he might remain a separate people, though, alas, a homeless one. Still, all down the passing years which lie between the fires of Sinai and the advent of the Messiah, there were those amongst them who strove earnestly to obey the life-giving Words which issued from the Mount that awful day. And so Jesus, the Christ, found a few good and just men on His arrival in this sin-sick world; and we are led by Scripture to feel assured that this people were never allowed to dwindle into weak and sinful relapse, for long or at all, without having some prophet, who was endowed by the brooding Spirit of God, to reprove them and to earnestly implore them to return to the obedient worship of the One True God. This chain of jewels reaches all the way from Moses until the Redeemer's day. Sadly they needed these exhortations, we feel sure, as we read of the finding of the "book of the law of Jehovah given by Moses." They must have *lost it* in their indifference to its sacredness. It is difficult to imagine such a fall into the idolatrous state as made

this possible; and we rejoice to read of the reformation which was in progress at the time of its recovery. Thus the story goes on with this people ever falling, ever repenting only to fall again; and so it continues until the closing of the inspired Word by Malachi, some four hundred years before the coming of the Saviour. In this inspired account, Jehovah assures this people of His love for them; but He rebukes, exhorts, warns, threatens them and literally beseeches them to prove His words of promise if they will but repent and be obedient. He reminds them of His former dealings with their fathers and assures them that He changes not. He says, "For I Jehovah change not; therefore ye, O Sons of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings, ye are cursed with the curse, for ye rob me, even this whole nation. Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightsome land,

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saith Jehovah of hosts. Your words have been stout against me, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, What have we spoken against Thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His charge and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts? and now we call the proud happy, yea, they that work wickedness are built, yea, they tempt God and escape." Again, He urges them to remember the Law of Moses and warns them that the great and terrible day of Jehovah shall come, and we know that, in the type, it came to them, and shall in the antitype come to us, and is indeed already upon us. Did they remember the Law to obey it? Did John the Baptist find a reformed and holy people ready for the Messiah's Kingdom? Did Jesus the Messiah find this people in a state of repentance because of the preaching of John? The Law taught constantly to these people by the prophets was not sufficient to keep them obedient. Our Redeemer found, their leaders at least, to be like whited sepulchres, hypocrites, and called them, "Offspring of vipers." This must have been an accurate description of their condition, as our Lord was ever truthful and would not stoop to mere abuse. He but spake of them as He found them in their double-faced religious life. Shall He find ourselves, the antitype, to be in this same condition of formal religious life, now at His coming? Are we greatly better in our obedience to the Law of

Jehovah as explained and emphasized by our Lord? Is there aught of the same class of sinning to be found in the individual life of our boasted Christendom?

What a picture of a struggling Christian soul is thus presented to us. We, like they, would, many of us, rather be martyrs to our faith than forsake it in favour of some other form of religion: but alas, to what length we, like they, are guilty of going in our faithless and adulterous conduct towards our recognized law of purity and separateness. As He found the Church of His earthly day shall He also find its antitype? "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find the faith on the earth?" It is such a personal, individual matter, this goodness and living faith of a people, that an appeal must of necessity be addressed to the people as units, rather than as a whole. A State can have no conscience, no soul, except as they exist in its units. All companies and corporations of men are subject to the wisdom and integrity of their units; and especially is this true of the Church of Christ in all its various sects and denominations. Any membership, small or great, which professes allegiance to Christ, is either serving God with all their minds, souls, and means, or they are traitors to Him Who gave all for them, just as the individual is true or traitor to his earthly kingdom. At the time of His first coming, He found a little cleanliness of soul, a

little beauty of character, a little trust in the Everlasting Father, among the people of the Church. May we not with reason hope that He shall also find some who have the true credentials for citizenship of His Holy City when He appears amongst us at the coming of His acknowledged Presence. Although when we look about us, we are appalled by the universal prevalence of the soul-disease of sin, yet, do we not also see evidence of a universal searching into the causes and proposed cures of this leprous disease of sin, as it works its horrid way over the body, mental, physical, and spiritual, of our Race? Is not Christendom herself sorely afflicted with it, and are not the few earnest souls amongst her great membership striving valiantly to bring this loathsome disease of sinning under the cure of the Great Physician? We must strive against this evil that hangs heavily over our people to-day, because it is hiding God from our Race as a whole. We must so strive, one by one. Not only must we strive alone, each by himself, but we must also strive collectively. We must each fight his sins, one by one, as the temptation to sin arises. We must also fill our minds and souls with those generous and holy impulses which tend to exclude sinful desire. So shall we gain strength for the resistance which shall help us to conquer. Not only must we strive to cure our personal disease; but we must unite as one body to attack valiantly

all national crimes to which we are addicted. This our State is already attempting in no weak manner. God give them unity of purpose in the service of the Christ, to Whom all our statesmen and electors profess to be under allegiance.

We ought to do better than our type of the old *dispensation*, for we have their experience of the result of disobedience to warn us; besides which we have nearly two thousand years of disobedient *Christendom*, with all its direful failure, to rebuke us. Not only have we had the Law and the Prophets until John, but also the divine explanations, promises, and warnings of Christ Himself. We have had the apostles and exhorters and earnest reformers, all the way down even until this testing day. Modern thought has been cleared somewhat by the better understanding of God's great goodness and providential works on our behalf. We have countless blessings poured upon our almost thankless heads. What has it all availed us? Sadly, we are obliged to confess to a wofully sinful condition everywhere in our midst. The Kingdom of Heaven is to be in us or in the midst of us. Is it developing among us according to our light? Where much is granted, much is required. We had better think about this matter, for the profits of our disobedience to light may not be so alluring, if carefully considered, as they now seem to us. What unclean sin is there that is satisfying gain, in any individual or national life? In this scientific

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day why do we still choose leprosy for a garment of death, rather than the seamless garment of the Christ-life?

In one instance the Master tells the Pharisees that, "The Law and the prophets were until John, from that time the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached and every man entereth violently into it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail." He also said, "Think not that I come to destroy the law or the prophets: I come not to destroy but to fulfil." At another time He tells His audience, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets." So it would look to the casual reader of the Scriptures as if the law and the prophets were obsolete; and in the same connexion we are told that these shall never fail and that the way into the Kingdom of Heaven was opened by obedience to the law and the prophets. Is there a contradiction here? It is not likely, when we know that all were the utterances of the Master. To the Pharisees who were steeped in the dogmas and customs belonging to the old dispensation, did He say that the law and the prophets were until John. These had become little more than ritualistic performance to those Pharisees, and all that they recognized in the law and the prophets was ended, in God's disciplinary purpose. This, I take it, was His meaning. But

there was no new *intrinsic* law for men. He came to fulfil the holy trend of all law and the teaching of all prophets. There was no new story to tell. Till heaven and earth passed away would these hold good, and they should yet be accomplished in men. This was what He told the mixed multitude which gathered around Him on the mountain side to hear the saving words of wisdom that fell from His truth-speaking lips.

True, the law of Moses was held in reverence by these religious leaders, but it had come to be a thing to be arrogant over, rather than to be obeyed; and their ritual had become their real religion. But there was no stifling ritual wound about the regal code of the King, when He came to them. So this ritualistic habit-bound people were not willing to keep His simple but far reaching law. We know this from His vehement denuncements of their leaders in religious life. Doubtless this ritual of their religion had been a cleansing and disciplinary institution and had served, at least, the purpose of keeping up their God-ordained separateness. But as the years passed away we see that these ordinances had become overvalued, shall we say, *overworked*. They came to have a prominence which was never intended by the Giver of the Great Law. It was the Ten Words of command and restriction, which fitted the soul for the continued life. The ritual was but a clothing provided for a childish people, that had been stripped

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of all idolatrous usages. In time the clothing became the main object of the religious aspirations of these people. In fact it became little more than a winding-sheet for the sleeping, dying soul of Judaism; and as yet her soul lies in a deathlike coma awaiting the voice of the One Whose it is to utter the command, "I say unto thee, Arise."

Since the day that this ritual-blinded people refused to recognize and acknowledge their long-expected Child until to-day, the religionists of the new dispensation have followed closely in the erring footsteps of the old. A few all down these centuries have discriminated between the essential law, and the petty rituals which were adopted by the new religionists, partly from Jewish habit and partly from the pagan affiliation. Perhaps the children of the dark and middle ages needed this, just as the Jew had needed it, to give them something which they could observe, they not always being able to grasp the spiritual and essential in their religious belief. But always a few have been as a little leaven hidden in the flour; enough to gradually impregnate the whole with the vital energy of living truth. Always these few were endeavouring to purify the religion of their brethren in their day and generation. Mediæval reformers followed the Early Fathers. Always have these and their modern successors followed in the wake of the prophets of old in their endeavour to warn a rebellious people against trusting to an empty

faith or meaningless ritual, and against the breaking of the true Law. But this was mostly in vain, as it had also been with the prophets of old. And so we find that the spiritual darkness which hung so impenetrably over them, was but their self-imposed clouds of error in over-estimating the trivial, and ignoring the illuminating law of God, which tended to the cleansing of their lives from sin. The modern world may wonder how these old Jewish religionists found time for aught else after following rigidly all the sub-laws and petty ordinances. We find that they were not kept quite busy enough by those which Moses had imposed upon them for discipline and to ensure a certain separateness, but they must needs add to them others of their own invention. We wonder at a mature people doing this. But the trouble was, the souls of the many did not mature, but sank into spiritual degeneracy, like aged men in their physical and mental senility, whom we may often observe to be amused and occupied by trivial objects, quite forgetting or ignoring the grave issues of the day. So, to this already too lengthy list of self-imposed laws and ordinances, they must needs add also oral traditions and many more trivial sub-laws. All this mummerly was a joy and pride to the senile or childish soul of Judaism. Loudly the few called to them to awaken into manhood; but with a few short-lived exceptions they slept hopelessly on, or played aimlessly with their

childish toys. It were far easier for them to pass the years in coma, than to arise and go with the few to listen and worship at the simple but awful Mount of Jehovah, where the searching fires burned fiercely and where the tempests of reformation roared thunderously about them. They preferred to repeat their traditions, read and re-read their old and newer self-imposed sub-laws and ordinances, and continue in the old path of indifference to the stirring of Sinai. And so the Redeemer of their souls found them at His advent, all but a few. Hypocrites, offspring of vipers, whited sepulchres, He found them to be, and childish in their love of play-toys—but not childish in innocence. They crucified Him more because He insisted that they should obey the Law as given through Moses, of which they were so arrogantly proud, than because He claimed to be the Messiah. Had He appeared in a spirit of pride and formality, they would doubtless have considered His claim; but a clean life and a meek and lowly spirit were no recommendation to these fallen children of Abraham. He was the Prophet, the last of a long line to come to them before their final fall into a long continued and weary homelessness.

That this people did not, as a whole, obey the law of Moses is easily proved by prophet after prophet. Moses, as he stood before the people, just as he was about to bid them farewell, reminded them, with particular emphasis, of the enviable

importance of their position in the world of men. Did they, for long, remember his wise counsel, or try to sustain the dignity and responsibility of their unique position? We find from the exhortation of the prophets that after Joshua slept with his fathers they soon lapsed into a state of corruption, which was brought about by forgetfulness of their covenant with Jehovah, and too free intercourse with the idolatrous peoples whom they had conquered, but in many cases had not driven out of Canaan. From the time of the death of Joshua and the elders who helped him to rule, through the period of judges, until Saul was called to be the first king to rule over them, their history is an amazing tale of falling away and of repenting, only to fall again. One wonders that a people could forget the special providence of Jehovah in a short period of some three hundred years. Neither Othniel, Deborah, Gideon, nor even Samuel could restrain this rebellious people for more than a decade or two. And at the end of this period of the ruling of Israel by judges, it is said, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Then comes Israel's term under her own line of kings, beginning with Saul. They had insisted on having a monarchy like other nations. After being warned of the disastrous results which would follow this course, they were allowed to establish this form of government. Did this gratification of

their rebellious desire bring them more stability of character or more purity of State Government? No, nor does their subsequent history justify them. The awful prophetic powers of Elijah and Elisha failed to bring this people into a state of holiness at all compatible with the purifying law which they held in their special keeping. The stirring exhortations, beseechings, and warnings of the splendidly gifted prophet Isaiah met with but little response in their habit-hardened souls. The lesser prophets called to them often and with vehemence, but mostly in vain. Jeremiah, that mournful seer of distress, anguish, and overthrow, shows us to what length the chosen seed of Abraham had gone and to what depths they had fallen. What a sad wail issues from his prophetic soul! Jehovah tells him that "If ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh the truth: I will pardon her." But alas, we must conclude that none were found. But even so, Jehovah spared their lives, we may assume, for His own plans later on. He says, "But even in those days, saith Jehovah, I will not make a full end of you. And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore hath Jehovah our God done all these things unto us? then shalt thou say unto them, Like as ye have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours. The word came to Jeremiah, saying, Stand in the gate of Jehovah's house and proclaim there this word

and say, Hear the word of Jehovah, all ye of Judah that enter in at these gates to worship Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbours; if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods, to your own hurt; then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers from of old even for evermore. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder and commit adultery and swear falsely and burn incense unto Baal and walk after their gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered, that ye may do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, saith Jehovah." Again and again are these rebellious people warned and even besought to return to the true faith and to saner habits; but all in vain. Then comes the threat of captivity to the power of Babylon. Seventy years of this unwelcome captivity and servitude they were threatened with

if they did not hasten to repent. The fulfilment of this threat a little later proves to us the hardness of their hearts and the degeneracy of their spiritual life. And thus this proud and favoured family passed into an exile from which comparatively few of them have ever, as yet, returned.

But even then God loved those sinning and stricken children of promise. He says, "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a darling child? for as often as I speak against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my heart yearneth for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith Jehovah." And so God was ever pitiful and tender in heart to these disobedient wanderers. In an agony of homelessness and sorrow, Jeremiah utters his lamentations over the misery of captive Zion. He says, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is brought upon me in the day of His fierce anger." It is a sad story of a lost opportunity which never came to them again. Small wonder that they sang such dirge-like songs in those avenging days of their insulted Jehovah. Small wonder that they wailed forth their belated affection for Zion in the saddest of all songs:

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps.

For they that led us captive required of us songs,
And they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing the Jehovah's song
In a foreign land?

O, saddest of all children of earth, why did you not remember your warning before your doom fell? Alas that your sorrowful but belated words of affection bore so little subsequent good fruit!

A reasonable mind would hope to find in the history of this people a marked and lasting change of conduct after their return from their hated bondage; but what do we rather find? First, that comparatively few were willing to return at all, and second, that amongst those who did return were many who had broken the law of separateness by marrying wives from amongst the idolatrous nation by whom they had been taken captive.

We find Ezra rebuilding the temple and endeavouring to restore the people to the lawful worship of the God of their Fathers, and to the clean and separate mode of living which was an essential part of the Great Law. Soon after this we find Nehemiah coming to assist Ezra in governing the people, and helping to complete the work by building a wall around their beloved city, Jerusalem. And Nehemiah writes in a rather self-congratulatory style, "Thus cleansed I them from everything foreign and appointed charges for the priests and for the Levites, every one in his work, and for

the wood offering at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good." A very few decades pass over this unfortunate people and we shall see, by reading Malachi's word of prophecy, into what relapse they had again fallen. Through this prophet, Jehovah, for the last time until John, accuses, convicts, argues, even beseeches them to try Him once more and see if they would not be so blest that their storehouses should not be large enough for the great good that should be theirs in the obedient life. He also tells them that a day shall come when all wickedness shall be destroyed as in a furnace of fire, and that if they would but turn and receive the messenger of light, they should tread all the wicked (or wickedness) under their feet. But, He warns them, "Remember ye the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances. And thus Jehovah re-commands them and leaves off His beseechings until some four hundred years later, when he sends John the Baptist, "In the Spirit and power of Elijah." Did these latest and most touchingly tender beseechings, or threatening exhortations, serve to keep or make these people holy during this silent interim which followed? Secular history does not so state it. And did the Prophet-King find a listening obedient people awaiting Him in hopeful holy gladness? True a few wise men followed the guiding star of hope

until they came to where He lay in all His young, innocent greatness. These came from afar with glorious visions which hastened their willing feet. They had watched for the prophetic traveller of the heavens to tell them that the Child had indeed come and to lead them thither. They cry to each other, See the star. See the radiant prophetic orb of light, which betokens Man's coming redemption; let us arise and follow where it leads us and we shall surely find the Divine Child. On, on, they went their hopeful way past Herod's lowering troubled gaze and questionings, until they—

Accost a group of pious shepherd men,
Who seem to converse most exultantly.
Thus spoke the Magi then, Know ye men aught
Of Israel's lordly king born here to-night?

These pious shepherd men told the wise watchers a strange story of the glory which attended the arrival of the Divine Child among the world of men. They told them of the prophetic Star, of the sons of the angelic choir, and, strangest of all, that He was not to be found in a palace; they told these wise seekers after Christ,

But seek Him not in lordly palace hall,
For in a manger low your Saviour lies.

Alas for Israel that all her children were not wise men or pious shepherds. Alas that He came in all His innocent greatness unto His own and that His

own received Him not. Alas, it was those who most loudly professed to be looking for Him by whom He was *despised and rejected*. Alas, that it should have been *His own* who mocked Him in His agony, and who pressed the piercing thorns into His regal brow, and sought to utterly destroy Him on the ignominious Cross. Alas that these did not perceive the Divine Presence overshadowing the cruel mocking Cross, or the shadow of the inexorable Nemesis which silently but surely enveloped them in the night of their own impending doom. We doubt not but that they would have received Him with haughty pride, had He come to them in the gaudy trappings of ritualistic religion or worldly splendour and pomp of earthly kingship, or in the trail of victorious warfare. But such was not His way of entry into His Kingdom; and since these religionists were neither wise men nor pious shepherds, they cried out that they would not have this man to rule over them and insisted that He should be *crucified*. They hoped to thus end this hated doctrine of the holy life as displacing mere rites and ceremonies. He found these people so incrustated in their rites and ceremonies that they had become blinded to the original significance of them; they had become as a pall of darkness over their souls, even darker, because thicker and harder than in the days of the prophets. The mere form of religion had obscured their vision of holiness. In former days they did have short periods of

repentance, after being exhorted and threatened by the prophets; but neither John nor Christ Himself, nor His apostles could bring light into these darkened souls. With but few exceptions they did not seem to have a thought of sorrow over their past and present sins, or a thought of a possible reconstruction of their social and religious life along lines of holiness; purity, love, and the seamless garment did not appeal to them as kingly qualities or trappings suitable either for their Messiah or themselves.

After a brief survey of the history of this people from their first call to a separate and obedient life until the Redeemer duly came amongst them, we can easily see the standpoint of His pronouncements on The Law and the Prophets. The formalities of their rites and ceremonies, the sub-laws of their own introduction, and all the encrusting usages of their religion were to be swept away by the régime of holiness, of a pure life, and a loving attitude toward each other. This He taught the ritualists. But to the mixed multitude, the common people, He gave the words of simple truth. He taught them that the Great Code which was formulated amidst the fires of Sinai must now and forever be obeyed absolutely by all. Not one jot or tittle might they disregard with impunity. He sums up the meaning of this Great Code to us in a few well-chosen words, which no man has as yet excelled in simple but appealing power. To

nullify the influence of these few words amongst men has occupied Satan and his legions for these nearly two thousand years; and still is this one simple utterance the dividing sword of all human issues, be they great or seemingly small. True, at other times He analyzes and amplifies this brief Word, but always do His teachings keep close within the embrace of these two commands on which, He tells us, "The whole Law hangeth and the Prophets." These are, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and the other, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Can we wonder that prophetic exhortations had been given forth by Jehovah for the purpose of bringing back the wandering hearts of these children of Promise to the keeping of these two laws? To love the One true God only, and to deal righteously with his brother, or better still, his neighbour, according as the minute law required, was the whole duty of the Israelite. Jesus preached this doctrine to Jew and Gentile alike. Personal purity and cleanliness of both mind and body was emphasized in the Mosaic ritual; for how would a soul dare to face the All-Seeing Creator with concealed filth of mind or body? A man must be a clean offering before his Maker. To love his neighbour as himself, a man must first have a clean and wholesome mind and body else he becomes a constant menace of contagion to his fellow-

citizen. Our present-day and ever increasing movements of slum cleansing, of quarantine, of civic baths, of civic sanitation laws, and all kindred attempts at cleanliness in modern physical life, are embraced in this second command. All movements calculated to correct selfish and oppressive systems and to destroy crushing combines of tyrannical commerce, etc., are also of this wise Word. All efforts at training the young mind to be careful in his consideration for others and in training him in the knowledge of the scientifically reasonable and ultimate advantage of purity of habits and conduct and of the national improvement, moral and physical, which is the result of the clean mental and physical living of the units of a nation; all these efforts are towards the ideal set up in the old law by rites and ordinances, which are renewed by our Redeemer, without the rites and ordinances, but with a wider, kindlier vision of the brotherhood of the human family. Fearing that we might exclude some of the family from our kindly attention, He tells us that if we so neglect any of these least we thus neglect Him.

It seems to me that these teachings as they bear on our day, this day of pregnant crisis, may with reason be regarded from two main standpoints in our conception of their working. We shall for want of more perfect descriptive terms call them *attitude* and *environment*. We take it that these two great commands spoken of by our Lord, can

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never be obeyed by us until our mental attitude towards God and our brother is corrected and cleansed. Given a people of correct and clean mental attitude towards God and all mankind, then and only then are we ready for the *Great Battle*. This Great Battle is that effort of the national, aye, racial soul, which employs its spirit-inspired energy in developing our *corrected attitude* into an *ideal environment*. The sincerity of our loving attitude towards God, is only proven by our obedience to His commands regarding our neighbourliness. The sincerity of our loving attitude towards our neighbour can only be proven by our kindly attention to his physical, mental, and spiritual environment. If we cannot decide as to who is our neighbour, we had better read what our teacher said about this testing point. After doing so we shall know that any human being who is in need of help to a better attitude or environment, is our neighbour. To love him is to have his wounds dressed and have him placed where he may be cared for and his recovery ensured by kindly wisdom. We must pay all incurred charges for him, we must feel the loss of his gain. The poet Lowell has very truly and beautifully expressed this thought of the holy joy of caring for the needy in the following lines:

And Sir Launfal said, I behold in thee
An image of Him Who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,—

And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side.
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me,
Behold through Him I give to thee.

And the voice that was calmer than silence said:
"Lo, it is I, be not afraid;
In many climes without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
Behold it is here—this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;
This crust is My body broken for thee,
This water His blood that died on the tree;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whoso we share in another's need,
Not what we give but what we share,—
For the gift without the giver is bare.
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and me."

We must be brave knights of the Holy Grail and drink of His cup of self-renunciation. We must be brave and earnest and obedient soldiers in this awful fight, this Great Battle, which is now in progress between the Powers of Darkness and the Light of the World. When all our mental attitudes are corrected by the Light of Christ the Redeemer we shall soon join as one in this Great Battle which has for its issue the reign of righteousness upon earth under the rule of the Sun of Righteousness. This is the *environment* in which we all have a, perhaps latent, hope. The abstract of our ideals must be developed into the concrete. It is the change of attitude from the

hollow, unctuous cry of "Lord, Lord," into the groan of the repentant, contrite soul on its knees crying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" "Lord, send me." Great God of Battle, do Thou we pray conscript us, when we lack the vision and courage to break compact with the Prince of all Evil. Give us to remember, O Christ, that each soul who bears Thy Name is a Keeper of the Holy Grail. Oh, forgive us in Thy pitiful forbearance, when we forget to feed and clothe Thee, and give Thee drink, both physical and spiritual! Ours is such a day of radiant hope if we will but see it. The binding, cramping, ordinances of the old law, disciplinary as they were, have now become obsolete; were made so when Christ died, and the temple veil was rent in twain. The new dispensation was to be conducted under the Law of all the essential good in the old, and instead of the imposed discipline there was to be a larger freedom, a greater kindliness. It was to be so much broader that it included all the nations of the earth. This great freedom we have degraded into licence; and no Jewish history can rival the history of our disobedient quarrellings, and the general corruption of the nominally Christian Church, from her fall into semi-paganism until the Reformation. True, much holy endeavour has been made to correct and cleanse her disgraceful uncleanness; but the result, until the more effective recent endeavours, has been quite in keeping with the

discouraging disobedience and uncleanness recorded regarding the former dispensation.

But all the Prophets point to a better fulfilling of the Royal Law. All these great prophets foretold the glorious day when Hope with her white wings shall cover the whole earth! Hope with her pinions grown into gigantic proportions, compared with her now feebly fluttering and helpless little wings; grown infinitely and eternally broad and long, from the experience of this testing period. Hope will then lead our vision far away into the eternal years, into an infinite and happier existence. We shall see visions; we shall dream dreams. We are in dire agony of unrest now, but we should call to mind that at no time is a mother's hope so sure as when in the pangs of travail. Her poor patient body is rent with its awful but sublimely dignified office of launching a new soul into the eternal process. So, at no time should our hope have so much reason to expand and rise as when we find ourselves in the pangs of travail for the birth of a new day, a new dispensation; the Holy City in the Kingdom of God. Long has Mother-Earth carried this day in her patient body, but now she is coming near the hour of her deliverance. Dear Hope, stay with us in this awful hour. Faith, Hope, and Love, come into our hearts and fill us so full that Doubt, Despair, and Hate shall be driven back into the satanic regions from which they have emanated.

When the Jewish Church crucified our Lord,

they had a very slight ground for excuse. Christ Himself said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." These children of promise had looked for a Prince who should make them secure as a nation and who should ultimately rule over all the world. They had also looked for a Prophet to come as well as their King, the Messiah, and they expected that Elijah would come. Doubtless they expected that when Elijah came he would do perhaps much greater things than in his former life; but John came preaching repentance, a doctrine that mere formal religion always loathes. So they slew him and thought to end the matter. John had preached the approaching Kingdom of Heaven, and a speedy preparation for its arrival. Then he acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah and King of the approaching State, which the Jew was expecting as a temporal one. When Jesus began to assert His mission, He did not demand this temporal throne or their temporal support; but only asked that they should become pure in heart and life, even as Himself was pure. In their mad anger they seemed quite to forget that "that Prophet" should also come to them as well as the King. They did not seem to perceive that Jesus was first "That Prophet" and at once and ultimately the Messiah King. So while the Jewish people were guilty of refusing the call to repentance, which refusal blinded their vision to the Divine Mission of Jesus; still, Jesus Himself excuses

them from the crime of wilful murder of their long hoped-for Messiah. He said, "They know not what they do." And afterwards Paul warns the Hebrew converts against "falling away." He told them that "falling away" after knowing the truth about Jesus Christ's mission, was crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame. And just here is the point on which our measure of Christianity rests, and by which it is tested. We know and acknowledge Him to be indeed The Christ. Very well. Then it follows that if we fall away from the true faith, we crucify Him afresh in full knowledge of His Royal and Divine standing. This, we may claim, the Jews did not do. Added to our knowledge of Christ's office, is the real sin of the Jew, the refusal to repent of our sins and the desire for a worldly kingdom instead of the Kingdom of God on earth. Their sinning is far outdone by our hardness of heart and our blinded vision regarding real faith. The nominal (not the true) Church of Christ has since the second or third century asked for a Christ who should be a temporal power; a condition which He refused to accept until the time of the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God on earth. His Kingdom, so far, on earth, is in the hearts of men. Then shall we invite this Holy Occupation in order that our ideals shall be raised to the heavenly standard of holiness, and that these ideals may be matured into happy reality? Shall we so repent that we are

willing for this? He stands at the door of each of our hearts knocking patiently for admittance. Shall we open the door to Him? Shall we? Or shall we crucify Him, each soul, one by one, and thus ensure a complete reign of Satan, instead of Christ Jesus, on earth?

By the Royal Law which issued forth from God amidst the fires and tempests of Sinai; by the warnings and beseechings of the prophets and the Christ Himself; by the retributive punishments laid upon this hardened and disobedient people; by the removal of the Shekinah from the Ark of the Temple; by the desperation and homelessness of this favoured but now sorrowful family of royal children; by all these experiences and their wonderful similarity to the nominal Christian Church all down the weary ages even until to-day, do I beseech of Christendom to unite in a simple essential creed, the creed that He Himself taught, which has for its own essentials, obedient love to God and to His Christ by the aid of the Holy Spirit. This will bring us to a just love toward our neighbour which will be worked out by us in the ordinary daily walks of life.

If we could only get a true vision of the "Law and the Prophets" and of the office of the Divine Child, this Son of the Blessed; if we would only unite to give Him our joyful support in His holy mission among men as we may be led by the Spirit; and if we would only consent to forget for a decade

or two our non-essential doctrines, remembering that *Christ demands obedience to God, before He gives much knowledge*, and with one consent pray and work as men and women never prayed and worked before, would all this effort fail? Should we be of any assistance to our waiting King? If we do not thus unite in this general effort, is it that we would rather have a great sectarian Christendom than unity under Christ? Do we want this Man to rule over us? Surely in our inner souls we do want Him. Shall we not only allow Him, but *beseech* of Him, to come in and occupy His legitimate Throne? Is the time near for our acceptance or rejection of the Risen Christ Who gave His life for us? How shall this crucial day end? One by one we answer to the call of the Saviour. One by one we answer the question which decides—Christ's destiny? no, but our own destiny. Are we ready and willing to help fulfil "The Law and the Prophets," or are we preparing to for ever crucify the Lord of Light, and put Him to an open shame? Oh, He asks so little of us, that we marvel at the unwillingness of the many. He only asks of us that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us; surely we could begin at once this simple creed; and after we become obedient to this all-embracing Word, we should be taught of weightier matters—if there be such.

May God help those who are already striving valiantly to obey this great Word; and may this

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most divinely taught company constantly be added to, until we shall be able to remove much of the shame that we have heaped upon the Crucified One, the Beloved of His Father.

Traveller, o'er yon mountain height
See that glory-beaming star;
Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of hope or joy foretell?
Traveller, yes; it brings the day,
Promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night,
For the morning seems to dawn;
Traveller, darkness takes its flight;
Doubt and terror are withdrawn.

Watchman, let thy wandering cease;
Hie thee to thy quiet home;
Traveller, lo, the Prince of Peace,
Lo, the Son of God is come.

Sir J. Bowring.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

"And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people."

MATT. IV. 23.

"The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here; or lo, there; the Kingdom of God is within you."

LUKE XVII. 20, 21.

"And a throne shall be established in lovingkindness; and one shall sit thereon in truth, in the tent of David, judging, and seeking justice and swift to do righteousness."

ISA. XVI. 5.

"In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the Living God."

HOS. I. 10.

WE have in a previous chapter noted the fact that our career as a Race was designed to be so very interesting to the spiritual world that the angels desired to look into the operation of God's plan for our ultimate salvation. It was to be a rather complex process, or so it seems to our dimly finite conception, as we look back over the fragmentary records of our Adamic family. First we

have Adam's (shall we call it) ignorant innocence, then we have his weak disobedience to God's restrictive commands; then we have the promise of the tempter's final overthrow. After this, we find that when the people became desperately wicked, God destroyed all of Adam's descendants except Noah and his family, by the flood. Next we see the dispersion of Noah's descendants which was caused by their attempt to build the Tower of Babel. The next important event which we find chronicled is the call of Abraham, with the special blessing promised to him by the mysterious Melchizedek, who we learn was the priest of God Most High; to whom Abraham gave a tenth of all he had. Long years after this happened, Jehovah through His prophets announced to the people that the Messiah was to be a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek; and some centuries later this Priest was described as being without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God.

We read the long history of Abraham's family, and all the exhortations and threatenings of Jehovah through the prophets and the punishments brought on them through other nations, in God's overruling providence. And all the way through the Old Testament story are interwoven the descriptive prophecies concerning the Messiah who was to appear at a later date, and was to come out

of this chosen family; but was to be Redeemer of the whole race without exception. "Every knee shall bow, etc." Along with all this we have many and varied descriptions of the promised Kingdom of the Redeemer of the world. And these descriptions agree that this Kingdom meant a universal state of sinlessness on earth, under the direct and acknowledged rule of the Messiah. The world can have no choice but to be ruled by Christ when its heart and conduct are fully set upon righteousness, because that is the essential condition of His régime. As we look about us and observe the almost universal standard of morality in all phases of life, it is easy to perceive that a new régime must be acknowledged by men's souls to-day if righteousness is to cover the earth. Now, our obedience is given, some to Christ and more to Satan. This cannot for long continue. We must give our undivided allegiance either to the Builder, or to the Destroyer. We cannot for long now serve the two masters. Were there no need of a new régime in men's hearts, there need be no Messiah. Had His first appearance brought perfect obedience to the Royal Law in the universal heart of man, there had been no need for Him to sow the seed and then go away and come again at the time of the Great Harvest; no need of His second coming to earth in the majesty of His fully accomplished Kingship and victory over sin and death in the world.

The old law of restrictions and obligations was not sufficient to renew fallen mankind into the status of the Sons of God. It was experimented upon in the presence of the heavenly hosts, and it must have been seen by them to be at least a partial failure; and as a general curative remedy, we, with our short-sighted human conception, can scarcely see it to be other than a grievous and almost entire failure. If God did not mean it to be just such a failure His prophets could not have so accurately foretold this hopeless effect of the law of obligations and restrictions, of rites and ceremonies, upon the people in general. It was doubtless a part of the designed object lesson and intended for ultimate good. This régime of ritual law became to the people like the overpruning of a tree until it could scarcely breathe and live, much less bear fruit. Some few there were who became strong enough to survive the process and matured into souls of rare spiritual purity and strange potency; but more of them united their own mode of worship with that of their idolatrous neighbours; and the remainder of the people became encrusted in formalism, to the destruction of their spiritual life. And so the Messiah found the ritualists who composed the Church of God of His day at His first coming.

Paul contends with the Hebrews regarding the all-sufficiency of the old régime thus: "Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it hath the people received the law)

what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests. And what we say is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless [or indissoluble] life; for it is witnessed of him,

Thou art a priest for ever,
After the order of Melchizedek.

For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing perfect) and the bringing in thereupon of a better hope through which we draw nigh to God." After Paul has further explained this change of dispensation to these Hebrews, he quotes Jeremiah's words from Jehovah, which promise a new covenant; and the main difference between the old and the new was, that the new was to be in the minds and hearts of the people. It was to be a time when all should know the Lord and His law, and should hasten to do the

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will of God with gladness of being. And he speaks further of the old law as "being a shadow of the good things to come. The old law of gifts and sacrifice and of observances could not," he said, "as touching the conscience make the worshipper perfect, being only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation." And he tells them how by faith many had died in the hope of these promises, having seen them and greeted them from afar. These had tried to live up to the light which they were granted by God; but they also had faith that a Light should in time come into the world, that should fully illuminate the souls of the whole race. Paul, perhaps more than any of the inspired writers, seems to have had the gift bestowed upon him in remarkable degree of perceiving the wider, more timeless meanings of things: of seeing into the measureless, ageless vista of the infinite plan of our Creator for His creature Man, who was made after His own Image. Paul sees that it is wide enough to be universal, and long enough that centuries upon centuries must pass away in its consummation. He sees that faith in the ultimate good, and implicit obedience of a few to their law, gave these old dispensation souls security from destruction.

He also sees that "the promise [or fruition] came not to them first that they should be perfected before the general day of grace." Paul,

we conclude, considers that God's plan did not permit of these sturdy souls reaching their full attainment before the day of grace. He writes, "And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect." Paul explains to the Corinthians, that Christ's kingdom extends into the state of spiritual existence which follows after physical death. He argues that if Christ were not raised from the physical death to which He was subjected, then our faith is vain, and believers are yet in their sins. He adds, "then they also that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." And he adds, "If we have only hope in this life, we are of all men most pitiable." Paul further continues in a strangely weighty and somewhat mystical passage, which is wholesome spiritual food for us, though somewhat difficult to digest, until we analyze it carefully, and utterly without preconceived ideas. This passage reads thus: "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's at His coming [or presence]. Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even

the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He have put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For He put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that He is excepted who did subject all things unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject to Him that subjected all things unto Him, that God may be all in all." Still further on, Paul continues, "If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." So also it is written, "The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of Heaven. As is the earthy, such also are they that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

So Paul warns us here that the kingdom is not composed of men's corporeal bodies in the first place, but in men's Christ-cleansed, obedient souls. These bodies of ours are only tabernacles or earthly houses; they are peculiar to the circumstance

of our earthly career. It is only the spirit or soul that is suited for eternal existence; and while we may enter the Holy City, or the absolutely obedient life, while we are yet in our physical bodies, still it is not these, but our spirits, which may inherit by attainment. The weaknesses of the flesh are very apt to retard our footsteps from following the Master, rather than aid them. We must therefore conclude that the ideal condition of our hopes must first be accepted by our minds, our spirits, our souls, before it can become a physical verity, by our united efforts under Christ towards bringing the ideal into the actual amongst men. Adam's ideal became degraded by listening to the tempter, and he fell and dragged a world of souls down with him. We must try to bring this ideal back unto the world until the poor old earth is once more the Garden of God, or Eden.

Adam's fall brought to us a twofold loss of life, loss of spiritual as well as physical continuity of existence. After this disaster men could slay one another from avarice, hatred, or jealousy. They could die of disease or accident or of senile decay. For a time, men could live for centuries, but the poison of sin developed in its suicidal and murderous mission, until disease became general and old age crept nearer to the natal day of man, until now for long years it has been a rare thing for a man to reach the one century mark, and disease and degeneracy are so almost universal, that few there be

who reach even the "threescore years and ten." Truly, now the good and wicked suffer alike from this great disaster of our first parents. But to-day men are looking into those matters which affect our health and longevity, and are trying to introduce various schemes which are hoped to improve the general standard of health of our people, and thereby add to the length of our earthly days. This is plainly the duty of those who have the kind of wisdom suited for the service. But we must set about this work from the only legitimate and permanently successful standpoint, or all our efforts will be futile. Jehovah said to the people, through Isaiah, "Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat of the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it." Jesus came to us, He gave us a most kindly invitation to seek helpful direction from Him. He says to us, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." If we reason with our Father about human affairs and our personal service, He will teach us that it lies in the sphere of helpfulness to

humanity in general, and unfortunate humanity in particular. He will refer us to His One Perfected Son and instruct us to listen to Him and to learn of Him, to walk so closely allied with Him, that we shall be able to catch the word of inspired instruction at all times. This security from grave error will give us that peace and rest of soul that is desirable in difficult service. Then our efforts will not be abortive or futile, but always timely and successful. The Father has said of this Perfected Son, through Isaiah, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth Justice to the Gentiles. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set justice in the earth." So we shall find our greatest service to be to help in all ways possible to bring justice and righteousness on earth. And we shall learn of our Redeemer—if we walk closely with Him—just what we had better attempt, and when and how we should do it. Our reason testifies to each of us that no kingdom could be a heavenly one without the reign of absolute justice in all directions. Justice, worked out analytically, is found to embrace all nobleness of character and conduct one towards another, and is the chief essential quality by means of which all our disease and pain shall be ultimately removed, by the removal of all causes of disease, accident, and sinning. And it will also remove the tendency to decadence of our people,

whether it be from luxury or want. In kindness it includes our helpful love one towards another. It includes the tender mercy of our Creator, in that though we sin we are yet existent; and it includes the repeated warnings against these sinnings, and the ultimate punishment that shall be ours, if we do not repent and turn from sin to the obedient life. It is a wonder that we do not try to obtain more of the blessings which result from the life of loving obedience. When Christ, the Blessed One, is allowed full control of all our ideals, Christendom will be "a Joy" and "there shall be heard in her no more the voice of weeping and the voice of crying." Oh, some one may object, that means when we go to Heaven. Does it, think you? Listen to Jehovah, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed." Surely this refers to length of earthly life. If we read a little farther on in this hopeful chapter we shall see that it foretells a most desirable earthly condition brought about by human justice worked out in general lovingkindness upon earth. This means happiness in long life, satisfaction in our labour, contentment, kindly associations, God hearing our requests before we make them; it means even the animals becoming subdued and peaceful by the Spirit of Peace and goodwill. Do we want this to become a reality, or

are present conditions better for our happiness? It has been objected that the development of the race from an educational and hygienic standpoint produces much spiritual good amongst them. This objection is a subterfuge of Satan's ingenuity to blind men's minds and hearts to their obligations one towards another. We must watch for these subterfuges of Satan, for they often have some resemblance to truth and we know that:

A lie which is wholly a lie
May be met with and fought outright,
But a lie which is half a truth
Is a different matter to fight.

We know that pain and suffering long continued often seems to ripen the afflicted one into a saintly patience and fulness of trust in God's goodness, and often develops the spirit of thoughtful consideration for others. That is the true half of this satanic subterfuge. The half which is wholly a lie is, that any of us can allow another to suffer needless pain, or endure want, or lack of useful and elevating knowledge, which we are in a position to prevent or alleviate; and at the same time be heirs of the Kingdom, either in this phase of being or the next. God never promised a future glorified state to a selfish soul. The integrity of the Kingdom of Heaven demands that selfishness be excluded. Had the Scriptures been silent we should see this to be true from lessons that we have

learned while here in our kindergarten days. Is not selfishness at the root of all our troubles in our toy empires, nations, and states, in all our object-lesson experiences here on earth? Is it so strange that the good God should design to let us have also one unselfish day before we start on our eternal journey? just to finish our object lesson; just to prove to us that it profits a man or nation to lead the unselfish holy life; that the pleasures derived from selfishness have too much of the stinging of hate, jealousy, and revenge in them to be truly enjoyable or to bring unifrom happiness.

Citizenship in the Holy City, or our last object-lesson day of happy obedience, is attained by those who are ready to forfeit all earthly gain or attainment, in order to obtain the one eternal benefit. These are knights of the Holy Grail. If we join ourselves to Christ's companionship we shall drink of His cup. Can ye drink of My cup? the Saviour inquires of all seeking disciples. In this testing time shall we be ready to answer, We are able? God grant that we be found willing and able to stand this test when our particular and personal hour of trial comes, as it must, to each of us. We are so conscious of our shameful deficiency in courage, in regard to the matter of standing up bravely for that which we know to be the wider law of God, that we may well shrink from this inquiry by Christ. We too often think of the City of God as a fanatical dream, and the quest of the

Holy Grail as too quixotic and ideal for a modern mind. We think it all belongs to the clanging mailed warriors of the unbalanced middle ages; forgetting alike the Cup of Communion and Cup of Vinegar. We too much take the one as impossible and the later as our licence. Some of us deny that we may walk yoked with Him, learning of Him; but we hold fast to the wrested doctrine of the Atonement as though Christ's cup on the Cross saved us *in* our sins; making a holy Sacrifice or Offering into a hurtful security which gives licence to sin. The wresting of this one point has been the spiritual poison of Christendom. God forbid that we should undervalue or underrate the great Gift of Christ Jesus to us; but God forbid also that we use it for licence to sin, thinking that an historical and theological belief in Christ's offering of Himself for us, without *obedience*, will bring us life eternal. It is plainly seen from whence this false idea came. It came from the same source as the mockings over the second coming of the Redeemer. And both ideas unite to produce the same awful result. The one gives licence to sin on the ground that Christ's death on the Cross saves you—that is, if you believe that it does; the other laughs at the idea of Christ's coming to judge the world, as though it had originated in some fanatic's disordered mind, instead of in God's Word. The two added together make Christendom just what it is to-day. James tells

us that "the demons also believe and shudder. But wilt thou know, O man, that faith apart from works is barren." And Peter warns us regarding the other sin thus, "In the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His coming [or presence]? For from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." After further exhortations he testifies thus, "But according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." John, in his vision, saw a new heaven and a new earth, and the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, *coming down out of heaven*, and God Himself was with men. And He saw God wiping away every tear from the eyes of the children of men. He saw Him in infinite and tender compassion relieving all pain of body, mind, and spirit. Putting all this evidence together we are obliged to conclude, that all this was inspired by God acting on the minds and wills of the people. Christ's self-confessed mission was to save the people *from* their sins and certainly not *in* their sins. If we will but let Him He will send His ministry of angels to assist this regenerating work in our souls, which shall be proven by our reformation in the human affairs, systems, and usages, which now cause so much misery. Christ said, "Whosoever will," therefore we must *will* to be a regenerated, reformed people.

He will in no wise cast us out from the companionship of Himself and His co-workers. That obedient activity under Christ's rule is not only scriptural but scientific and reasonable, is easily shown by a simple analogy with ordinary matters. For instance, a young person may believe that a course in a college would save him from being an uneducated person in after life. But of what avail is his belief if he does not put himself under the tuition of this college? His belief is of no use to him, it is only a reproach to him, if he does not make use of the opportunity. He may decide to make use of it, and may proceed to become an inmate of the institution of learning. But even then if he does not apply himself faithfully to its curriculum he will not benefit by it, he will not meet his examinations with honour. It will be, as before, only a reproof to him, a lost opportunity. His belief in the power of this institution to give instruction is useless, or worse, a reproof, unless he absorb that which it represents to him. We might take an instance from a man desiring a beautiful and convenient home. An architect may skilfully design it and the man may believe it to be his ideal home. Still it is of no use to the man; it exists only in the imagination. A builder may build it, and the man may fully approve of its design, and be satisfied with the precise execution of the design by the builder. He may bring admiring friends to see it. He thinks that it is

his home; but it is not his home until he occupies it. He believes it to be his, but he must incorporate it into his family existence before it becomes his dearly beloved home. So, we may know of Christ's efficacy to lead us into the higher life from perfection unto perfection; but if we do not walk so closely with Him that we learn of Him, this knowledge is useless to us. We may pretend to walk in the Christian faith, but if we do not learn of Him, and absorb His teaching into our being so that it manifests itself in our conduct one toward another, it is worse than useless to us, it is a reproof for our wasted opportunity. We must believe in Him, we must walk with Him, we must absorb His curriculum so thoroughly that we shall manifest His ideals in our lives amongst our fellows. The belief that Christ is designing a Home for us is not sufficient to give that Home to us. The fact that He builds it and gives it to us, by His offering of Himself, does not assure us that it is ours. *It assures us that it can be ours, but that is all.* We must consent to occupy it. It is only occupied by citizens who live the sinless life. This is the reason that our dear Home, the Holy City, is not yet ours. We are not pure enough to be willing to occupy it. We had better seek earnestly to learn our lessons quickly and thoroughly, so as to shorten the time before we may occupy our long-hoped-for *Home of the Believing Soul.*

The Gospel of the Kingdom is a most unpopular

subject for discussion among the great majority of modern religionists; it has never been a very welcome theme in the erring Church; and the Church has always been more or less an erring one. Christ came to the Jewish Church preaching the Gospel, but they could not bear it, and they crucified Him. And ever since has her successor been crucifying Him afresh and putting Him to an open shame. But this Gospel of the Kingdom is still waiting in majestic patience for the day of its fulfilment by its complete entrance into the hearts of men. When we invite the Kingdom of God into our hearts it proceeds quietly but utterly to displace all evil in our nature and conduct, by a regenerated nature and a resultant state of holiness. We had better each examine our hearts and find out which Master has undisputed occupation. We must ask ourselves a few questions regarding our attitude towards God and man, and this will assist us to judge for ourselves of the occupancy of our hearts and minds. We may select a list from the description of those things which exclude us from the Holy City, and also from the life eternal. Do we *fear* that God may fail us? Do we *fear* popular opinion, or any other thing which we are not brave enough to endure for Christ's sake? Do we *believe* what He has taught us in His world? Do we *believe* that He has promised Life for obedience and Death for wilful breaking of the Law? Are we in any way *abominable* persons? Do we, though

fairly decent, allow all sorts of abominations to exist without much opposition from us? Do we *murder*? Or do we assist at hastening the death, through weakness, want, or accident, of any persons whom we might strengthen, supply their needs, or make secure from accident; but whom we let go to their doom from selfish withholding of the necessary means of alleviation or the removal of the cause? Do we *misuse natural and holy office*, in either our physical or spiritual nature and functions? Do we allow such in others to continue unchecked? Are we *sorcerers*, or do we use *undue influence* over our fellows to their injury? Do we compel them, through circumstances or tyrannical coercion or threat, to think as we wish on public questions, or perhaps cast a vote against their conscience through fear of us? Do we submit to this injustice ourselves through fear of these unholy influences? Do any of us ever tell that which is a *lie*? Do we ever act a lie, or allow a lie to pass from another unchallenged? No need to ask whether any of these sins touch our conscience, for few of us but would plead guilty to some measure of guilt in all of these. Or to take another condemning list: are we filled with *unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; are we whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, unmerciful*? Do we, knowing that these things exclude us from the Kingdom,

do them ourselves and consent with them that practise them? These two lists might be supplemented by others, but they are quite sufficient on which to found a general purifying movement in our own hearts and in the world of men, and will be found inclusive enough for us to be written as weighed or wanting, when the hand of our Judge is seen to be writing on the wall of our heart as men and as nations. It is the pure in heart that shall see God, and not the unclean; it is the poor in spirit that inherits the Kingdom, and not the haughty. By our two testing lists we find that it is not our cry of "Lord, Lord," by which we shall gain admittance to the Kingdom; but it is by perfected character, matured into thought and conduct: and the thought and conduct have for their field of operation the daily ordinary intercourse, commercial, political, social, and religious, which go to make up the common experience of human life. One does not expect a vessel of water to be pure and clean after emptying poisonous filth into it. Neither does reason lead us to expect a holy State to exist wherein is emptied the filth of hate, greed, covetousness, envy, pride, fear of one another, and lies. And who can deny but that these traits of character are not more general than their opposites, the redeeming ones? These are love, generosity, in honour preferring one another, humility, frank trust in one another, and truthfulness. Everything is made up of its com-

ponent parts, and why not the holy State to be? If you could by any chance transport a person to High Heaven, who hated, envied, and lied, as a fixed habit of character, he would not really be in Heaven, as he would be accompanied by his own satanic presence. His location or environment could not bring his unhappy soul into a true citizenship of Heaven.

Our spiritual service towards the Kingdom is placed or staged in the arena of our human character and existence. Christ gladly and tenderly saves a willing soul though its body be starving and naked. He does not require our gift of a loaf or a garment in order to take an unfortunate child of distress into His arms of safety. He can transport such an one Home to a happier condition quite without our paltry efforts—when we grudge them so. But these seemingly paltry efforts of ours are vital to our own salvation. I pray God, for the Kingdom's sake, that very soon He will grant His Light to enter men's hearts enough for them to see and realize this vital truth. True, many do now see it, but we earnestly beg in Christ's Name that it be more generally emphasized by those who perceive it. We should then from the very instinct of self-preservation direct our united efforts towards the one main issue of civilization, that of earnestly endeavouring to raise the standard of character and physical condition of mankind in general. Our desires would

become attuned to this aim and our efforts would soon tend towards the general good of the human unit, rather than, as it now does, to the self-aggrandisement of a vain and haughty few. This self-destructive attitude, which now obtains to such great degree, must be very painful to our Saviour and His Executive, as they walk about amongst us unseen, looking carefully into our methods of operation in the various fields of human endeavour. All our thoughts as well as actions are an open page before these. Unless we are striving to be perfect we shall feel terribly humiliated to think of this. The presence of these witnesses, when we become aware of them, should make us very earnest in our endeavour, if we use their presence as a support, rather than as a fear; we should remember that the evidence which these are collecting for or against us, is based on those two all-inclusive laws, viz., love to God and love to men. Our love to God is measured by our love towards each other. Our love towards each other is measured by the word of Christ our Judge, which says, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets." That is not an unreasonable demand, is it? I truly think that our ideal for humanity has already reached up to this though our conduct does not fulfil our ideal. But that we do already acknowledge it to be

the just Law, is full of hope for the future of our people.

I think that our Saviour feels all the pain and want of His unfortunate children; actually feels it, as a loving mother feels the pain of her young suffering child, only a hundredfold more sensitively. It is of no use coming to the door of His abode and saying, Lord, Lord, we did wonders in Thy name. He will ask of us, Why did you starve Me, kill Me, oppress Me, allow Me to remain degraded when ye should have raised Me, allow Me to become degenerate from want and sinful condition? and most of all, Why gave ye Me no spiritual food, or true spiritual education? If we begin a long harangue of excuse saying, When saw we Thee in these ill conditions? He will say to us, When ye broke My mother heart, so illtreating My children, ye did it unto Me. Ye cannot enter in; I never knew you. Go to your master; Mammon is your Lord, not I. The little ones shall come to Me; they are Mine.

We find that Jesus went about in all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. If caring for the body, mental and physical, as well as spiritual, is not a part, and an essential part, of the Gospel of the Kingdom, with all reverence to the kindly Christ, we must inquire Why, when His time was so short, did He not

confine Himself to preaching the intricate but awfully essential doctrines of dogmatic Christianity? Why did He not confine Himself to the essential tenets of the Catholic Faith, so that we might believe accurately as units of one whole, that should be His Holy Bride, The Lamb's Wife? It seems to be a dreadful mistake for Christ Jesus to make; and a terrible loss to our race that He so neglected the main issue of His mission. If He had but sought to set all these brain-splitting and contentious doctrines in perfect order for our souls' security, we might have succeeded in being more dominant and tyrannical religionists even than we have been. But *is* dogmatic tyranny the main office of the Christian Faith? Do modern men recognize it as the essential value of Christianity? Does the modern and more clearly enlightened mind tend to simple or to dogmatic religion? We may also with some degree of reasonableness ask the question, From whence received we this Faith of ours? Who originated it? For whom was it introduced? And for what given result was it to be followed?

We believe that God the Father promised mankind that He would send to them One Who should teach—a profound set of dogmas? No! One Who should bring them back to a state of happy obedience. So we may believe that the kindly Father sent His One Perfect Son to us with the office and message of our salvation. When this One came

to mankind, the Father acknowledged Him as His Son and told mankind to listen to His word. Then we might well presume that Jesus Christ was the Originator, under the Father, of our Faith. "Hear ye Him," the Father commanded us. It must have been brought as "glad tidings" for all, because whosoever will may come, and ultimately every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess. God says, "Look unto Me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. By Myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." So the saving faith which God sent to us through His Son was sent to all, that is certain. Then we come to the last of these questions; for what given result was it to be followed? As far as we can read the evidence in God's Word concerning this question we see that there is to be one result only. This result is often mistaken for two, because it is divided into two, by location and circumstance: but the result of adherence to our faith is really but one benefit to the soul. In location, we first occupy an earthly house, we tabernacle in this wilderness, called Human Life. Afterwards, we pass on into another location, we may suppose—at all events it is another circumstance of housing, etc., as Paul testifies. Of this wilderness life we know something, of the next we know almost nothing. It is both amus-

ing and pathetic to hear longing souls describing the circumstances of the heavenly life, which is ours after physical death. We have heard wonderful inventions of the homesick soul regarding our future existence; we have listened more with a tear than a smile when we remember how very little, almost nothing, God has told us regarding this *Afterwards* of our souls. Nearly all of that from which we draw any approximate knowledge of it, is from illustrative passages and not actual description. So we come to think of our lives as though they had two phases: the one earthly, the other heavenly. The earthly one is so troublesome and we find it so difficult to be good therein, that we come to let things continue as they are, without much opposition, and sit in the hopeful security that some day we shall go to Heaven where there is no sin or trouble; and the reason given is that Christ died for our sinning and His death reconciles God to condone our sinning. God forbid that we should lose hope in the efficacy of His generous sacrifice. God forbid that we should lessen the hope of Heaven in one weak brother or sister. But God forbid also that we should forget what the Originator of our Faith taught us. I cannot see the scriptural grounds on which the theory is built, that some miracle of holiness shall befall us at physical decease. I find that we must fight the good fight of faith, if we wish for the crown of life. The Kingdom *within* is the Heaven to which a

soul attains; its location and circumstance may be here and now, or it may be in the after life. It must be, if we expect eternal life. I do not see how men came to think honestly that it did not matter much what our lives were here, as regards character and conduct, because all things earthly did not signify. Whence came this delusion? Was it from Christ? If not, from whom came it? What was the Gospel of the Kingdom as taught by Christ Jesus? Nothing else written by man or demon matters. And so we sadly complain that if these controversial doctrines are the essentials of this Gospel, Why, O why, did not He make them plain instead of going about doing good, and begging of the people to be good and kind one toward the other?

We find that He ever hastened to relieve suffering and sickness and empowered His disciples to do the same. And yet He claimed and maintained the dignity of His Messiahship. He found that these two functions must be united in His Person and Mission, He must relieve the suffering of humanity, on earth, and must lead it into the sinless eternal life. He was a Surety to the Father that He would save us from our sins. "For this came I into the world," was His sole claim. Then helping humanity out of its suffering and sinfulness is the only Christlike work that we can help Him by doing. In His last word to us He urges this theme of service towards purity and freedom of the

whole world from suffering. We are really cowards when we want to slip off to our easy and pleasant Heaven, because we believe that Christ died for us, forgetting His real offering and mission, and leaving all the work towards the regeneration of our Race to others. If such cowardly souls were allowed to enter into the presence of the suffering Messiah, how would they feel in this Great Self-sacrificing Presence? What shall be His verdict? He says, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to every man according"—as he holds a correct view of the many intricate doctrines which man has interwoven into the fabric which we term Christianity—is this what He said? No, but only this, "As his *work* is." At another time He took a small child in His arms and told His audience that of such was the Kingdom. Then to purity of purpose, and self-sacrificing service in lessening the suffering and want amongst the children of men, our neighbours, we must add childlike trustfulness and simplicity. But what if a small child or childlike person should not quite correctly understand the doctrinal mazes through which the soul is supposed to pass on its way to the eternal Palace of the King? We do not know, we cannot tell, as the King did not direct us to pass through any such mazes in order to enter His Palace. To whom shall we appeal as the highest authority? Christ's teaching and commands seem to be too simple to weave into

our beloved dogmas, to be in keeping with our modern culture, to be truly acceptable to us. He certainly should have left us something more erudite, which scholarly men of our advanced modern day, with philosophically trained minds, could accept with dignity, and which should be in keeping with their culture. Really, to retain a paganish, pseudo-philosophical, medieval, or modern dogmatic religious belief, I do not perceive how we can consent to, or accept the simple saving teaching and example of the lowly Jesus. Perhaps His apostles will suit our mood better. True, Paul adds some rather mystifying utterances, if we have a preference for mysticism, to his main teaching; and he knew much that it was not timely to tell us. But no one, except Christ, urges purity of purpose and conduct as essential for salvation or the Kingdom, more than St. Paul. All the inspired apostles of the Gospel of the Kingdom unite in this. True they each amplify this theme, and fill in our vision of the mission of the Saviour, but not one of them detracts from the simplicity of the teaching of the Great Leader. It was left to the semi-paganized early and medieval Church to produce a series of self-termed *apostles* who wove uninspired doctrinal intricacies around the few essentials which Christ Himself and His true apostles taught; until these simple truths became wellnigh strangled in the hateful embrace of the struggling creeds; and all the while Christ hung

crucified afresh and was constantly put to an open shame; not this time by the Jewish Church, but by the Church which was called by His name, the Christian Church. Yet some few there always were who were simple enough and great enough to escape strangulation of soul and make efforts to release their fellows. He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God. These form the grandest procession that has ever passed down the hurrying centuries. And still the few, nay, almost the many, hasten to join this ever widening column of souls who shall form the star-lit crown of our patient King. As Carlyle says, "All martyrs and noble men and gods are of one grand host, immeasurable, marching ever forward since the beginning of the world. The enormous all-conquering flame-crowned Host, noble every soldier in it; sacred and alone noble. Let him who is not of it hide himself; let him tremble for himself. These are they," he most truly tells us, "who strive to make humanity less accursed, that they may be unstained by deformities, by wasted tears, or heart's blood of men, or any defilements of the Pit. So that man has arisen and shall rise, from the low places of this earth, very literally into divine heavens." Were it not more noble of each of us to hasten to join this immortal throng, which is ever marching onward in helpfulness toward

the ideal of the soul, the City of God, than to belong to the Cainish, indifferent, though vastly more numerous host, which can never enter into the blessed state wherein dwells only that which is righteous? "Let him tremble for himself," who decides to follow in the armies of the degenerate children of Cain.

Perhaps we are mistaken in our view that the elevation of the human brotherhood is essential to the establishment and security of Christ's Kingdom on earth. We had better as wise persons examine the evidence of the best authority on the subject. The Scriptures teach us that the terms Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven, Holy City, New Jerusalem, and the complete reign of Christ on earth are identical in meaning, and therefore may be used interchangeably. This being so, we may conclude that Christ Himself is the One to consult as highest authority on the subject of entrance into His Kingdom. No one has a right to detract from its meaning, or add to the few essential truths which He taught, nor can any one do so with safety to his soul; Christ so declared as a last warning to us from out His hidden Throne, and the Father commanded us, "Hear ye Him."

In the wonderful Sermon on the Mount, He very fully explains to us, that nothing in the world can bring about entrance into His kingdom but righteous kindness. The old disciplinary teaching of justice, an eye for an eye, a life for a life, would

never bring about His Régime. Nothing but a forgiving spirit, "In honour preferring one another," of man being willing to give his life, not only for a friend, but for an enemy also. Jesus also teaches us that unless our religion is of a holier type than the hypocritical formality and theological wranglings of the Scribes and Pharisees, we can in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Certainly not, as this envy and strife would exclude the light of Heaven from us by its darkening presence. At another time, when explaining some parables, which He had spoken, to His disciples, He said, "As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world [or better, the consummation of the age]. The Son of man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of the Father." Then He adds this most significant phrase, "He that hath ears let him hear." I fear many of us have spiritual ears to hear but do not choose to listen to the divine message, but do the rather listen to the alluring whispering of the world. Again we are told that His disciples rebuked those who brought little children to be blest by Him, but He instead rebuked the disciples, telling them that to such belonged His Kingdom. They had, not long

previously, been rebuked for contending as to who should be greatest in the expected Kingdom. He told them, "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom." These disciples who strangely forget their position as followers of Jesus, did not themselves desire to prefer one another, but the rather to *precede* one another. This attitude would bar them out of the Kingdom. There is food here for much thought and sincere introspection. We learn that a young man who had great possessions asked our Lord, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" The Lord told him to keep the commandments, especially those regarding the attitude of men toward men. The young man replied, "All these things have I observed, what lack I yet?" Mark tells us that Jesus looking upon him loved him, and no wonder that He did love so upright a young man. But Jesus probed a bit too deep for the young man's soul-willingness for self-sacrifice. He said to the seeker after life eternal, "If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow Me." But alas, he went away sorrowful. He could not empty his heart of its beloved idols, highly moral though Jesus found him to be. Jesus emphasized this object lesson thus, "Verily I say unto you, it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Here our Lord identifies

a *state of perfection* with *eternal life* and with *entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven*. This should give us serious thought, if we consider that theological belief will save us alone; that to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Messiah, is the only kind of belief that is required of us. We find evidence that a *saving belief* is an *obeying belief*. We must believe in the practical phase of His mission as well as the doctrinal, else the latter will avail us but little. We are taught frequently, and we cannot repeat too often, that He Himself claimed to save us *from* our sins and not *in* our sins. This makes it quite clear that to be sure that we are being saved, we must be sure that we are earnestly trying to stop sinning. *This is the vital point of the gospel of the Kingdom*. The Jewish religionists certainly believed that their Messiah was to come soon to them; they doubtless believed all prophecy concerning Him, as they understood it. Yet Jesus tells them that, "The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness and ye believed him not; but the publicans and harlots believed him; and ye when ye saw it did not even repent yourselves afterward that ye might believe him." Here, our Lord connects the state of repentance with that of belief, but as preceding it. This also is a vital point in connexion with our fitness for the Kingdom. I confess that it strikes one at first as though the correct

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order were reversed by our Lord, if we do not pause and consider well. Our Lord had the Divine Gift of being able to say a few simple words of instruction which neither time nor controversy can overthrow. It is one of the surest proofs of His Divine nature. If we pause to consider this supposed reversed order, we shall be brought, by the Spirit of Truth, to see that until we are in a repentant condition, we do not wish to be perfect nor do we believe it to be the highest wisdom to be righteous. We are more inclined to believe in great worldly advantage as being the highest good. After we have come to see the evil effects of sinning in ourselves and others, we come to change our standard of what is really the highest good. We see that our aims have been destructive and unclean. We are ashamed of ourselves, we repent and are anxious to become perfected by some process. We are then in a state of mind and soul to see Christ in His true character. While in this humble and hopeful state of mind, we come to believe that not only is our Saviour's teaching, as recorded, an historically correct rendering from His lips; but we come to believe so absolutely in its perfecting qualities, that we would willingly adopt it in our ideals and conduct even if there were no Christ.

I think this was the inner meaning of Christ when He begged His hearers *to believe for the very work's sake*. The *work* of bringing perfected

souls into the Kingdom was dearer to Him than any personal servile adulation to Himself from followers who ignored His true mission. He always put His mission before His personal advantage, aye, even to the shameful Cross. He seldom spoke of His Own personality: never, unless truth were at stake. His call to the people was ever and always to repent that they might be forgiven and then work earnestly towards the perfection of all things, themselves included. The Jewish religionists were offended that He ignored their vexatious doctrinal themes and insisted on preaching with such power the simple doctrine of righteousness: they marvelled at His ability and wisdom and feared Him when He did not insist on the old formalities which were so dear to their palsied souls. They asked, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? But Jesus said to them, "My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself." So Jesus told these mere ritualists that one must be willing to obey before he is in a condition to know of the teaching. This is a warning to contentious persons. If we wish to be able to perceive the Truth we must obey that part of truth which we are already sure of. We cannot know the intricate until we obey the simple. This is doubtless why He was so severe on the dogmatists. He accused

them of shutting the Kingdom against men and entering not themselves. Religious wrangles, or wrangles of any sort, will shut us out of Heaven. These delighted in religious argument, and encouraged the spirit of dissension in the people, thus shutting out Heaven from themselves and the common people. And Jesus pronounces seven woes unto this class of persons, which we would do wisely to read and mark to-day. His parting words, as recorded by Matthew, are "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you; and lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age." When modern preachers try to teach intricate doctrines instead of the teaching of Jesus Christ, they go outside of their authorized mission, and cannot expect His Presence or approval to remain with them. Such preachers must be classed with those of old whom Jesus so bitterly denounced. These do not preach The Gospel of the Kingdom, but rather tend to shut it out from longing humanity. We rejoice that this kind of preaching is becoming more rare as time goes on.

If we refer to the account given by Mark, we find that after Jesus had been subjected to the temptations in the wilderness, in which He had

been luringly offered all the kingdoms of the world by Satan, and had stedfastly refused all his blandishments, advice, and bargainings, and after John was delivered up to these haters of sound preaching, He came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe in the gospel [good tidings]." Again we see the call to repentance as preceding that to belief. This writer gives us an account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, in which the people proclaimed Him as King of David's line and He rebuked them not, but rather seemed to expect and accept the title. These people cried, "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest." Perhaps this people shouted better than they realized; but they did not seem to consider that the Messianic Kingdom was to be an ordinary one; they may not have understood the meaning of their own enthusiasm; but the Son of David accepted their homage and the crown of their approval. On entering the city of Jerusalem He at once began to endeavour to cleanse the Temple from the money changers, etc., and said to them, "Is not it written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers; and [for this] the chief priests and scribes sought how they might

destroy Him." So, as was foretold, He was despised and rejected of men, or at least by those whose one office in life was to be looking for Him and to be preparing the people in holiness for this unique and universal coming event; instead of which they were a band of a "Wall Street" speculating character, or something that was closely allied to it. If there is no lesson in this account which can have any bearing on the great organized Christian Church to-day, taken as a whole, then we must pass it over; but we feel assured that the Church will experience some stings from a guilty conscience on careful self-examination. God grant the too worldly Church the much required gift of prayerful introspection. The Church must be made to conform with its prophetic description, when God says, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations." He is in His Temple to-day examining into the methods of the Church. It is high time for a very careful plan of introspection to be carried out in our boasted Christendom. Is it not time now for the "full grain in the ear"? Is the fruit now ready for the gathering? When time has matured His plans, He will reap and He will gather and separate. God's plans always mature in time. Christ was born just when the wise men followed the leading star to where He lay. Had we not better join with these wise men? Do we not see the fig-tree telling its tale of hope? It is a pity that we hold such a

wrong estimate of the worth of some things. Jesus asks His hearers, "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? For what shall a man give in exchange for his life? He warns us here that no worldly gain shall pay us for the loss of our soul's life. He teaches here plainly that there is certainly ultimate death for the disobedient soul, and shows us how little the world can recompense us for this awful loss of opportunity. And He warns us how shortsighted it is to be ashamed of true piety, or of Christ Himself. He says of such that He will be ashamed of them when He comes in the glory of His Father and the Holy Angels. He also taught that a sinning, rebellious Church need not expect the power which belongs only to His Kingdom to rest upon it. Nor is there historic or contemporary evidence that the Church has been found worthy of or fitted for this power, excepting in a few rare instances of individual gifts of strange potency. There is much amiss with us, as we are not a righteous people, except in a small degree, and the gifts of apostolic days are not much sought after, or wanted—or so it seems. It is said that a poet-diplomat was asked if he considered the Christian religion to be a failure, and he answered that he did not know, he had never seen it tried. This sounds severe, but the main thing that matters is, Is it true? Have we, any of us, ever as yet seen the religion of Jesus Christ tried? If so, Where, and by whom?

Obedience to the Royal Law would bring us apostolic powers. Paul tells the Corinthians, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." After explaining the unity of the whole Church as one in Christ, all suffering together and all rejoicing together, he further instructs them thus, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof, and God has set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles [or powers], then gifts of healings, helps, governments or [wise counsel], divers kinds of tongues. Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers? Are all workers of Miracles [or powers]? Have all gifts of Healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But desire earnestly the Greater Gifts." If we read the two following chapters of this epistle we shall have some idea of what was expected to be general in the Church regarding gifts. We see that Paul places first in prominence, apostleship. Certainly the Church has not been wanting in apostles of Christianity, as they have understood it; but have these been a part of Christ's body, always teaching what He taught, and only that? Or, have they been too much given to teaching *Scripture wrested into unauthorized doctrine*? We cannot deny that the Church has had its prophets; or those who received special truths from God and gave them forth to the people. Neither can we deny that some have claimed, or assumed, a

superior knowledge of God's Will, to which they were in no wise entitled. Only those whose teachings are in direct and absolute unity with Christ's own words of teaching can claim this distinction; and there have been *some* such beautiful clear-eyed souls; for this we are thankful. There have been many, many teachers in the Church, and we must find it to be true of these, that only as they taught the simple faith as Christ taught it, are they of Christ's body. It is a grave sin to teach as a Christian doctrine that which Christ or His Apostles never taught. As for miracles or powers of healing, I fear that we are almost without these gifts. I fear Christ's body sadly needs the operation of this gift. Helps and wise counsels are, we may suppose, the most widely diffused gifts in Christendom. We grant that helpers are everywhere plentiful, if not always wisely employed. Government is everywhere present, but whether this government of wise counsels is always in unity with Christ is quite another question. Divers kinds of tongues would to-day astonish the world, unless they were obtained through a seat of learning. So, perhaps our poet-diplomat was not so far afield when he said, I do not know whether Christianity is a failure or not, I have never seen it tried. This matter is not only our own affair, but it is of vital importance to the non-Christian population of the earth. They, many of them, can read our Scriptures, and see

just what our religion means; they then turn the searchlight on our spiritual condition, and smile in derision. The bringing of the whole world to Christ is delayed by our inefficiency regarding our faith. We are the only examples of the power of Christ unto salvation; and a poor example we are. We are too apt to forget the vital point in Christian doctrine, namely, that the Kingdom of God is within the hearts of men, and not in a spectacular and showy and tyrannical organization. Neither need we look for Christ to come to us in any spectacular manner. He has warned us not to follow after any one who claims to show us the Christ, as He was not to be so seen at His second coming. He says, "For as the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heavens, shineth into the other part under the heavens; so shall the Son of Man be in His day." Jesus here seems to liken His coming to a great electric and terrifying flood of light flashing over the whole earth. Those who are sensitive to change of weather know right well when a terrifying electric storm is in process of development, long before it breaks forth in the splendour of its almost irresistible mission! So, if we be sensitive to the conditions of the Kingdom we shall be quite prepared for the spiritual splendour of Light which shall be a token of His Presence. We had better take Him as a shelter from the coming storm. We had better let Him insulate us from the destruction which shall accompany

His full arrival. Absolute trust in our Saviour, and obedience to all His commands and instructions, is our only sure insulation from the cleansing fires of God. We cannot attain to this safety without the ever present guidance and assistance of the Holy Spirit, Christ's Executive. If we are thus in safety the flashing fires of Christ's approaching reign will not dismay us, but will rather fill us with the joy of a great hope. We are also reminded of Noah's experience. He, believing, hastened to protect himself and family from impending destruction, by obediently doing as he was commanded by God. But the masses of the people gave no heed and did not prepare, and so were drowned. These, probably, considered Noah to be insane, or a dreamer. We are reminded that "Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed." In both instances the people that perished were wicked. They would not repent, they did not believe that they were in danger, they perished and Christ Jesus said, "After the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed." The revealing of Christ is the time set for this to occur. Our responsibility is great at the present momentous period.

Sodom had been spared if ten righteous men had been found in her. We do not know just how perilous a situation we may be in to-day ourselves. There was another peril of which we were warned at this time by our Lord; and it would seem to be more like our gravest peril than these two. We are told to remember Lot's wife. She believed, she came out of Sodom because she believed; but she desired to look back, perhaps in longing for her own associations. She looked back for some reason, and that was her undoing. She turned into stone, it is told us. If we are to remember this story, it must be that it applies to our Christian experience. And is it not easily seen wherein the lesson lies? The professed Christian leaves his old standpoint, or the world, and sets out for a safer country. He really believes or he would remain in the old way. But after adopting the Christian religion, and starting to journey heavenward, he looks back. It is this attempt to proceed forward while clinging to and desiring to see what is taking place in the old, that turns our hearts to stone. We get hard, and wanting in receptive sensitiveness. We want to face both ways. We want to serve God and Mammon at the same time, and the unnatural attempt hardens us to our eternal injury. Our obedience in our forward walking is our surety. John the Baptist told the people that "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that obeyeth not the Son

shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John here identifies belief with obedience. If we take our obedience to the commands of Christ as test of our belief, and our thus substantiated belief as our grounds for eternal life, just where do we stand to-day by this test? Shall there be enough of these living souls amongst us to save us from the utter destruction which seems imminent?

The apostle John tells us of the visit by night of the Pharisee Nicodemus to inquire of Jesus about His new doctrine. Jesus told him, "Except one be born anew [or from above] he cannot see the Kingdom of God." He further explains that, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." So first one's vision must be widened and heightened until he sees all humanity as one, and Heaven and earth as one. "Every knee [thank God] shall bow"; "a new Heaven and a new earth"; these pictures come into the vision of the true follower of the Master. Then, individually, we must be born anew by the cleansing of our lives from all sinful habits of mind and body. This cleansing is typified by the sacrament of baptism. We must be born anew of the Holy Spirit in order that we shall be filled only by essential truths. Jesus said, "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." If we are born of the Spirit of Truth, we shall be able to answer Pilate's question correctly.

Paul, who had been especially well instructed

in the meaning of the Gospel of the Kingdom, and who was also well versed in contemporary heathen philosophical cults as well as the Jewish, was quite prepared to compare them with his new faith. He thus expresses himself: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." He urges these Romans to whom he was writing to become well-pleasing to God by obedience to the Law of love to God and one another. And he says, "Be not fashioned according to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Then follows a homily to these people that the stern James cannot excel; and that we would do well to heed. We must be good, Paul urges, but we need not be great, to enter Christ's Kingdom. He notes that not many wise (according to the flesh), or many noble, are called: but he adds, "God chooses the foolish things of the world, that He might put to shame the things that are strong." We conclude from these passages and their connexions, that often God chooses very weak vessels for great service, in order that He alone may be recognized as Teacher and Ruler of His own Creation. And all who are called to some special service must give credit to Him alone for all excellence of service. However, we have the right to claim one quality—if we possess it—that is, an absolute willingness for full self-sacrifice, when it is required of us. This will give us that earnestness of purpose which

no one can turn aside from our clear path of duty.

Peter urges repentance in order that sin may be blotted out, that spiritual refreshing may come to our souls, in order "that He [God] may send the Christ Who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus; Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old. . . . Unto you first God, having raised up His servant [or child], sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." So, Peter, also, taught that Christ could not come to reign until we repented. This is a serious thought for Christian believers to face. Who of us is free from the sin which is serving to bar the progress of our patient Redeemer out of His Kingdom in the hearts of men?

True His reign began at His ascension, at the close of His earthly career; but what a pitifully small earthly kingdom it has been. Oh, let us all join in the universal earnest effort to hasten the day when the Angel of God shall be authorized to announce, "The Kingdom of the world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." Not only Christendom, which is called by His name, but all the nations and peoples of the earth, must and shall be as one beloved family of the Father, under the beneficent reign of His only begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth.

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Oh, many of us do hope earnestly that very soon—

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and wane no more.

And let us all unite to chant that universal and holy prayer left us by our Saviour King:

Our Father who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil;
For thine is the kingdom,
The power and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER V

THE FALLING AWAY

"Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of lawlessness (or sin) be revealed."

2 THESS. ii. 3.

"Behold Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue muttereth wickedness."

ISA. lix. 1, 2, 3.

"For her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

REV. xviii. 5.

THAT there should be a falling away from the true faith before the final coming of our Lord to reign on earth, is without doubt distinctly foretold by the prophets of the old dispensation. That this was not wholly fulfilled before the new dispensation, is just as distinctly taught in the New Testament. Christ repeatedly referred to the condition of belief and morals which should prevail

in His professed following, at the time of His return to assume the full control of human affairs. His Revelation to us through John contained descriptions of the faults of some, the awful failure of most, and the sanctified fidelity of the few, of the Church which was to follow after and hold as leaven the teaching of the Master. To deny that this Church, as a whole, fell, is to deny the very foundation of our religion, viz.: the word of the prophets, of Jesus Christ, and of His Apostles. Granted that she was to fall, and granted (by plenty of evidence) that she did fall; how shall we satisfy our intelligence or sense of reason, that this should be so? First we ask ourselves, How could she ever have so mistaken her mission? and second, How came it that the All-Wise and All-Powerful should have so planned it to be?

It is only by the use of our intellectual capacity to analyze and consider, accept or reject, the validity of the thoughts, opinions, and conclusions, which are forced upon us from many God-given sources, that we ever come to have any ideas about, or conceptions of, things spiritual. Therefore we are obliged to face any doubt which may arise like a shadowy ghost from the darkness and dissipate or allay it in some way, or allow it to wander as an unholy thing in the secret chambers of our intellect, which stands guard over our souls. An intellect which is thus standing at this God-given post, dare not shirk its duty. It dare not neglect

to challenge every belief or thought which may attempt to fix itself on the soul of which it is in charge.

As to this question we might well ask, How could the Church have so mistaken her mission? We might dwell at great length upon the themes of depravity, want of true faith, sin of arrogant desire to supersede all others in numerical and political greatness, of natural tendency to self-indulgent licence, etc., but having so explained the influences which may have brought it about or helped to bring it about, we should still be left with the all-inclusive question, How came it that the All-Wise and All-Powerful should have so planned it? Had He not in His infinite foresight answered this question for us long ago, we should hesitate to say that He did plan it; but would take the generally accepted ground, that He merely *permitted* it to be so. Jehovah testifies of Himself thus, "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things." And He warns us of the sin of presumption in regard to judging our Creator's methods for us. He says, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker. Shall the clay say to Him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?" We are not at liberty to ask, Why? of our Creator; but we are under necessity to co-operate with God's plans as our intelligence enables us to see our duty in connexion with them. We must try to

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take the larger view of the universal order of things and not bind our judgment by the petty restrictions of the present isolated moment.

We are certainly too apt to look upon the career of our race on earth—

Too insularly, as if
No spiritual counterpoint completed it,
Consummating its meaning, rounding all
To justice and perfection, line upon line,
Form by form, nothing single or alone,
The great below clenched by the great above.

Butler, in his work on *Natural and Revealed Theology*, gives us the following thoughts (and also refers us to Dick's *Philosophy of a Future State*): "Again, it is said the various manifestations of God to men, his communications to them and especially his incarnation, are unworthy of him. The objection is, that as he is the Lord of countless worlds, he would not take such notice of one in comparison of the whole so insignificant. This is overlooking the fact that God is omniscient, omnipotent, infinite. If he notices the sparrow's fall and numbers the hairs of our heads, which philosophy as well as the Bible concedes, will he not concern himself for the welfare of millions on millions of immortal beings bearing his own moral image? Who can say also what influence the effects of sin here and the plan of redemption may not have exerted on other parts of the universe? Were the dealings of God with men recorded in

Scripture confined wholly to our species, they could not on any just principles be pronounced unworthy of him. And when we consider the bearing which they may have on other worlds, all occasion of scepticism on this point vanishes." This thought, from Butler, seems to be a much more scriptural view of God's creative plans than that of the poet Milton, when he makes God to say of man—

I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
. . . They themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I; if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.

We are led to wonder whether Milton was as clear an expounder of Scripture as he was a splendidly gifted poet.

Long, bitter, and unchristian has been the feud between the upholders of Calvinism and the upholders of Arminianism: and to what end? I do not perceive how a *Scripture* student or a *Nature* student can pass by the facts disclosed by these two infallible sources, showing that there is a Supreme Originator and Controller of the destiny of every atom in the great Universe, in all there is or can be in Matter. The scientist finds a Law and Order so all-embracing that it provides for even the process of dissolution and decay. The young earth being covered with dense green plant

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life was doubtless a beautiful sight; and when great trees began to cover the earth, this plant life began to cover itself into great depths. It died, decayed, solidified, and remained in a prison of heavy darkness while, perhaps, millenniums passed over its overthrown beauty. But the Creator Who was, and is, and is to come, knew just what use He had planned for it. And now, in His ripened time, we, by His kind and thoughtful providence, are using it for our need: and again is it being transformed into yet another form of being. We might instance many properties in Matter which are to-day being used to benefit the vegetable kingdom from which we obtain our food, that are positively obnoxious in themselves. These, often loathsome, mixtures help to produce the finest grains and fruits and the most beautiful and fragrant flowers. If our wise Creator plans to produce disgusting decay of animal and vegetable life, and through this avenue transform it into finest food and sweetest beauty, is it wise of us to say that He does not, or cannot will that we pass through an epoch of sin and misery in order that we may be transformed into a new creation of His own planning? "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be." That is, if we struggle out of our sinful condition and conform ourselves to the best we know. True we are not insensate plant or soulless beast. But has it not been well argued that "Natural Law is but the vanishing lines of a great

Eternal Order"? Many operations of great skill are performed by wise men to-day on the human body; but one which has a distinct message to us regarding our designed period of sinning, is that of inoculation. It really seems as if that very natural operation in our bodies against the worst forms of many diseases is the counterpart of our period of tendency towards sinning, in order that our souls shall in this period run a term of the destructive disease which shall save us through eternity from ever again falling into its death-producing grasp. We all and every one of us are thus inoculated by sin, and sin runs a certain course in us. If we do not exhaust our sinful tendency, we shall not be saved by our soundness, but we shall succumb to the real disease. The disease of sin destroys us. Temptation gives us the experience that we require for ultimate good. If we fall into sin, we should use it as a lesson never to so fall again. If we continue to sin carelessly or rebelliously we have succumbed, not to the inoculation, but to the disease itself, which is destructive and not remedial. By our reluctant falling we learn to hate sin; we learn to be watchful, *to have eyes towards sinning*, as the word inoculation seems to suggest from its root meaning, viz.: "to furnish with eyes."

So we find it to be not only scriptural to conclude that our tendency towards the disease was designed by our Creator for our ultimate immunity toward sin; but we find that He has also provided the

same remedy to be used by man both in the animal and vegetable kingdom and that it is so applied to both of these kingdoms in Nature. God said, "I create evil." He did not say, I unwillingly *permit evil*. If He creates evil, we may be just as sure as that God is God, that He has also planned in utter wisdom all the consequence of evil. And we may be as sure as that God is Truth, that ultimately His creation of our Race and all the incidental experiences of decay and spiritual degeneracy which the plan for our career entailed, shall be full of interest to us in another state of being, and that we too shall agree that it is indeed *good*. Perhaps we shall carry out these two lessons in our spiritual experience which we have noted in Nature. Perhaps we have either the experience of attaining to immunesness from sin, or that of passing away into soulless débris, from which God will re-use us in some way. *Perhaps*, we said, but is it not a fact that if we be not resurrected from the sinful life we die? And do we not know that God wastes not, but only transforms chaotic matter? Is it not a more hopeful outlook to become immune from destruction than to pass into a knowledgeless chaos? We had better see from Nature that if we do not justify our remedy, by improvement and recovery, we shall not be in good enough condition of spiritual health to be retained by our Husbandman now, at the time of the Harvest. We must not forget that our 'repentance or our

destruction is foretold as God's mandate. Resurrection and destruction are both waiting near by for our decision. Whosoever *will* may be resurrected from the falling away from our first innocent estate.

God's eternal purposes change not. We must believe that we are placed here just as we are, by our Creator's eternal purpose. This is the belief which gives us that trust in God, of which so much is said in both Books of Scripture, as our surety in time of need: and when, in our weakness, have we not a tendency toward sinning? Do we not need help? It is this trust that gives us "hope that He will also still deliver us." It gives us to know that "Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that take refuge in Him." We know that it is said, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." The marginal rendering of the word *mind* is (in the R. V.) given as *imagination*, which is much to be preferred; in that it suggests the idea that hope is fed through this trustful imagination. It gives us visions of an ideal future which the cold logic of a trained but restricted brain could never give us. This well-founded trust enables us to say with the Psalmist, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the deep darkness of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me"; and to say, "I will take refuge in the covert

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of Thy wings, for Thou, O God, hast heard my vows, Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear Thy name."

But after confessing with all earnestness to the uttermost belief in the full power of God, and in His predestined and accurately executed designs for our career, we have but journeyed along on the flow of one of these oft-times tempestuous streams, that sometime shall join into one, in order that they may in true Christian unity flow as one into the Kingdom of God. In both Books is the call to repentance the paramount theme. If we are not the masters of our own wills, this constant exhortation and invitation is cruel mockery to a fated people. If we cannot use our own wills for decisions of thought and conduct, then Christ taunted us from out His throne with a delusive hope, when He said so tenderly, "And he that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely." Oh, we are so glad that He did say it to us, in this tenderly reassuring way!

We shall not dwell on the well-known texts which give multiplied Scripture evidence that a man has a free will to do right or wrong, as to-day this requires little or no upholding. All must see that the new dispensation is one of liberty of the human soul to obey, or rebel. And we believe it to be mainly true of the old dispensation as well. If God can control the Universe in its magnitude and in its minutest forms, can He not also give us the

will to do or not to do—which by some skilful management shall not disturb His designs and yet is not automatic? We restrict God's possibilities too much. That our Creator planned our career to be just as it has been for an object lesson to others as well as to ourselves, is more than probable. But that we are to take licence from this idea and think that we may continue to sin in predestined security from the death of the soul, is a diabolical illusion, and utterly without foundation either in Scripture, Nature, or Reason. Never was it more of a satanic trap than to-day; this day of the merging of the age, in which Christendom has turned liberty into a licence to sin, into that period when she shall have realized her mission, by using her high-born liberty to fit herself for useful service towards the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God, by implicit and childlike obedience to the Royal Law. She will, we hope and pray, use all her God-given powers to bend her own will to that of her Redeemer whom she as a Church has defied so long. If we cannot fully comprehend just why our earthly experience has been so very unlovely, let us not impudently judge God, but rather make every effort of mind and soul to gain the higher life; the life that we share with Jesus Christ by conforming to His type. If we do *not* do so, and still believe that He is the Messiah, then we share the life and belief of the demons; so James instructs us. We had better make an effort each for himself to con-

form to His moral image, and not think that we shall be coerced into a loving obedience to Christ's régime. Let us say with the apostle Paul, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold, but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect [or full grown], be thus minded, and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk." What admirable and reasonable advice this striving and humble soul has here given us! Paul surely united the two seemingly opposing doctrines in his own life and preaching. He could not well avoid knowing that he was called for a special work, after all his experiences; but this did not make him feel that he had licence to be more careless of walking than others. There is so much prophetic, Messianic, and apostolic evidence of the call to eternal life; and of the more special call of some to special service, that it is not necessary to further discuss it.

Up to the present day the wills of the units of professed Christendom, all but the few, have been greatly at fault. In both dispensations this imper-

fect state of mind and will has resulted in a deplorable and most pronounced falling away from the Law of God, either through careless walking or wilful disobedience. Of this there can be no valid doubt. That these two periods were ordained for a trial of influences on the human soul, there can be but little doubt. That the old régime of "carnal ordinances" had little lasting effect on men's righteousness, is agreed to by all who read the history of it. That the régime of fewer rites and ceremonies, less restriction, more simple teaching, more liberty, has had a more beneficial influence on the righteousness of men, in this now almost completed period in which we find ourselves to-day, is to be greatly doubted. If we look into our history we shall soon see into what greater depths of sinning the Christian Church fell, than did the Jewish, whom she has despised though less guilty than herself. The dark and middle ages have a humiliating tale of shame to disclose. The modern Church is not yet quite free from the spirit of these religious shambles.

We may also find circumstantial evidence that God ordained the experience of these two trial periods, from their strange similarity in the courses they ran; and we hope not to be considered too imaginative, if we point out these similarities; but first we would draw attention to their probable object in God's purpose, viz.: If angels desired to look into these operations, we may assume with

reason that it was to learn some needed lesson. We know that there were good and bad angels, that there were those who tempted and those who ministered to us. We also know that some of these personal intelligent entities were capable of either good or ill, because we learn that they kept not their first estate, but fell into disobedience. To satisfy our minds that God the Infinite may have perfectly wise reasons for making us an illustration of some principles to others, we beg to draw attention to one, which is, we may suppose, more than likely to be correct. We must allow that at least in earlier days than ours there was freewill amongst the angels. We are not at all sure that they had it after some fell into open rebellion. We shall suppose for our purpose—as seems to be probable—that all who did not at that time fall, have since then been under a law of obedience from which there is no escape; else rebellion might have continued. This would separate the spiritual beings into two classes, viz.: those who were rebellious and those who were obedient. We conclude from Scripture that these two classes remain as they are so divided until some later date ordained by the Creator. The rebellious class we will make no attempt at discussing; but concerning those who always were and still are obedient, we offer this suggestion. May not many of these become weary of the monotony of, shall we call it, automatic obedience? May not many of these also be weary

of the simplicity of the creed which says that holy service one toward another is the only true worship of God Most High? We may the more easily grant this suggestion as being probable when we note that the obedient angels might be again divided into two classes, viz.: Those who love to do God's holy service would strive earnestly to do it, though there were no forceful influence compelling obedience. These are the *truly* Holy Angels. Then there may be those who are not so holy in their ideals. These may be at times dissatisfied with their life of enforced obedience and may also desire a more spectacular worship of God rather than the simpler form of service towards those who need their ministry. So we suggest that these two points may have been illustrated in us to show, not only ourselves for reference in after experience, but also to show to these slightly disaffected but forcibly obedient angels that too much liberty of will leads souls into licence too often to be really advisable; that if we are controlled to obedience, we, in time, grow to have ideals equal to the law; and that this is ultimately the most satisfactory course for the individual soul as well as for the whole. We already recognize this theory in our common law, and we do not leave each person the liberty to do as he likes, excepting as he likes to obey the law. Then we have suggested that these may have desired more spectacular or ceremonious worship of God Most High.

This desire usually accompanies a low spiritual condition. In the Jewish Church we have a good object lesson of the inability of ritual to produce true piety. In the Romanized Christian Church we have also had another effective example of the deadening effect of ritualistic worship of God Most High. We, as well as the dissatisfied angels, must see that ritualism and true piety scarcely ever co-exist for long. Service to one another, as being true worship of God, is taught by word, and by illustration of its efficiency, all through the Scripture and in the history of the Christian Church. We think that in at least these two most vital points both men and angels must have well learnt their lesson, unless they be indeed blind and deaf to the spiritual meaning of history.

We should remember that earth touches heaven closely. John saw "A new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away." This must be so when we become implicitly obedient like the good angels; for we shall be freed from the tempting demons which now surround us with their baneful influence, and perhaps we shall not require to the same extent the assistance of the blessed ministry of spiritual beings who are now constantly rescuing us from the path of sin into which we are far too easily tempted. This would bring about a new condition in the heaven immediately about us, as well as the new and blessed earthly condition. Liberty from the

bondage of sin, of struggling against sin, is Heaven within. Licence towards self-indulgent sinning and a consent towards it, is Hell within. In the new condition we shall be in the Kingdom of Heaven Within.

Paul tells the Thessalonians that, "Touching the coming [or presence] of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled either by spirit or by word or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand; let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be except the falling away come first and the man of sin [or lawlessness] be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God. . . . And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work, only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way, and then shall be revealed the lawless one whom the Lord Jesus shall slay [or consume] with the breath of His mouth and bring to naught by the manifestation of his presence, even he whose coming [or presence] is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing; because they receive not the love of truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a

working of error, that they should believe a lie, that they might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." We as Protestants have accused the Roman Catholic Church of holding this spirit of lawlessness especially in the person of that man who happens to fill the arrogant office of Pope of the Roman Church. But Paul says in the above passage, "For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work," and this was said some three hundred years before the Church became semi-paganized by the affiliation with pagan Rome. And these had no especial Pope for some time after that. The term, the Man of Lawlessness, has a wider meaning than this, although we may be sure that the term includes all of these arrogant potentates. And it includes all others who exalt themselves against all that is called God. In the symbolic language of the Scriptures the term Woman seems to be the actual body of the Church as it exists in its members as a whole, while the term Man seems always to signify the thought-seed which produced the profession of the individuals that go to make up the body, or the Woman. Then we must look for this Man of Sin wherever church organization exists. If an organization exists in which he is not found, then we may hope there to find the true faith taught and practised. Paul, the chief apostle of the Christian religion, was very strong in his denouncement of those who did not preach the Faith as he had given

it to them. To the apostate Galatians he writes: "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from Him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel, only there are some that trouble you and would prevent the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. . . . For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me that it is not after men. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." Again we see Paul warning these apostate professors, "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And he warns these not to follow the lusts of the flesh, but to bear the fruits of the Spirit. He says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us walk. Let us not become vain-glorious, challenging [or provoking] one another, envying one another." If we take this homily in our hand, or in our mind,

and review the history of the Church in all her wanderings amidst hatred, gloom, fighting for supremacy, unwillingness to suffer for the Master's sake, unkindness, unrighteousness, unfaithfulness towards Christ and each other, haughtiness, lack of Christian forbearance,—against which sinning the law of God stands firm and inexorable,—we shall not be far from finding the Man of Lawlessness. When he is revealed Christ can come to us. The Church of Christendom has too much, even to-day, put carnal ordinances before the law of obedience. This is the cause of the falling away, indeed it is the falling away. Holiness is our testing quality before God and His Christ; instead of which we have placed knowledge and approval of some intricate doctrine in the first place. This difference of opinion on our leading dogmas has generated enough hate and cruelty in the Church to condemn her to destruction. And this is just where she stands to-day. If she does not abandon all such errors, and teach only that which Christ taught and instructed His apostles to preach, she shall be destroyed as was her type, Jerusalem. Not the Church of Christ *but the unfaithful organizations which are called by His Name but are not of the true Christian Faith, which teaches nothing but obedience to, and trust in, Christ.* We are glad to know that the Church as a whole is to-day avoiding, as being injurious, these topics of personal opinion, which cause so much strife and hate. We may hope by

this pregnant sign that the Church is cleansing herself, at least in her religious theories. Good citizenship is taking on a prominence in civilized countries which has never before been acceded to it. We hope that this spirit will soon enter more fully into the Church. We grant that individually it is becoming believed in, but we hope for the day when holiness shall be required in Church membership. *The general effort towards Church union is an admission that divisional doctrines are non-essentials.* These efforts are tending towards the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. When we are led to see *that Faith in Christ*, as taught by Christ and the apostles, is *obedience to Christ*, that according to these belief and obedience have but one meaning to a Christian, then we shall see just where the Man of Lawlessness stands. We shall see him revealed. When we acknowledge him to be nothing more nor less than a licence towards the breaking of God's law; which licence we have indulged in, thinking that because Christ died for our sins we could go on sinning; or that because Christ, by dying for us, in some way paid God for our liberty to do as we liked with impunity; when we see this to be the wicked thought-seed, the Man of Sin, which is ruining the Church, and has been ruining it ever since Paul so wrote, then shall this destroyer of the Race stand *revealed*. I think if Christendom saw this as it really is, and straight-way began to cleanse herself with all her heart and

soul, the whole world would follow in her wake and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah and to the house of the God of Jacob and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths." May God in His infinite mercy grant that this may soon become a reality.

Neither of the two dispensations were successful, if holiness is the final test of religion. The first was filled with rites and ceremonies which had esoteric meanings and were calculated to promote holiness by that method. This did not follow, for we find that its followers fell from their first purity most disastrously. The second was void of rites and ceremonies, but filled with liberty of action; only with the reservation, that all action must be controlled by the simple principle of love to God and love and helpfulness one towards another. Neither did this régime prove to be a success; as we find the Christian Church also fell away from its first purity, and is still, taken as a whole, in an appalling condition as regards being a power for holiness in the world, notwithstanding much noble effort of the ever present *few*.

We find that these two unsuccessful trial régimes ran an almost similar course, both in time and circumstance. If we take the period from Abraham's call, to the advent of the promised Messiah, we shall find that it is very nearly the same number of years as the period between the advent of Christ until to-day, or a little later. Also we find these

two periods are subdivided into approximately similar periods in both régimes. These sub-periods run thus: first, from Abraham's call until the call of Moses; second, from the call of Moses to the close of inspired writing; third, from this to the arrival of the Messiah. Then, similarly in the Christian era: first, from Christ until Constantine and the fall of Rome; second, from the fall of Rome until the Reformation; third, from the Reformation until to-day, or a little later. If we look into these two sets of periods we shall find that each pair of periods is of approximately the same number of years. And in similarity of experience their likeness is not less striking. The holy zeal of the first pair of periods is very striking in both. The long and eventful life of Israel as a nation, until the close of inspiration, gives us a very similar story in many ways to that of the Christian Church as she became nationalized by Constantine, until we find her in the throes of the Reformation. And in the pre-Christian era we shall find again much likeness to that portion of our era which lies between the Reformation and our Lord's Return.

From what few facts we can glean concerning the Jewish people, we have no reason to doubt but that they served the God of their father Abraham during this first period in at least a goodly measure; not perfectly perhaps, but fairly faithfully. We find that they became so numerous and influential,

that they were a menace to the power of the Egyptians among whom they dwelt. We find that they were so hardly dealt with that their lives were filled with bitterness. We need not go into the familiar details of the exodus of this people from Egypt, or of their tiresome journey in the wilderness, or of the arrival at Canaan; but by recalling to memory these passing events, we shall find a close parallel to the first period in the Christian Church.

We find that this people also started out well. They were so full, at first, of holy zeal, that they actually tried to follow the trend of Christ's teaching, the doctrine of obedience to God and love towards one another. We find that this obedience to their new light brought them success and plenty, though it brought also persecution. But in time this success in numbers and influence brought them to the notice of the power of Rome. These too were becoming a menace to the empire in which they were servants only. As in the former case, so in this: it was found to be necessary to establish in some way the security of the ruling power. Constantine chose the craftier and more worldly-wise plan, and conciliated this people by affiliating them into a friendly constituent of his empire. This was a great change for the early Christians, as it lifted them out of a cruel and oppressive state of persecution, into being a joint power with other citizens of Rome. I think unprejudiced historians explain this change of attitude towards the Christ-

ians as arising more from policy than piety or real change of heart in the Emperor of Rome. The worldly wisdom of this policy was soon justified by the fall of the pagan party of Rome for ever. And thus at the fall of Rome we find the Christian marching side by side with the pagan, and joining together in a new-born unity under the ensign of the Cross upheld by the pagan goddess Victory. Never was there an ensign set up more apt to circumstances than this. We find the next period in each of these dispensations to bear the same striking resemblance of outline, not only in approximate length of time, but also in the strange similarity of moral experience. One cannot help seeing that the temporal and spiritual experience of these two peoples run along the same lines. Their inconsistencies, their disobedience to the light of acknowledged law, their affiliation with paganism, compose the subject matter of the history of both peoples alike. The first was not satisfied, but it must add more and yet more laws and obligations to its ample ritual. It borrowed from pagan sources, or wandered into absolute paganism, at times. It repented time after time, and went on its way worse than ever. The spiritual meaning of it all was ignored and almost forgotten, excepting by the few. And the Christian Church during her parallel period ignored the true teaching of Christ, her Founder and Master, and used the liberty of the new régime to begin a series

of religious wrangles, unequalled we hope in any other religion. The war of creeds stormed noisily all down the centuries, until now if one examine the different denominations, even in reformed Protestantism, he will stand in wonder at their variety. It is the counterpart of the Jewish error of adding more rites and ceremonies. Some few also in the Christian Church have had a simple enough faith in Christ and His redemptive office to be as a little leaven which has kept her from falling never to rise again. We not only hope that she shall soon rise and become, under Christ, the bread of life to the other children; but we think we can see signs of this leaven at work in its developing potency in all the public avenues of life. We should all thank God that our period of living is placed in the *to-day*. But until the Reformation, there was little chance for the leaven to work, as we may now observe it to be doing. The old religionist lost the ark; we have lost the power to listen only to Christ. The reformed Church was mostly a reform of creeds; better these were, of that there can be no doubt, but still it was a matter of creeds, creeds, creeds, till Christ was almost forgotten. There seems to be one difference between these two periods: in the old we do not read that there was so much persecution between those of the same faith as there was in the Christian period. This will stand out as long as our earthly memory lasts, as one of the most inconsistent and disgraceful of all sins that

any people have fallen into, that we have so persecuted each other, and within the confines of the same religious belief, and that belief founded on the principles of brotherly love. It was surely a great Satanic victory. We shall also find a similarity of length of years and circumstance, such as we have noted, in the former periods of each dispensation. The epoch from the Reformation, or a little before it, until now, and a little later, compares in some respects with the Jewish epoch from the close of inspiration and a little before, until Christ's time. Otherwise than in length of time we find them to bear resemblance. Without attempting anything which may be considered far-fetched or fanciful, we may consider that at least there was in both some similarity in the struggles of Church and State, of priest and king, of lawkeepers and lawbreakers. But we do not expect to find to-day that our Protestant priesthood, our modern clergy of all Protestant sects, are quite so bad as Christ's description of the old would lead us to fear they might be. We know that some are bound up in the hardening bands of an empty formalism as empty as that of present-day Romanism. But that these are in the minority we fully conceded, and perhaps none are more severe on these than their brother Anglicans of purer creed and holier aspiration. And we must remember that the danger of formalism is not wanting in the programme, or machinery, of the non-conformists. All worship is likely to

become a habit, if one engage in it in one way regularly for long. So much of this and so much of that, and the same over and over again. This is my personal reason for feeling inclined to worship in the purest form of the Established Church. After many years of worship outside of it, I feel that this form of the worship of God is most excellent and cannot be excelled by extempore prayers or by irregular forms. Formalism can creep into the service of a village prayer meeting, or where two or three are gathered together in His Name, even in the most isolated rural district. This I know after many years of experience. Good living souls these were, many of them, and they loved God sincerely and tried to live honourably between each other and before the world; but their prayers scarcely ever varied much. Then why not adopt that which is so beautifully all-inclusive; only let us be sure to pray from our hearts and not merely from habit. That alone is the danger in public prayer, whether it be written or not. I believe John Wesley agreed with this view, and desired the use of the Prayer Book. I ask of the Established Church to examine herself, and see if she cannot become so pure and yet so liberal-minded that she may once more become *the* home for all her people—the House of Prayer for the people, not from overbearing arrogance, that day has for ever passed, but from purity of worship and simple catholicity of creed. To this

end many of her best people are now striving. We see in this holy attempt a sign of the fulfilling of one of the offices of this period. The parallel period was preparing for Christ, so are we. They were preparing for a mere reception of the Kingdom; we are preparing for its utmost fulfilment. Their clergy were misleading the people so that few were in a mental or religious state to receive Christ in His simple atmosphere of holiness and its accompanying gifts. It is the mission of our clergy to rightly lead the people into this simpler environment of holiness, wherein it shall be possible to receive Him as Our Ruler and Friend. Both periods had this office of preparation for Christ, the one for the falling away, the other, the present one, for His full reign. We shall find that these two periods have also an educational office. Religion and education are closely allied as movements, the one usually being complement of the other. We will note as briefly as we may the educational movement preceded the advent of Christ and prepared a people for His simple and scientific wisdom. Between five and six hundred years before Christ, when Draco, Solon, and Clisthenes were trying with a good deal of success to reform the laws and customs of ancient Greece, Servius Tullius was forming a set of laws and customs for ancient Rome; these were much the same as those which Solon was at the same time setting up in Athens. New life and culture were thus

aroused in these two powerful States. This effort had not quite died down when Christ came to plant on the awakened soil of these two nations the seed of His Kingdom. Especially in Greece was this new life followed by a fruition of men like Homer, and brilliant educationalists such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and we may include the Neo-Platonists. While Rome does not seem to have developed a philosophical school of her own, still she gladly adopted that of Athens and made herself busy at intervals endeavouring to carry out various schemes of reformation in her laws and usages, with more or less success, until the day of comparative happiness for her people which was hers under Augustus, and which was the natal day of the Prince of Peace. It was during this reign that the Roman Empire gave to the world the works of Virgil, Horace, Livy, and Ovid. We might mention the names of many other brilliant persons who flourished in Greece, Rome, Egypt, and elsewhere during that period of about five hundred years before Christ; but we merely wish to draw attention to the fact that this period bears a strange resemblance in this respect to our own renaissance of the fifteenth century, the fruits of which are still ripening in western Europe. Before leaving the subject of the older preparatory period, we wish to draw attention to the religious activity amongst the prophets of Israel during this same comparative period of Greek and Roman

activity in general learning. About the same date as Draco, we find the prophet Jeremiah warning the people of Israel that God was preparing a punishment for them, did they not hasten to repent of their idolatrous apostasy and other enormities. Then come his Lamentations over the absolute fulfilment of his prophecy. They had not repented, and the blow had fallen. Habakkuk also warns this people and foretells in graphic imagery their captivity and dispersion. Daniel speaks from out the captivity to us. Though now a prisoner in the proud Court of Babylon, he is able to give an historic account of parts of this period and also prophecy future events some of which are to-day imminent in their fulfilment. Obadiah warns the enemies of Israel and foretells that these children of promise shall yet become a flourishing kingdom. That also must now be imminent. Ezekiel writes his work of strong reproof and often of mystical meaning, but of reassuring comfort to this stricken people. Also he foretells our last great struggle, between guilty unrighteousness and obedient goodness; between, we conclude, spiritual Israel and those who will not recognize the Rulership of Jesus the Messiah, as He is purifying the souls of men and the nations of the earth for His Kingdom. We believe ourselves to be now engaged in this struggle. Ezekiel concludes with a symbolic description of some place which is probably the Holy City, the righteous condition, in a figure.

After the return of a portion of Israel to their own country, we find Haggai urging them to rebuild the Temple and promises them the Divine assistance. He also foretells the second Temple as greater than the first; possibly meaning that it would be honoured by the presence of the Messiah. Or, he may surely have had half-hidden meaning that the second Temple was to be greater than the first, considering the Church as God's visible Temple. Haggai also foretells the setting up of the Kingdom of the Messiah, in which Kingdom should be peace. We pray that this also be now imminent. We also have the warnings and prophesyings concerning the Kingdom of Malachi, Ezra, and Nehemiah. After foretelling the forerunner of the Messiah, and the terrible day of cleansing that should come upon the people, these prophets close their warnings, which spread over about two hundred years, and pass into a silence unbroken until John the Baptist came with his divine announcement of the arrival of the Messiah and His Kingdom. This silent interval does not seem to be very rich in fruition as following these prophets. But the work of these prophets, added to the work of the brilliant contemporary educationalists of now classic memory, forms a chapter of great mental brilliancy difficult to surpass; and do we not find its nearest counterpart to be that of our Western renaissance of the fifteenth century and after? As in Greece and Rome, did we not have our thinkers, philo-

sophers, lawgivers, have we not had our struggles between the aristocrat and the pleb, between slave and free, rich and poor? And were there not even some early crude efforts towards remedial measures for these grievances? And has not the seed of this effort brought forth much goodly fruit since then? Is it not the proudest boast in our empire to-day that all wrongs shall be corrected? And have we not during these five hundred years had our modern prophets? Following in the steps of the Wickliffe and Huss of earlier date, have we not such names as Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingle, Calvin, John Knox?—each one bringing some divine message to us, although, unlike the holy prophets, these perhaps unconsciously mixed some error along with much holy effort; but no one can doubt that the Western Church owes its existence to these noble struggling souls. Then in our own nation have we not the Elizabethan encouragement to all classes of learning? This has left a trail of literary stars whose radiance still draws all eyes to our nation and language. Have we not the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with their lesser brothers, still flourishing in our midst and across the seas? Have we not broad and scientific minds begotten and matured in our nation as well as in western Europe generally? Do we not see our nation, as chief responsible seat of Christendom to-day, in a tense struggle to bring the soil of our own and other kindred States into a

condition wherein it shall be possible to begin to plant the perfect seed in this well-prepared soil, that shall have for its quickly ripening harvest the Kingdom of God? We are not preparing for a partial failure of the Kingdom, but for the full and absolute reign of Christ in righteousness. *We must succeed.*

In all days of our trial or illustrative experience, ours is the Great Opportunity. We may well believe that, as long as memory shall last in the approaching experiences of the coming centuries, nothing will stand out in such clear and distinct relief as this one question, What use did we make of our Great Opportunity? It comes but once to each of us; but more momentous than that, it comes but once to the whole Race. Christ is now walking about amongst us, seeing our efforts towards His holy reign. He can read our hearts and knows perfectly well whether we want Him or not, whether we are working for His all-embracing régime, or for His overthrow, in honour of Satan. But to think that we can pretend to wish for the Kingdom and be working against it by personal or national sinfulness, is a foolish delusion, and not at all in keeping with our acquired wisdom in other matters of much less vital importance. If we are not now uniting in an acknowledged effort towards holy conditions, so that He shall reign, what is our reason for not doing so? It does not seem to be deliberate wickedness so much, for we find our-

selves trying to correct all the worst forms of sin. Yet we do not seem to be ready to give ourselves absolutely to the ruling of the Gospel of the Kingdom. We must have become blinded in our powers of perception of what true faith is, during our fallen period. So we had better awaken ourselves to its true meaning. "Shall he find the faith?" or is it extinct among us? Hardness of heart and want of true faith in the Gospel of the Kingdom seems to be that which Christ foresaw in us with sorrow. We do seem to be such a respectable and pseudo-religious people, that we are difficult to convince as to our need of regeneration into holiness. But we are forewarned of this state, with all its selfish and petty defilements. Paul warns Timothy that, "In the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, . . . traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof." These are some of the faults which the nominal Church of Christ was to be guilty of in the last days. Do we find ourselves guilty of any or all of these? Does it not read more like a description of our present condition than a prophecy concerning it? This list is a brief summary of a class of selfish but respectable sins. But Peter warns us of a still more deadly danger which was to be ours in the last days.

Hardness of heart, no doubt caused by the above sins, was to steal into our souls, until we were to become forgetful of the stern realities of the Gospel of the Kingdom. The danger lay in our forgetting the words of the prophets and the commandments of our Lord, which were left us through His apostles. Peter warns all Christians of this, or his preaching is vain. He says, "In the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His coming [presence]? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." After further warnings as to their unbelief he says, "But according to His promise, we look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." We conclude from these two warnings that at Christ's coming, or acknowledged Presence, He will find the fallen Church guilty of these two classes of sins. She will be composed of persons who are steeped in the defilement of all sorts of petty selfish habits and aims; and added to these they will mock at the idea of His near coming. What do we actually find now? Is this descriptive prophecy fulfilled to-day? What do worldly people say of the professors of Christianity? or what do these say of one another? Then, as to Christ's coming soon; is it not a subject of derision amongst the majority of the professors of the Christian faith? Is it not almost considered to be the futile hope of a fanatic?

We have a parable given us by our Lord for our warning on this subject. He tells us that a man planted a vineyard and let it out to husbandmen and went into another country for a long time. He sent servant after servant to them, but they beat them and sent them away empty. "Then the Lord of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son, it may be that they will reverence him.' But these wicked men said, 'This is the heir; let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.' And they cast him forth and killed him." But our Lord did not say that the inheritance then became the property of these murderous husbandmen; but that the vineyard would be given to others, and these unworthy men would be destroyed by the owner of the vineyard at his arrival. The first dispensation had the prophets. Then God sent His Son and they slew Him. But this time He comes with the Power of God and He will destroy unfaithful husbandmen or those who put all their energies into building up their special religious or political or social interest instead of the Kingdom of God.

There are two trends of essential doctrine, which run all through the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation; which, at this day of the parting of the ways, we would do well to heed. The one is that God's plans for us always mature at the appointed time; the other is that sin brings ultimate destruction to the sinner. The flood came to

those who believed and those who scoffed, alike; the difference lay only in the way it was met by these two classes of persons concerned. The Messiah came duly, and just when He was expected by those who had carefully considered the prophecies concerning Him. There was no failure in the fulfilment of these prophecies; what disaster there was came from failure to fulfil the conditions demanded. Many of the people were drowned in Noah's day, because they did not believe and did not prepare. The Kingdom of Christ has been small on earth, because the majority have refused to prepare their souls for its occupation within them. If all this was part of a great plan of our Creator as an object lesson, we are in no wise responsible for anything concerning it in the *past*, but *to-day is ours*. It is ours to build an Ark for ourselves. It is ours to diligently till the vineyard for the returning Owner of all there is or can be. It is ours to cast up a highway, and to cast it up at once. We are in a position of final responsibility *to-day*. Everything points to the fact. Are we mockers of the last days, or are we believers? We are one or the other. As we have noted, God's plans mature in time; and sinning is inviting destruction; and the parting of the ways is near. We may choose our path for a while and refuse to attain our refuge, but when the flood comes our destruction will be swift and sure. Some may think they will go on wickedly until the flood begins

to come and then they will seek refuge in some safe Shelter. Do not thus hope, for there seems, from the Words of the Lord Christ, to be a time when those who have thus deliberately chosen to remain wicked for a while longer, shall remain so for ever. I refer to the passage, "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still [or yet more], and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still [or yet more]." Then follows that alarming passage, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward [or wages] is with me, to render to each man according as his work is." All this is to be an earthly condition. There is no suggestion that it refers to physical death; though we may be sure that the same Judgment shall await us, if we pass into the other state of being before His coming to us. We are unwilling to leave this point of our responsibility for present and honest decision until we have used every effort to emphasize the great importance of each decision, which we may make to-day between right and wrong, between Christ and Satan. It seems to be clearly set forth from events and dates and epochs, that now has come the time when we shall be obliged to choose whom we will serve: whether we shall become a resurrected people, raised from our fallen estate unto a hope of life eternal, or a people who choose to die a shameful death of destruction by suicidal sinning. The wages of sin is Death, of some sort, and by some process.

196 If Ye Fulfil the Royal Law

We find that Jesus Christ was doubly symbolized in the sacrificial offering in the old Jewish ritual. This is significant as bearing on His mission and His experience since His first advent until His full redemptive reign. The image of the slain lamb is familiar to us as being the symbol of His crucifixion, which is the main ground of our Faith; but do we as often think of the Messiah as symbolized by that other lamb, termed the Scapegoat, on whom were heaped the iniquities of the whole people. Surely this is the saddest phase of the Messiahship. He it is "who bore away our iniquities, and carried off our diseases." No wonder that His sweat of blood fell to the ground from His anguish of soul. It is an insult to the calm courage of our Sovereign, to assume that this agony arose from dread of the physical pain, which He knew was to be His experience for a short while. No more belittling thought could be expressed of Him. Oh, no, it was His God-given vision of our shameless falling away from His Gospel while still professing Him, and the terrible results that should follow, which rent His loving soul. Who that loves Him can doubt it? It was the vision of His office of Scapegoat, bearing the sins of the people while in this long wilderness, which doubtless bore so heavily upon Him at this dark hour. Our "two thousand years of wrong" were heaped upon His sinless soul at that awful hour. Is it not time that we arose to our feet in unity of en-

deavour to relieve Him of this cruel and unthankful burden? So long as we sin, He bears it. Verily, He is a Man of sorrows. We should remember that He cannot reign, *actually*, while He is forced by us to continue to carry this shameful burden of our sin. We must cease to sin, then we shall give our patient suffering Saviour His true Kingship in the hearts and conduct of mankind.

We have during our term of falling away consented to crown our crucified One as King, and all the while we have kept Him, not only crucified afresh, but also we have kept Him in the wilderness under the crushing burden of our guilt. The past is held in the hand of our All-Wise Designer; it is not ours to deal with. We are told that "the times of ignorance God overlooked; but now He commandeth men, that they should all, everywhere, repent; inasmuch as He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained." Of how much more importance is this warning to-day, when we have every reason to believe that the appointed time is upon us, and the Judge is on His Judicial Throne, though not fully on His Royal Throne. He must first teach us as *That Prophet*. He is now judging us as our Judge; we hope that ere long He will be able to rise to His full position by consent of our willing hearts. If we do not so consent, we die, we are destroyed, by some process, long or short.

198 If Ye Fulfil the Royal Law

We can easily see that obedience to the Supreme Lawgiver is the order of the Cosmos, of the Universal process. We work as part of this process in an orderly and obedient manner, or we degenerate back into chaos. It is the Royal Law which designs that the created thing or soul which sinneth against its legitimate office in the universal order, dies, ceases to be, becomes waste material to be used again; for what purpose God, in His Infinite wisdom, only knows. But we know by our lessons from Nature that He wastes not. Conformity to type or reversal to chaos seems from Scripture to be our sure destiny, and we are all invited to conform to type; and even besought to will to escape destruction, or chaos.

We have fallen out of the true way, as it was foretold that we should do. Every one of us who call ourselves by His Holy name, who call ourselves Christians, should determine to reveal sin, or lawlessness, wherever we detect its deadly presence, irrespective of person or position; for so only shall we rise from our fallen state. We must trust that our Saviour will send what assistance we require, if we are faithful to His Kingdom. We must unite to do all we can to help bring about His complete reign. Habakkuk wrote: "And Jehovah answered me, and said, Write the vision and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for the appointed time and it hasteth towards the end and shall not lie: though it

tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay.”

O Saviour Christ, our woes dispel,
For some are sick and some are sad,
And some have never loved Thee well,
And some have lost the love they had;
And some have found the world is vain,
Yet from the world they break not free;
And some have friends who give them pain,
Yet have not sought a friend in Thee;
And all, O Lord, crave perfect rest,
Yet are not wholly free from sin;
And they who fain would serve Thee best
Are conscious most of wrong within.

H. Twells.

CHAPTER VI

AFTERWARDS

“And it shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions; and upon the servants and upon the hand-maidens in those days will I pour out my spirit.”

JOEL ii. 28, 29.

“It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment, than for that city.”

MATT. x. 15.

“For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”

MATT. xi. 21.

“The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the Judgment with this generation and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold a greater than Jonah is here.”

MATT. xii. 41.

“And the great city was divided into three parts and the cities of the nations fell and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.”

REV. xvi. 19.

“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.”

REV. xxi. 10.

BEFORE we can arrive at any distinct conception of our responsibility as units of a great organization such as Christendom is, we must have some general idea of the experience of that

great body, in its past, present, and probable future history or outlook. The past of Christendom is a matter of history, the present is ours to read, and the future ours to help make or mar. The promise of the future is very bright, if we will have it so. If we courageously struggle against sin, for the sake of the coming Kingdom, we enter it; if we do not, we perish miserably from our moral unsoundness, from our spiritual decadence. We had better decide at once to join the procession of holy souls who are hastening joyously towards the Holy City, in this early dawn of sun-streaked grey, which is heralding the glorious vision of all loyal souls, the Kingdom of God on earth, the glorious seventh day of rest from our sinful wanderings away from the obedient innocence of our natal morn in Eden.

Much prominence is given in the Scriptures to that collection of souls and the habitations thereof which we call *a city*. These are often used by the inspired writers as illustrations of God's dealings with men. In both Books, our attention is frequently drawn to their experience—our long hoped-for state of obedience to the Royal Law, under the direct rule of the Christ, being typified as Jerusalem, and our fallen era, or the period of our experience while we are more or less in a state of disobedience, under Satan's earthly rule, we find typified as Babylon (or Babel). Before considering these two illustrative cities, we might give our

attention to the peculiar experiences and destinies of some other ancient cities of which we are so frequently reminded in Scripture for our warning and instruction. In an attempt to reach the true meaning of the warnings in connexion with these, we must look briefly into the history and destiny of each, and perhaps we shall not find them lacking in timely warning for us to-day.

The city of Sodom, with its surroundings, is first introduced to our attention in Scripture by a most alluring though brief description. It was said to be "like the Garden of Jehovah." It was situated in the fertile plain of Jordan and seems to have been a most desirable place in which to live, and so Lot gladly settled there. We are told that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly." Abraham had settled not far away from Lot's new home, and Jehovah talked with him about the destruction of Sodom. Abraham pleaded for the life of Sodom, but Jehovah told him that if ten souls could not be found who were walking obediently to Him, it should be destroyed. But this small number could not be found; so she perished with her wicked sisters of this lovely plain; all but Lot and his family. Perhaps there is no memory of childhood Scripture lessons which remains so vividly and realistically in our minds as that of this great city receiving for its destruction the retributive fires from heaven; and of the *few* people

fleeing for their lives over the plains before this fury of fire and brimstone. And in that memorable occurrence nothing stands out with more spectacular effect than the strange experience of Lot's wife. Disobediently, but with true womanly curiosity, and perhaps lingering love for her deserted home and associations, she looked back. But the disobedience of that one moment cost her all that she might have inherited. As we visualize this remarkable scene, we see this now historic figure stricken by a strange doom. We may watch her as she slowly but surely turns into stone. We are warned by our Lord to "Remember Lot's wife's. She must be typical of some people who are living to-day, as her experience and doom are to be remembered by us. Is she represented to-day by the Church in any way? Does she signify those who profess to believe in Christ and leave the worldly pleasures and sinful conduct of which they have become too fond; and are ever turning back with longing admiring eyes, longing for less restraint, more licence? And in the lesson conveyed in the idea that she was turned into *stone*, does it not seem to signify that those who are ever thus longing for the old paths of sin are experiencing a hardening effect within their souls? Was it not this hardness of heart, or stoniness of spiritual condition, that also affected the Scribes and Pharisees to their destruction? Are we free from this hardening process? But to leave the special lesson

learned from the conduct and destiny of Lot's wife, we may ask ourselves, What was the lesson for us in the destruction of these cities of the plain? Why was Sodom so punished? What was her sin? We find that she was not destroyed *only* because she had so wickedly sinned in the past; but more because she utterly refused to repent or listen to any warning. She refused, individually, to quit sinning. She was composed of a class of scoffers whom we may easily find in evidence to-day. They were at liberty to repent if they willed to do so; but it seems that they had no desire towards goodness. That God's word of destruction was not inexorable had they repented is shown by His attitude towards them in His talk with Abraham, but they did not give Jehovah the opportunity to save them. And we believe that had a few more of them repented the whole city would have been saved, at least until they lapsed again—as did Nineveh. Isaiah warns the Israelites that had it not been for a very small remnant, they had in their day met with a like fate. Isaiah then proceeds with a warning to them, calling them Rulers of Sodom and People of Gomorrah, and tells them how weary Jehovah was of their formal but empty religious exercises, and urges them to repent and to do that which is right. He tells them that Jehovah says, "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands

are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." We must conclude from this passage that these Sodomites were a formally religious people, as also were the Israelites whom Isaiah warned by their example. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both compare the idolatrous ways of Israel to Sodom. Jeremiah tells us that Jehovah says that Jerusalem's conduct was worse than that of Sodom. He says, "Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease were in her and her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hands of the poor and the needy, and they were haughty and committed abominations before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw good." In Revelation we have this accusation made against the later Temple service, or the Christian Church. We can scarcely avoid the conclusion that it refers to the sinful state of the Church of the last days, or now. This passage explains, for fear we may misapply it to some one besides ourselves, that it is "Where also their Lord was crucified." This identifies spiritual Sodom with the formal Church; but as we are told that it is yet to come we must find it to be in our nominal Christian Church to-day, for do we not crucify Him afresh and put Him to an open shame constantly? And are we not true successors to the old Church? Sodom had also the reputation

of being guilty of another wicked and unnatural habit. Did the Israelitish Church form no unnatural and immoral alliances? Has our Church from Constantine, and even before, made no such concessions to paganism, by unclean alliances, which are repugnant to a Christian individual or community? If the Church is not or never has been thus guilty, why did Christ Jesus foretell it of her through John's vision? So we conclude from all available evidence that Sodom is used as illustrating the sin and doom of the nominal Church, in so far as she professes to a formal dogmatic Christianity, but refuses to obey the ruling of the Kingdom of Christ. The evil of the system, or city, shall be destroyed; but the true Church of Christ shall come out of all this impurity, never again to fall into such sinful ways. She will be the Holy Bride, the new Jerusalem.

We are also warned in our sinning, by the strange, and for long averted, doom of Nineveh, which was at one time "the greatest city in the world." Her historic description certainly rivals that of her sister Babylon. We have first the graphic Scripture account of the arrival of the prophet Jonah to warn these people of their impending destruction; of their prompt repentance; of Jonah's despondency because his prophecy had not been fulfilled; of these people being allowed another period of existence. Nineveh must have returned to her wicked ways again after this mercy had been

granted her; for we next find the prophetic word that she shall yet be utterly and forever destroyed. Nahum foretells her fate thus, "The gates of the rivers are opened and the palace is dissolved." Also we read, "But with an overrunning flood He will make a full end of her place." Again we read, "Behold I am against thee, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke." And He says, "There shall the fire devour thee." All these words surely signify destruction by flood and fire. What do we find to have actually taken place? We know that she was a joyous and gay city, little given to conscience-stricken forebodings; more thoughtless and worldly than rebelliously wicked, though very wicked she certainly was. So she took little account of religion and laughed gaily at solemn prophecy. Had not Jonah warned them in vain, and wept beneath his gourd-covered booth at their preservation from destruction? Have we not been just as thoughtlessly wicked and godless, and do we not still live? True, still another threat hung over their laughter-loving city; but why borrow trouble? The threat said that flood and fire would one day come to their undoing, but until then they need fear no enemy. Well was she made flood-proof by the strongest of brick and cement walls. She thought herself secure, and laughed and scorned a seemingly reluctant fate. And doubtless poor disappointed Jonah became a standing joke with her people. But in God's

own time, He began to loosen the clouds of the heavens, till they began to pour out their waters over that land which was drained by the river Tigris on which Nineveh was so well situated. Steadily but surely rose the waters of the river. Up and up they rose, and in their tempestuous haste they beat and beat against those man-made walls of security until great portions became loosened and gave way, making place for Jehovah's avenging floods to enter. Up in the palace stands the King of Nineveh, with eyes wide and full of startled horror. Outside on the tossing floods float the ships of the enemies, and on land wait their armies. The Medes and the Persians are waiting for their long-desired prey. Still the King stands with frightened eyes until conviction of immediate doom enters his soul. We think we see him turn in terrified but resolute haste to his people, demanding that fires should be set burning everywhere. Fire for everything which would burn: treasure, eunuchs, concubines, himself, his people; all pass away in this suicidal holocaust. Outside, the twin enemies waited while flood and fire completed their devastating work. When all was completed and the ruin was complete, still there remained one unfulfilled word of doom: Nineveh must be empty, void, waste. So, just as true to prophecy as floods and fires, we see the very ashes of Nineveh rising and leaving her dishonoured site. All that was left of treasure or gold or silver, with the ashes

of that great joyous city, wended its way down the prophetic flood, or wandered across the plain to enrich Babylon; born at the same time, in death they were not separated. Truly the thoughtless and gay and wicked are not secure from an avenging God. Surely nothing in the lives of these people became them like their destruction. Spectacular and gay and worldly in life, and dramatically spectacular even in dissolution. And scarcely less dramatic was the final fall of her greedy, worldly sister Babylon a little later. Nineveh is described as more irreligious, worldly, and gay; while Babylon had a formal religious life but was utterly wanting in true piety. This difference we may suppose made the difference in their doom. The one was soulless and godless, and death came swift and complete. The other had a little bit of soul, and a little belief in God, so died more slowly. Both perished because of their unrepentant state of wickedness. Zephaniah speaks of Nineveh thus: "This is the joyous City that dwelt carelessly and said in her heart, I am, and there is none besides me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passes by her shall hiss and wag his hand. Woe to her that is rebellious and polluted, to the oppressing City! She obeyed not the voice, she received not correction [or instruction], she trusted not in Jehovah; she drew not near to her God. Her princes in the midst of her are roaring lions; her judges are

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ravening wolves, they leave nothing until tomorrow. Her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have profaned the Sanctuary and they have done violence to the law. Jehovah said to her, Only fear thou Me, receive correction [or instruction], so her dwelling shall not be cast off according to all that I have appointed concerning her; but they rose early and corrupted all their doings." This is why she so utterly perished. This illustrative city seems to represent worldly Christendom. Her sphere of life seems to be outside of formal religious systems, and also outside of commercial systems. It seems to be covered by that phase of life which we now term Society, or Social life. It seems to cover all our thoughtless gaiety, our extravagance and selfishness. It covers all our love of fine and gaudy clothing and household appointments, and luxury of all descriptions. It covers our thoughtlessness of the needs of others, our utter lack of even formal religion, our tendency to sneer at simple holiness and true piety as being fanatical. It also covers our growing and constant desire for amusement of some description. If we attend Church service, or any branch thereof, we want to be entertained. We expect our preachers to be interesting rather than corrective; educative in a literary way, rather than instructive towards holiness. Our laws are good, but there is much to be desired in the legal body by whom they are applied to questions of right and

wrong. If one have much experience with such, the appellation of the "Ravens Wolves" shall not be found to be mere abusive description. It will become a revelation to an innocent and inexperienced admirer of our common law and its avenues of application. Surely our priests, many of them chosen for their learning or oratorical ability, are among those who lightly break God's law; and our prophets (or teachers) have proven themselves many times to be treacherous to the true teachings of Christ the Son of God. In our worldly phase we are not now fit to continue to live, nor shall we. This phase shall never enter the Holy City; it is too selfish and in its selfishness it is too cruel to Christ's little brothers and sisters. Though the aristocratic princes be loud and mighty sounding like "Roaring Lions," they shall not enter into the Holy City, the City whose ruling is, "In Honour preferring One Another." Also this phase of our sinning has a deep stain of Guilt upon it, in that it causes our religious life to be insincere and quite lacking in vital Godliness; and it is also the chief cause of the terrible uncleanness of our commercial life. The desire to outdo our fellows in tawdry showiness is, I believe, generally granted to be the cause of most of this selfish, dishonest, Cainlike sinning, of which Commerce is Guilty. Oh, we are spiritual imbeciles in our foolish viewpoint! What lasting good is there in a gaudy vulgar tawdriness of living? What doth it profit

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a man, if he gain the all-worldly magnificence of house and clothing, if his spiritual nature dies?

Off the coast of ancient Phoenicia, partly on a little island, and partly on the adjacent mainland, lay the illustrious and gifted city of Tyre. Different in character and experience to the other typical cities of her day she certainly was; but in this very difference lay her gifts, and also her danger. The names of Phoenicia and Tyre and Sidon stand out clearly in ancient history as synonyms of Commerce. The people of Tyre had the gift peculiar to all truly great leaders of people: that of utilizing the skill and talents and natural advantages of others less worldly-wise, in increasing their own power. These she courted and incorporated into herself to her own great advantage. She grew so rich and influential by this method that she considered herself to be in Godlike security. In her geographically advantageous situation she became the centre of commerce between the peoples whose States and cities lay behind her, and those which lay around and beyond the Great Sea on the coast of which she had built herself a strong position. Thus was she greatly gifted. In these very great natural and acquired advantages lay her danger, and her danger was twofold. She, through the selfish methods which she came to use, became very dishonest and corrupt. She became so wicked that she had to die. She was not considered by God, the Great Judge, to be good enough

for her holy office; so the sentence of destruction was pronounced upon her. But she died hard. She was destroyed by the second of her great dangers. The first brought it upon her; the second was the means used. She became in danger from the covetous ambition of the other cities and States with which she was commercially connected. She became the object of much strife. She was battered by almost unparalleled sieges, attacked by enemy after enemy for long years, yet withstanding capture or destruction; at last her strength diminished, her hands grew feeble, and she is Queen of the Seas no more, her ships are a dream of the past. She became a "fitting place for a few fisherfolk to live in, and stretch their nets on her rocks." God had said, "I will make thee a bare rock; thou shalt be a place for the spreading of nets; thou shalt be built no more." And so it came to pass. To-day I believe there is a small town or village on the site, but bearing no relation whatever to ancient Tyre, and having no significance, as her site had been long desolated before this little gathering of houses came into being. We must read the prophetic description of Tyre before we can understand the cause of her destruction and the process used to bring it about; and also before we can correctly draw our intended lesson from her experience. We find that Jehovah made unique statements regarding this City, which we should try, for our own benefit, to understand. He says

to Tyre: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways, from the days that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee. By the abundance of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned. Therefore have I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I have destroyed thee, O covering Cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. By the multitude of thy iniquities, in the unrighteousness of thy traffic, thou hast profaned thy Sanctuaries; therefore have I brought forth a fire from the midst of thee, it hath devoured thee, and I have turned thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. . . . Thou art become a terror [or destruction] and thou shalt never more have any being." We find no word of reproof for the trading instinct of Tyre; on the contrary she was said to be a "Covering Cherub from the midst of the stones of fire." Jehovah had also said of her, "Thou sealest up the measure [or sum] full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou wast in Eden, the Garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering." No greater praise could be given a city of souls than this description, or explanation, of her position in human experience. Cherubim were those angels who ministered to the needs of the race in the manifold forms of service which Jehovah required of them. One might well call them "The Executive of Jehovah." These people of Tyre were said by Jehovah to have originally

been of this Holy Company, in their character and office of serving humanity; and that in some way the rest of humanity were protected by them. It was also said that Tyre was originally set in the midst of precious stones. These are generally conceded to be *leading divine principles*. It is certainly difficult for the ordinary mind to find these descriptions consistent with the character of Tyre, as we know her; or to think of Commerce—as we know it—as a covering Cherub, protecting the people, and resting its holy service to mankind on God-given, divine principles; or to think of the origin of Commerce as being in the Garden of God. It were far easier to imagine that it grew from the Bottomless Pit, and was founded on essentially *satanic principles*. But God's Word is always right; and often when we in our weakness of perception think that it must be untrue, that is usually the time when we find it to be scientifically, historically, and morally *true*. So in this case, between the Glory of Eden and the Black Darkness of the Pit, lies the experience of Tyre and her antitype (or synonym) Commerce. Tyre has passed away into her unrepentant destiny. So shall modern Commerce if she repents not. Shall she be moved to a more righteous fulfilment of her holy office? Do we not see that there is a tendency to take from the hands of the selfish *few* that which is, or should be, a Holy Office? One thing we do know, that is, that the present condition of

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commercial systems and usages cannot by any chance enter into the Holy City. So it means radical renovation, or destruction, and placing of its holier form in a holier setting. But what and where was The Garden of God? Suppose we search for it. When God finished the creation of the habitable earth and peopled it, He pronounced it to be *good*. He filled it with good things for the special benefit of man, and made all things subject to him. The earth is a comparatively vast place. Men, of necessity, soon began to wander apart into widely distant locations. As time passed men began to desire or require more variety of the earth's products for their sustenance, or for their comfort. *We* might have a surplus of some desirable product; *our brother* at some distant spot might have none of it, yet he might desire or need some of it. Again, our brother might have that in more than sufficient quantity for his own use, which I lacked, and could not produce in my location. So we began to exchange products for each other's benefit, as well as for our own. *Exchange* was born in the very Garden of Eden, in God's Garden, and is desirable for mutual need and happiness. We may easily now perceive how the thought of receiving and distributing depôts came into being, and still be in the Garden of God. We may easily see how Tyre became, on a large scale, such a depôt. *She would thus serve the race as ministering Cherub*. And as long as justice,

honesty, kindness, and truth were her motives, she had vital principles beneath her foundations. She could not die. But the taint of Cain left a tendency in humanity, which was soon to despoil God of the beauty of His original Eden. Selfishness crept in, and left in its serpent-trail unholy thoughts in the hearts of men. Their ideals became sensualized, and their vision of holiness bedimmed. This is why Tyre became desolate. She corrupted her Holy Office of, Bear ye one another's burdens, of Love one another, of Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, that do ye also unto them, into an unnatural and selfish system, which to-day bears in its aspect more relation to the Pit than it does to the Garden of God. In her original office Tyre was the complement of Jerusalem, whom she came to hate. Jerusalem was to provide for the spiritual needs of the people. It was she from whom was to proceed the Law of Life. It was Tyre from whom men expected to obtain anything pertaining to physical life that was desired or required. In their original state of purity both cities dwelt amidst the precious stones in the Garden of God. Both sinned *afterwards*. Jerusalem awaits renewing. The location of the centre of Commerce has been finally removed from Tyre to the still greater geographical centre, the Great Metropolis of the World, LONDON. If the great system of Commerce, which is now quite world-wide in its operations, does not repent and

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do her first works, she shall no doubt have a change of site, and in her present iniquitous mode of traffic be utterly and forever desolated. The time must come very soon, when Christ will insist that the receiving and distributing of the plentiful and wonderful variety of the earth's products be kindly and honestly and justly done, *by some method*; perhaps by a national office of this great need amongst our people. There are "little clouds the size of a man's hand" which denote the approach of this rain of general plenty, not only in our nation, but amongst the international families; and the kindly brotherliness of nation toward nation. Just now, if one can only see the tragic surface of things he will surely doubt that love and justice are near, or that Hope has much reason to grow strong and soar above us. And yet underneath the awful tragedy of the present unprecedented struggle, do not Hope and Peace lie brooding lovingly? So, we must not be discouraged, but work as individuals, for national and international purity of purpose and brotherly helpfulness. We may all hope for the day when the Church shall be purified and enlarged until every knee shall bow to God Most High in obedient worship and when our purified commercial systems shall reach out and supply the needs and chaste desires of all those who thus obediently bow to the Royal Law of God. This condition is actually The Kingdom of God on Earth, and its

King is the One Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. This Kingdom we can each hasten a little now. We have learned from Sodom the value of a few righteous souls. We had better take these tragic lessons to ourselves as we are instructed, and remember that God is still living and awaiting our individual, national, and international decision.

No city has had greater symbolic prominence, outside of Jerusalem, than the wonderful and ancient City of Babylon. We may suppose her to have been first built by that ambitious and warlike person, Nimrod. But the magnificent Babylon of History was rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar, and in keeping with the proud, self-indulgent extravagance of his character. Much thought and skill were brought to bear in her making. Her great walls were marvels of skill and labour. Her palaces and dwellings were splendid and magnificent. Her place of worship was certainly more than in keeping with these. The Temple of Belus, or Jupiter, is described by Herodotus as covering a square of two stadia, or a quarter of a mile. We are told,¹ "In the midst of which arose the celebrated tower, to which both the same writer and Strabo give an elevation of one stadium or 660 feet; and the same measure at its base." The larger palace, we are told, was eight miles in circumference, and within it were the celebrated hanging gardens on the top terrace of which was a

¹ Watson.

reservoir of water brought up from the river below by which the garden was watered. Situated in a very garden of fertility she was rich beyond realization. She was, or became, arrogant, oppressive, and very wicked. Her doom was foretold, and it fell on her drunken soul. We need scarcely remind ourselves of the dramatic entrance of Cyrus into those sin-stained and debauched palaces. The hand of God had written her downfall on her own walls. It was now too late for her to awaken; she could not repent; she was too nearly imbecile with her drunkenness for that. It takes wide-awake sanity and well-matured thought for effective repentance. Babylon was past this condition. Repentance long despised withdrew, and destruction and disgrace stayed to keep Babylon company in her lingering death. Her wound was so great that from the day of the entrance of Cyrus, she began to die the death from which no efforts afterwards were found to be sufficient for her resurrection. Alexander the Great, it is said, attempted to restore her to her former glory, and designed to make her the metropolis of a universal empire. The angel of death prevented this ambitious conqueror from carrying out this scheme. And now she lies quietly in a dreamless sleep from which there shall be no awakening. Never does she mutter in her sleep, excepting when the ghost of her suicidal past arises from history and points to her desolation and disgrace. Is her experience

nothing to us? Is the howling of the wolves and jackals in the place of her old palaces no warning to us to-day? Is it true that as a man soweth, so also shall he reap? We may well ask, why did destruction and desolation come upon her so utterly and so inexorably? For in whatsoever answer we find to this question, we must also find our own warning to-day; for spiritual Babylon has not yet quite fallen into desolation. Before she had been desolated, when she stood haughtily in the pride of her magnificence and great riches, Isaiah had been told by Jehovah to take up this parable against the King of Babylon and say, "How hath the oppressor ceased, the golden city [or the exactress] ceased? Jehovah hath broken the staff of the wicked, the sceptre of the rulers that smote the peoples in wrath with a continual stroke, that ruled the nations in anger with a persecution that none restrained." We judge from this passage that Babylon oppressed her people and also exacted too much from them; or perhaps the oppression was in the shape of exactions. We find that she smote the people with a *continual* stroke and that she did it in wrath. And we find that she ruled the peoples in an angry persecution which none restrained. If we read the history of the semi-paganized Christian Church from the time of her unholy union with paganism until the last few hundred years, we shall easily see that this is absolutely fulfilled in her extortions from her ad-

herents and in her cruel persecution of those whom she tried to force into her fold. And this description would cover all such persecution in the Church or by the Church, either before the separation of the Greek branch or the Protestant from her, or after the separation in any of the three; and we know that all have been guilty in more or less degree. So we had better not cast stones at spiritual Babylon; not just yet. We are sure that she is yet with us or in us, because she was to fall with a mighty fall and it was to just precede the coming of our Lord to His Kingdom. Indeed we may conclude that she is the greatest obstacle to His imminent reign. So, whatever she is accused of we shall be wise to search about for these same sins in order to remove them and let the King of Glory in. In Revelation she is accused, or rather described, as "Her that corrupted the earth with her fornications." She was accused of this odious crime with the nations, and also of making the merchants of the earth rich by the power of her wantonness (or luxury). Has the Church ever used her holy office for degrading purposes? Has she used her *form* of spiritual power for things merely sensual and worldly? Has she been in large measure a system of luxurious living? The Babylonians and Chaldeans generally are summed up by historians as being guilty of "idolatry, tyranny, oppression, pride, covetousness, drunkenness, falsehood, and general wickedness." We

should remember for our comfort that Babylon and the Christian Church are not identical in meaning, but that she is only the *sinful conduct* of the organization known by that name. Where we are not guilty we need take no offence. We believe with all our heart that a great measure of the holy ideals and conduct of the Holy City, The Bride of Christ, is now in our midst, and that these ideals are constantly increasing and rising, and our endeavour towards their realization is ever and everywhere strengthening. But seeing this hopeful sign, we should try all the more to knock the false foundations from under this phase of our religious profession wherever we may see it; and so shall this wicked city fall into utter desolation, even as her *wicked but religious* type fell. The modern mind does not take very kindly to persecution in religious matters to-day. The spirit of persecution may not be so dead as she seems. But as this spirit is founded on the doctrine of Satan and not on Christ's doctrine of brotherly consideration one towards another, it must soon fall, even in spirit. If we sum up the accusations against Babylon we shall find that dishonesty, pride of heart, self-security, arrogance, adultery, exacting measures, and a persecuting spirit were hers. If we free ourselves as individuals and as sects and denominations from all these sins, there will be no spiritual Babylon left. She will gradually become a ruin. It depends on individual and collective

effort. And if we have not gotten ourselves out of her when she falls, we shall be ruined in her ruin. We need not point too fixedly at any one sect, for we find that Babylon was divided into three parts before the wrath of God was poured out on her. So we must not be too severe on the Church of the dark and middle ages; those were days of coarse ignorance; but to-day we none of us have the slightest excuse for being guilty of these wicked offences against God and our fellow human beings. Better things are required of us to-day. Babylon was to fall quickly when she did fall. "In one hour she shall be made desolate." May it not be that, if we pray earnestly for assistance in this matter, we shall have the Holy Spirit to convict and convince our people of sin, that all three great cities of the Christian Church shall with one accord acknowledge their sins of the past, repent of all their evil ways, and turn with one accord to the simple, obedient belief in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Then He shall see of the long and weary travail of His soul and He shall at last be satisfied. *Then shall He be our Peace.*

Across a sandy desert away towards the western sea, resting amidst and upon the hills and valleys of Palestine, and lying some few hundred miles away from the deserted site of Babylon, is still situated the equally ancient city of Jerusalem; most notable of all cities that have been, or perhaps shall be, in the experience of the human race.

Originally, or as we first find her noted, she was called Salem, or Peace. While being occupied by the Jebusites, she was called Jebus, which word means, "Which treads under foot, or contemns." When these Jebusites were displaced by the Israelites, she became known as Jerusalem. We find that this word means "The vision, or inheritance, of peace." She is often called the City of David, and also the Holy City. During the reigns of David and Solomon she became prodigiously rich. This was the hour of her greatest national glory. Troublous times came to her from "internal divisions and foreign wars, wicked and tyrannical princes, and, last of all, the crime most offensive to Heaven and the one least to be expected among so favoured a people, led to a series of calamities, through the long period of nine hundred years to which no other city or nation can furnish a parallel. That the account of her falling away and the consequences thereof is familiar to us all, takes nothing from the sorrowful misery of the story. But it certainly is very difficult for us to understand this troubled history of fall and repentance or punishment, repeated time after time, when we remember that none knew so well as they that obedience to Jehovah invariably brought them peace and prosperity, and that continued disobedience brought punishment. We wonder they so often forgot it. As Jerusalem is the most prominent of all typical or illustrative cities, and is

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constantly used for reproof, warning, and also (we rejoice to note) for *hope* to the soul of the sincere believer, we should try to find in her peculiar experience that which shall apply to our present-day experience and responsibility. We find that at first she was a city of Peace. It was at the original city of Salem, her most ancient part, that Abraham met Melchizedek (or King of Righteousness), who was also priest of God Most High. This great King and Priest blessed Abraham in the name of the Most High God; and Abraham gave to him one tenth of all he had. So we find Jerusalem at this early date, and we know not for how long before, to have been the chosen place of God's peculiar manifestations to men through some especially appointed line of priesthood. Of what kind the priesthood was before Abraham's call and his meeting with this great personage and being blessed and appointed to especial office by him, we know but little; but we do know that we do not again meet with any mention of this kind of priesthood, except in prophecy, until Christ Jesus the Messiah came to us, being of this same priesthood. It is said of Him:

Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.

We judge from Salem being the sanctuary of this priesthood, and from her name meaning Peace, that she was occupied originally by righteous and

therefore peaceful persons. We find that the Jebusites who conquered or overran her were a warlike people. As their name, the Salemites, signifies Peace, we may well presume that these warlike people met with little or no resistance from the peaceful Salemites. Not understanding the holiness of peace and peaceful ideals the Jebusites would despise them, but would tolerate their harmless presence; and perhaps if we fully understand it, in their harmlessness lay their safety. At any rate, we find this little Holy City still existing within the larger wicked city held there by the hand of God Most High, until His Priest officially invested Abraham in his office of Father of the Faithful and spiritual leader of a new dispensation. We must conclude that this Great Priest then withdrew from the sight of mankind. Of the particular form of the pre-Abrahamic period of religion, we do not find much description. That there was at least an oral law to be obeyed, even by Cain, is certain. We find the presence of law broken or obeyed from Adam until Abraham; and in this first vision of Jerusalem (Salem) do we not find it in much the same condition as when Christ so strongly reprov'd her? She had a few who would listen to His Word. He had His Salem, although we grant that she was small in comparison with the Rulers of the greater city; and by this illustrative lesson we may hope that at His coming acknowledged presence amongst

us, He shall still have a little Holy City within the greater organization, which is warlike and overbearing in its treatment of the *few* who are attaining to true citizenship of the coming City of the King of Righteousness. "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find the faith on the earth?" As He found a few on whom to build the foundation of His Kingdom when He first came, shall He not also find a small obedient City now, which shall be the strong leavening power to raise fallen humanity into that state which now exists only in our highest ideals? Ultimately all that is not of this high character shall be cast out, and Jerusalem must be restored to her pristine holiness when her Priest was King of Righteousness and her name was Peace. As in herself, so must it be in her antitype, the spiritual Jerusalem, or The Church of the Christian era. We find that when David took this city away from these intruders, the Jebusites, he built a new one which he called The City of David; wherein he built a royal palace and the Temple of the Lord God. Throughout his reign and that of his son Solomon, this city was the centre of a great prosperity. Those were glorious days for Jerusalem. The historians tell us that "universal peace, unmeasured wealth, the wisdom and clemency of the prince, and the worship of the true God marked Jerusalem, above every city, as enjoying the presence and the especial favour of

the Almighty." It seems absolutely marvellous that they should choose to be deprived of this matchless position after having once tasted of its advantages. But worldly success usually brings haughtiness of bearing; and so it was with her. As metropolis of the whole twelve states, she grew oppressive to the ten, which did not come directly in contact with her border. These revolted against her insolence, and left only Judah and Benjamin to her possession. Added to this came siege after siege, dispersion, desolation, and ruin. Still she survived it all and yet lives awaiting her cleansing and renewing. It is unnecessary to quote much to prove that she fell into sin, as this is the main theme of the old Scriptures, and references to it also run all through the new. Our Lord, in His day, pronounced seven woes upon her, and also foretold the razing of her houses and the Temple. First, He accuses her religionists of not entering Heaven themselves nor allowing any one else to enter. As our Lord said that the Kingdom was within us, or words to that effect, we conclude that He accused these men of influencing other souls to be unholy; to be *very religious*, but quite disobedient to the Royal Law of God. Secondly, He accuses these religionists of proselytizing by every known means, and then making their converts twofold more the sons of hell than themselves. This is a strong and far-reaching accusation in its present-day application. Thirdly, He seems

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to accuse them of placing the fear of gold before the fear of God. Taking this lesson in its general bearing, is it not the dread of financial loss which causes the greater part of our breaking of God's Law of Justice, kindness and truth? In the fourth place Christ warns them against the placing of emphasis on trifling ordinances which are lawful enough in themselves, but says that they had done these and had neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith. He says, "Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat and swallow the camel." In the fifth place, He says to these, "Ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess." He demands that these defilements be removed, and identifies with uncleanness both extortion and excess. Is our organization guilty of any of this uncleanness? Is the popular Church the kindly home of the poor man, or is the prosperous man more welcome, because more suitable for extortion? We do not accuse, we only ask the question. In the sixth place, Christ is exceedingly vehement in His accusation against them. They are, as He finds them, full of hypocrisy and iniquity. If all are free from this charge to-day, we are nearer the Kingdom of Heaven than many of us suppose. In the seventh, we find an awful denunciation of those who while pretending to be sorry for what their fathers had done were doing worse themselves; and who He knew would

continue to destroy all who came to them preaching repentance and the simple obedient life. He ends with a pathetic cry of sorrow over unrepentant Jerusalem in the sad words of prophecy, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." And so it came to pass. The story of the siege and razing of Jerusalem is not pleasant reading for the modern mind to dwell upon. But as she is constantly held up as a type of the Church of Christendom we had better be warned by her catastrophe. Die, she did not, she could not; she cannot die until her destiny as an object lesson is completed. The *few* have always been in evidence to save her from the utter destruction which fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah, Nineveh, and Babylon. Tyre, who in her spirit of jealousy rejoiced over the calamities of Jerusalem, was desolated down to the bare rocks, and for ever removed from her site. But because she was a cherub ministering to the wants of the children of the race, her spirit was preserved and transplanted to the isles and coast lands of western Europe, where she might duly spread herself in a kindly ministry over all the earth. Just about this same time, the site of the spiritual City of Jerusalem was also transferred

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to these same western isles and coast lands, from whence she shall radiate the Light of the Kingdom until "The Kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." Truly

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.
Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter
And He will make it plain.

We feel that we can better accept the sense of these lines by the poet Cowper, when we see that God is now ripening His plans for our future benefit, and has always been designing experiences which shall ensure our future holiness and happiness, if we will but have it so.

If we are a creation of special interest to a more spiritual race of beings, it should give us reason for exceeding carefulness as to how we fulfil our destiny to-day, this day of the parting of the ways. As we have before noted, our present epoch from the Reformation until to-day and later, runs parallel to that which just preceded the arrival of the Messiah. Both held the office of preparation for His coming. Their difference lies in the difference

of the Kingdoms, or Churches, which followed each epoch. The first was preparing for a partial failure of the Gospel of the Kingdom; the second, or present one, is preparing for the complete entrance of Christ and His Kingdom. We should therefore expect to find a proportionally greater ratio of goodness to-day than Christ found at His first appearance amongst us. And notwithstanding much that looks very discouraging on the surface we must see that men's ideals were never so generally high and pure as they are to-day. We might go into details of all the social problems to prove that men are working earnestly Heavenward, but we do not need to do so, as these subjects are constantly before the public eye. But that these helpful and cleansing movements are everywhere present, is a sure token of His Presence. So we may hopefully presume that we are now helping to prepare for the new régime; and while many outside of the organized Church are working earnestly in this way, the Church should try to fill her holy office consistently, by putting forth all her efforts towards this one great issue. Everything done in our religious, social, or commercial experience is either righteous or it is wicked. It tends either towards Heaven or Hell. All our thoughts and operations must pass through the same judgment as did those of these cities which we have been briefly noting. Outside of Jerusalem to the east lies the valley of Jehoshaphat; almost

touching it, but to the south of the city, lies the valley of Hinnom: the first name signifying, "The judgment of God" or "Jehovah judgeth." The other has come to signify "A place of destruction." This latter place has a horrible record of the heathenish practice of passing the young children through the fires of the god Moloch. When Josiah came to the throne of Judah this was the practice of Jerusalem. This King changed this horror-filled valley into a means of cleansing the adjacent city. He caused all the filth and all the refuse and dead bodies of animals or of criminals who were not considered fit for proper burial, to be thrown into this valley and there consumed by fire. It was set alight and the fire was kept continually burning by the constant flow of débris which was daily thrown into it. To assist combustion brimstone was added to it. And thus Jerusalem became a more sanitary city. Thus was this valley of the sinful and murderous practice of a paganized people turned into a great blessing by consuming all uncleanness and corruption. On this tragic beginning and wholesome ending is our conception of that which we term "Hell" built. When an illustration is used as this one has been, it is not only *honest*, but *wise*, to follow the illustration closely. So we find that the old Church in her most idolatrous days passed her children through the fires of Moloch in this place; when she became repentant and in holier mood, she used it to cleanse

herself from all her filth and to consume dead bodies which were not entitled to decent burial. *We find that no person or animal was thrown in there alive.* If we follow this illustration precisely we shall find that there have been *wresters of Scripture* at work as regards this symbolic place and our old hereditary conception of the Place of Punishment. This place has been the topic of many lurid and vindictive orations in the past, but has almost ceased to be spoken of to-day. It is, however, worth prayerful and unprejudiced reconsideration in the light of modern freedom to seek after the truth. Jehovah reproves the people of Jerusalem strongly for the practice of this abominable pagan rite, thus, "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire; which I commanded not, neither came it into My heart." If the type is for our instruction so also is the reproof. We had better be careful how we accuse God of cruelty; how we affirm that He does that which He Himself denies that it ever came into His heart to do. All the references to punishment for sin are of two kinds: the one direct and definite, viz., "The soul that sinneth it shall die"; the other figurative, as that of being restrained from running in a particular race, and as illustrated in the well-known passage, "And these shall go away into eternal punishment," which last two words are well known to be not precisely trans-

lated; in which slight imperfection rests our hereditary conception of the home prepared for all those who do not perhaps think as we do, or who sin in some other way. But this too shall pass away with other unkind conceptions. Sin is everywhere promised punishment, and unless repented of, it is also promised death. Punishment and ultimate death is certainly the destiny of disobedient cities and souls. But eternally continued torture for city or soul is not taught without *mistranslation or wresting of the Scriptures and misreading the Hand of Destiny*. "Neither came it into My heart," says Jehovah. But suppose we think a little more closely of these typical valleys; now that most of us have ceased to burn our sons and daughters in the one, and are bringing into prominence the other. We had better remember that we are now being judged in the valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of Decision. We decide on all matters in this valley; that which is wicked in our practice must be sifted out and thrown into the companion valley for destruction; then shall we be clean enough to be a part of the New City which is absolutely free from filth and corruption.

In Christ's last words to us in the vision of John, He speaks of the conditions of citizenship under which we may enter; all other conditions shall be thrown into Gehenna, into the valley of the son of Hinnom. Before considering the conditions of the New City in detail, we wish to briefly draw

attention to the lessons left us by Christ Jesus through John in the descriptions and destinies of seven other cities of the Christian era. We shall no doubt find the individual failings and virtues of these to be typical of the general failings and virtues of the whole Christian Church. And since these accounts are ours to read, they are also ours for warning, instruction, and comfort; and they also help to prove to us that God and His Son do not threaten or comfort in vain. "Seek ye out of the Book of Jehovah and read; no one of these shall be missing, none shall want her mate; for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them. And he hath cast the lot of them and his hand hath divided unto them by line." Again we read, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this Book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this Book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and out of the holy city, which are written in this Book." From these closing Messianic Words to us, we find that this last Book of the Scriptures is a description of the Holy City and of the Tree of Life, and our Lord warns us to take it just as it stands with its lessons, warnings, and prophecies. It specially contains the instructions to the Church concerning that which shall be found fit for the City to be, fit

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for the continued life, and that which is not; and to prove to a faithless generation that He is not dead indeed, but risen to His throne in the heavens, He gives these seven names to prove Himself with. We shall do well to heed their present-day warning and also their comforting assurance.

Ephesus was a very great and rich city, and of great political importance as metropolis of Asia Minor. Its Temple of Diana, "whom all Asia worshipped," is world-famous. This Temple "was adorned with one hundred and twenty-seven columns of Parian marble, each of a single shaft and sixty feet high, which formed one of the seven wonders of the world." There is also said to be the remains of a magnificent theatre which could easily seat twenty thousand people. But to-day her desolation is complete. Less than a hundred years ago, a traveller in those regions found the population to consist of "a Turk, whose shed we occupied, his Arab servant, and a single Greek." Also he found some Turcomans tenting among the ruins. I believe there is to-day near by a small village; but not on the actual site of desolated Ephesus. Paul in his inimitable epistle to the Ephesians says to them: "So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed

together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." We may not take space for more of this loving and instructive epistle to this greatly-privileged portion of the early Church; but we can easily conceive, as we read between the lines of the whole epistle, of the great hopefulness in Paul's heart regarding their future Christian experience; and so might it have been with them, had they listened to his kindly warning to "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might," to "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." He seems to warn them against insidious foes, powers of darkness, wickedness in high or heavenly places. Did they heed his warning? Did they keep on the whole armour or only a part of it? Again we read a message to Ephesus, at a little later date, but not long enough afterwards to justify their lapse—if lapses can ever be justified. This time it is the Master of our souls' security, speaking to them through John. He says, "I know thy works, and thy toil and stedfastness [or patience], and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles and they are not, and didst find them false; and thou hast stedfastness [or patience] and didst bear for My name's sake and hast not grown weary. But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love. Remember therefore

whence thou art fallen and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." Paul lovingly warns them to be careful of that which he saw to be their weakness, earnest though they were. Christ gives full credit for a good beginning, but accuses them of wandering in their affections from His holy precepts and commands, which they had at first listened to and obeyed. It is much easier to fall than to rise. This warning was ineffectual, the candlestick was removed, and Ephesus is to-day a Christless ruin. It is not sufficient that we begin and set out well on our journey Holy-City-wards, but we must continue to journey forward. We would draw from both these warnings, along with the descriptions of her wealth, magnificence, and her love of worldly pleasure and splendour, that these insidiously tempted her away from the love of the simple holy living that was taught to her as a token of the obedient faith in the Messiah, in allegiance to Whom they professed to be very earnest. They no doubt lost their separateness, by holding the two loves at the same time. In a case like this we find that Christ withdraws in favour of Mammon. He knows that we cannot serve both, and He told us that we could not do it. In their experience as a wealthy, splendour- and pleasure-loving people, we shall find our lesson from this old ruined city.

Smyrna is the next city to whom Christ Jesus

addresses Himself through John. She also was "one of the finest cities in all the Levant." She was and is beautifully situated; was and is rich and commercially important. To-day she has a population of some hundreds of thousands, and is the chief city of Asia Minor. Why is her destiny so different from that of Ephesus, her sister? We must go to the Master's message to her to find out her secret, and see if we too cannot profit by her experience and example. He tells John to write thus: "These things saith the first and the last, who became dead and lived again: I know thy tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich), and the revilings of them that say they are Jews and they are not, but of the synagogue of Satan. Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." There is no warning or reproof in this message, but only promise of the reward of life; that is, if these continued as they were then. Be ye faithful as you have already been, seems to be His word to them. Is not the same kindly and assuring message which is conveyed in this promise to Smyrna also for the obedient portion of the Church of our day? Is

there not promise of enlargement and continuity, expressed for it in Smyrna's enlargement and long-continued life and increasing vigour of being? "Be ye faithful," the Word said. We conclude that she was not so much tempted by worldly pleasures as was her sister Ephesus. Perhaps she enjoyed a simpler kind of prosperity; more of a plentiful nature, than of an intricate and showy character. We may easily suppose this, as she is not described as like Ephesus in this way. That is the easiest and safest road to the Holy City, which lies between plenty and simplicity and is the surest way to the continued life of a city or a soul.

The letter to Pergamum seems to indicate that many of her Christian people were true to the faith, and had kept themselves free from the pollution into which some of their number had fallen. The accusation against the best members of this Church was, that they allowed the evil kind to pretend an acceptance of discipleship to Jesus Christ, and to bear His most Holy Name, while they were really trying to undermine His true doctrine. So He came to them with His two-edged sword, to divide the true members of His Church from those who were in reality working towards the upholding of Satan's reign. And the sword must have done its work effectively, for we find that she did not die. She still lives, and has still, I believe, some Christian churches (Greek) in her midst. She had enough of those who in-

sisted on the separated life to save her. We learn here that we cannot allow sects to pretend to the name of Christianity, and worship as such amongst us, unchallenged, who deny to our Saviour His true mission and present authority, as some do even to-day. These sap the vitality of our living faith. So the Church of the living, reigning Redeemer Jesus Christ must to-day take the two-edged sword and make a clean-cut division, or she stands guilty of acquiescence in this insidious scheme of Satan against the fully accomplished reign of our Redeemer on earth in the renewed hearts of men.

To Thyatira the warning came thus, "I know thy works and thy love and faith and ministry and stedfastness [or patience], and that thy last works are more than thy first." But then they are accused of having in their midst the wicked woman Jezebel, who taught the people all sorts of pagan and unclean usages and doctrines. This typical Jezebel is to have great tribulation and her children are to be killed. We all remember the part that the real idolatrous queen played, in the story which we read in sacred history, and we do not need to search further than the unity of the Christian Church with the pagan Roman Church, to find her and from her to find her children. We may well conclude that all the pagan ideas and usages which were brought into the Church by Constantine in his clever scheme of affiliation,

shall be rooted out and killed by Christ and His Holy Executive. He says, "And all the churches shall know that I am He that searches the reins and hearts, and I will give unto each one of you according to your works." After this comes the remarkable passage, "But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden. Nevertheless, that which we have, hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh and he that keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron as the vessels of the potters are broken to shivers; as I also have received of My Father, and I will give him the morning star." "Till I come," the Lord said. At present Thyatira is a town of several thousand inhabitants and living under the name of Ak Hissar. She does not seem to have any special significance to-day; but she is certainly alive. Her ultimate destiny cannot yet be described because it cannot be accomplished *till He come*. Her position lends itself to a local fulfilment of this message regarding the states which lie adjacent and behind her. I feel assured that she shall be prominent in some way when He comes, and in the larger sense we, as a Church, must receive our lesson of promise. We find that it is by the killing of all pagan ideas and usages and empty forms

that we shall be made fit to live. And in thus overcoming all the taint of paganism that this woman brought in, we shall be made to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. This does not at first sound like the true teaching of Christ, but when we remember that iron is almost a synonym for strength; that those who themselves obey the law of Christ are the only ones fitted to enforce it on others; and that Christ's régime is to be an absolutely holy and just one, then does it not follow that all who obey do also in a sense rule? As to some particular nation ruling, if such becomes the case, it will be first by attainment to that state of holiness themselves. It can never consistently be a matter of jealousy. Christ is Ruler over all, and he who rules most, under Him, is he who serves the general human brotherhood in the most loving and self-sacrificing spirit. "We serve the race" is the motto of the Knights of the Redeemer, wherever you shall find them.

Sardis is described as having only the name of being alive, though actually dead. She was so nearly dead spiritually that none of her works were right or perfect before God. But there were a few of her people who were accounted worthy to walk in white with the living Christ. These few were not threatened with death, nor were their names to be blotted out of the Book of Life. These were to belong to that happy, because obedient, company to whom Christ will say, "Well done,"

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instead of, "I never knew you." We know that these were but few; and so, though we find Sardis is still spared, she is but a miserable little village and that not quite on the same site as the old prosperous city. Conquered and plundered by Cyrus, and afterwards ruined by an earthquake, she only lives out a pitiful destiny, sufficiently alive to enable her *name* to be kept in evidence in honour of these few. There is here a companion lesson to that of Sodom: Sardis had a few, she lived; Sodom had not her ten good souls and she died quickly. God in His providence seems to place great value on each individual soul. And we never know in just how important a position we may be standing at some given moment. Comparing the experience of Sardis with that of Smyrna and Thyatira, we may conclude that had she more believingly obedient souls she would to-day be a city of the same ratio. God is not dead, but still keeps patient watch over souls and cities.

Philadelphia (meaning, Brotherly Love) is now called by the name of Ala-shehr (meaning, City of God). She was praised highly for her goodness more than any of these typical cities. She still lives, but under her new name, the very name that Christ said she should have. Her first name meant Brotherly Love, and in this characteristic was she especially beloved by Him Who so loved the world that He gave Himself for the saving of it; and afterwards she found herself called, The City of

God. No wonder He loved these people if they were notable for love one towards another; and Christ promised them that because they had kept so stedfastly to the true meaning of His word, He would keep them from the hour of trial. Is this promise also for us? If we love our fellow human beings with the same kind of self-sacrificing love that He gave to us all, shall we too be exempt from the terrors of the Judgment to come? If we hold fast to lovingkindness, which is the same quality as believing obedience, will He shield us from the darkening storm which is now gathering over the sin-sick world? It is said, "A man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land." If we want this so comforting shelter from all ills, *we must love more and hate not at all*. We must pity the erring, the selfish, the arrogant, for their afflicted spiritual state, even as we pity the hungry and naked. In doing this we shall doubtless pity our own selves. We must tolerate the failings of others, remembering our own. If we do so, shall we too come to be dwellers in the City of Brotherly Love? And in our *afterwards* shall we too be citizens of the City of God? Is our main lesson here to be learned, that these two cities are really *only one*?

Laodicea was very religious at the beginning of her Christian experience. Dogmatically religious

we find she was likely to be, as she was the mother of six bishoprics. She was very wealthy, and very fond of being entertained. She had three theatres and an immense circus in which could be seated upward of thirty thousand spectators. She had too easy a time, was too rich, was too fond of amusement, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He went. Her people, though believers in Christ as Messiah, did not want Him to refine them as gold, by the purifying fires of God. They did not want reproof or the chastenings that bring the tender love of God to us. They were neither wilfully bad, nor earnestly good. They wanted the advantages of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; and also they wanted at the same time to be saved from eternal death by the sacrificial offering of the Christ. But He refused to accept them. He cast them out of His mouth. This is our last lesson from these seven typical cities of the Christian era, and few will deny that we greatly need this lesson to-day. Laodicea was Babylonish in her character and also in her destiny. She too is a name of reproach. She too is to-day a nameless ruin in which, as in Babylon, the wolves and jackals howl their derision at her suicidal foolishness.

May God in His overruling wisdom grant that we take to heart, according to our light, the lessons conveyed to us by the characteristics and destinies of these cities; and that in our *afterwards* we shall be the honour and glory of our Creator, rather

than a shame to the human family, through our lost opportunities for the renewed and continued life.

There are but two paths for us to-day: the one leads to the Holy City of God and the other to Destruction. We are obliged to-day to take either the one path or the other. Which shall it be?

Then the writing shall be read,
Which shall judge the quick and dead,
Then the Lord of all our Race
Shall appoint to each a place;
Every wrong shall be set right,
Every secret brought to light.
O, just Judge, to whom belongs
Vengeance for all earthly wrongs,
Grant forgiveness, Lord, at last,
Ere the dread account be past.

Sir Walter Scott.

CHAPTER VII

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.”

REV. XXI. 1, 2.

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into my mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people; and there shall be heard in her no more the voice of weeping and the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child shall die a hundred years old and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for calamity; for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah.”

ISA. LXV. 17-25.

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“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin will I remember no more.”

JER. xxxi. 35-37.

“The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

ACTS xvii. 30, 31.

“He that is unrighteous, let him be unrighteous still [or yet more]; and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still [or yet more]; and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still [or yet more]; and he that is holy, let him be made holy still [or yet more]. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life and may enter in by the gates into the city.”

REV. xxii. 11-14.

A NEW Heaven and a new Earth, over which the Lord Jesus Christ shall reign supremely and without the tormenting opposition of Satan, is, or should be, the steadfast hope and highest ideal of all true Christian souls, if they be well read in the generally acknowledged Word of God. If we look carefully into the teaching of the prophets,

from Enoch to John the Baptist, and also into the teaching of Christ and His apostles, we stand amazed at the view which some in the Church take regarding this hope of the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven; the coming of the New Heaven and the New Earth. It has become with many who bear His Most Holy Name, rather more of a standing jest than a Divine Hope. This class of religionists were long ago warned by Jehovah through Isaiah thus: "Now therefore be ye not scoffers, lest your bonds be made strong; for a decree of destruction have I heard from the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, upon the whole land [or earth]. Give ye ear, and hear My voice; hearken and hear My speech. Doth he that plougheth to sow plough continually? Doth he continually open and harrow his ground?" Those who scoff at the imminence of the fulfilment of the complete mission and office of our Redeemer, should remember this text; and they should also remember that God has long ago ploughed the soil; has harrowed it into a state fit for seed; has sown the seed; and His Christ, the Sower, has withdrawn from our immediate vision for a while. His return is assured to be timely; specifically, the time of the Harvest. These modern scoffers would do wisely to look into this matter from the true Scriptural standpoint; and also look well into the history of events and trends of thought, and see if there can be found no valid signs of the fast ripening of the Harvest. There is a common proverb

which suits this situation well, namely, "He laughs best who laughs last." It is infinitely wiser to assist in preparing for the great Time of the Harvest than to laugh at the idea of its near approach. Solomon tells us that Wisdom asks, "How long will scoffers delight in scoffing and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof. But ye have set at naught all my counsel and would have none of my reproof: I also will laugh in the day of your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a storm [or desolation] and your calamity cometh on as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then will they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they will seek Me diligently [or early] but they shall not find Me." We had better so read and so act, that we shall be able to *laugh* with the children of Wisdom, instead of shrinking in fear from approaching events. If we turn prophecy into a jest and evidence into a derision; if we refuse to sanely consider this most vital question, how shall Wisdom instruct us, or how shall logical reasoning, deduced from established evidence, reach our understanding? We shall have laughed too soon. We know that many fantastic theories have been promulgated; we may hope that much of the derision on the subject amongst professed Christians has been brought about by the earnest, though partly mistaken, efforts of these, sometimes, rather fanatical preachers of the doctrine of

Christ's imminent appearance. But even though some of these theories be of a rather unbalanced character, at least their promoters have had the virtue of an honest purpose. These are looking for Christ to reign on earth; and they desire that He shall do so, and are doing that which they deem to be their duty towards its announcement. If these are hoping for and working for the Kingdom in their own way, I would rather laugh with them when He comes, than laugh to-day with the scoffers. We rejoice to know that many earnest and well-balanced Christians in the Church to-day are also looking now for His appearance amongst us. The Church should be looking for Him now in its entire membership instead of only the *few*. Peter warns the Church of this disloyalty in many of its members thus: "This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandments of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming [or presence]? for from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they wilfully forgot, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted

out of the water and amidst the water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. . . . But, according to his promise, we look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace without spot and blameless in His sight, and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other Scripture, unto their own destruction. Ye, therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your stedfastness." To ignore this holy hope of the Christian soul is a dangerous thing for us to do. Peter certainly does not consider it a matter to be trifled with—that is, unless we be of the wicked sort, or of those who wrest the Scripture. If we be sincere seekers after the truth of this matter, we shall give some honest attention to the hopes of even the fanatical theorists.

If we wish to criticise the many different theories suggested by different persons, we must have some infallible basis by which to judge them. Personal leanings, or hereditary prejudice, should for the time being be laid aside; for in no other state of mind can we form an unbiassed or righteous opinion. We should be ready to recognize the truth though it proceed from a comparatively low estate of spirituality. I think that, in our hearts, we all agree that we should accept truth from all sources; but it is a different and more difficult operation of the heart and mind to decide just what is truth and what is groundless error. So many of us, perhaps wisely, consent to the spiritual views held, perhaps, by our forbears and ourselves, for many years, rather than make a start in another direction, where we may be stranded on worse ground than we left behind, or may be tossed about for long years upon the troubled seas of doubt and restless dissatisfaction in spiritual matters. And if one have no sound basis from which to prove all things and hold fast only that which is good, is it not better to stay just where we are and do our best to serve our Maker as we see to be right for our day and generation? We should never forget in such a spiritual or mental conflict to pray earnestly for the Spirit of Truth. If the Spirit of Truth clearly calls us, we must go as we are led; only let us be very careful that we have prayed in real sincerity, that only Truth may

appeal to our minds and souls; and that we may not be deceived by insidious Error, who is ever present with artful designs to wreck the unwary soul. I know of no other standard by which to distinguish Truth from Error than that of the Sacred Scriptures: and in a secondary form of evidence, as these teachings agree with the essential part of human experience and inherent human aspiration. I think all practical Christians will agree that the trend of the Scriptures and the trend of the highest human aspirations and ideals have always been and are now in unity as to the ultimate issue. Some one may contend that it is only by education from these Scriptures that we have arrived at this trend of thought. That is only partly true. From whence came the spirit of the endeavours of many philosophers and law-givers to rectify the error and wrong which prevailed amongst those peoples who were ignorant of our Sacred Books, or who would scorn to listen to their instruction if they had them? And in what direction did the endeavours of these comparatively wise men lead national thought? Was it not in the direction of bringing about more equality between men, and more freedom for the many? True, it was difficult for these to feel that a slave had God-given rights. And that slavery itself was a great sin, had not then, nor for many long years afterwards, entered into their ideals. Nor is the shadow of this world-wide iniquity yet

quite eliminated in the very countries that owe their religious conceptions to our accepted Sacred Scriptures.

We do not contend that these ancient efforts produced much lasting good; we only contend that the trend of these noble endeavours was much in the same direction as those which are constantly advocated by our Scriptures. We must therefore conclude that these received from God, by some means, much the same trend of ideals as our Scriptures teach us; or that there is a latent consciousness in men's souls that feels out, perhaps in the dark, after the True Essential God, and His true law, The Royal Law. And the highest human souls of all ages seem to recognize the simplicity of the Universal Creed. One God and His Name One. One Family dwelling in kindly unity. One God-Man to bring us into this condition under His Super-Law, One Holy Spirit, working through countless agencies, to bring this holy unity about. This seems to be the highest ideal in the Holy Scriptures, and in men's souls. We know that Jesus is He for Whose personal leadership the soul "pines, waving its tentacles piteously in the empty air, feeling after God (or His Christ) if so be that it may find Him." God so loved this wanting, desiring human race that He sent us His Divine Son to satisfy our longing for *Perfection in a Person*, which we can realize and understand, and which we can look at until we become capable of

endeavour towards conforming to this Type. We hunger for a human representation of all God's attributes. "This is what fits us for Christ. There is a grandeur in this cry from the depths which makes its very unhappiness sublime." All the human race have cried out in the night for Him, and in their infant ignorance they have found something else instead of Him; something which seemed to them in the darkness like Him. Thus we as a Race came to have numbers of personal gods, clothed with the attributes of our highest ideals. And to-day we stand in this same attitude, but we have at last grasped our true ideal, the Christ. We, some of us, have come to have the same ideals as He brought us. We cannot as yet attain to conformity to Him as Type; but we have come to the place where we say, This is He for Whom my soul has longed and yearned. I can conceive of nothing higher. To this standard I must attain as I am able to attune my life and habits to it. I think it is the very ideal which is calculated to draw all men towards it, being the best conception of goodness and attainment that can be conceived of. So that in time all must see that He is indeed our Redeemer. His purity, His self-sacrifice, and (not the least of our desires) His Divine Leadership appeal to all the highest aspirations of the Race. This latent desire for peaceful unity must be general even in the beasts that perish, for we learn that their natures shall

change, as ours become holy and peaceful. They are naturally kinder than we, and can teach us many a lesson of thoughtfulness one towards another. We have not as yet in a general way yielded to the law of kindness towards one another, and this is the test of our ideals. The various gods that we in our infant days set up for ourselves, not knowing of any better, had some attributes, accredited to them that we do not approve of now in our maturity. We expect and demand holiness in our acknowledged Leader, and we know that He is holy, and we are satisfied. We, in the Christian world, do not seek for, or feel out after, another; we know that Perfection cannot be excelled. We know what laws He has laid down for the ruling of His Kingdom; and we are satisfied that these cannot be excelled either, because they too are perfection. Granted that Christ Jesus fulfils all our longing hopes, and that His instructions excel all that we could imagine in our ideals, we stand in the path leading towards the highest standard of ethics and circumstance that the human race has ever aspired to. As in our early days we endowed with godhood all influences good or ill, thus acknowledging our need, not only of leadership, but also of assistance; in this attempt to create and clothe with attributes all these helpful or harmful influences, we find ourselves also feeling out in the darkness after the helpful brooding Holy Spirit, or recognizing the injurious influence of

the evil demons, who are the unholy Executive of Satan. And so at this late hour of our career, this almost closing of the sixth day of failure to really find Him, as a whole Race, we have a great hope that the light is now breaking, which shall enable us to see the true Leader of our souls, and see Him as He really is; and then we shall begin very rapidly to become more like Him. He must be lifted up so that all men may see His Light; and when we once see the true Light that came in the Person of the Messiah, we are in process of being judged. Many of us do not want to present ourselves before this Light. It is said by Him, "For every one that doeth [or practiseth] evil, hateth the light and cometh not to the light lest his works should be reprov'd [or convicted]. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God." And so in this simple but very trying test, we are passing ourselves under Judgment. We judge ourselves by the Word. If we belong to the Satanic Kingdom we obey *its dicta*; if we belong to Christ's Kingdom we come to *Him* in constant inquiry after instructions for our daily walking. Thus do we convict or approve ourselves before the Light of the World. He came to save us from sinning and dying; if we want to continue to sin and die, we must stay with the Destroyer, not with the Saviour. And this is precisely what we do, if we decide to continue doing the deeds which

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are evil. Evil is simply the sin of trying to injure one another, or being unkind or unjust to one another, or missing opportunities of furthering each other's—not our own—interest. How many of us can stand before this simple test of works and thoughts? And yet this is the Scriptural test of citizenship of Christ's Kingdom.

And so the fulfilment of Scripture, as to time and circumstance, being almost completed, we are able to perceive that an experience is coming to us wherein we shall each of us be presented before this Light, for judgment of our hearts and works. We already see men's ideals being presented before this Light. We see public movements judged from this divine standpoint of thoughtfulness towards one another. Is this an indication that we are setting up the King within our own hearts, and demanding that He shall be set up in all public movements? Man lives in so complex a condition that temptation follows him everywhere, or lurks in waiting for him at all points. And as our experience multiplies, and becomes more complex, so do our temptations. Such commonplace and necessary things as clothing, food, and home-life, while part of our very existence, are they which, more than any other, lead us into temptation. And if we ever expect to escape from this hotbed of evil desires which tempt us so cruelly, we shall have to reconstruct our system of social, commercial, and even religious life, which go to make up the

tyranny of our everyday experience. We must pass all our ideals which pertain to these three classes of human affairs before the Word of the Light of the World. If we do this, we shall find that we must simplify our desires along these lines; and by simplifying them, we shall no doubt find to our surprise that we have enriched and beautified all the circumstances of our heart's desires, and that *the ideal of temperate simplicity is really the greatest good* and gives the most abiding pleasure. It seems to have almost escaped our calculation that the Holy City is the City of Greatest Happiness. Our present-day philosophy is too *swinish* to be truly scientific. There is plenty on earth to produce that for all which is now considered luxury, to be obtained only by the few. Really, the idea that a state of plenty, unless it be a rarity, cannot be enjoyed, is one of the most unscientific of all the Satanic inspirations. Christ says: one another, prefer one another, care for one another; Satan breathes out over this: self, self-preferment, care for oneself. Satan says, If a thing is costly from the circumstance of much labour, or risk of life, or from rarity, it is therefore desirable. This is a most false and hurtful and essentially swinish doctrine to teach, and is clearly a child of the Pit. I think a true artist or philosopher would be happier, more profoundly satisfied in the Holy City than in the present condition of the world, under Satan's idea of Greatest Happiness.

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If we could only have an outpouring of the Spirit of Truth upon us, so that we could see things as they really are! True, some do see visions of a redeemed earthly condition, and dream dreams of the holy state to be; but what we need is a general outpouring of this state of mind and heart, so that we shall arise as one and work in a self-sacrificing way as one, in order to cast up a holy highway for the Redeemer.

To many of us, the story of the wonderful day of Pentecost, which followed the ascension of our Saviour, comes like the recital of some mystic religious dream. That it actually occurred is believed by us; but which of us *realizes* its significance in connexion with our present experience, as compared with our possible future experience? Joel had written for our hope and encouragement, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." And Peter testifies to the people that the wonders of Pentecost was the fulfilment of that word. It *was* the last days of that old dispensation, and *is*, in the racial process, concurrent with the present last days of our dispensation. Therefore Peter's address should be re-read to-day with vital interest, by all who long for Christ's appearance. We quote at some length the report of his words and the result that followed

his address to those early seekers, thus: "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him. And with many other words he testified and exhorted them saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. They that received his word were baptized and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

"And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all that believed were together and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved."

Peter says that the promise was for those whom he addressed, and for their children, and for those afar off. We may take this last as meaning far off in generation; not as near as the children. So we

may claim its general application. Peter said, if we may apply it to ourselves, that if we *repented* we should have the gift of the Holy Spirit. As he spoke under inspiration of this Holy Spirit, it must be a true promise. So if we have not this gift, it is because we have not *repented*. He says also, that this promised for all whom God calls to Him; but in order to avoid misunderstanding as to being called of God, he exhorts them thus, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." We see this to mean, Listen to God's call by and through His Son, and use your God-given will in repentance and effort to attain to that spiritual condition in which a soul is fitted for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The immediate consequence of this gift was recognition of the fact that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and that all His children have an equal right to plenty and comfortable sustenance. When the Christian world has repented, so that it is fit to receive the directing influence of the Holy Spirit, we shall soon be in a position to solve all economic problems; and not till then. These people, though co-operative in their new plan of economics, do not seem to have acted in any fanatical manner; for we find that they had favour with all the people.

Again, we have a strong proof of the felicity of the economic arrangements of this new Church, which was just fresh from the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit whom Christ Jesus had sent

to them, as He had promised to do. Peter and John had been testifying of Jesus with great power, and it is said that, "When they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul, and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. For neither was there among them any that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the price of the things that were sold and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any had need."

Did temptation creep into this new and holy economic condition? We find that it did. We have the story of Ananias and Sapphira his wife to testify that some fell into sin even in the early days of the new Church. These two souls wanted the name and benefit of the holy method of living; but they thought to retain a little out of the sale of their property, we may presume, fearing that the new plan might not continue, or that they themselves might change their minds regarding it; or they may have kept back part of it in order to have a little more luxurious living in secret than that

which the commune enjoyed. We believe that their severe penalty was due to their secret disloyalty to their Leader. It was a case of high treason. That this kind of high treason is in our midst to-day, is, I imagine, undisputed. That it was considered to be a typical instance of a grave sin of the nominal Church is evident. We are never guilty of high treason, until we take upon ourselves allegiance either to an earthly ruler or to Christ. There is plenty of food for serious thought in this lesson of the death of these two traitors. Our reluctance to put our best and our all into the true service of the Lord has brought about spiritual death to the Church, in her members, all down the passing years; still we withhold and still we die; the most obedient of us are in a measure guilty of this sin, and are in a state of correspondingly deathlike coma. We like a showy religion which requires great churches and cathedrals and all the worldly honour which is attached to the formal observance thereof; but as yet we keep back part of the price of our pretended offering. We do that which was never in our dispensation enjoined upon us in the way of formality; and that which was constantly and continually enjoined upon us, we almost entirely ignore. Our inner hearts are full of petty or more serious faults of character, which are quite unlawful in a Christian. We ought either to acknowledge Satan as our Lord, or cleanse our hearts from these hidden

death-producing sins. But we may be sure that while these sins exist in secret, our souls are just as quietly dying. While we are in this state we must be conscious of it ourselves; the world usually sees signs of our inner weakness, and the Holy Spirit has full record of all the secret workings of our hearts. We might well ask ourselves the question, Is there any actual and abiding profit in this traitorous behaviour?

We not only deceive ourselves to our undoing by keeping back part of the price, by withholding from our Lord our full surrender to Him, by holding back some of that which belongs to the little unfortunate children, by giving part of our time and talents and influence to Satan's interests; but we also become *lazy* from a feeling of security, which arises from a regular system of co-operation. We find that Paul had to reprove some of these co-operative citizens for idleness. He commands the Thessalonians thus: "If any will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing. And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed and yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish

him as a brother." We learn here that in a Christian community all are expected to work in an orderly way and eat their own bread. We also learn that some hoped by joining this community to escape work. And in a strictly religious sense do we not also find this trouble to-day? If we are truly Christians we shall be working in co-operation with Christ in His Church, in some form of labour that we are best suited for. Our work will be as different as our ordinary pursuits. But we must work or not eat. I doubt whether we are given much spiritual food if we are not doing our best to serve the brotherhood of the human family. And we are warned to work for our own ultimate salvation: we are not to rest so idly in the security that we feel in Christ's offering for us, that we lose the use of our active spiritual energies. Paul warns the Philippians thus: "So then, my beloved, even as ye have obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work of His good pleasure." To work in all ways which are commanded of God, and in which we find ourselves capable of real service, with the assurance of the indwelling guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in Christian unity, *is Heaven*. This is the Kingdom within, or, in our midst, that our Saviour speaks of. And Christ Jesus promises the good-for-nothing Laodiceans that if they will

but become zealous and brave and earnest in their effort to overcome, they shall share His throne with Him. We are taught through these indifferent people that we must either rouse ourselves up to action and earnest purpose, or die an ignominious death from inertia. If we awaken and repent and get to work at the service that we each are best suited to render towards the new State to be, we shall have the peerless blessing of the Triune Godhead dwelling in us and with us, to will and to work for His good pleasure. Have we tested this promise yet? We have many instances of this indwelling with its accompanying power in the Old and New Testaments; also we have it in many established instances of more modern date. But we cannot hope for this holy occupation of the Church until she becomes cleansed in the individual. This calls for effort, and not idleness. We must *work* for this great event. We must first decide that we want it. Do we really desire this holy indwelling that shall displace so much of our accustomed thought and aim, which is so unclean and injurious?

When the Judge meets us in the Valley of Decision or Judgment, we shall find that many of our unprofitable aims and usages must be consigned to the adjoining Valley of Destruction. This is, in figure, the method that Christ Jesus will use to cleanse the Church, until it becomes fitted for the City of God on earth and in heaven. Have we authority for this assertion? Only His own word

supplementing and fulfilling that of the prophets of Jehovah; this should be sufficient authority. After giving to the people that memorable thesis known to us as the Sermon on the Mount, and after more of this kind of discourse, Jesus said definitely that, "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." All things that cause stumbling shall be cast into the Valley of Destruction. The persons to whom this means financial loss or loss of political influence or great social prominence, or loss of religious high standing or of opportunity to indulge in idle pleasure, while others support them by their hard labour—these will, no doubt, stand at the edge of this consuming fire weeping over their losses, and gnashing their teeth in rage, as they see their iniquitous systems and usages pass away from them for ever in the flames of Gehenna. And the righteous shall shine forth as the sun. The difference between the two classes will be so great that a radiance of holiness shall emanate from one, and weeping and gnashing of teeth from the other. We do not read of a medium class, but of a righteous and wicked only. We have already seen some of these signs in connexion with the equalizing measures which have with great effort and forbear-

ance been enacted. Jesus Christ also said to us, this time from out His hidden Throne, "Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God; and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more; the first things are passed away But for the fearful and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and fornicators and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." As the City is to come down out of heaven, and God is to *tabernacle* with men, it must be in a state of earthly being; and as it is to be made free from pain or distress or crying, it cannot mean a spiritual state of being, as we are not taught that these conditions belong to the spiritual body. And as Jesus said, "None is good save one, even God," we should think it to be likely that all the people of the earth will at this time be actually consumed by fire. But God has, we rejoice to know, also said that every knee shall yet bow to Him, and every one shall confess His name. As iniquity is frequently personified and Jesus had before His death spoken (as above quoted) of the consuming of all things which cause stumbling, we may believe with reason that the latter passage means precisely the same as His saying quoted a

little above it. Everywhere in Scripture do we find corroboration of this view. And everywhere do we find reference to a time when these wicked things which cause stumbling to the human race shall be separated out of our experience and for ever destroyed. All our stumbling comes from our breaking of the law of God. We cannot stumble in any other way; only by disobedience do we fall away from the path of rectitude, which leads to His Kingdom. It is our readiness to be fearful, unbelieving, idolatrous, and, most general of all, untruthful, that keeps back Christ's reign. We are selfish and wicked, so we cause in each other that trouble which brings crying and mourning and pain. This lawlessness of ours prevents His complete reign over us; a reign which shall bring nothing but blessing and benefit to us. Paul, fearing that the new converts might be led into some fanatical error regarding the coming again of Christ, warns the Thessalonians thus: "Let no man beguile you in any wise; for it will not be, except the falling away come first and the man of sin [or lawlessness] be revealed. . . . And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work; only there is one that restraineth now until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume [or slay] with the breath of His mouth and

bring to naught by the manifestation of His coming [or presence]." This is a clear and most distinct statement of the fact that the Lord Jesus is restrained from His Kingdom by lawlessness in us; but at the accomplished time He will bring to an end our breaking of the law.

We are led by Scripture to look for this time to come at a given date in any case; but sooner, if we choose to invite it by becoming obedient before we are really forced to obey or be destroyed in some way. Connected with this theory is another, which we had better heed when we are called upon to make a decision between right and wrong conduct. We quote the following passage to explain this dangerous situation, "And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still [or yet more]: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still [or yet more]: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still [or yet more]: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still [or yet more]. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is . . . Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city." It seems probable from this that there will come to each of us a time when from our own decision we arrive at the parting of the ways; after

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which, according as we decide, we become continually more righteous and holy from our own personal effort to become so; or, if we decide to be lawless, unrighteous, and filthy, we do from that fatal decision continue to walk in the downward path which leads to destruction. I think that this irrevocable moment only comes with our deliberate decision either for or against lawlessness. Long centuries ago, when our race was young, Jehovah said, "My Spirit shall not strive [or rule in, or abide in] with man for ever." And we know that there came a time when the Spirit left off reasoning with these ancient people; and those who obeyed went into the Ark, and those who did not were soon covered by the destructive flood. In all the experiences of the many cities, which we have noted in the previous chapter, only Nineveh lived after her doom was pronounced; and that was because she repented so earnestly: but the mercy was not extended to her a second time. These cities were all warned; and all those who refused to decide to be righteous died, either suddenly, or else corruption set in until it destroyed the city which had deliberately chosen to die. It may be learned from these typical cities that wickedness is forgiven, if the sinner repents and leaves off sinning. But we never find that a soul is *forced* to repent. A decision deliberately made, seems to be a final one; and from that moment we grow better or worse, according as we decide. Our text given above was

intended for the very last days of the last epoch of this dispensation: so it is especially ours. Have we not each of us known persons who were brought face to face with a decision by which they were compelled to wrong some one, or do that which was noble and right? Have we not seen some turn into the wrong path deliberately, after which no moral crime seemed beyond them, only stopping at the cold common law? Do we not observe that in such, the conscience soon ceases to warn and the moral nature becomes lifeless? On the other hand, have we not seen those who have been awakened to higher ideals and aims, become better day by day, ripening in righteous qualities? It is the Valley of Decision that is of gravest importance to us to-day. We shall at some time be obliged to walk through it in our way, either to the New Jerusalem, or to the Gehenna of destruction, that awaits those who listen to the wrong call.

There is so much evidence that the New Heavens and New Earth refer entirely to an acquired condition of righteousness on the earth, and that we are everywhere urged to repent and work for its early coming, that I cannot comprehend how Scripture students can, without wresting the Word of God to their hurt, think of the new Holy City as being only in the heavens; nor do I comprehend how the doctrine has arisen which says that the Lord shall come to a wicked, indifferent, and unrepentant race, and by an instantaneous miracle

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make a perfect and holy people of us, whether we wish it or not. True, we know that His Kingdom must come duly. God still rules the destinies of the Race. But where does He promise us that any but the repentant and obedient shall enter therein, or even form a part of it? Then shall there be few therein? That hardly seems to be Scriptural, as we are informed that "every knee shall bow, and that every tongue shall confess His name." Then where does the truth lie? At least one prominent and vital truth stands out distinctly in the Christian religion as it was taught by the Founder of it and His apostles and His herald John the Baptist. This vital truth is, that repentance over past sinning, and the keeping of the Royal Law, are alike essential to life eternal and to entrance into the Holy City on earth. This cannot be disputed by any Scripture student. There are not two conditions of soul for these two states, but only one, viz., the condition of having the Kingdom within. Then to live is Christ and to die is gain. To live to partake of the cups of service and self-offering of the Redeemer, and to leave our physical body of infirmities and temptations, is great *gain*. But the status of unity with the Redeemer is the same in each. So, we cannot but see that our indifference, or more open rebellion, to this Law, is that which hinders His reign on earth. It is *Lawlessness which restrains*, or we might have the time shortened. We should take

warning from the doom of those typical cities to which we have been drawing attention: that if we ignore all warning, and deliberately decide to keep Christ out of His own as long as we can, preferring the present rule of Satan, by the time He shall come, from the date having been reached in which He must reign, we and our children will have ceased to be running in the race for either the Holy City or Eternal Life. This thought is expressed in our Lord's utterance when He is speaking of the near approaching climax. He says: "But when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats." Then he gives us the test whereby we shall all be judged and separated. We are all too familiar with these words to be in any appreciable dread of their awful meaning. After fully stating what the test shall be which shall separate us into two classes, He tells us, "And these [the wicked, or those who are merely unkind] shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life." We learn from scholars that the original term used here is the same as was used if an unruly horse or man were withdrawn from a race in which he was running, but not running according to rules. There is so much figure used in Scripture that we should be careful how we read these passages.

For instance, *The end of the world* is given a marginal rendering in the R.V. as *The Consummation of the Age*. This one instance will serve to clear up much seeming inconsistency in prophecy. But if we take the prophecies together with Jesus Christ's own words, and those of the apostles, we can have no doubt but that at the close of this *age* the wicked and unrepentant shall be by some means put out of the race for Eternal Life and the Holy City. At this late date, this idea is food for thought for a man who is contemplating the future of his own children, or those of other citizens of Christendom.

There is no space in this *merely suggestive* work to search into intricate prophecies and their dates of fulfilment. There are many books to be had on this subject which pay well for most careful reading. These are a class of themselves. But for our purpose we are led to use a different method of arriving at the same approximate conclusion regarding Christ's imminent recognized Presence, and the establishing of His Kingdom.

We have found our racial career from Adam's day, as we have the history of it, to be divided into three periods; the two latter of which we have already been drawing attention to. The first of these three, however, lies in that period between Adam and Abraham. We shall find that our career from Adam's day until the end of the present century, taken as a whole, is again divided into periods, which are each important enough to be

considered a time-marking point; each has a length of about one thousand years, and in each case the new day is pointed off by important era-marking circumstances. Where lack of exactness is noted, we should remember that history does not always *mark* the initial date when great changes begin. No doubt with this consideration we shall find that these periods coincide fairly accurately with the turn of each one thousand years. (In noting these dates, we accept the chronology of our history, which is accepted by our Church and Nation. That there are many other chronologies given, we are aware; but as this is the generally accepted one, and seems to agree with the general scheme of our career, we do not hesitate to adopt it for this purpose.) We find the period from Adam to Enoch to be about one thousand years (first day). Enoch is spoken of as having walked with God; and we are obliged to consider him a very religious personage of his day and no doubt an era-marking prophet of God. Some three thousand years after he wrote and taught his message to humanity, he is spoken of as being a most distinguished prophet. And also his translation without death is alluded to. As this period rests on the translation and not the birth of Enoch, we may suppose that his teaching had its greatest effect after the people had witnessed this almost unique event, *i. e.*, the translation of a body into another state of being without the usual course of death.

The next period (second day) of one thousand years lies between the translation of Enoch and Abraham's birth and call. To his call and appointment to the office of leader we need not refer. That it marked off a new spiritual day, no one who reads Scripture can doubt. The next period (third day) brings us into the period of the building of the Temple by David and Solomon. With the coming of David to the throne of Israel and the carrying out of his design for the building of the Temple by Solomon, came a new spiritual, as well as temporal, day to Israel. From the building of the Temple until the birth of Christ gives us the fourth day (4th). No Christian will doubt that this event ushered in a new day or period; and a period which is clearly defined. If we follow the fifth day down through its one thousand years, we find that it rests on the beginning of a new religious and political condition in Christendom, and a new occupation of Jerusalem. The Turkish Mohammedan had established himself in the holy place, and with but short-lived interruption continues there until this day. England, at this date, was in process of occupation by the Normans; for though it was not until 1066 A.D. that William of Normandy really came to the throne of England, and established Norman usages and supremacy over the nation, these had been creeping into England even before Edward the Confessor came to the throne. He was educated

fully in Norman ways during his exile of twenty-five years in Normandy—while the Danes ruled England. But one can see from accounts of the times by historians, that the actual occupation of England by the Normans began, in spirit, as did also the Turkish occupation of Jerusalem, in effort and spirit, pretty nearly on the one-thousand-year date. And if these Normans, as well as the Saxons, are descendants of the Dispersion and are part of Israel, it adds to the importance of the event and date. Perhaps the most important of all the momentous movements peculiar to this period, is the struggle for supremacy in Europe between the two great forces of Church and civil government. Very bitter was the struggle throughout Europe in the early part of the eleventh century, and so it continued for some time, until, before the century closed, Church supremacy bore heavily and completely on all the States of Europe. But the real seed-bed in this movement of era-marking struggle lay close to the one-thousand-year date, and in the Holy Roman Empire, until the Western Reformation, few dared for long to defy the Pope of Rome. The sixth day clearly lies between this induction of Roman arbitrary Supremacy and the beginning of the next century, or 2000 A.D. The seventh lies still farther on, one thousand years after the close of the sixth day. I think we shall find this to be the true situation in this Adamic Race: and truth has a peculiar and

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unique quality in that she unifies the true ideas which lie scattered here and there amidst much error and falsehood.

Much error and misunderstanding have arisen from a misunderstanding of prophecy concerning this seventh day, the day of Christ's Kingdom on earth. Many minor sects have, as we have noted, confused the prophecies concerning the preliminary Presence of Christ, with that of His complete reign over an obedient and holy people. There are two trends of prophecy which must be kept distinct to avoid this confusion. The one assures us that Christ will ultimately subject everything to His rule. The other is that we must repent and become obedient and holy in order that this holy ruling shall be possible. That the time of this second preparatory period is one of terrible struggle between right and wrong is as sure as His Word. That Christ Jesus and His Executive is due to come before the new day arrives is a matter of Scripture. That He comes to separate the things which cause stumbling from the helpful things, is but reasonable. But we are too apt to confuse His position amongst us as Judge, or Separator, with that of His absolute reign during the seventh day. Now is the time that we ourselves must decide each his own destiny; we are wholly responsible for the future of our souls. After He has subjected everything to Himself or to the Royal Law, it is too late. *Something will have*

happened to us before that, if we choose to rebel against Him. As it is so generally conceded that the seventh day is to be a perfect condition, and as it is so clearly set forth to be an earthly state of being, we shall merely call attention to some prophecies which describe this condition as it works itself out in human experience so that we may have a substantial ground for all our efforts towards that end. In so doing we hope to be enabled to perceive to what an extent we have fallen into sinful habits and systems, and what deeply rooted cause we have for the repentance which is besought of us and demanded of us, if we wish to enter this near approaching *last* and *only* Holy City, the New Jerusalem. Jehovah commands us to seek after this special knowledge. What can be more immediately important to us at this testing epoch? He says, "Seek ye out of the book of Jehovah, and read; no one of these shall be missing, none shall want her mate; for my mouth it hath commanded and His Spirit it hath gathered them. And He hath cast the lot for them and His hand hath divided it into them by line." Prophecy has always been filled duly, and God's arm is not shortened that He cannot save, or that He cannot destroy. So, if we seek in His Word we shall find many descriptions of this coming condition which should interest and instruct us, if we are earnestly purposing to assist the Lord Christ with our best talents and opportunity,

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as the Holy Spirit shall direct and uphold us. If we think that Christ does not want or need our service we had better read in Isaiah where Jehovah says, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers take ye no rest, and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. . . . Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up an ensign for the peoples. Behold, Jehovah hath proclaimed unto the end of the earth, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him. And they shall call them The holy people, The redeemed of Jehovah." This certainly looks as if we should watch and work towards this great purpose, and our reward will be sure; and agrees with the Lord's word through John, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is." We must not only watch and work, but we must refine and purify ourselves. Daniel tells us regarding this day *the time of the end* thus: "Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly and none shall understand; but they that are wise shall understand." This teaches us that we shall not be *compelled* to become pure

and refined from the filth of sin; but that we must strive after it ourselves. The warnings to the seven churches in Asia, to which we have drawn attention, teach this same doctrine. We are constantly urged to repent ourselves of sinning, to be zealous to repent. Hosea warns the Church or spiritual Israel, "To sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap according to kindness; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek Jehovah, till He come and rain righteousness upon you. Ye have ploughed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies; for thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men." This leaves a grave responsibility on the Church to amend her own ways and learn to trust in God rather than in human might. Perhaps nothing which we can quote so well describes our present condition, and what God thinks of our ways, and what He asks that we should do instead thereof, as the following from the prophet Amos, "They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. . . . For I know how manifold are your transgressions and how mighty are your sins, ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, that turn aside the needy in the gates from their rights. . . . Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silence in such a time, for it is an evil time. . . . Woe unto you that desire the day of Jehovah! Wherefore would ye have the day of Jehovah? It is darkness and not light. . . .

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Shall not the day of Jehovah be darkness and not light, even very dark and no rightness in it? I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea though ye offer Me your burnt offerings and meat offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offering of your fat beasts. Take thou away from Me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty [or ever] flowing stream." We seem to have here a word of warning that is very poignant as it bears on our doctrinal religion and formal worship of God. This passage, taken with that found in Isaiah i. 10-20, shows plainly how God hates so much hollow pretence; so much cry of Lord, Lord, and, The day of Jehovah, The day of Jehovah. If we do not decide to obey the Royal Law of God, we had better not be calling loudly for the Lord, or for the day of Jehovah, for it is a dark day for those who deliberately choose Satan's rule. This day is ours when each of us decides, either for or against submission to the absolute rule of Christ Jesus on earth. We should remember that God said through Zephaniah: "And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their hearts, Jehovah will not do good, neither will He do evil." And the prophet urges the more obedient to "Seek ye Jehovah, all

ye meek of the earth, that have kept His ordinances. Seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger." Speaking of this testing time Malachi tells us that, when the Lord comes to His Temple, it will first be in Judgment. He says, "But who can abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap, and He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them as gold and silver, and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness." This is much the same idea as that contained in our Lord's parable of the wheat and the tares. In these passages much good is granted to be found in the sons of Levi. There is much gold and silver; but the foreign matter must be separated from the pure metal by the fires of God's crucible. There is much good wheat too, we rejoice to know that, but the tares are as yet too much mixed up with the wheat for seed for His new Kingdom. It is not unreasonable that the Sons of Levi should be asked to refine themselves and become so holy that "the bells of the horses therein shall have written upon them, 'Holy unto Jehovah,' and every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto Jehovah." It is only reasonable that holiness be required from those who teach the necessity of holiness. True, no one can be wholly good,

but each can confess his weakness and refine himself from the dross which has become a part of his measure of gold and silver, and a part of the living seed of good wheat which is his. And in our Christendom, which is made up of those souls to whom we are prayerfully appealing, do we not find the duty evident, and the opportunity ready, for this general movement of refinement, in all the various systems of commercial, social, intellectual, and religious life which go to make up our daily experience? Our Race may be said to exist in these four phases of being. Each must pass through the fires of God and of His Christ, and are now doing so; who could doubt it? There is a great call for brave soldiers of the Cross to-day. And all those who determine to fight the good fight should remember Elisha's comforting words to the timid young man who said, "Alas, my Master, how shall we do?" "Fear not," Elisha answered, "for they that are with us are more than they that are with them. And Elisha prayed and said, Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw, and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." The theme of special service in its many avenues is too long and intricate to more than note in its important place here. But we should think of this as a lesson regarding our security in these services; and we conclude from

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the above passage that we may hope for a like protection if we are working for the right object. And if we are thus working earnestly towards His Kingdom we must feel that nothing in heaven or earth or hell can stop our efforts if they are appointed to us of God. But we may, like His Only begotten Son, have some of the experience of Gethsemane, the Cup, and the Cross: we shall share His temptation of the wilderness, and His weariness, and also, we rejoice to know, we too shall have the ministry of the Holy Spirit to protect and assist us in all endeavours which are truly unselfish and holy. On this holy assistance and demoniac tempting by spiritual beings, hangs the explanation of the term, A New Heaven and a New Earth. We look for a Sabbath of rest from all that tempts and destroys. This would necessitate a new state of affairs in the heavenly or spiritual condition that lies immediately around us. Paul speaks of the third heaven; so there must be at least three. This is a very interesting theme, but we may only draw attention to it here, as it shows us how we stand to-day in the design of our Creator for our Race. And to-day I do believe that many of us hope and yearn for the rest from our sinning, which shall be ours under the Divine rule of Christ. O happy, obedient day when this Man shall be our peace! And it may be ours soon if we choose wisely and quickly.

“The choice is no vague nor doubtful one.

High on the desert mountain, full descried, sits throned the tempter with his old promise, the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. He still calls you to your labour, as Christ to your rest, labour and sorrow, base desire and cruel hope. So far as you desire to possess rather than to give; so far as you look for power to command instead of to bless; so far as your own prosperity seems to you to issue out of contest or rivalry, of any kind, with other men, or other nations; so long as the hope before you is for supremacy instead of love; and your desire is to be greatest instead of least, first instead of last, so long you are serving the Lord of all that is last and least. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death; and you shall have death's crown with the worm coiled in it; and death's wages with the worm feeding on them; kindred of the earth shall you become; saying to the grave, 'Thou art my father,' and to the worm, 'Thou art my mother and my sister.'

"I leave you to judge and to choose between this labour and the peace bequeathed; these wages and the gift of the Morning Star; this obedience and the doing of the will which shall enable you to claim another kindred than that of the earth, and to hear another voice than that of the grave, saying, 'My brother and sister and mother.'" —*Ruskin*.

Let us lend ourselves willingly and gladly to the grand and (we may be sure) universally beneficent

design and experience which the Master of our souls has appointed to our Race, and which in His infinitely perfect Judgment He pronounced to be Good. Let us submit ourselves to the "Master's touch."

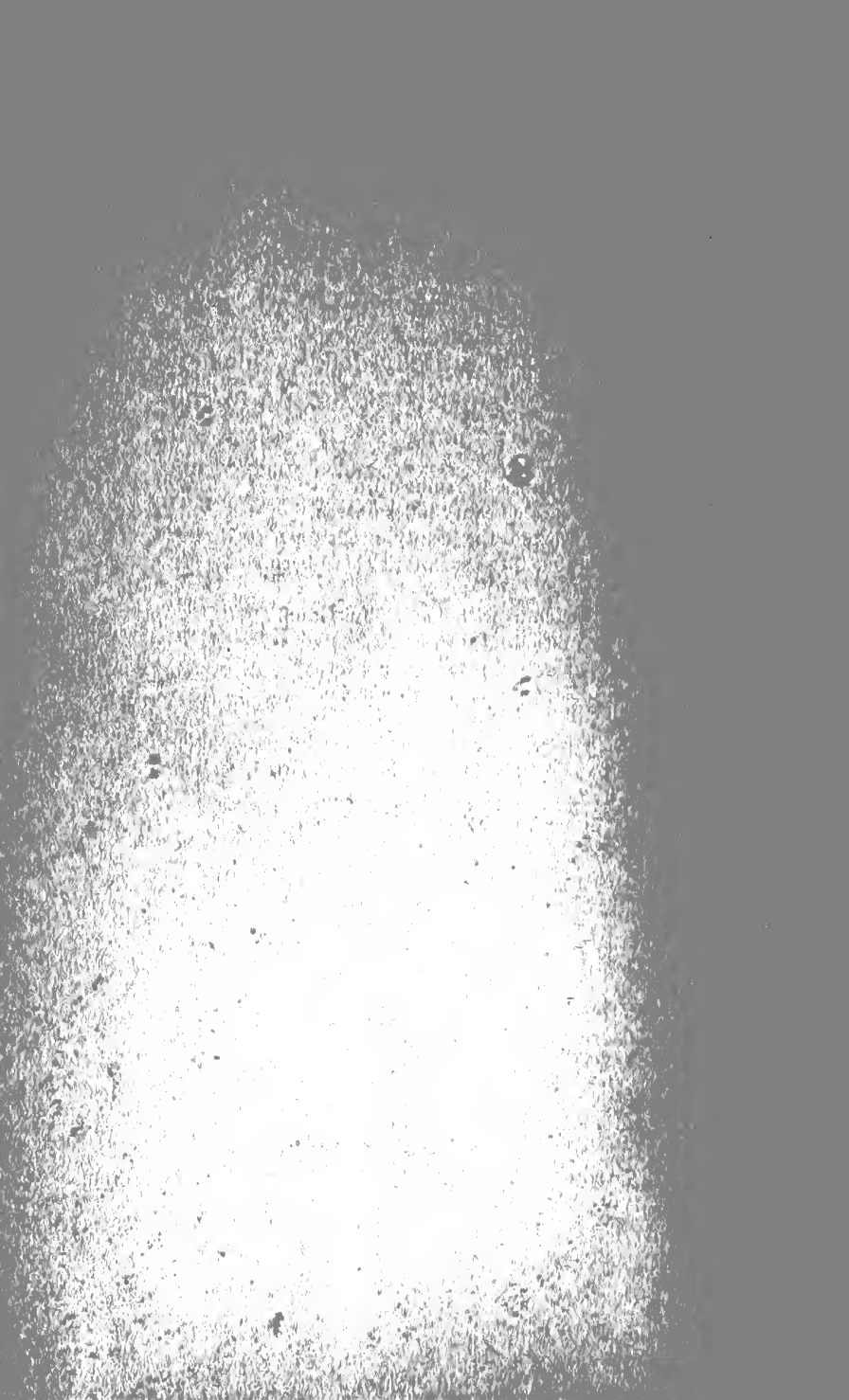
Horatius Bonar has beautifully defined this act of loving submission to the Great Royal Law of God. He says:

In the still air the music lies unheard,
In the rough marble beauty hides unseen,
To make the music and the beauty, needs
The Master's touch, the sculptor's chisel keen.

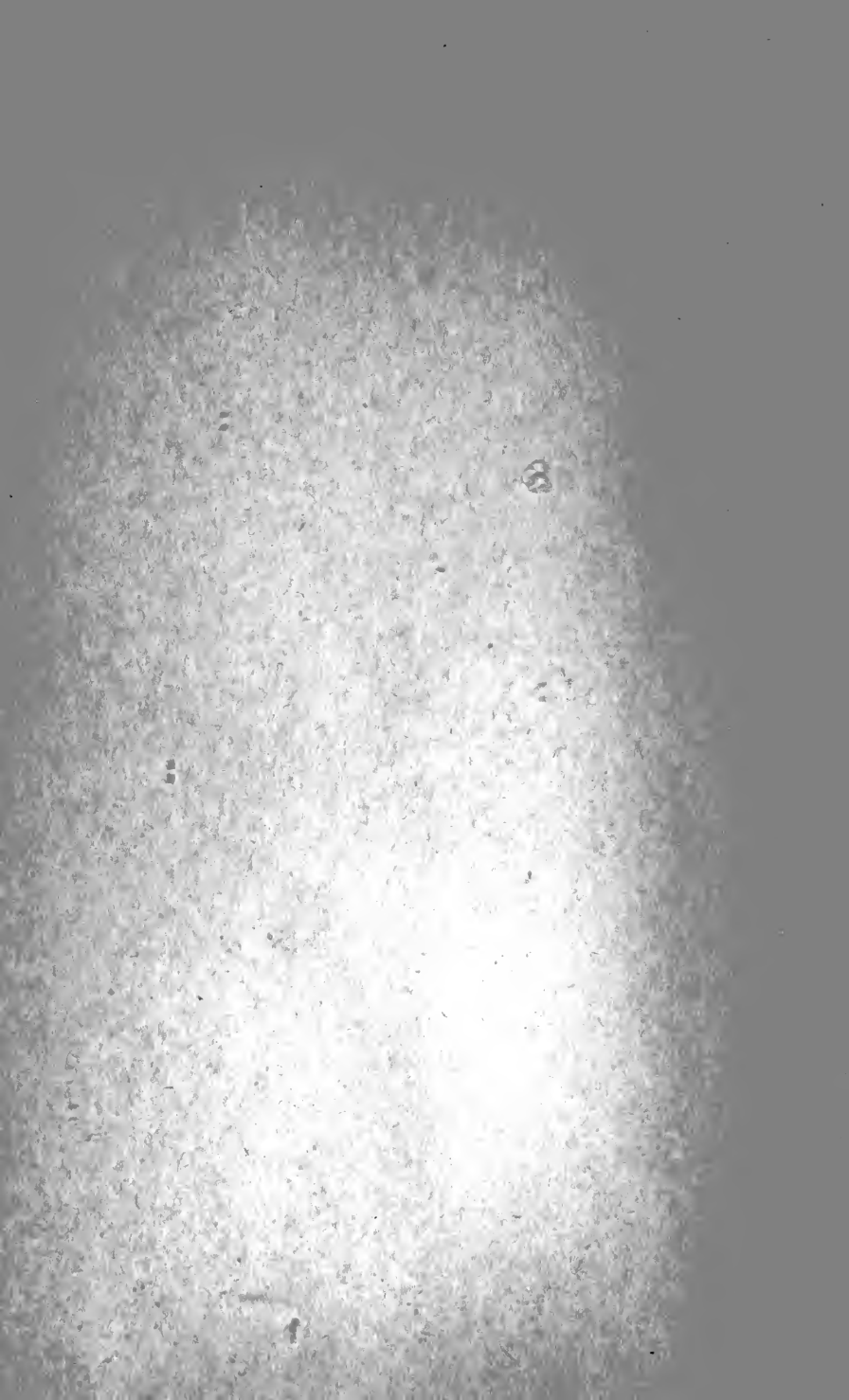
Great Master, touch us with Thy skilful Hand,
Let not Thy music that is in us die,
Great Sculptor, hew and polish us; nor let
Hidden and lost, Thy form within us lie.

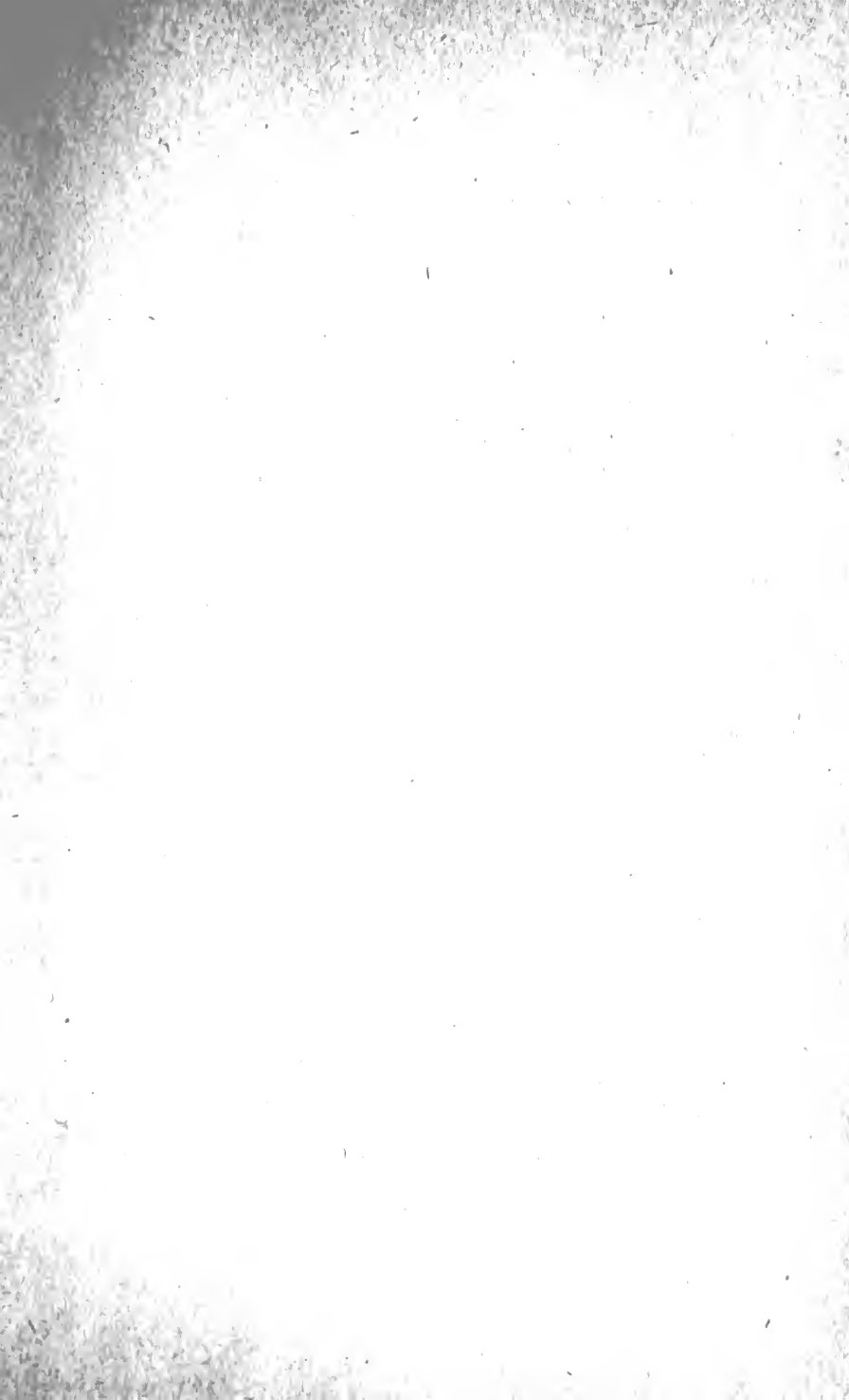
Spare not the stroke, do with us as Thou wilt,
Let there be naught unfinished, broken, marred,
Complete Thy purpose that we may become
Thy perfect image, thou our God, our Lord.

THE END.









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