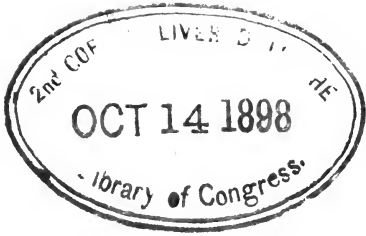
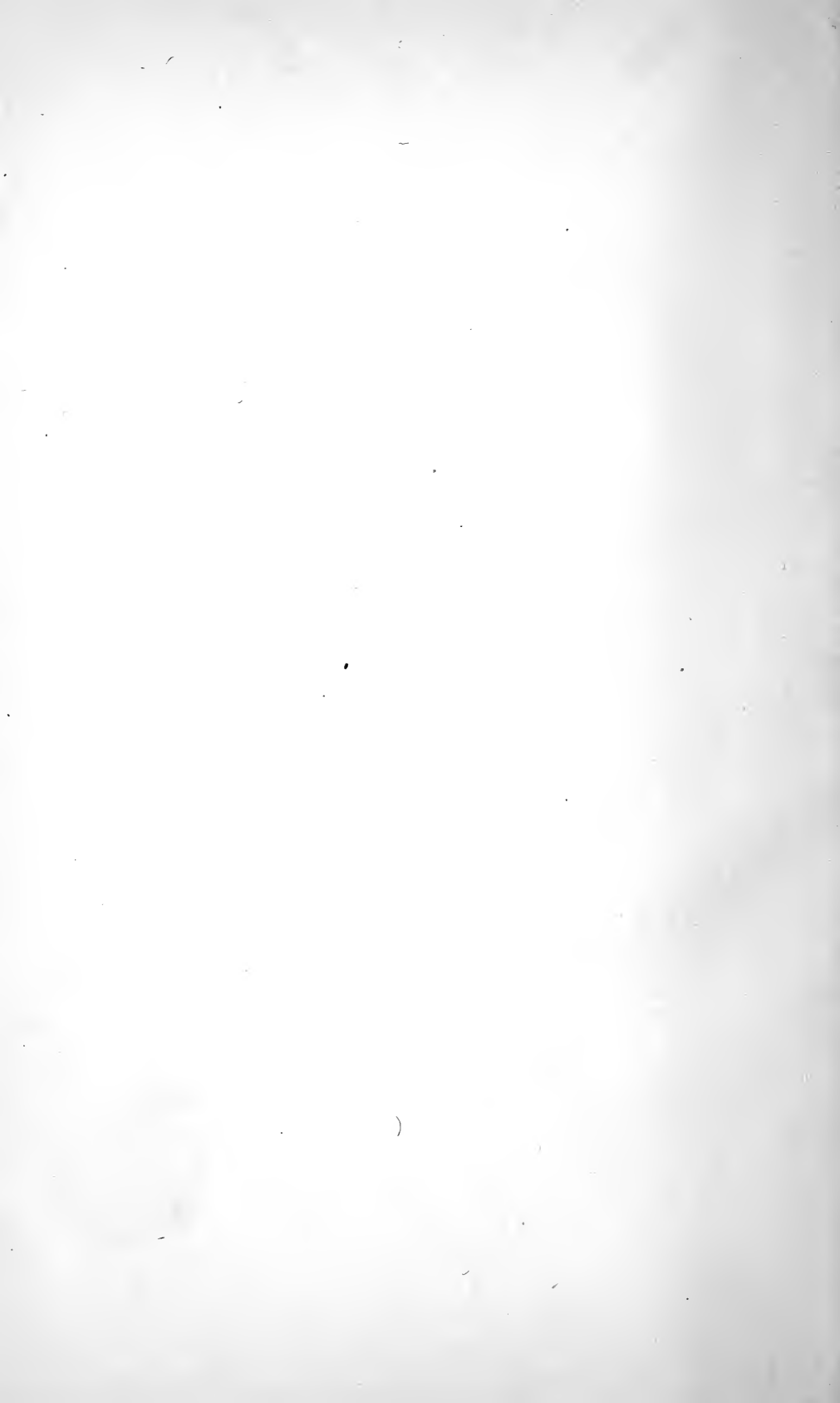


Spiritual Life

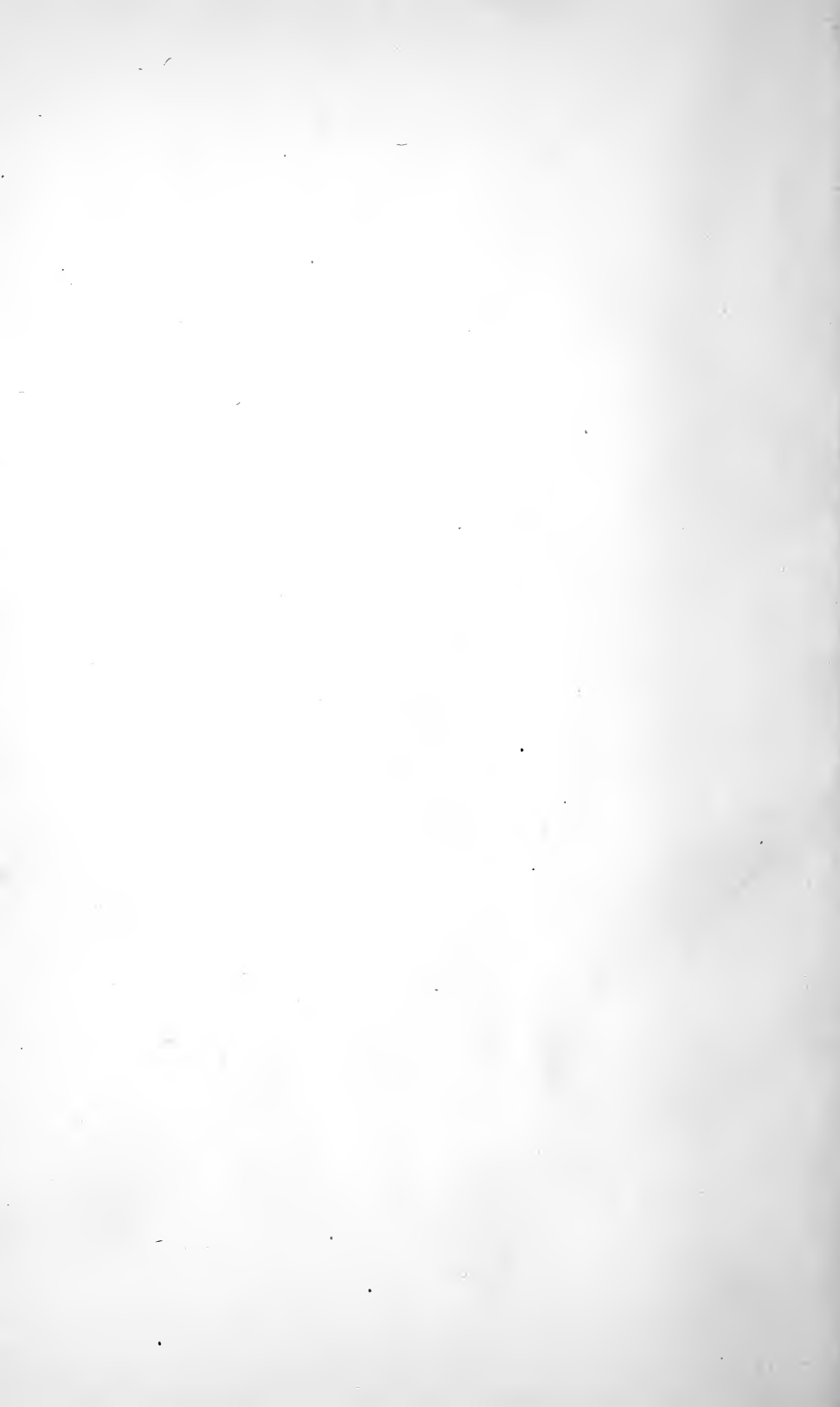


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SPIRITUAL LIFE.

BY REV. L. L. NASH, D.D.,
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
BISHOP O. P. FITZGERALD, D.D.

NASHVILLE, TENN.:
PUBLISHING HOUSE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.
BARBEE & SMITH, AGENTS.
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INTRODUCTION.

THESE twelve chapters are written in good, strong English style. They discuss the salient points of a subject of profound and eternal interest. The spirit of the writer is reverent and earnest; he appeals to Scripture authority and common sense; his strong conviction is contagious and invigorating; his buoyant faith uplifts the faith of the reader. The spirit of the book is not controversial, though the author gives no uncertain sound in any utterance that he makes. Even among readers who might differ somewhat from his manner of stating some of his views, no offense could be taken. He is everywhere sweet-toned and brotherly. From such examination as I have been able to give to the work, amid pressing duties and some physical disability, I can and do hereby commend it to the reading Christian public as worthy of their friendly consideration. The polemics of the book are not aggressive nor objectionable. Its spiritual suggestion and stimulation will not be small to him who reads thoughtfully and prayerfully.

O. P. FITZGERALD.

May, 1898.

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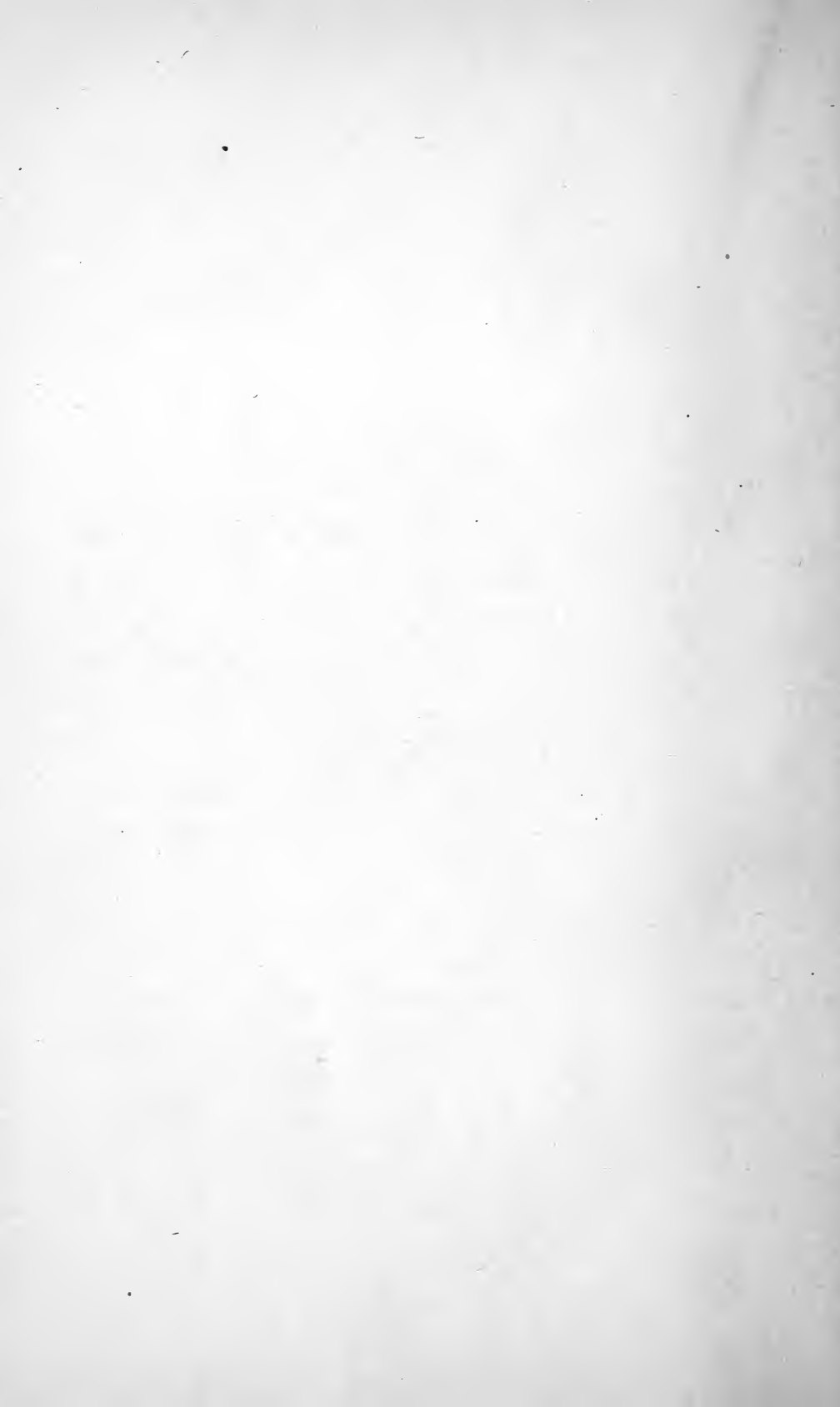
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“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”
(Rom. i. 20, 21.)



SPIRITUAL LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE SPIRITUAL SPHERE.

GOD has created two entities, and, so far as we know, only two: matter and spirit. No sane mind can question the real existence of either. Matter, we know, has an existence, because we are conscious of its presence, and through contact with it, by means of our senses, it becomes to us a conscious reality. As unreasonable as the denial of the existence of material things may appear to the common sense of mankind, its existence as a real entity has been denied by those whose minds have been disordered and whose reason has been perverted. But consciousness is the highest tribunal; and if we cannot believe our consciousness, we can know nothing, and we are in the strongest sense of the term agnostics.

Believing in the truthfulness of consciousness, and the reality of the existence of material and spiritual things, we shall not stop to consider the vagaries of those who question the correctness of

cognition, or the truthfulness of apprehension, but proceed to study the reality of spiritual things upon this foundation, and to investigate spiritual phenomena from what we know of spiritual things, with the hope of rising higher and knowing more about what we should be most interested in knowing. In material things we find lifeless, dead matter, and for convenience of classification we call this inorganized matter. Upon this foundation we find that the wise Creator has built vegetable and animal life. This we call organized matter. We call this organized matter the vegetable and animal kingdoms. In the material sphere we have three kingdoms: the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal kingdoms. Above all these kingdoms we have another, which we call the spiritual sphere, or the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal this kingdom to men. He claimed to be a King, and to have a kingdom. When he was arraigned before Pilate, and was asked, "Art thou a king?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John xviii. 37.) Jesus Christ was always a king, and lived and reigned in the spiritual realm, even

in the days of his humiliation. He said: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (John xviii. 36.) That he might teach the nature of this kingdom, Jesus exhausted every figure of speech; but his disciples were so dull of comprehension they could not understand him. They always connected it with the material, visible world. Even when he said to them, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," they did not understand him. When he told them that they should not say, "Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you," they were still far from apprehending his meaning. To see this kingdom we must be born again. Although this kingdom is within us, we cannot realize it without spiritual life. The spiritual kingdom is the most real and substantial part of God's creation.

"For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." All the phenomena of the spirit belong to the invisible and the eternal. The artist has the ideal of things, which he expresses in his work. The things themselves may be easily destroyed, but

the ideal is indestructible. This truth is accepted by philosophy, hence ideas are regarded as the only real entities.

“ While the idea gives rules, the *ideal* serves as the archetype for the permanent determination of the copy; and we have no other rule for our actions but the conduct of that divine man within us, with which we compare ourselves, and by which we judge and better ourselves, though we can never reach it. These ideals, though they cannot claim objective reality, are not therefore to be considered as chimeras, but supply reason with an indispensable standard, because it requires the concept of that which is perfect of its kind, in order to estimate and measure by it the degree and number of the defects in the imperfect.” (Kant, “ Critique of Pure Reason.”)

It matters not how little we know of the realm of the spiritual, it has influence over us, and we are largely controlled by forces that belong to the spirit world. In the order of creation of the material universe, the higher is built upon the lower. “ Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.” (1 Cor. xv. 46, 47.) In the order in

creation, the earth was first found; then vegetable life appeared; then the lower order of animal life; and last of all man was made in the image of God himself. The fall and redemption of man were in the mind of God from the beginning. Not that God ordered or caused the fall, but the plan of redemption and restoration of man to a place in the kingdom of God was no afterthought with the Deity. In man there is a union of the material and spiritual. He belongs to two worlds. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

There was a spiritual sphere before the material universe was created, and the inhabitants of this kingdom sang together and shouted for joy when God spread out the north over the empty place and hung the planets upon nothing. But it is with reference to man's relation to the spiritual kingdom that the earthy comes first. It is the divine plan that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." There are, no doubt, myriads of inhabitants of the spirit world who have never "borne the image of the earthy." The great mystery of the spiritual sphere is seen in the relation of man to this higher kingdom. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God

was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) This mystery engages the thought of angels. They study the question from above, while men study it from below. Man is the mystery of the universe because the material and spiritual both meet in him. Angels are his servants: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) But these things are hid from the natural man. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) We might as well attempt to teach the blind how colors look, or the deaf the melody of sound, as to attempt to show the things that belong to the spiritual world to the natural man, until he receives spiritual sight. Hence we shall not be surprised if some things that are said, in our effort to describe the spiritual sphere, are looked upon as foolishness by those who know nothing of spiritual life. But be patient with us, and it may be that you will, unexpectedly to yourself, find that you are brought into a new world.

The natural man is like the shipwrecked mariners who escaped from a sinking ship in a life-boat. After drifting until they were nearly famished for water, they saw a vessel and cried for help. As they neared the vessel they called for water, and were told to reach over the sides of their boat and drink, for they were sailing in fresh water. Miles of fresh water were all around them, and they knew it not. The natural man is conscious that he needs something to make him happy. There is within him a longing for something better than this lower world can give him. Here his pleasures perish with the using. He sees his cherished hopes blasted, and is disappointed in his fondest expectations. The world—his world—passes away, and leaves him disappointed and lonely. In his sore distress he asks, “Is life worth living?” and there is no answer but the echo of his own voice. He looks up to the stars, and they seem to mock his helpless grief with their merry twinkle. He studies all nature for a solution of his question, and a solace for his sorrow, but no answer comes to his troubled heart, and no light penetrates the sullen gloom that surrounds him. Like a solitary cloud, self-balanced and alone, he is in a universe of gloom.

In this condition the kingdom of God offers

him a refuge. The King calls him: "Come unto me, all ye that labor 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." (Matt. xi. 28-30.)

There is one mistake that keeps many from accepting this gracious invitation. They imagine the kingdom of God is a long way off. They measure spiritual things by material measure. The promises of God are all put off to be enjoyed in the future. Could this restless, troubled world realize that the kingdom of God is at hand, and its blessings within reach, would not a sunburst of happiness drive away the clouds of trouble and unrest, and bring peace to troubled hearts? When we think of heaven we put it away beyond the stars, and imagine that a home so far away cannot cure our present ills. When we think of spiritual beings, because we cannot see them with our natural eyes, we doubt their existence, and sink down into the valley of gloom. We are like Jacob when he went away from home to escape the fury of Esau, whom he had robbed of his birthright. He thought he was not only leaving home and friends behind, but God as well; and

lay down on the ground with a heavy heart, and a pillow of stone. He was disconsolate indeed. But while he slept he had a vision. A ladder was let down from heaven, and the angels ascended and descended upon it. They surrounded him with their glorious presence and illuminated the place where he lay, until his sad heart was so filled with spiritual light that he awoke in a new world, and exclaimed, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not!" We need a vision of the spiritual world. We need to know that the place where we dwell "is none other but the house of God"; and "the gate of heaven." The angels are around about us, and God, who is over all, stands above us ready to say: "I am the Lord God of your fathers, and to me all things belong. I am able to supply all your need, and to give you an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Faith in the spiritual is not an unreasonable superstition. It cannot be that a world like this—so full of evidence of wisdom, inhabited by such beings as men whose aspirations reach out into the infinite and eternal future, and whose instincts demand an interest in another and a better country—is entirely disconnected from the spiritual realm. We cannot bring the spiritual world un-

der the government of natural law. We cannot apply linear measure to spiritual distances. We may flash our words around the globe with lightning speed, but thought annihilates space independent of a wire conductor or a galvanic battery. It is only the material part of man that depends on material contrivances, and only as he is connected with matter that he has need of material things. Neither can that which is purely material get into the spiritual world. Matter is not spirit, and never can be. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." (1 Cor. xv. 50.) "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) It is a spiritual kingdom, and our material part cannot enter its mysteries or share its joys; it is for our spirits. This does not prove that there will be no material bodies in heaven, but it does prove that we cannot carry our material thoughts and sensual natures into this kingdom. Matter and spirit are united in humanity, and after the resurrection our bodies and spirits will be forever united; but the distinction between matter and spirit will forever remain. Flesh and blood as it exists in this life will not be

the casket of the soul in the future; and yet there will be a resurrection of our bodies, and a glorification of them to suit the eternal character of the spiritual sphere. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) Jesus Christ arose from the dead, and ascended into heaven with his glorified body. We do not know what changes passed upon his material body; but his spiritual part is the same that dwelt among men, and his body is the same that was nailed to the cross, in spite of its glorification.

Science teaches us that light in a vacuum travels about one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second, and that at this great rate of speed it would take some of the fixed stars hundreds and thousands of years to throw their beams of light on our planet. But Jesus Christ arose with his glorified body to heaven, which may be beyond the stars, immediately; and ten days after he left, the Holy Spirit came upon his disciples, and filled them with the power of the kingdom of God. He has the power over material things to set aside the fixed laws that govern them, and to do what would be impossible to do in harmony with these laws as we understand them. The material is subject to

the spiritual. The kingdom of God is the supreme kingdom. Miracles are manifestations of spiritual power and energy. To say that a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature is, in reality, an employment of language which in the face of the matter cannot be justified. Miracles are the manifestation of a power superior to matter and above matter and its laws as we are able to comprehend them. Our efforts to interpret spiritual phenomena by material rules, and to bring the spiritual in subjection to the material kingdom, are manifestly an error. But it is hard for us to think in any way without using the language of earth, and the revelation that God makes to us is made in our language because we can understand no other. There are, no doubt, things belonging to the spirit world we have no power yet to understand. "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Cor. xii. 2-4.) Such was the experience of St.

Paul. He kept the experience to himself for fourteen years, and when he did speak of it he did not assert his own personality, but leaves us to infer who the man was who received this revelation. He carried through his life a knowledge of the spirit world that he could not make known to the Church. Why it was unlawful to tell what he heard we do not know; but it seems that he who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, would not withhold from us any good thing if we could receive it in our present state. St. Paul had a special mission to the world, and he received special qualifications for his work; while he got an insight into the spiritual sphere he could not tell in all its fullness, he did make known enough of the mysteries of this kingdom to enable every believer in his gospel to adjust himself to the kingdom of God. And yet: "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." (2 Pet. iii. 16.)

The whole revelation of God is an effort on his part to reveal himself and his kingdom to man. We say this with reverence, for we fully believe in the omnipotence of Deity; but we cannot but

believe that the most stupendous work the God-head ever enterprised is the redemption of man and raising him up out of this natural, sinful world into his eternal kingdom. The creation of the material universe, and peopling it with sentient beings, was but the work of his fingers. His greater power is displayed in the restoration of man to the divine image. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Pet. i. 3, 4.) From all this we learn that sin separates us from God and his kingdom. It is the will of God that we should not only enter into his kingdom, but partake of his nature. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." To see here means to possess, to enjoy; and the blessedness is not in the future, but in the present tense. While "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," yet "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all

things, yea, the deep things of God.” (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.)

While we cannot put the experiences wrought in us into language intelligible to the natural man, we can enter into the experiences of the kingdom of God. These experiences spring from our knowledge of Christ, “whom not having seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.”

Miracles are not the best evidence of the existence and power of God or of the reality of the spiritual and eternal kingdom of God. The necessity for the working of miracles to make God manifest to men is no compliment to our intelligence, but rather a rebuke of our stupidity. The divine power and presence of God may be seen everywhere by him whose spiritual eyes are opened. It is unbelief that asks for a sign, and no sign is given unto it.

Truly Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee; but is there any more evidence of his divine power in this miracle than may be seen by the eye of faith every day, as by natural law, which is nothing but the divine manner of doing things, we see water turned into wine as

it refreshes the vine and makes it bear the wine-producing grape?

The days of miracles have passed away, but God is showing himself and his spiritual kingdom to believing souls in his providence. He is uncovering himself in his saving grace as Jesus Christ is revealed in human experience and as the kingdom of God is set up in human hearts. There is something unspeakably glorious in the experience of men when they enter the kingdom of God. This experience is more than a creed; it is a life. To enlarge this life is our object in these pages.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

(25)



CHAPTER II.

THE NATURAL MAN.

BY the term “natural man” is meant an unspiritual man, one who has been born of the flesh, but who has never been born of the Spirit. He is a child of fallen Adam. He is dead to spiritual life, and is so regarded in the Scriptures. While this is the condition of every unregenerate man, there is a spiritual influence that exerts itself on every such man, that works in him much that is good. It is this spiritual power that plants within him that silent monitor we call conscience. What is conscience but the consciousness that the acts for which a person believes himself to be responsible do or do not conform to this ideal of right; the moral judgment of the individual applied to his own conduct, in distinction from his perception of right and wrong in the abstract and in the conduct of others. It manifests itself in the feeling of obligation or duty, the moral imperative “I ought” or “I ought not.” Conscience is a witness implanted by the Holy Spirit in every human breast. The fact that there is such a witness is unquestionable, but the Author

of its existence is not recognized by the natural man. He thinks that his conscience is a part of himself, and is not derived from any other source. He attributes the work actually wrought in him by the Spirit of God to his own moral goodness, and for this reason does not know that he is spiritually dead. The natural man is a robber and a rebel. He robs God of the glory of his work wrought in humanity, and rebels against obedience to what he knows to be right. If he persists in this course, conscience itself will by and by cease, and leave him capable of committing the most atrocious crimes without compunction.

In a description of the natural man it will be necessary to show man up in his most desperate condition. Let us bear in mind the fact that no man is entirely destitute of divine influence, and in a purely natural state, until he has done violence to his conscience, and seared it as with a hot iron.

While we are all sinners by nature, yet "where sin abounded" grace does "much more abound." We are born into the world with corrupt natures; and yet, under the gracious provisions of the atonement, all who die in infancy are unconditionally saved. The gracious influence of the Spirit of God will save every human soul who does not of his own volition rebel against this influence.

Man has a bad heredity by nature, and his environment in this world is not calculated to correct his evil bias. The work of his salvation, graciously begun in him by virtue of the atonement, has much to overcome, both from inherited sin and bad external surroundings. When we consider the immense work involved in imparting spiritual life to fallen man, we need not be surprised at the slow progress made, even under the operation of almighty grace and love. This world is full of attractions for the natural man, and they are all opposed to spiritual life. The carnal nature is enmity to God; it is not subject to his law; neither can it be. To establish spiritual life necessitates the crucifixion of the flesh, with its appetites and passions. St. Paul gives us a catalogue of the works of the flesh, and the doing of the things described in this list is perfectly natural to every unregenerated soul. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. v. 19-21.)

In the doing of these things the natural man finds his pleasure. The love of them is so strong that he has no power of himself to turn away from them. He has no desire to give them up, until grace works in him that desire. He has no will to depart from them until God works in him that good will, and enables him to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling; while God works in him to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

The pleasures of sin are a present possession. The opportunity for enjoying them is always at hand. The natural man can understand these things; he cannot understand the higher and better joys of spiritual life. Much has been said and written about man's creation in the likeness of God, and of his fall. We do not propose to deal with the history of man, but in this connection deal with him as we find him. We accept without question or misgiving the account of creation given us in the Bible, but we are not so much concerned to know where man came from as we are to know what he is and what is to be his final destiny. We find him just such a being as the Bible describes. When not assisted by divine grace, all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually. He is a selfish, cruel being, living for his own gratification, and so un-

feeling that it has been justly said that "nothing equals man's inhumanity to man." Placed as he is in a world where the beneficent Creator has made so many things conducive to his happiness, and where there is so much evidence that his Creator is love, and desires his well-being; yet he persists in turning the blessings of heaven into a curse, and in making himself miserable, while he spends his time and energy in making his fellow-men unhappy. He knows what is right, and approves it; but pursues a wrong course, against his own reason and the happiness of himself and others. In all ages, and among all peoples, there has been acknowledgment that there is something wrong with humanity. This knowledge is not confined to those who have studied the sacred Scriptures. Heathen philosophers and sages have recognized this fact; and many of them have grappled with the difficulty, and made heroic efforts to reform the race. Some of these would-be reformers of the world's irregularities have left the impression of their labors on the world, and the result of their teachings have lived long after they passed away. Let us study a few of these human teachers of humanity and their work. Confucius, the sage of China, whose teachings have affected a larger part of the human race than the teachings of any other

mere man, saw that the world needed reforming, and spent his life in an effort to make men good. His teachings did not deal with the future, nor did he trouble himself with the origin of the race. To correct the wrong tendency of human life, and make the world better, by improving the minds and morals of mankind, was the task of the Chinese philosopher and sage. His success in making himself a name, and living for centuries in the minds and hearts of the inhabitants of the most populous nation on the globe, is attributable to the fact that he dealt with the world as he knew it, and taught the truth as he saw it. But his teachings, while accepted by millions, did not possess the power to lift men up to the excellent moral idea he possessed, or destroy the selfishness of the natural man, and make him what all could see he ought to be.

In the study of Greek and Roman literature we find abundant evidence to prove that mankind lived far below the ideal of rectitude held by the wisest and best men of their day. Human nature is the same in all ages. The depths of degradation into which the downward tendency of man plunges him has left its own evidence in the history of the past, and the condition of the natural man of to-day proclaims the same deplorable fate for the race unaided by the power of divine grace.

While everything in nature moves in harmony with the law under which it is placed, man presents, and has always presented, a notable exception. To the thoughtful mind, we constantly see that we live in a world "where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile." Education has been tried, as a remedy to correct man's irregularities and bring him into harmony with the law under which he is placed. But so perverse is unregenerate humanity that it becomes more hopelessly wicked and contrary to the law of right as it ascends the scale of intellectual development in its natural state. So true is this that it is an axiom that "educated depravity is a machine of destruction." Cultivate the faculties of fallen man, and you but teach him the art of gilding sin, and to take away from it the ugliness that belongs to it, and make that appear attractive which would otherwise be repulsive. Look at humanity in squalor and rags, covered with filth, and breathing out blasphemy; and the sinner himself turns away from the loathsome sight in disgust. But take the same fallen, depraved thing and teach it the art of gentility, cultivate æsthetic faculties, polish it with polite manners, and give it the science of the diplomat, and you have increased its power for evil a hundredfold. But in spite of all this, sin in high

life is as loathsome, yea, more loathsome in the eyes of God than it is in its natural dress. Extremes meet at every point in the life of fallen humanity. The natural man, in the enjoyment of wealth and honor, can hide his ugliness from his fellow with the long robe and wide phylacteries of the Pharisee. But God judgeth not as man judgeth. He looks upon the heart. The fashionable sinner, clothed in fine linen and purple, and faring sumptuously every day, who sows to the flesh, will be as sure to reap corruption as the most degraded and loathsome wretch that lies in the gutter. The cultivated, refined woman who knows nothing of spiritual life is as far from heaven and happiness as her shameless sister who sells her soul for the bread that perisheth and disgraces her kind to the disgust of the wicked. "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." (1 Tim. v. 6.) To reach the natural man with spiritual life at either extreme of human society is the problem that confronts the kingdom of God. Much attention is given to the "submerged tenth"—not too much, however—but at the other end of the line, in the higher walks of human society, there is a problem, the solution of which is so difficult, and the task so stupendous, that the bravest hardly dares to undertake it. The natural man seems

aware of the fact that this world is his kingdom. He will tolerate the kingdom of God if it does not thrust its demands across his plans and intrude its requirements into an interruption of his pleasures.

The Son of God was tolerated while he confined himself to the working of miracles; but when he drove out the money-changers from the temple, and declared that the scribes and Pharisees would be cast out of the kingdom of God, their hatred knew no bounds, and their malice would accept nothing but his blood. There are many at this day who breathe the same spirit. They are not unnatural, but natural men. Even the grace of God is turned into lasciviousness, and all the work of uplifting humanity by the Lord, who bought the human race with his blood, is denied; and this not by the lowest and most degraded, but by the most favored of the children of men. It is in the higher walks of human society that the most stubborn resistance to spiritual life is found. As the kingdom of God advances, and human society is elevated, the tendency is to turn the Church of God into an affair of human society, and use it as a means of furthering the sensual pleasures of the natural man. Where these conditions are met, human nature in its worst form is intrenched in its most impregnable fortress. Education and cul-

ture alone are so far from saving man, and fitting him for the kingdom of God, that they often place him beyond the reach of those means designed for his salvation.

The natural man must be crucified before the spiritual man can be raised up. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. viii. 7.) We may polish the natural man ever so much, even until he appears beautiful, but his innate depravity and hatred to God will remain. As a volcano clad in snow may glisten in the sunlight, a thing of beauty, while the boiling lava is ever ready to burst out in an eruption and spread desolation and death, so stands the natural man, with all the polish of the schools, but carnal and at enmity with God.

The conflict between the carnal nature and the Spirit of God is unto death. It is a fight to a finish; there can be no compromise. The cross of the Christian is not a beautiful jewel, to be worn with pleasure, but it is a rough instrument, and has blood on it. He who bore the cross for sinners, and despised the shame that He might save them, never offered them salvation from their fallen condition on easy terms. He knew what was in man, and did not fail to declare unto him the whole truth.

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”
(Ephesians v. 14.)

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CHAPTER III.

THE AWAKENED MAN.

MAN in his natural state is dead to spiritual things. He is called upon by his Maker to awake out of sleep, and to arise from the dead. To show him the true condition in which he is placed by his relation to fallen Adam, the strongest figures of speech are employed. He is told that he cannot know God without a spiritual birth. There is kindled in his soul pleasing hopes and longings after immortality. He is made to feel a sense of fear of something hidden from him in the mysterious future. He cannot entirely divest himself of the idea that he must spend an eternity in a state of happiness or in a state of conscious suffering. All his reasoning cannot remove these hopes and fears entirely from his mind. He may not be inclined to believe the revelation God has given him; but, after all his reasoning against it, the awful thought remains: "These things may be true; and if they are true, they are tremendous truths."

We cannot think that there is a rational human being who never felt these awakenings. They are wrought in every man by the Spirit of God.

They are more sensibly felt at some times than at others. The incidents and circumstances that surround us in life have much to do in giving power and effect to these awakening agencies. The Holy Ghost is operating upon all human hearts and minds for this purpose. God is striving to arouse his human offspring to a sense of his presence and his love. These aspirations for a higher and better life are supernatural. They are flashes of light from the spiritual sphere. In them we see signs of spiritual life. If this light is followed, it will lead the earnest inquirer into the knowledge of things that cannot be conceived by the natural man.

Life has been defined by science to be "correspondence to environment." The spiritual environment is ever present, but man does not correspond to it until he is awakened. He lives and moves and has his being in God, and yet knows him not. Every revelation of Deity is an effort to arouse humanity to a consciousness of spiritual life. The thunderings of Sinai and the tragedy of Calvary have the same object. One appeals to man's sense of fear; the other touches his sympathy. One shows the majesty of God; the other reveals his love. Sinai appeals to man's reason, and says, "God is just and will punish sin"; Calvary appeals to his heart, and says, "God is

merciful and will pardon transgression." All that could be done to arouse a lost world to a sense of danger and deliverance has been done, and yet the world sleeps on and knows not the power of spiritual life. The awakening is not complete. A few hear the voice of the Son of God, and come into the kingdom. Satan is busy applying spiritual opiates to all who will take them. As long as he can soothe the conscience of the awakened soul and quiet the guilty fears of those who are not in touch with God, he is sure of his prey. He creeps into the Church and does his most effectual work as an angel of light. Many truly awakened souls have been lulled to sleep by a profession of faith in Christ without a conscious experience of pardon. The shadow is too often mistaken for the substance, and a form of godliness is accepted that knows nothing of redemption, and denies the power thereof. But in the face of these difficulties the divine agencies for awakening men are in operation, sometimes with more effect than others in individual cases. While the Spirit of God is always at work, yet there is indisputable evidence that there are seasons of special spiritual power in the awakening and conversion of sinners. These seasons come when the human instrumentality is brought in subjection to

the divine agency. God has taken man as his co-worker in this great enterprise. The divine power and grace are always present in the individual, and may at any time arouse any man into a state of deep concern for his salvation; but external instruments are generally necessary to give this divine grace efficacy. Hence the need of "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." These seasons, in which there are general awakenings, come when the human instruments are brought in touch with the Spirit of God. The first great awakening among men in this dispensation of grace occurred on the day of Pentecost. While the disciples of Christ were in one place, and in one accord, the Holy Ghost was poured out, and thousands were awakened to a sense of spiritual life. "They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Whenever the conditions are met the awakening power of God comes to the world. The Church is the channel through which God sends this power. He does not depend, however, upon a great multitude; but where there are two or three assembled in his name he has a means with which to work. Our Lord seems to have confided his interest to the Church; and not only does his glory depend on

the fidelity of his people, but the salvation of the world also. There has never been a general awakening among men that did not come from the coöperation of a few who were brought in touch with the Spirit of God.

In view of the fact that it is necessary to the salvation of men that they must be awakened to the importance of spiritual life, and the Church occupies such an important relation to a lost world, the importance of this work is enough to wake the Church to a sense of her duty and responsibility. The Saviour of the world has given a charge to his people, and says to them: "Occupy till I come." There is encouragement given along with this responsibility, for the Lord is ever ready to coöperate with his people in all proper efforts to awaken a sleeping world.

The means necessary to accomplish this work, so far as human instrumentality is concerned, is worthy of consideration. All who believe the Scriptures are agreed that a preached gospel is the divinely appointed agency intended to accomplish this purpose. But there is a great diversity of opinion as to how the gospel shall be preached as an awakening agency. Some do not believe that it is necessary to appeal to a sense of fear of future punishment to awaken sinful men. But

they certainly do not get this idea from the preaching of Jesus Christ or his apostles. If it had not been necessary to warn men of the danger of an endless hell to awaken them to a sense of the importance of fleeing the wrath to come, the Saviour would not have said: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix. 43-48.)

From the teachings of the Scriptures it is plain that a sense of fear of future and eternal punishment is necessary to arouse men from the sleep of death to the joy of spiritual life. It may be questioned whether any man was ever thoroughly awakened until he felt certain of the danger of future punishment. The Holy Ghost is sent into

the world "to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

The awakened man fears the punishment in store for him in the future. He is assured that when he dies without pardon he must make his bed in hell. A dreadful bed indeed; where rest comes neither day nor night, and where the voice of gladness is never heard. He is fully assured of this state of wretchedness, although he may have doubts about a blissful immortality for any one. This is the side of spiritual being first revealed to a sinner. He is ready to exclaim with the psalmist: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." (Ps. cxvi. 3.)

Spiritual life is accompanied with the pains of spiritual birth. These pains belong to the period of spiritual awakening. This experience is not a creed; for many who believe the things revealed in the Scriptures, who are orthodox so far as the assent of the mind is concerned, have paid so little attention to the awakenings of the Spirit of God and the personal appeals of the gospel that they are strangers to the quickenings of the spirit of life.

It is not only necessary that the gospel should be preached in all its faithfulness, but personal ap-

plication should be made of its teachings. There is work here for all who personally enjoy spiritual life. Our Lord's method of evangelizing put every one who came in touch with him to work upon others. When they had found the life they forgot self in the fullness of their joy, and brought their friends to him. It is impossible to live in daily contact with those who are fully alive to the powers of spiritual life, and not feel the mighty influence. And yet we have professedly Christian families with unawakened members in them: parents who profess to know Christ, with godless children, dead in sin, and growing more callous every day; wives who profess to know Christ, with godless husbands, who never seem to think it is any of their business to wake their companions out of the sleep of death; husbands who claim to be Christians, with godless wives. It is this state of things that hangs like a pall of death over a sleeping world. Should we wonder that the unsaved question the reality of our profession, and the existence of a spiritual sphere? These could not exist if all who profess to know Christ and to be in touch with the spiritual world were themselves fully alive.

*“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation
not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world
worketh death.” (2 Cor. vii. 10.)*

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CHAPTER IV.

REPENTANCE.

IT is not enough that man should be awakened to a knowledge of his condition as an unsaved spirit? He must coöperate with God in the work of salvation. The first call of the gospel that comes to his awakened ears is a call to repentance. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iii. 1, 2.) "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iv. 17.) "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 3.) It behooves us to attend carefully to this call, and learn what it means; for we are taught that there are two kinds of repentance. One is a partial or worldly repentance, wherein one is grieved for and turns from his sin merely on account of the hurt it has done or is likely to do him. So a malefactor, who still loves his sin, repents of doing it, because it brings him to punishment. Then there is what is called an evangelical repentance, which is a godly sorrow wrought in the

heart of a sinful person by the word and spirit of God, whereby from a sense of his sin, as offensive to God and defiling and endangering to his own soul, and from an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, he, with grief and hatred of all his known sins, turns from them to God, as his Saviour and Lord. This is called "repentance toward God," as therein we turn from sin to him; and "repentance unto life," as it leads to spiritual life, and is the first step the awakened man makes toward eternal life. This repentance springs from godly sorrow, an experience hard to define so that those who never felt it can understand. It is an experience that belongs to the spiritual life, and, like every other experience of spiritual things, it must be felt to be understood. Nevertheless we will endeavor to describe it so that all may know whether they have received this grace; and if not, we will endeavor to point to the means by which it may be obtained, and leave none an excuse for remaining in an impenitent state.

Repentance is more than conviction for and sorrow on account of sin; it also involves turning away from sin. It is not simply turning away from sin, but involves a godly sorrow for sin, and herein lies the experience of repentance. We cannot be too careful to define the gracious work and

experience in repentance on the one hand, or to show the part we have in this work on the other hand. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (2 Cor. vii. 10.) There can be no spiritual life among men without repentance. It lies at the foundation of the spiritual structure, and is an important part of the building. It is not a grace to be experienced once and then laid aside, but goes along with us at every stage of spiritual progress. It is not necessary that we should commit some fresh offense after we obtain pardon, that the heart may continue to feel the sweet experience of godly sorrow; for, paradoxical as the statement may appear, the spiritual man gets real joy out of godly sorrow. It is the root of humility, and must abide in the soul of every one who remains in the kingdom of God. It is the opposite experience from the sorrow of the world which worketh death. There is life in every heart throb produced by godly sorrow. It puts the soul in touch with Him who bore our sorrows and carried our griefs. This view of the grace of repentance explains the expression of an early Christian father, who said: "The Christian has his joys and his sorrows, but somehow his sorrows are

sweeter than his joys." Those who have felt the sweet meltings of heart that come from true repentance are not glad that they ever sinned that they might feel them, for this experience destroys all love of sin, and is the only grace that does; but they do rejoice because this grace brings them in touch with the meek and lowly Saviour, and enables them to learn of him.

Repentance being the first fruit of spiritual life, it is of the utmost importance that it be genuine. If we begin wrong, we shall hardly ever get right.

It is not necessary that we should be great sinners to be deeply penitent, for God is infinitely purer and holier than the best child of fallen Adam. The carnal nature in every human being is enmity to God, and must be crucified. Repentance makes all the promises of God sweet to the soul. It gives new life to prayer. It is this grace which brings us to the Saviour's feet; that lays us low, and keeps us there.

Repentance is the gift of God—that is, the grace that enables us to repent is his gift. He cannot repent for us, neither can we repent without his gracious help. That this grace is his free gift we learn from the Scriptures. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is writ-

ten, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke xxiv. 45-47.) "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts xi. 18.) "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." (2 Tim. ii. 24-26.) From these quotations, and many others that might be given, we see that God gives repentance. Without the grace that works contrition in the soul, no man can repent. It is not enough to reform our lives and cease to do evil and learn to do well. Many have no doubt done this and fancied themselves Christians who never truly and heartily repented of their sins. We must forsake sin from a spiritual motive. It is a hard thing for us to be sure of our motives. If the motives be pure, our whole life will be right; but if our motives be wrong, the

whole life will be wrong. We may turn away from sin without any hatred of it, we may abstain from doing many things that would give us pleasure, not because God forbids the doing of them but for other considerations, and imagine that we are serving God, when in reality we are serving ourselves. True repentance destroys the love of sin, for there is nothing so painful to those who feel the grace of godly sorrow as the risings of carnal desires. They hate sin because God hates it. These experiences belong to the spiritual life. It is generally supposed that repentance is only the gate of religion, and all we have to do is to repent of our sins once and then leave this grace. St. Paul does teach, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb. vi. 1, 2); but we must bear in mind that we are not taught to leave any of these things in any such sense as to discard them as being of no more service. We leave these first principles of the gospel just as we leave the study of the alphabet when we learn to read, or the study of the first principles of any science

when we have become sufficiently familiar with them to know how to use them. Our knowledge of these first principles is our preparation for further progress. We cannot take a step in the acquisition of more knowledge without using these first lessons. We are not always conscious of the use we are making of them. I am using the knowledge I have of the alphabet in writing this page; I could not progress at all without this knowledge, and yet I do not stop to think of the letters I am making. This is the only sense in which we are exhorted to leave any of the first principles of the gospel. Repentance is a grace that must abide in the soul as long as there is spiritual life. The only persons who cannot be saved are those who cannot be moved to repentance. As long as this grace abides in the soul it is evidence that there is a germ of spiritual life there. It produces a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and has the promise of the Saviour that it is a blessed state. Faith is born of repentance toward God. While repentance is not the condition of salvation, it is necessary as a preparation for faith. No impenitent soul can exercise faith in Christ. The assent of the mind to the truths of revelation may exist in an impenitent mind, but that trust of the heart which is a su-

pernatural evidence or conviction that God loves us and gave his Son to die for us, and that by his death we are reconciled to God, is an experience founded on repentance.

Let us inquire how this grace may be obtained and improved, so that we may enter into the kingdom of God. We should realize first of all our entire dependence upon God for the grace of repentance. Let us divest ourselves of all feelings of self-sufficiency. Those who teach that we can repent just when we please are in error. We can repent when God pleases to help, and he stands ready to help us whenever we humble ourselves under his mighty hand.

Having accepted the truth that our salvation is all of grace, let us be careful to seek an humble, contrite heart. Let us cultivate the sentiment contained in the following lines:

O that I could repent,
With all my idols part;
And to thy gracious eye present
An humble, contrite heart:
A heart with grief oppressed
For having grieved my God;
A troubled heart that cannot rest
Till sprinkled with thy blood!
Jesus, on me bestow
The penitent desire;

With true sincerity of woe
My aching breast inspire;
With soft'ning pity look,
And melt my hardness down;
Strike with thy love's resistless stroke,
And break this heart of stone!

Let us pray earnestly for the grace of repentance. God will not turn away any who sincerely seek this grace. He says: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find." Let all who desire this grace begin immediately to bring forth works meet for repentance, by abstaining from all evil and by doing all the good in their power; but let them be careful not to be satisfied with anything short of the grace of repentance. As long as there remains in the soul any love for sin, and any pleasure in the doing of those things that we know are not for the glory of God, our repentance is incomplete.

A careful study of God's word, with special reference to our own spiritual life, is a great aid to this grace of repentance. In all these means of grace let us keep the object of our pursuit before our minds, and remember that we are seeking spiritual life in all its fullness.



“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Tit. iii. 5-7.)



CHAPTER V.

REGENERATION.

REGENERATION, or the new birth, has been well defined as “the final and decisive work wrought in the spirit and moral nature of a man when the perfect principle of spiritual life in Christ Jesus is imparted by the Holy Ghost.” We come into the natural world by a birth, and there is no way into the kingdom of God but by a birth. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John iii. 6.)

As the different kingdoms in the material realm are separated from each other by impassable barriers, so the kingdom of God is separated from the fleshly kingdom. The natural man can no more grow into a spiritual man than a vegetable can grow into an animal. God, in his goodness, has provided a means whereby a natural man may be born into the spiritual kingdom. We say born into this kingdom; not grow into it. There is a wide difference in a birth into a state of existence, and a growth after we get into this existence. There is an idea among men that it is not necessary that they should receive this new life by a birth.

They frequently have the opinion that there is nothing in religion but a reformation of the old nature with which they are born into the world. They seem to think that there is nothing necessary but an outward, formal acceptance of a creed, a profession of faith in the Christian religion, and a formal observance of its requirements, without any radical change of nature, or the receiving of any spiritual help. The teaching of Jesus on this subject is clear and convincing to any who believe in his divine nature and his mission to this world as the only Saviour of men. As in the natural birth there is a quickening and form of life before birth, so it is in the spiritual life. The soul is quickened in the divine process of awakening and repentance before the birth of the spirit takes place. In this initial spiritual life there is no power to see the kingdom of God. The light of the spiritual sphere is excluded. The awakened, penitent soul gropes blindly in search of the life that has already begun within it, but does not understand the phenomena of that life. When that life is explained, he asks: "How can these things be?" He looks to the natural world for an explanation of the mysteries of spiritual life, and exclaims: "Can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

But the natural life can shed but little light on the question: Even analogy fails, because of the total dissimilarity of the two lives. There is only one thing the awakened, penitent soul can do, and that is receive Christ by faith. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 11-13.)

Human learning cannot explain this mysterious, spiritual work. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.)

This life begins in awakening and repentance; but if it stops there, it is an abortion. To every awakened soul the Scripture says: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we had our conversation [or citizenship] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the

desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” (Eph. ii. 2.)

This quickening is the work of the Holy Spirit, and is the result of the great love wherewith God loves us, and causes him to quicken us together with Christ and save us by his grace.

The difficulty in the way of this spiritual regeneration is the human will. While man has no power to produce in himself this new birth, he has the power to resist the operations of the Spirit of God, and frustrate his work. To be born again, there must be coöperation of the human with the divine spirit. God proposes in this work of regeneration to take man into his spiritual kingdom. Were he simply passive in the hands of God, there would be no failures in the spiritual life of any man; for the grace of God appears to all, and the initial life is begun in all. The faith by which Christ is received in regeneration is a voluntary thing. In discussing faith, it is sometimes confounded with belief. Belief is an involuntary act of the mind, when the evidence is absolutely conclusive, and therefore cannot be resisted; but saving faith is a voluntary trust in God through Christ, whereby the soul is left in his hands, and all resistance to the operation of his

spirit is stopped. As soon as any soul is brought into this state of trust it is born of the Spirit of God. So faith becomes the condition of regeneration and the first mark or evidence of the new birth. Until faith is obtained, the door into the kingdom of God is shut and barred on the spiritual side. No human hand can move that bar or open that door. Christ says: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (John x. 9.)

Faith puts us in possession of both worlds; so that he who has it goes into the holiest of holies, and communes with God, and then goes forth to enjoy all the blessings of this present life according to the will of God, and thereby finds pasture. This language does not convey the idea that the child of God goes in and out of God's favor, doing right and wrong by turns. The new birth destroys the desire to do the things that God forbids. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John iii. 9.)

For fear that some babe in Christ may be discouraged by the text just quoted, I will endeavor to explain the apostle's meaning. The apostle defines sin to be the transgression of law. Accord-

ing to his definition sin is any want of conformity to or any overt transgression of the decalogue. No one possessing a living faith in Christ, whereby God is continually breathing spiritual life into his soul, and his soul is continually breathing out love and prayer to God, can commit sin. This is a great privilege that the child of God possesses; and if any have not yet entered into this liberty, let them not be discouraged. Let us not strive to lower the standard of spiritual life. We cannot do this and breathe the atmosphere of the spiritual world. Let us avoid any effort to change the law of spiritual life that God has given, or to add any new requirements to that law. For "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." (Ps. xix. 7.)

If we find that we have not attained the liberty of the children of God, let us seek it with renewed zeal and earnestness. We are not to understand that it is impossible for any who are born of God to fall into sin; if this were the case, St. John would not have written: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for

the sins of the whole world.” (1 John ii. 1, 2.) But he does teach that we cannot sin and enjoy the evidence of the divine sonship at one and the same time. Sin shuts the soul out of the kingdom of God, and the abiding Spirit of God shuts sin out of the soul. These states are incompatible. The child of God who falls into sin loses the privilege of sonship; and yet it does not follow that he loses the initial life, which is manifested in awakening and repentance. He may fall away entirely, and get into that state where it is impossible to renew him to repentance; hence the great danger of falling into sin. Not every sin willingly committed after regeneration is of such a character as to destroy the gracious influence of the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. God does not withdraw the grace of repentance from all who thus sin; therefore we may depart from grace given and fall into sin and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. We should be careful to avoid either of two errors: first, that we cannot sin and fall away after regeneration; or, secondly, to deny that those who fall away after regeneration may be restored again to the favor of God and the privileges of his children.

This power to live without sin, in the sense of the term as used by St. John, is the privilege of

every regenerate person. It is not only the privilege of the regenerate, but it is absolutely necessary, to remain in this state of grace, that we do not commit sin. Whatever may be our theory of regeneration, if we accept the teachings of the Bible (and without this teaching we know nothing on the subject), we must admit that it is a state of existence in which we do not sin by transgressing God's law. It is claimed by some that regeneration is not such a complete work as to fit the soul for heaven, and that a subsequent work is necessary. We do not so understand the Scriptures. Every person regenerated by the Holy Ghost is a child of God, and therefore an heir of eternal life. The youngest and feeblest child in the household of faith is no less a child of the Heavenly Father than the most mature member of his family.

Let us be careful not to undervalue the high and exalted privilege of regeneration. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

(Rom. viii. 14-17.) There is no higher attainment than that of sonship, and this is the heritage of every regenerate soul.

We do not mean to teach that there is no growth after regeneration (we shall discuss this in another chapter); but we do claim that regeneration puts us into the kingdom of God and makes us joint heirs with Christ, and that the youngest member of the family of our Heavenly Father shares just as fully in that love wherewith he has loved us as the most experienced member of his household. Every regenerate child of Adam is a joint heir to all the treasures of grace and glory. God does not accept a divided heart; neither does he perform an imperfect work in the soul when he regenerates it. Jesus becomes all we need when we receive him by faith, and he gives us power to become the sons of God. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. i. 30, 31.)

To sanctify means to set apart for holy uses, and every regenerated soul is set apart for God's service; even the bodies of the regenerate are temples of the Holy Ghost. It is a mistake to con-

found sanctification with growth. The perfection of the divine life begun in regeneration goes on increasing in all wisdom and knowledge until it attains a perfection of maturity that drives out the last remains of carnality and inbred sin: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. iv. 13, 14.)

While the child of God is a babe in Christ he is liable to be tossed about by every wind of doctrine, and there are never wanting those who lie in wait to deceive. Those who are of this class are not always intentional deceivers; but many who mean well get a perverted view of the work of salvation, and pervert the souls of the children of God.

As much has been said about a second work of grace upon the hearts of believers, distinct from regeneration, let us calmly examine the subject. The real question at issue is this: Does the Bible teach, and Christian experience confirm, the doctrine that there is, subsequent to regeneration, a second radical and instantaneous work of divine

grace within and upon the moral nature of the regenerate believer which must take place before death in order to complete salvation from sin? From what has already been said in these pages, the serious reader no doubt has seen that no such work is admitted by the author, as necessary to spiritual life and eternal salvation. That the atonement of Christ provides for the salvation from all sin, for all who believe, may be abundantly proved by the following texts of Scripture: "He was manifested to take away our sins. . . . For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii. 5, 8.) "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi. 6.) "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal. v. 24.) "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. . . . He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 7-9.) "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii. 21.) "Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,

and purify unto himself a peculiar people.” (Tit. ii. 14.)

All these promises belong to every regenerated soul; and we find nothing in the Bible that denies them the privilege of claiming them, or excuses them living below the standard here given. Holiness, sanctification, perfection, perfect love, are also provided for all who are born of God, in and through the atonement: “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” (Heb. x. 14.) “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” (1 Thess. iv. 3.) “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless.” (1 Thess. v. 23.) “If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. . . . God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect. . . . Perfect love casteth out fear.” (1 John iv. 12-18.) “But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.” (1 John ii. 5.) “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Rom. xiii. 10.) “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” (Luke x. 27.) “Fol-

low peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. xii. 14.) “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (1 Pet. i. 15.) “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. . . . And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” (John xvii. 17-19.) “And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love, . . . to the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God.” (1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.) “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. v. 48.) “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.” (Phil. iii. 12-15.) “Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.” (Heb. vi. 1.) “Now the God of peace . . .

make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight." (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.) "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." (Ps. xxxvii. 37.)

That sanctification, holiness, perfection, salvation from all sin, perfect love, are all included in that ideal of religion which is set forth before us in the quotations above made there can be no doubt. But do any or all of them point unmistakably to a second instantaneous and radical work of grace, subsequent to regeneration, as the experience by which those who have been regenerated are saved from all inward sin, and perfected in holiness? or do they simply recognize all these things as included in that ideal experience, character, and life which go to make up the definition given in the Bible of the true religion of Christ, obtained in regeneration? We believe all these promises and privileges belong to every one born of the Spirit; and if any man lives below the standard here given, he needs the grace of regeneration; whether it be called a second blessing, a third, or a fourth, or a hundredth blessing.

A mistake in a vital doctrine of the only true religion must be attended with harm. Observant people have noted a spirit of censoriousness and

arrogance in the manner of many who have professed this second radical and instantaneous work, called sanctification; and however good the intention of those who have taught this doctrine, it cannot be denied that the fruit has not been good.

Nothing short of the perfection taught in the Bible can suffice; and if it takes a thousand blessings to put and keep us in this state, let us not be content until they are all obtained, and we are able to walk with our Lord in white and breathe the air of the spiritual sphere.

We cannot deal with the experiences of men, but our Lord gives us a universal rule by which every life may be tried: "By their fruits shall ye know them." The fruits of spiritual life will grow wherever this work of regeneration is wrought. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, are the fruits of regeneration. Unless we bring forth these fruits, we have no right to claim the humblest place in the kingdom of God.

God is not the author of confusion, and the manifestations of spiritual life are not to be seen in wild ravings and senseless excitement. There is emotion in this life, but it is that deep spiritual joy and peace that fill the soul of the child of God with foretastes of heavenly felicity.

Let us stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, and walk therein. If we do this, we shall not err on either hand. A caricature of spiritual life may bring the holiest things of our religion into contempt, and do much harm to those who know nothing of the truth as it is in Jesus.

In spite of all the obstacles in the way of the kingdom of God, still he saves us. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Whatever men may say, regeneration saves us.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.” (2 Pet. iii. 18.)

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CHAPTER VI.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

GROWTH is the normal condition of a living thing. In the material sphere, as soon as growth ceases, decay begins. It may be very slow and imperceptible, but there is a sure tendency toward death. There is no standing still. We ourselves show signs of this decay when our bodies cease to develop. Look at the vegetable kingdom for an exposition of this truth. As soon as a plant or a tree ceases to grow, how soon it begins to ripen for death! We may not be able to understand the deep mystery of life in any of its phases, but we can see these signs of life, development, decay, followed by death. Our Lord himself points to vegetable life as an illustration of the growth in his kingdom. "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." (Mark iv. 28.) It is not long after the blade and the ear stop growing, before the full corn in the ear is ripe; and if not put into the garner, it falls to the earth and decays.

The analogy between physical and spiritual things fails at many points, but physical things

bear a sufficient likeness to spiritual things to be used by Him who spoke the truth infallibly for purposes of illustration. The deep mystery of life was all plain to the mind of the Son of God. He knew the hidden secrets of all life; for he is the Author of life. Man sees the surface manifestations of vitality. In the physical sphere there are birth, growth, decay, and death. Birth and growth belong to spiritual life, and here the analogy stops. Those who are spiritually alive grow in this life, but never die. "Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John xi. 24-26.) Death has no place in the spiritual sphere; not in the sense of decay and dissolution. There is such a thing as spiritual death, but it consists in separation from God and in conscious wretchedness. There is no such thing as maturity in spiritual life in any such sense as implies cessation of growth and spiritual development; and we should never think of a spiritual state so mature that spiritual growth has ceased. The more knowledge we possess, the easier knowledge is acquired; and the more grace we possess, the more rapidly

we grow in grace and in likeness to God. The analogy between natural and spiritual things fails at this point also, for when a tree reaches maturity it begins to decline.

There is no such thing as either instantaneous or gradual development to such a state of perfection that we do not develop into still higher attainments in spiritual life. But, while this is so, there are states known as states of spiritual infancy, youth, and manhood. There are "babes in Christ," who must be fed with milk; and there are adults, who can eat stronger food, and do the work of men in God's service. We do not object to the terms "mature Christians," if they are used in this sense; but to use them in any sense that implies any such maturity that does not admit of larger growth and greater development is a dangerous error. We must never suppose that Christian growth ever reaches an altitude in which the soul remains in the same state. There are no sudden leaps that land the Christian, at one mighty bound, into a state of maturity that admits of nothing higher; neither can he grow into such a state of perfection that growth ceases because the soul has attained all there is in the kingdom of grace. Such a state of perfection is not attainable in this life, nor in that which is to come. As asymptotical

lines may run on side by side forever, and never touch each other, so may the life of the Christian grow on forever by the side of the perfect God-life, and yet never reach a point where it may not continue to approach that grand ideal expressed in the injunction: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

The child of God never ceases to grow in grace and in knowledge. This is true both in this life and in that life which is to come. This growth is more or less rapid, according to conditions and circumstances; but there must be growth if there is healthy spiritual life. Here we may find an illustration in the vegetable kingdom. Look at a stalk of corn sprung from a grain dropped in a ditch bank. The soil is rich, and the seed is good; but the plant is smothered by briars and weeds. It is stunted and yellow, and brings forth no fruit to perfection. Put the young Christian in such surroundings, and the spiritual life will be chilled and unfruitful, and without great effort such environment will result in spiritual death. But spiritual life may exist and grow in spite of unfavorable surroundings and circumstances. The spiritual child who is in the midst of temptations and evil influences, but who withstands them, and maintains a steadfast faith in God and walks uprightly, will

develop a stronger Christian character, and be all the nobler from the fact that he overcame his evil environment. This can only be done by the power of a consecrated will and by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Growth in grace varies in different persons, both in rapidity from a given starting point, and in spiritual comprehensiveness. Every regenerated soul grasps everything in sight at the beginning of spiritual life. Whatever is recognized as sinful is forsaken, and whatever is known to be the duty of a child of God is done. He believes all that is revealed to his mind as the truth of God. But as he grows, his perception of truth and duty is enlarged, and he discovers sins to be forsaken and duties to be done that he did not see at the time of his spiritual birth.

One duty done, we see higher;
That brings us greater light,
And we see higher still;
That performed, and a flood of light
Brings infinite progression.

As fast as the divine light reveals imperfection, the child of God strives to free himself from it and come up to the perfect ideal. The child of God is not under condemnation as long as he repents of everything he discovers to be sinful in

thoughts and feelings as well as acts; and by this he may know his relation to God, for if a revelation of existing sin comes to him he immediately repents of, forsakes, and renounces it by the very instincts of that divine life. This he must do, or part company with the Holy Spirit. In this sense only he grows less sinful as he grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have said that we believe it is a mistake to say that we grow into sanctification; for the term means to devote a person or thing to holy uses. Every child of God must be devoted to God at the beginning of the spiritual life; and growth in grace presupposes that the offering is complete. When we take the offering off the altar we are in a backslidden state, and not in the enjoyment of spiritual life at all.

We are not to concern ourselves about growth *per se*, for we cannot add one cubit to our stature; but we are to induce spiritual growth by adjusting ourselves to the law of spiritual life. The use of the means of grace is as necessary to spiritual growth as food and drink, air and exercise, etc., are to physical development. To grow spiritually we must increase in the knowledge of the things of God. Jesus Christ is not the same being in the conception of all believers. He honors the

smallest faith in him that moves the believer to forsake sin and trust in him for salvation, and in this sense he will not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax; but he does not will that we should remain in a state of infancy touching his person, character, and work. Often did he say to his disciples, as they were slow to apprehend him and their relation to him: "O ye of little faith!" They grew in grace and in knowledge by their contact with him from day to day; and yet there were constant revelations of power and goodness manifested in his life that surprised them. They saw him heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, raise the dead, and feed the multitude in a miraculous way; but when they awoke him during the storm on the Sea of Galilee, and he commanded the winds and the waves and they obeyed his voice, they were ready to exclaim: "What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him." (Luke viii. 25.) "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii. 18) links growth in grace and the knowledge of Christ together, and we cannot grow in grace without growing in this knowledge. The more we know about him the more faith we can have in him, and the more we

can love him. It is the work of the Holy Ghost to show believers the things of Christ: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John xvi. 13, 14.) As the genial warmth of the sun and the refreshing showers are necessary to vegetable growth, so the Holy Spirit coming upon the soul in refreshing and enlightening power is necessary to spiritual growth. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. iii. 14-19.) Here, in this matchless prayer of St. Paul for the Ephesian church, we have the idea of spiritual growth in its highest expression: the mighty

strengthening of the indwelling Spirit, the abiding Christ, the soul rooted and grounded in love, the enlarged comprehension, until the soul takes in, with all saints, the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of the ever-present Christ. To have this knowledge of Christ, we must study him in the revelation we have of him in the Bible. We must add to this experience, which comes to us day by day; if we are watchful and prayerful, our experiences will afford us new views of Christ, and as we grow in years we will grow in grace and knowledge.

While the exhortation is given to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, the matter of growth is something we need not concern ourselves about. All we need to do is to meet the conditions; the growth will take care of itself. And hoping to be helpful in the work of bringing the reader to a proper adjustment of himself to these conditions, we will discuss the law of spiritual life in another chapter. This law is revealed in the gospel of his Son, our Saviour. In all I have said, or shall say, in this little book I am simply endeavoring to unfold the gospel as I see it. I am fully aware of the inability of man to add anything to the revelation of truth given in his word, and yet we may be helpful to our

fellow-men by presenting his truth from our point of view. I am not attempting to be exhaustive, but suggestive in what I have to say, and have no doubt that the serious reader will be greatly helped by what I am unable to write, as he sees and studies the question from his own standpoint.

*“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus
hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”
(Rom. viii. 2.)*

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CHAPTER VII.

THE LAW OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.

GOD is the Giver of all life and the Source of all law. Law is the right adjustment of things, and righteousness is the fundamental principle of the divine law everywhere in the universe. Law in the spiritual sphere is immutable and unwavering; and yet there is provision for the salvation of fallen man, although he has forfeited his right to live by breaking the law. Herein is the mystery of the universe. How can God be just, and the Justifier of the ungodly? The law of spiritual life is explained in the gospel alone. The incarnation and sacrificial death of the Son of God is the only ground of hope for the human race, and reveals God's justice and his mercy to all created intelligent beings. His revelation to man begins with a revelation of his righteousness. At his creation he places man under the same moral law that governs all moral beings throughout his universal empire. The transgression of the law brought death into the world, and the fulfilling of the law by Jesus Christ brings life within reach of a fallen race. "There is therefore now

no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. viii. 1, 2.) The gospel is here called “the law of the Spirit of life”; and, whatever it may be or may not be to the angels, to men the gospel of Jesus Christ is the *law of spiritual life*. To understand its rich provisions, and partake of the high privileges of this gospel is the chief duty and highest privilege of the human race. The gospel is founded on the righteousness of God, and is as full an expression of his justice as it is of his grace. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John i. 9.) God could not give spiritual life at the expense of his righteousness. The Judge of the whole earth cannot fail to do right. The righteousness of God is the foundation of all faith, all hope, and all love. Righteousness is rightness; and if there should be any danger of any change in Deity, from a being of perfect rectitude, the foundations would be moved; and “if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do”?

There is a sentimental idea of love that loses sight of God’s inflexible righteousness and justice.

We sometimes think of the law as all severity, and the gospel as all mercy and love; whereas the gospel is the highest expression of justice as well as of love and mercy. The law as it exists apart from the atonement of Jesus Christ has in it no place for pardon. In teaching the law under the old dispensation there was no provision in the ceremonial law for the pardon of the highest grade of offenses. Adultery and murder belonged to that class of sins for which the Lord did not provide for pardon under the Levitical priesthood. Hence when David had committed these sins he did not look for priestly absolution. When he cried, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. . . . For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering" (Ps. li. 14-16), he acknowledged the need of a higher and broader law to meet the exigencies of his case than was found in the sacrifices and offerings of the Mosaic dispensation. The gospel alone contains the provision of pardon that meets all the requirements of fallen humanity. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things,

from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) When David had committed his great sin, God did not send a priest to him; neither did he send David to a priest; but he sent a prophet, and David looked away beyond the rites and ceremonies of Judaism to the only Source of pardon and life.

The rites and ceremonies of Judaism were indeed the shadow of this law of life; but they made nothing perfect; "but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." (Heb. vii. 19.) We see a figure of this law of life in all the rites and symbols of Jewish worship. In the ark of the covenant we see the tables of stone containing the law; the pot of manna, declaring God's providence in the sustenance of life; and Aaron's rod that budded, proclaiming the necessity of a living priesthood, which is only fulfilled in him who is our "great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." (Heb. iv. 14.)

The high priest under the Mosaic dispensation could enter into the holiest of holies only once a year, and he could not go in without blood. The mercy seat was over the ark, and there the blood was sprinkled; indicating the great mercy seat sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, which is the only

blood that can take away sin. Of the sacrifices offered under the Mosaic dispensation St. Paul says: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." (Heb. x. 4-7.)

The gospel is in harmony with the righteousness of God, because it is the right adjustment of fallen man to the law of righteousness that governs all spiritual beings. There is no compromise made with wrong. Man is redeemed by the blood of Christ. The law of righteousness that has always existed as the eternal rule of right is preserved inviolate. In the death of Christ as a ransom for the human race the penalty of the broken law is fully paid. Forgiveness of sin cannot possibly be reconciled with righteousness without propitiation; but the blood of Christ blots out transgression for all who believe in him, and puts man under the law of life, and says to him: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having for-

given you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Col. ii. 13-15.)

The law of spiritual life as revealed in the gospel is in harmony with the law of life as seen in the physical kingdom. All life in the physical sphere is conditioned upon death. There is no exception to this law. From the lowest forms of vegetative vitality to the highest type of animal life, this law is operative. Everywhere we see life spring out of death, and supported by death. This does not come in conflict with the law of biogenesis, which proclaims that all life springs from preëxisting life; for there was life before there could be any death, and since death entered the domain of life God has wrought the mighty work of bringing life out of death. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.) This is the law of vegetable reproduction. The seed must decay in the soil. From this the minute germ of a new plant starts into life, and feeds on the death of the life-giving seed. "The corn of wheat" must perish

to give birth to the new life. Thus are the mysteries of life and death blended together in the vegetable kingdom.

This law holds good in the sphere of animal life. Death comes before life under this law here, as in the vegetable kingdom; life is born of death. In incubation or in gestation, in the nest or in the matrix, the *ovum* must perish, that the new life may come forth. Nor does life in the animal kingdom simply come from death, but it is continually sustained by it. It is no doubt a discovery of this law that has led scientists to the idea of the "survival of the fittest," as they have seen the strong devour the weak, and the life of one animal sustained by the death of another. The Christian doctrine of atonement finds illustration in the law of natural life; for both in the kingdom of nature and in the kingdom of heaven life is conditioned upon death, and the Christian doctrine of atonement is not only a dogma but a suggestion of the continuity of the law of God as it runs through all his vast empire. I do not see much "natural law in the spiritual world," but I do see many signs of spiritual law in the natural world. Life is here conditional upon death, for this is the law of life, so far as man is concerned, in the spiritual sphere. Nearly nineteen centuries ago Christ came into

the world and died. The fact has been planted in human history and in human hearts. What reproductive power this fact has developed! It showed its vitality in the lives of his disciples, and all with whom they came in contact felt its power. According to this law, spiritual life demands the death of the carnal nature of man. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." (Rom. vi. 5-9.) The spiritual birth and growth into the kingdom of God are by a process in conformity to the law of spiritual life. This law works with absolute certainty when the soul is adjusted to its requirements. There is perfect rectitude in the entire process from beginning to end.

This law is as natural in the spiritual sphere as the law of incubation or gestation in the physical sphere. Our science deals with these things with perfect faith; but because it cannot use the same

apparatus, and proceed on the same lines of analysis and synthesis in the spiritual sphere, it looks upon everything relating to spiritual life as a mystery that the mind cannot grasp, and in which the soul cannot trust, and find comfort and peace. But the law of spiritual life may be as satisfactorily understood as is the law of physical life. In all analysis there is a chasm that we cannot cross with a definition. No life can be satisfactorily defined in terms of human language. The only true definition of life is living. This is true of all life. Yet we are assured of such an orderly adjustment in nature that we speak with confidence of the laws of natural life and health, and we trust these laws with absolute faith, and we are never disappointed by them when we understand them. The law of spiritual life is apprehended by faith. This law is no less real than physical law, because we comprehend it by a different process. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. xi. 1.) There is a foundation underlying spiritual things as broad as the universe and as firm as God. To be safe we must build upon this foundation. No wind or wave can shake the structure erected upon this site, built in accord with the plan of the Architect. The visible uni-

verse will pass away, decay and death are written here; but the invisible and spiritual sphere abideth forever. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.) We are called to look upon these invisible things; let us come reverently to this task and learn all we can about the law of that kingdom that abideth forever. Human law does not excuse the transgressor on the ground of ignorance. Every act of disobedience meets a just recompense of reward. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. ii. 2, 3.) If we do not acquaint ourselves with this law of life, of how much sorer punishment shall we be thought worthy than was inflicted

upon those who had less light than we have? Let us forever discard the notion that the law of life under the gospel dispensation is less exacting of its requirements than the law that governed Israel under the Mosaic dispensation, or less exacting than the moral law at any period in the government of moral beings throughout the universe. This law of spiritual life demands repentance and faith at all times, as the condition of salvation. We dare not approach God, unless the blood of propitiation is upon us. There is a wrath more to be dreaded than the wrath of Sinai. A violation of the law of spiritual life, as revealed in the gospel, will bring horrors to the soul more to be dreaded than the thunders that muttered around the holy mount, or the lightnings that flashed in the faces of the Israelites when the law was given by Moses. At that time no one dared to approach the mount of God, and Moses did fear and quake. But St. John, in the Revelation, describes a scene more dreadful: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the

throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. vi. 15-17.)

Penalty is necessary to law, and the more perfect the law the greater the penalty for disobedience. The law of spiritual life is a perfect law. It is perfectly adjusted to man's condition. It comes down to him with all he needs to help him up into the realm of spiritual life. There can be no excuse for any man who fails to meet its requirements; and if he fails, he will meet the wrath of the Lamb. There is something terrific in the thought! The Lamb of God, the Friend of sinners, who never turned away a poor, helpless soul, comes on the throne of judgment with a wrath so great that every unsaved soul, from every condition in life, would prefer annihilation rather than meet this wrath!

No sinner will have anything to plead who has neglected to avail himself of the salvation offered in the gospel, when the penalty for neglecting this great salvation is exacted by the law of life. Out of Christ, God is a consuming fire. All that is necessary to meet the wrath of the Lamb, and suffer the penalty of the law of spiritual life, is to neglect the great salvation. In this state of probation it is offered to all on the same condition. "This is a

faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." (1 Tim. i. 15.) The gospel is the law of spiritual life, and it is broad enough to cover the needs of the human race. It is called a perfect law, for there is nothing wanting in its requirements or its adaptability to those it is intended to govern. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James i. 25.)



*“I am come that they might have life, and that they
might have it more abundantly.” (John x. 10.)*

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNITY OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.

LIFE is necessarily a unit. A thing cannot be both dead and alive at one and the same time, and yet there are degrees of life. Life and consciousness are not the same thing. The newborn babe has life, but consciousness is not developed in any such degree that life to it is a conscious reality. In the period of gestation there is life, but there is no knowledge of the fact. This is evidently the case with the beginning of life in the natural world, and there is an analogous condition, or state of being, in the beginning of spiritual life. The initial quickening of the soul, in the awakening wrought by the Holy Spirit before pardon and regeneration, is the beginning of spiritual life; but there is no consciousness that apprehends the meaning of this spiritual life. The definition of life given by lexicographers, as has been before stated, is incomplete, because in its last analysis life is indefinable. It is said to be, with reference to spiritual life, "the principle or state of conscious spiritual existence: as the life of the soul." If we limit spiritual life to a state of conscious

existence, and mean by this definition that there is no spiritual life until there is a conscious knowledge of pardon and regeneration, a large part of those who give evidences of the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit operating upon them must be classed among the spiritually dead. In this discussion we prefer, as it appears to us to be the true position, to accept the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit in the awakened soul as the beginning of spiritual life. Life, as near as we can define it in a spiritual sense, is that kind of spiritual existence which belongs to God, is manifested in Christ, and is imparted to mankind by the Holy Ghost. In the process of imparting this divine life to a fallen spirit, dead to God and spiritual existence, there is a period that I cannot better define than to call it a period of spiritual gestation; answering to the period of life before the natural birth. The life has begun in the soul, but the spirit birth has not taken place to that extent and degree of life when consciousness of the fact is fully embraced. Experience teaches that this phase of spiritual life frequently leads to a course of conduct devoted to God and his service before there is satisfactory assurance of pardon. There is a degree of faith at this period of spiritual life, but it is not full and satisfactory. It leads, however, to

a hungering and thirsting after righteousness and to the performance of the duties of religion. We call this initial spiritual life. This is the "smoking flax our Lord will not quench," and "the bruised reed he will not break." It is the beginning of the life of God in the soul of man.

If the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit are not aborted, this life will develop into an experience which will put the soul in possession of conscious fellowship with God, and will lead into a blessed state of felicity here, which will be consummated after death. It is a mistake to undervalue these beginnings of spiritual life on the one hand, or to be satisfied with no higher degree of life on the other hand. It is unsafe to stop short of the full assurance of conscious salvation. God has promised the witness of his Spirit with our spirit to the fact of our sonship. The germ of spiritual life should be zealously guarded until we come into the full possession of the inheritance of the saints.

Many serious souls have been troubled, because they did not believe that they were under gracious influences, while the Spirit of God was working mightily in them. While emotion in the spiritual life should not be ignored, we should not be misled by our emotions. Penitents laboring under this mistake have fallen into a state of despair when

the ebullitions of feeling which had accompanied the first gracious influences of the Spirit had subsided, and concluded that God had given them up because they could no longer feel acutely and weep over their sins. This initial spiritual life does not confine its manifestations to the emotional nature. It deals with the will and reasoning powers as well. As long as there is a conscious desire to forsake sin and please God, it is evidence that the Spirit of God is still striving in the soul.

That we may be able to realize the presence of this initial life within us, let us remember that all the good desires and good aspirations we have come from God. Man left to himself would never have a good impulse. All the thoughts and imaginations of his heart will be evil, and only evil continually. If we realize this truth, we cannot doubt that whatever of good there is in us is of grace; and if God has given us these good desires and kindled in our hearts these aspirations after a better life, he can have but one purpose in them, and that is to lead us to himself. These experiences are the beginnings of spiritual life. They may be ever so feeble, but they mean salvation if they are carefully cherished and preserved by the use of every means in our power to follow them to their source. If we accept the fact of the fall of

man, with all that it implies, we must admit that not only our good deeds are wrought in us by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, but all the gracious dispositions of soul we experience are his work. If there is any failure in the perfection of this life in any soul, this failure must be caused by that soul itself. St. Paul intimates this in his Epistle to the Philippians when he says: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers of my grace." (Phil. i. 3-7.)

The good work done is of grace, and the life begun in the soul is intended to be performed until the day of Jesus Christ. To the Galatians St. Paul says: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you." (Gal. iv. 19, 20.) There is no doubt that this life had

begun in these Galatians, whom St. Paul addressed as "my little children," and for whom he "travailed in birth again"; but there was danger that this life should cease and spiritual death ensue.

Let us take an illustration from the vegetable kingdom; and we are warranted in this, as our Lord himself gives the example. Take the little plant which is putting forth the tender germ. It is very imperfect and frail, and does not show what it will be. How unlike the full corn in the ear is the tender stalk just budding into life! And yet from the beginning of this vegetable life, until the mature corn is ripe, there is the same vegetable life; and if the stalk dies, it is impossible to bring it to life again. It may be nipped by the frost or wilt under the scorching heat of the sun; but if the life germ is not destroyed, it will revive when refreshed by genial showers, and grow unto perfection. As long as the life of the plant is not destroyed it may grow. Every kind of life is a unit; and when the continuity is once broken, none but God himself can mend the link.

Spiritual life has enemies within and without. It must grow up in the soul in harmony with the human will, which may choose life or death. It cannot develop in spite of this kingly power,

which God himself will not dethrone. It must make its way as the carnal nature dies. It can only come up in the soul from this death. A Christian poet expresses the thought well in these lines:

More of thy life, and more I have,
As the old Adam dies;
Bury me, Saviour, in thy grave,
That I with thee may rise.

The more life is the same in kind with the less life. It is all one life. In the imperfect state, the Christian life, like the life of a plant, is so immature that it can hardly be recognized. The tender green blade does not look like the ripe corn in the ear. If we had no experience on the subject, who would believe that little germ would ever produce the full ripe corn?

So is the beginning of spiritual life. So imperfect and immature we behold it to-day running over with the exuberance of joy; to-morrow it is blackened by the frost of temptation or withered by the hot trials of persecution. But notwithstanding all this, if it is kept by the power of a consecrated will, and nourished by the means of grace, it will grow on until it reaches a maturity that makes it meet for the garners in the sky.

In treating of the periods of spiritual life the

Scriptures use various terms, and the failure on the part of many to understand these terms has led to much erroneous teaching. There are three terms to which the careful attention of the serious reader is invited. These are "holiness," "sanctification," and "perfection."

The first of these terms designates the state or character of being holy or sinless, a thing or person set apart to God's use and service and cleansed of all pollution. This state belongs to all who are regenerated, for the blood of Christ cleanses all his children from the guilt and power of sin.

"Sanctification" is the second term, and signifies setting apart a person or thing for the service of God. This term is also applicable to every regenerated soul. The term "saint" is used with a common application to all Christians, and means a sinner saved by grace. These terms do not convey the idea of growth and development in the spiritual life.

"Perfection" is a term of different meaning. It designates a finished state: "The state of being perfect, as in material form, design, composition, construction, operation, action, qualification, etc.; that degree of excellence which leaves nothing to be desired, or in which nothing requisite is wanting; entire freedom from defect, blemish, weak-

ness, or liability to err or fail; supreme excellence, whether moral or material; completeness or thoroughness, as perfection in an art, fruits in perfection, the perfection of beauty." This absolute spiritual perfection belongs to no spiritual being but God. In a qualified sense it means a state of spiritual being where the whole nature is permeated with love to God and his righteousness. As a state of love, it may be attained, but not in such degree that we cannot fail to love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves. To keep in this state of perfect love, it is necessary that we should continue to use the means of grace, and groan after still larger measures of love. This perfection of Christian character is the goal to which every child of God is exhorted to press.

The highest standard of spiritual life to which we can attain here is given in this language: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 12, 13.) This perfection is attained by growth, as is clearly stated in these words: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow

up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. iv. 15.)

It is the same spiritual life from the first quickenings of the Holy Spirit until the perfection of Christian character is attained, even the stature of the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of Christ.

There is another figure, taken from the Old Testament Scriptures, which will help us to get an idea of this process of development in the divine life: "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. iii. 3.)

The refiner of silver puts the silver ore into the crucible and watches the dross consume away until his own likeness becomes visible, and the refining process goes on until that likeness is perfectly reflected as from the face of a polished mirror. The silver is the same metal through the entire process. At first it is mixed with baser metal and with earth, but the work of purification goes on until it is refined and comes forth pure silver. So this work of purification goes on in the spiritual life, until all the mixture and dross of sin and corruption are purged away by the Refiner of the soul,

and the spiritual life is made pure and reflects the perfect image of the Son of God.

The unity need never be broken until the work of life is complete and the soul is created anew in righteousness and true holiness.

There is a difficulty that suggests itself to the thoughtful mind with reference to the result of death before the spiritual life is fully developed. This difficulty is met by faith in the power and willingness of God to perfect the spiritual life and make every child of his meet for his kingdom and glory. While the development of spiritual life is by a process of growth, every regenerated soul is prepared at death for a home in heaven. While death is not in any sense the sanctifier of the soul, there is no reason to doubt that God can and does carry the work of spiritual life to such a state of perfection in even a babe in Christ, who dies in this state of spiritual infancy, as to fit and qualify it for an inheritance among the saints in light. Here we are shut up to faith. Reason cannot fathom this peculiar problem. We cannot tell what God does for the soul in the hour and article of death. Jesus saved the thief on the cross, and took him as a trophy from his cross into paradise.

There is no place for any soul who has been born of God, when he dies, but heaven. Neither

will he leave the earnest penitent, who pleads for mercy and salvation to the last, to perish in despair. The poet sang good theology when his Muse was inspired to the strain:

But if I die with mercy sought,
When I the king have tried,
This were to die (delightful thought!)
As sinner never died.

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” (Rom. vi. 22.)

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CHAPTER IX.

THE FRUIT OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.

WE need to see the fruit of spiritual life in ourselves, that we may have the witness of our own spirit, as well as the witness of the Spirit of God, to the fact that we have this life. These fruits are visible. Our Lord himself says: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." (Matt. vii. 16, 17.) St. Paul also calls our attention to this fruit in ourselves: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (Rom. vi. 22.) He also points out the fruit of the Spirit so plainly that we need not doubt as to whether we are bringing forth this fruit in our experience and life. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal. v. 22, 23.)

There are no phenomena of nature with which we may become more familiar than we may with these fruits of spiritual life.

Let us take them as they are classified as the fruit of the Spirit. Love is the first in order. We are not able to define this in a few simple terms, but we can make such an analysis of it that all will recognize it as belonging to the fruits of spiritual life. To make this analysis we will seek the help of St. Paul, who ran the beams of this spiritual light through the prism of his own inspired mind, and, having broken it up in its several parts, just as we run a sunbeam through a prism that we may see its various colors, he gives us the following analysis: "Love suffereth long, and is kind." Wherever we find long-suffering and kindness blended together we should not be at a loss to know its origin. It is such a rare combination in this world that it only has to be encountered to be recognized. Kindness after long-suffering cannot fail to impress any undamned or undoomed spirit of its heavenly origin. "Love envieth not." It is perfectly natural to man in an unspiritual state to envy his fellow-man. Envy is active selfishness, it makes the subject of it unhappy, and yet he breathes it as he does the breath of life. He cannot bear the sight of his neighbor's prosperity when it surpasses his own. It chafes like a caged hyena at another's promotion, especially if that one is a rival for

worldly success, or worldly honors. Love destroys all this in the soul when the spiritual life dominates it. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (or rash). It produces in those who possess it such a sense of humility and unselfishness that they do not behave themselves "unseemly," nor seek their own happiness, especially at the expense of others. "Is not provoked"; for when it is provoked or angered it is not love. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." It will weep at either the sin or folly of an enemy, but never rejoices at any evil, takes no pleasure in hearing or repeating it, but desires it may be forgotten forever; but it rejoices in the truth because truth is its proper fruit and belongs to the sphere in which it lives. Everything false is opposed to love, and it cannot live in an atmosphere of falsehood. "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." This is such a block of excellences that we can hardly take it in; and yet when the soul of the spiritual man is filled with this fruit of the Spirit of God, no other terms can express its power. "Love never faileth." It accompanies to and adorns us in eternity; it prepares us for and constitutes heaven. Love is the essence of God's moral character, and is shed abroad in the heart of

the regenerated soul. It is the one thing needed to make humanity what God designed it should be. It is the only power that can govern a spirit. In the material sphere, matter is governed by force; spirits cannot be governed by the law of force. They may be punished by force, but punishment is not government. The angels that "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day"; these spiritual beings are not governed, they are punished. Government in the spiritual sphere implies willing obedience on the part of the governed. In this world men who are incarcerated in prison and deprived of liberty are not governed.

The whole plan of salvation is an effort on the part of Deity to impart to man this fruit of spiritual life. The creating of a material universe was nothing more than pastime for God; it was the work of his fingers. But the work of redemption taxed the powers of the whole Godhead. We may easily imagine that the hour was great and illustrious when, from the dark and formless mass, this material universe trembled into birth; when the morning stars sang together and the firstborn sons of light shouted for joy. But far grander was the time when, through the incarnation of the

second Person in the Trinity and his sacrificial death upon the cross, the plan was consummated by which a world of deathless spirits, in revolt against Jehovah, were placed in an attitude for government, and a way opened by which they might receive this first fruit of spiritual and eternal life.

The whole revelation of God culminated in the great love with which "he so loved the world," as to give "his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The Old Testament dispensation, with all its grand scenes of power and symbols of glory, was but a preparation for the expression of his love, by which the world might be brought into the spiritual sphere, through the impartation of this love to the souls of men.

Love is the one great need of our world. Not a sickly, sentimental, selfish emotion, too often mistaken for love, but such love as that analyzed by St. Paul in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the analysis of which we have endeavored to place here.

The next fruit of the Spirit, as the apostle presents it, is joy. In his classification we think love is placed as the first fruit because it is the root of all others, as well as the sum of them all. It is certain they all spring from the spiritual birth,

which cannot be better defined than in the following words: "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. v. 5.)

Joy is the first fruit of this love which is shed abroad in our hearts. As soon as we are born of the Spirit of God, joy is the result. Joy is defined to be: "An emotion of pleasure caused by the gratification of any passion or desire; ardent happiness arising from present or expected good; exultant satisfaction; exhilaration of spirits; gladness; delight." This general definition of joy is good, and when you add to it "in the Holy Ghost" you have Christian joy.

This fruit of the Spirit differs from other joy in this: it does not depend upon circumstances and surroundings. It may exist, and has shown itself in spite of physical conditions. Paul and Silas were in the inner prison of the jail at Philippi, "and at midnight they sang praises unto God." There could have been no temporal circumstances to make them joyful. They had been cruelly beaten, and their feet were made fast in the stocks; and yet their hearts were full of joy. This is that joy which is a fruit of spiritual life. And this experience is peculiar to the Christian re-

ligion. Some philosophers have taught that pain is a lesser sort of pleasure, and they and their disciples have affected to be indifferent to pain, but none of them have given any sign of positive joy in suffering. We have seen the Christian in poverty and pain rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is that joy which is a fruit of the Spirit.

There is no fruit of spiritual life that should be more carefully examined than joy, because every emotion of pleasure caused by the gratification of any passion or desire is not necessarily Christian joy. Men sometimes go wild with delight at the attainment of the object of their desires here in this world, when a moment's thought will assure us that these joys are momentary, and depend upon the possession of things that are in themselves transient and soon lost. These joys perish with the using, as the things we rejoice in perish.

Even our religious enjoyments may be deceptive. We may attend church to hear the eloquence of the preacher or to be charmed with the harmonious strains of sweet music, when there is nothing of spiritual joy in our lives. We should be careful to distinguish purely æsthetic pleasure from that joy which is the fruit of the Spirit. The one is transitory, and depends for its existence on our pleasant surroundings; the other is an abiding

treasure of the soul, and will triumph over every loss and trial. When possessing it, we may be happy in health or in sickness, in wealth or in want. It is the divine secret that enables the Christian "to know both how to be abased and to know how to abound." In other words, to know how to be rich, and to know how to be poor; and that teaches us that, whatsoever state we are in, therewith to be content. Possessing this fruit of the Spirit, although the outward man may perish, the inward man is renewed day by day.

It is this fruit of the Spirit of which the Christian poet sings in the following lines:

Joy is a fruit that will not grow,
In nature's barren soil;
All we can boast, till Christ we know,
Is vanity and toil.

But where the Lord has planted grace,
And made his glories known,
There fruits of heavenly joy and peace
Are found—and there alone.

A bleeding Saviour seen by faith,
A sense of pard'ning love,
A hope that triumphs over death,
Give joys like those above.

These are the joys which satisfy
And sanctify the mind;
Which make the Spirit mount on high,
And leave the world behind.

This is the joy of the Lord and is the Christian's strength.

Peace is the next fruit set forth in this classification. This is the special blessing promised by our Lord before he left the world. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John xiv. 27.) The Christian's peace is a growing fruit. It is the first thing consciously experienced when God forgives his sins. It enlarges in the soul like a river, and this figure is used to illustrate it: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." (Isa. xlvi. 18.) This fruit of the Spirit cannot grow in the soul unless the commandments of God are kept. No child of God can enjoy it unless he is careful to study and faithful to keep all the commandments of God. There is nothing we can be more conscious of than the unrest of soul that follows any failure to obey God, and there is no clearer experience than the peace of Christ that dwells in every faithful heart.

Long-suffering is the next fruit of the Spirit. We have noticed this fruit of the Spirit in the analysis of love. It is well for us to keep this pe-

cular grace before our minds, for in it we see the mind of Christ. He exhibited a degree of long-suffering in his humiliation worthy of all imitation and reproduction by his disciples.

Gentleness is the next fruit of the Spirit. There is a power in this Christian grace that we do not fully appreciate, and yet it is seen with delight by those who have eyes to behold the fruits of spiritual life. Even the most hardened of earth's unfortunate children are impressed by the quiet, gentle spirit and demeanor of those who have the mind of Christ. "Be gentle toward all men" is an apostolic injunction that will be observed by those who are partakers of the divine nature. By this grace the world is to be subdued and won to Christ; and through it the light of spiritual life is constantly falling upon the darkened souls of men. It shines in the prisons of Christendom, and says to the poor criminal, ruined and cursed by sin, that there is a gentle, kind Saviour whose heart of compassion may be touched by the most degraded wretch, who has nothing to commend him to the divine favor but wretchedness and shame. All the gentleness inspired in the hearts of philanthropists is a fruit of the Spirit, and there is not a heart so hard or a soul so dead that it cannot feel the life-giving

power of gentleness. Where this fruit grows in the Christian home we have heaven in miniature. Let no one imagine himself a Christian until he learns to be gentle and kind, not only to those who please him, but to his enemies as well; for if we love them only who love us, what right have we to claim that we are the children of God? Do not even publicans and sinners this much? This is a fruit that will show itself in every one possessing spiritual life. There is no exception to this rule.

The next grace set forth as a fruit of the Spirit is goodness. This term indicates the state or quality of being good in any sense—excellence, purity, virtue, grace, benevolence. It is a comprehensive term. The highest tribute of praise to any man is to say he is a good man. It is the sum of all the graces of the Spirit. The only ultimate good, or end in itself, must be goodness or excellence of conscious life.

Faith comes next in order. This fruit of the Spirit is the beginning of the spiritual life. It is that power of the soul that realizes the existence of invisible things. It is in this particular sense that it is here enumerated as the fruit of the Spirit. By faith we discover the spiritual sphere, and the more faith possessed by the soul the more

real is the existence of all things that belong to the invisible world. There are degrees of faith. As a fruit of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man, it increases in proportion to the enlargement of the spiritual indument. As we rise higher and higher on the table-lands of faith, we catch the inspiration of the poet who sang:

Faith lends its realizing light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly,
Th' Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye.

No one full of the Spirit of God and producing these fruits ever doubts the truths of our holy religion. To him spiritual things are the realities of consciousness. He has in him the substance of things hoped for; the demonstration of things not seen. Faith is the only medium through which we can receive this knowledge. Reason cannot reveal spiritual things to the soul. It is by faith we realize the existence of the soul itself.

The discoveries of faith are above the senses, but they are more real than the things of sense, in that they are eternal things. The senses themselves fail, as well as the things they discover, but faith abides in the soul forever as a fruit of the Spirit.

We are sometimes taught that faith will end in sight and hope in fruition, but the Bible does not teach this. St. Paul says: "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love." But he says that they all abide. The objects of faith change. So do those of hope; but as long as eternity lasts there will be in the soul "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This, like all the fruits of the Spirit, is an abiding possession of spiritual life.

Meekness is the next fruit in order given by St. Paul. This is so much like gentleness that it is hard to distinguish it from that fruit, and yet there is a difference of sufficient importance to give it a place of its own among the fruits of spiritual life. The term expresses the idea of the quality of being meek, softness of temper, mildness; it involves gentleness, forbearance under injuries and provocations, unrepining submission. This term conveys the idea of lowliness and self-abasement.

The last fruit given in this classification is temperance. This conveys the idea of moderation. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." (Phil. iv. 5.) This text conveys the idea of temperance as the fruit of the Spirit. It forbids extravagance in anything.

Some otherwise good men have an intemperate zeal, and by this injure themselves and any cause they may espouse. Those who thus act do not show forth this fruit of the Spirit; and, wanting this, all of good in them is marred, if not entirely ruined. We frequently give too narrow a definition to temperance. As a Christian grace it occupies an important place. It conveys the idea of habitual moderation in regard to the indulgence of the natural appetites and passions; restrained or moderate indulgence, abstinence from all violence or excess, from inordinate or unseasonable indulgence, or from the use or pursuit of anything injurious to moral or physical well-being; sobriety, frugality, as temperance in eating and drinking, temperance in the indulgence of joy or grief. This definition seems to cover what is meant by this fruit of the Spirit, and is necessary to spiritual life. No one can have all these fruits in himself and have any doubt of spiritual life, for this is that life. On the other hand, no one can be assured of spiritual life without these fruits in him. To have these fruits explains the doctrine of assurance because it is assurance.

We frequently mistake in our efforts to obtain a knowledge of God and heavenly things, and suppose all this knowledge may be obtained by a

mighty bound, forgetting that growth in these things is the law of spiritual life. We begin this life suddenly, for we are justified by faith, and immediately experience peace with God. But at that time our Lord says unto us: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii. 31, 32.)

It is the good pleasure of our Father to give us the kingdom. He puts it in the reach of all who will use the means to obtain it. We are grafted into Christ by faith, and as long as we abide in him we bring forth fruit. But if we abide not in him, we are cast forth as withered branches. He saith: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John xv. 1, 2.)

The philosophy of this spiritual life we can no more understand than we can understand the mystery of natural life; but we can live it and enjoy all its privileges, and, as we have before stated, the only definition of this life that can be satisfactory is living it. This we may all do by the help of his grace.



“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: . . . we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Cor. v. 6, 8.)

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CHAPTER X.

SPIRITUAL LIFE IN THE DISEMBODIED STATE.

THIS theme involves the state of the soul after dissolution. Is there any conscious existence in the disembodied state? For an answer to this question we must depend upon the revelation God has given in the Bible. There are presumptive arguments drawn from science and philosophy, but they are not conclusive. Our science and our philosophy cannot deal with things of a purely spiritual character. Spiritual things are not unscientific or contrary to philosophy, but they are above them. They belong to a higher sphere, and must be dealt with according to the laws of spiritual life. Science may demonstrate spiritual things after these things have been revealed to the understanding by a higher power. Reason must accept the Bible as a revelation from God, for the following argument proves the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible as a literary production must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God. It could not be the invention of good men or angels, for they neither would nor could make a book,

and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, "Thus saith the Lord," when it was their own invention. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils, for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns them to eternal punishment. Therefore we must conclude that the Bible is given by the inspiration of God.

This much reason sees from the internal evidence of the Holy Scriptures, and when the evidence from the fulfilled prophecies, as well as the indisputable miracles, is considered there is no rational ground for doubt that the Bible is what it claims to be: the word of God. We have a perfect right and it is our duty to satisfy ourselves that the inspired Scriptures are such as they claim to be. But when it is established that God has spoken, his word should be the end of controversy. We must accept the plain teachings of Scripture on the subject under consideration, or we cannot consider the question at all, as we know nothing about it from any other source of knowledge.

Let us reverently consult the Scriptures to ascertain what they teach us about the life of the soul in the disembodied state of being, between death and the resurrection. We should be grate-

ful for the full revelation given us on this subject. The first proof of the conscious state of existence to which we will turn is the case of the thief who was crucified with Christ. "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 39-43.)

Here we have the most remarkable tragedy presented to our minds that ever occurred in human history. Three men are dying side by side in the most cruel manner imaginable. Two of these men are notorious lawbreakers; the other, judged from any standard known to men, is the most perfect character the world ever saw. One of the malefactors, in a railing spirit, says to Jesus, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us"; the other, in the spirit of true penitence, rebukes his fellow-sufferer, and then appeals to the dying Jesus to be remembered by him in his

kingdom. Such faith, at such an hour, is so striking that it can only be surpassed by the answer of the prayer it inspired: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." What does this promise mean? We examine the original language to ascertain if possible just what it does mean, and we find that our translation, although it is clear enough and strong enough to inspire our hearts with hope for the dying petitioner, is not as strong as the language in which it was first spoken by the Saviour. The poor thief might have meant something like this: "I believe you are a king, and in spite of your present helpless condition will at some time have a kingdom. Remember me when you come into it." The answer was no doubt somewhat a surprise to the dying thief. "This very day," not at some time in the distant future, "thou shalt be with me in paradise." The term "paradise" means a place of delights, and no one can be in paradise without being in a state of conscious happiness. If the promise to the dying thief had any meaning, it meant that as soon as the soul was freed from the tortures of the cross it would be in a state of conscious blessedness.

Efforts have been made by those who teach that there is no life or consciousness for the soul in the disembodied state to put a meaning in the

promise of Jesus to the dying penitent that the language does not warrant. It has by a forced and strained interpretation been twisted into a promise to be fulfilled at some time in the future, but it is a pleasant reflection that no such interpretation has ever been given to these words by any one deeply learned in the meaning of the language in which Jesus spoke. It has always been the faith of the Christian Church that the dying thief and the Saviour were together in paradise on the day of the crucifixion.

We cannot understand how the soul exists separate from the body. But there is no objection to the fact because we cannot understand it. We do not understand how the soul exists in the body. How matter and spirit are united in man is no doubt a mystery to all created intelligence. We philosophize about this wonderful mystery, and form our theories; but after all, the basal fact of the whole matter is a matter of faith. We know only in part in our present state of being. Reason is constantly coming to chasms it cannot cross and meeting mysteries it cannot solve. The greatest perversion of reason and faith is to attempt to discard all matters of faith that we cannot harmonize with reason so as to see through them from the standpoint of reason. If our rea-

son could solve every difficulty, there would be no room for or need of faith.

That the soul enters immediately at death into a state of conscious happiness or misery is taught in the Scriptures beyond doubt or cavil. The penitent thief went with Jesus into paradise on the day he died, and all who penitently believe in him do the same thing. This is proved by the following scripture: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight): we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 1-8.)

There is no uncertain sound set forth in this scripture. It begins with a declaration of absolute knowledge on the subject that covers the ground. The "building of God," the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," whatever that may be, is the home of the soul as soon as it is liberated from the body. Then the good are present with the Lord. While here in the body they are separated from him in a sense they are not after death. There they immediately behold the glorified Christ.

There is an intermediate state for the soul between death and the resurrection, but the place where it is is heaven. It is where Christ is in his glorious resurrection body. This is proved by the following Scripture assertions: "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." (Luke xxiv. 51.) "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts i. 10, 11.)

Stephen was permitted to look into heaven: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up

steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.” (Acts vii. 55.) There can be no doubt that Jesus ascended into heaven; and it is equally certain that the souls of Christians go where he is as soon as they die. “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Rev. vi. 9, 10.) This scripture is undoubtedly figurative, but it teaches the conscious life of the souls of the saints in the disembodied state. If these souls are not alive, this scripture is entirely misleading and does not teach anything. But the whole tenor of Scripture teaches the continued, conscious life of the soul; and why multiply texts to prove the truth of the doctrine? We answer: Because this precious truth has been disputed by some who claim to believe the Scriptures; and the souls of some have been perverted into the belief that man dies like the beast, and that the human soul is not immortal. The experience of those who are born of the Spirit of God confirm the teachings of the Bible. There is kindled in all who experience this spirit-

ual birth a hope that assures them of a continuous spiritual existence after death. "They rejoice in hope of the glory of God." They cannot tell why or from whence this assurance comes, only that it is a part of that heaven-born experience. They have in themselves the first fruits of this life, and it is a conscious reality.

The life of any person is a fact, and every real life is a force. The force of spiritual life begun in an immortal soul, with all its experiences and hopes, cannot end in a world like this. This world is moved by personality. All the currents of history have flowed from persons. The central fact in human history is Christ. It cannot be that such a life as his, capable of such infinite reproduction in those who believe in him, is destined to have its continuity broken for any period at all. Spiritual life is continuous from its very nature. The spiritual man realizes this from an experience as real as life itself. Natural death and dissolution come into human life; but find life and immortality bidding defiance to death, and the force of individual life rising superior to death and laying hold upon eternal life. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," is the Christian's insurance policy, and it is as true as heaven and as unfailing as God.

There is another evidence of the conscious existence of the soul after death given in the transfiguration of Christ. At that time Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus in the presence of Peter and James and John. Moses had been dead for nearly fifteen hundred years, and yet he appeared on the mount and was known by the disciples. If only Elijah had appeared there, there might have been, from this instance alone, no proof of the immortality of those who die, as he was translated. But Moses died. We have the word of God for that. "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord." (Deut. xxxiv. 5.) The Lord said: "Moses my servant is dead." (Josh. i. 2.) No man attended his funeral or knew where he was buried. But he died, and nearly fifteen hundred years afterwards appeared alive, and was known by the disciples of Christ.

The transfiguration teaches the conscious existence of one who died; and more, it teaches the recognition of that one by those who never saw him upon earth before. This whole scene is designed to teach a great lesson of the spirit world. What is true of Moses and Elijah is true of all who have passed into the spirit realm, out of the body, if they departed in the favor of God. We shall

know our friends and loved ones in heaven, and many saints we never knew here. But what of the souls of the wicked? Are they immortal? To find an answer to this question, we must turn to the Bible. Here we find the proof as conclusive that the souls of the wicked have an existence after death as it is that the righteous do. To prove this, the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus is given. I call this a narrative because it lacks the signs that accompany a parable. Our Lord said: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table." (Luke xvi. 19-21.) Who would dare to say that there were no such men as these? "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell [that is, in the place of departed spirits, for the word *hades*, here translated "hell," means out of the body] he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus,

that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." (Luke xvi. 22-24.) Here we are taught that the rich man was in a state of conscious suffering. The strongest possible figures of speech are used to indicate the nature of that suffering; and if this scripture does not teach the conscious existence of the souls of the wicked after death, it teaches nothing and is entirely misleading. Even memory is there to gather up recollections of a wasted life and the good things that are now lost forever. "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." (Luke xvi. 25.)

No amount of quibbling can destroy the teachings of this scripture. It is given to prove to all who believe the word of God that there is a conscious existence for the souls of the good and the bad after death. The rich man and Lazarus represent the two classes. They both lived and died, and our Lord raises the curtain and shows us what followed death.

The nature of the happiness experienced by the good after death is realized by the experiences of those who have the earnest of the Spirit in this

life. Here the children of God are able to glory in tribulations, and have the love of God shed abroad in their souls. In the disembodied state the soul is liberated from its tenement of clay, and beholds with undimmed eye the glory of God. The child of God is a pilgrim and a stranger in this world; he gets home when he steps out of the body into heaven. He is then freed from all anxiety and pain, for at that hour he enters into glory.

As the child of God gets near home sometimes he has glimpses of the glorious state before he leaves this land of shadows. God gives him dying grace, and he longs to depart and be with Christ. Heaven and earth get very close together where the good man ends his earthly pilgrimage. Who ever studied this question by the death-bed of the child of God, and was not impressed with the reality of spiritual things? If he did not feel he was standing in the vestibule of a mansion in heaven at that hour, his soul must be dead to all these higher spiritual things. It cannot be that these experiences end with the death of the body.



“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” (1 Cor. xv. 54.)

CHAPTER XI.

SPIRITUAL LIFE IN THE RESURRECTION STATE.

IT is the purpose of God to keep matter and spirit united in man, and to do this he will raise up the bodies of all who sleep in the dust and give them life in another state of being. The resurrection body will be adjusted to the life in that state. It is not given to man in this life to understand fully what he shall then be. As in other things touching spiritual life, so it is in this: we must walk by faith, and not by sight. The fact of the resurrection of the body is fully revealed both by the declarations of the Scriptures and the resurrection of Christ and his appearance to his apostles by many infallible signs and manifestations of himself. And yet there were many things about his resurrection body they could not understand. He came into their presence after his resurrection, while they were in a room with the door shut. He showed them his body, and assured them that it was the same body that was nailed to the cross. But there was a power about this body that he did not exhibit before his death and resurrection. He would suddenly appear to

his disciples, and as suddenly vanish out of sight. He assured them of the reality of his body being composed of flesh and bones, and yet by his actions he showed them that he was not subject to the laws that govern material bodies. He is the first fruits of them that sleep, and we are assured that we shall be like him. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.)

In the resurrection state all the children of God will be like Christ in their resurrection bodies, as well as in the spiritual likeness they will bear to him. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." We shall have this spiritual body in the resurrection state, and in it we shall forever dwell in the home our Father will provide for us. This is not speculation, but a blessed fact of revelation. Our science and our philosophy cannot comprehend it, but it is not opposed to science or philosophy; it is just above them while we are in this state of being.

The enjoyments of life in the resurrection state will be a continuation and a perfection of spiritual joy begun in this life. Here we have a foretaste of that blessedness into which we shall then enter

fully. Here we know in part, by faith; there we shall know even as we are known. Here we see through a glass darkly; there we shall see face to face. Our bodies here are a clog to our spirits. As the temporary home of our souls, they are a sort of prison house. These bodies are fitly called "tabernacles" by St. Paul. This word means a tent, and a tent is a transient dwelling place. It is also a frail dwelling. So are our bodies in this state of being. They are undergoing a change all the time. By a molecular process that is constantly going on in our bodies, we are changing our material part all the time. Here our bodies are subject to disease, decay, and death. No one can study the mechanism of the human body, and not be impressed with wonder that such a complicated and delicate machine should last so long. Physical life depends upon so many contingencies that we do not wonder that the psalmist should exclaim: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Ps. cxxxix. 14.)

In the resurrection state the body is immortal. It will not be subject to disease or decay. No pain will ever afflict us there. We have reason to believe that every one will appear in the maturity of life. We do not believe that there will be any saints of God in the resurrection state in bodies

that will appear old. There the aged will put on immortal youth, and those who died in infancy will come forth with mature bodies. This is not mere speculation. Our Lord is the type. He died and rose again in the zenith of his manhood. Every wrinkle will be smoothed on the brow of age in the resurrection state. The gray of our hair will all be left in the tomb. The angelic visitors that have appeared on earth were all young men. When Moses and Elijah appeared on the mount of transfiguration there is no doubt that it might have been said of them as it was said of Moses when he was one hundred and twenty years old (when he died): "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." (Deut. xxxiv. 7.)

We all shrink from the decrepitude of old age in this life. It is an affliction from which we shall be free in the resurrection state. Weariness and languor will be unknown in that blessed life. Pain and suffering belong to this period of human existence; but if we obtain the resurrection of the just, we shall part company with these ills forever.

Man never reaches the perfection of being until after the resurrection of the body. As we have shown in a preceding chapter, the good man goes into a state of blessedness at death, and he is with the Lord in heaven, yet he does not reach the

goal set before him until after the resurrection of the body. His soul was made to inhabit a material, glorified body forever, and he does not enter into the highest enjoyment prepared for him until he awakes in the full likeness of his Lord. Then, and not until then, will he be fully satisfied.

This state is called the glorified state. We can form but an imperfect idea of such a life, its employments and its pleasures, but there is enough revealed of it to fill the heart of the child of God with a hope full of joy and blessed anticipations.

In that period of human existence man reaches his final home. The child of God gets his mansion which Christ has gone to prepare. Here, I am persuaded, we shall find that our eternal home will possess all we enjoy in this life, and I think we shall be surprised to find that there will be so much there we learned to love and appreciate here. Our fleshly appetites and passions will be eliminated, but all the purely intellectual pleasures and spiritual joys of this life will be ours forever. We shall possess all the necessary powers of sense to enable us to enjoy the grandeur and beauty of the celestial city. The resurrection of the body is a grand fact of revelation that means much to man. The ties that bind us to our friends here, and which are broken at death in such a way as

to leave us filled with a grief with which we do not wish to part, will be mended completely then. The rewards of faithful service in this state of trial will be fully given there; and we shall find all the promises of our Father true, and none of the good things spoken of in his word lacking. There, like the Israelites when they had reached the promised land, we shall recount the promises of God and exclaim: "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." (Josh. xxi. 45.)

Our hope of a resurrection from the dead and an eternal existence after this resurrection is built on the promises of God. Heaven and earth as they now exist will pass away, but none of his promises will ever fail. Standing on these promises by the graves of our loved ones, we may sing:

O blessed dead who in thee sleep,
While o'er their moldering dust we weep;
O faithful Saviour, who shall come,
That dust to ransom from the tomb.

The dealing of God with the descendants of Abraham was a type of his dealings with his Church through all the ages. His promise to literal Israel was long in fulfilling, but Canaan was reached and every promise fulfilled at last. So

will it be with us. Our Canaan will be reached when our bodies are raised from the dead and we get home to our mansions in the skies. The home idea is wrought into the warp and woof of our being. We feel instinctively that our souls must have bodies and our bodies must have homes. While we may be happy in the disembodied state, there will, no doubt, be a consciousness of greater happiness when our bodies are raised and we are again complete—fulfilling the great idea of God expressed in our creation. We cannot attain unto the full likeness of our Head until, like him, we attain unto the resurrection of the just. In the world of spirits we shall wait for the redemption of our bodies. Death loses its sting when we are saved from all sin and God gives us dying grace, and the grave loses its victory when our bodies are raised and glorified. Then we shall get to our own home and enjoy all its pleasures.

Look at that young man (or young woman) who leaves home to spend a year at college. For a time he is homesick, but, knowing it is best for him to stay away and prepare for the duties of life, he denies himself the luxuries of home, and spends the time in exacting duties and hard mental labor. By and by the time comes to re-

turn; every one is looking for the loved one back home. Mother, father, brothers, and sisters are doing what they can to make the home-coming of the loved one happy. The day arrives, and the heart of the young student beats quickly at the thought of seeing them, and of getting home again. The journey is made, the happy greeting is over, and the young man goes to his room and sees that it has been fitted up with loving care for his reception. There are tokens of affection everywhere. The beautiful room is more lovely than ever, and the grateful heart of the student feels, "This is my home. This beautiful room has been fitted up for me"; and there is a thrill of joy and an appreciation of home never felt before.

Our Lord has gone to prepare a place for every one who loves him. They will all have a mansion all their own. What joy must thrill the heart of the child of God when he enters into this inheritance! At home! forever at home! This will constitute a large part of the joy of spiritual life in the resurrection state. To this we may add the family reunions that will take place there. Loved ones who have been separated by death will meet in their eternal home and know that the union will be forever. But above all this, the joy of seeing Him who loved us and redeemed us from death

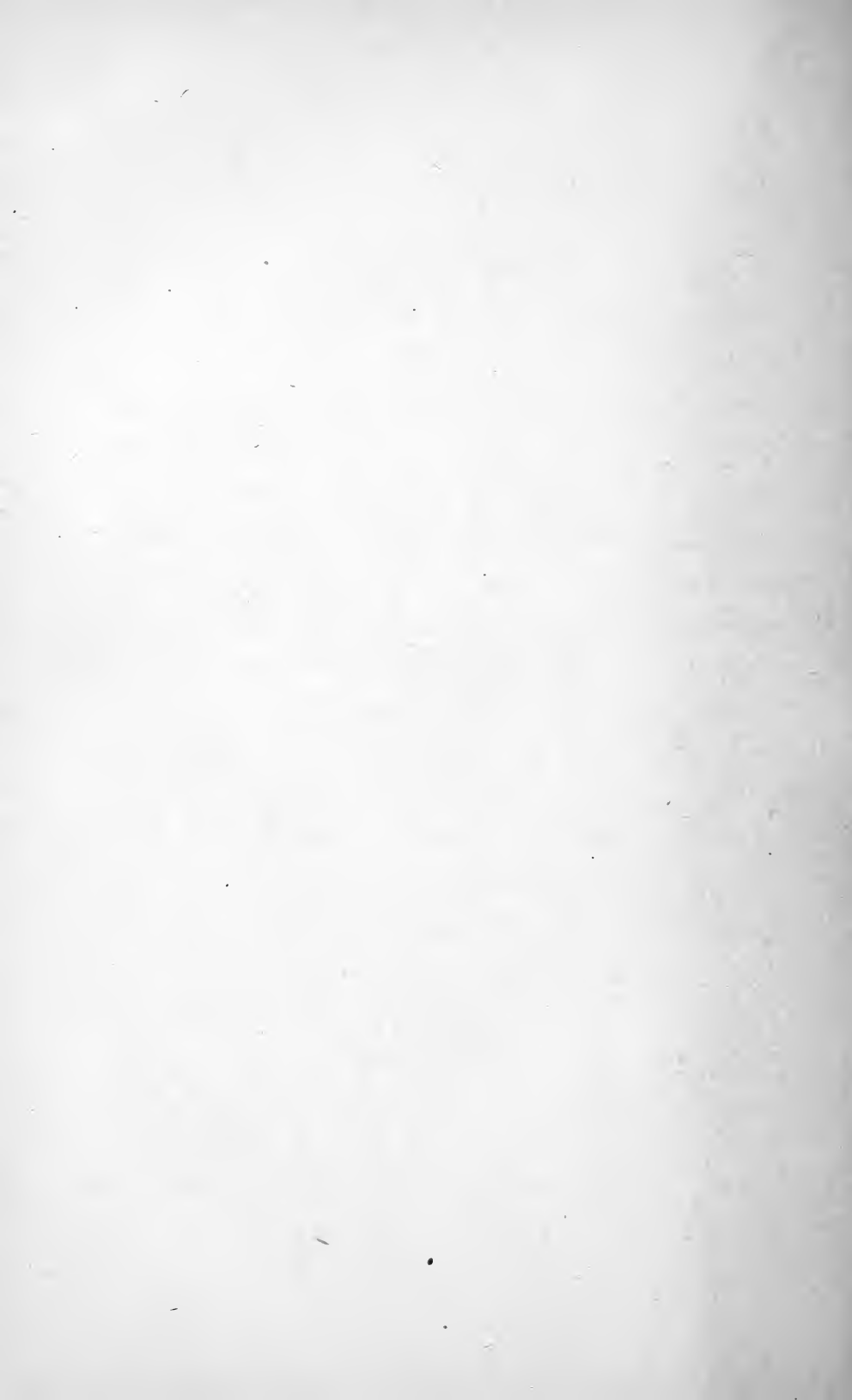
and the grave will constitute a source of joy indescribable and full of glory. The Church is called the Bride of Christ. At the resurrection he will take his Bride home to his Father's house. Many scenes in this life faintly foreshadow this home-coming. Let us look at a scene that has been presented on earth. There stands a mansion, the home of elegance and opulence. It is a massive structure, and combines elegance and airiness with massiveness in wonderful perfection of design, Corinthian columns of pure marble resting on bases of solid and beautiful scroll work. All that art and taste can do is done to make this home attractive and inviting. Both within and without this mansion is a thing of beauty. A son goes out from this home and selects a bride, and the day is appointed when he brings her home. Great preparations have been made for the happy occasion. The day arrives, and the beautiful bride comes to the home of the man she loves and who loves her with all his heart. It is a day of joy in that household. But this is indeed a faint picture of the home-coming of the Bride of Christ. Heaven is immeasurably more beautiful than any earthly mansion that ever has been or ever will be erected by the skill of man; and the happiness of the bride who leans upon her husband's arm, a

picture of ecstasy in repose, but faintly outlines the picture of the happiness of the redeemed, the Bride of Christ, raised from the grave and clothed in white, taken by him to the mansion in the skies.

In the resurrection state we shall reach the perfection of intellectual joy. Here we see through a glass darkly. There are so many problems that we cannot solve, so many things that it would be such a pleasure to know, but we cannot know them. There we shall know as we are known. No distressing doubts will ever cast their shadows over us in that state of eternal light. There we shall attain unto the perfection of being contemplated in the purpose of God when he made man in his own image. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." (Ps. xvii. 15.)

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

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CHAPTER XII.

THE MILLENNIUM AND SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THIS subject is one of great moment because there is so much in it that concerns the highest interest of our race. Theologians have been disposed to pass it by as not of practical importance to the salvation of men or the progress of the kingdom of God, but a careful study of the question impresses me that it is a matter of the first importance to have right views on the subject. The doctrine of the Millenarians is founded on an ancient tradition in the Church, which is grounded on some doubtful texts in the book of Revelation and other scriptures, believed by them to teach that our Saviour shall reign a thousand years with the faithful upon the earth after the resurrection of the just, before the full completion of final happiness; and their name, taken from the Latin word *mille*, “a thousand,” has a direct allusion to the duration of this spiritual empire, which is styled the millennium. The doctrine is older than the Christian dispensation, and originated among the Jews. The tradition fixed the

duration of the world, in its present imperfect state, to six thousand years, and announces a Sabbath of one thousand years, to begin about the close of the sixth millennium after the creation. This is to be a thousand years of universal peace and plenty, during which time Christ will reign in person on the earth with his saints.

This doctrine was first promulgated by a rabbinical writer among the Jews by the name of Elias who flourished about two centuries before the birth of Christ. This belief obtained among the Chaldeans from the earliest times; and it is countenanced by Barnabas, Irenæus, and other primitive writers, and also by many of the Jews at the present day; for they deny that the Messiah has come, and look for him to come and restore the kingdom to Israel, and set up his reign upon earth. While this theory has much plausibility, and has never failed to awaken interest among men, it has not the sanction of Scripture, and is accompanied by a sensual conception of the kingdom of God which frequently leads into very damaging error in belief and practice.

Justin Martyr, the most ancient of the fathers, was a great supporter of the doctrine of the millennium, or that our Saviour shall reign with the faithful upon earth, after the resurrection, a thou-

sand years; which he declares was the belief of all orthodox Christians. But this opinion is not generally followed; for though there has been, perhaps, no age of the Church in which this doctrine was not admitted by one or more divines of the first eminence, it yet appears from the writings of Eusebius, Irenæus, and others among the ancients, as well as from the histories of Dupin, Mosheim, and other moderns, that it was never adopted by the whole Church, nor formed an article in the established creed in any nation. Origen, the most learned of the fathers, and Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria (usually, for his immense erudition, surnamed the Great), both opposed the doctrine that prevailed on the subject in their day; and Dr. Whitby, in his learned treatise on the subject, proves, first, that the millennium was never generally received in the Church of Christ; and secondly, that there is no just ground to think that it was derived from the apostles.

On the other hand, Dr. T. Burnett and others maintain that it was very generally admitted till the Nicene Council, in A.D. 325, or till the fourth century. The Doctor supposes Dionysius, of Alexandria, who wrote against Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, before the middle of the third century, to have been the first to attack this doctrine; but Origen

had previously assailed it in many of his fictitious additions. The truth seems to be that a spiritual reign of Christ was believed by all who carefully examined the Scriptures, though the popular notions of the millennium were often rejected; and ancient as well as modern writers assailed the extravagant superstructure, not the scriptural foundation of the doctrine. In the time of Cromwell there arose a set of enthusiasts in England, called "Millenarians," but more frequently "Fifth Monarchy Men," who expected the sudden appearance of Christ, to establish on earth a new monarchy or kingdom. In consequence of this, some of them aimed at the subversion of all human government. In ancient history we read of four great monarchies (Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman); and these men, believing that this new spiritual kingdom of Christ was to be the fifth, obtained the name by which they were called. They claimed to be the saints of God, and to have the dominion of saints, in fulfillment of this promise from the seventh chapter and twenty-seventh verse of Daniel: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions

shall serve and obey him." They expected, when Christ should come into this kingdom to begin his reign on earth, that they, as his deputies, were to govern all things under him.

The opinions of modern thinkers on this subject may be reduced to two: 1. Some believe that Christ will reign personally on the earth, and that the prophecies of the millennium point to a resurrection of martyrs and other just men to reign with him a thousand years in a visible kingdom. 2. Others are inclined to believe that by the reign of Christ and the saints for a thousand years on earth nothing more is meant than that before the general judgment the Jews shall be converted, genuine Christianity diffused through all nations, and mankind enjoy that peace and happiness which the faith and precepts of the gospel are calculated to confer on all by whom they are sincerely embraced. The state of the Christian Church, say they, will be, for a thousand years before the general judgment, so pure and so widely extended, that, when compared with the state of the world in the ages preceding, it may, in the language of Scripture, be called a resurrection from the dead. In support of this interpretation they quote two passages from St. Paul, in which a conversion from paganism to Christianity, and a

reformation of life is called a resurrection from the dead. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom. vi. 13.) Again: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.) There is indeed an order in the resurrection, but we nowhere observe mention made of a first and second resurrection at the distance of a thousand years from each other. In 1 Corinthians xv. 24, 25 we read: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." If the Millenarian hypothesis were well founded, the words would no doubt have run thus: "Christ, the first fruits, then the martyrs and saints at his coming, and a thousand years afterwards the residue of mankind—then cometh the end," etc.

Bishop Newton, a strong advocate of the Millenarian doctrine, says: "When these great events shall come to pass—of which we collect from the prophecies this to be the proper order: the Protes-

tant witnesses shall be greatly exalted, and the twelve hundred and sixty years of their prophesying in sackcloth, and of the tyranny of the beast shall end together; the conversion and restoration of the Jews succeed, then follows the ruin of the Ottoman empire, and then the total destruction of Rome and of antichrist—when these great events, I say, shall come to pass, then shall the kingdom of Christ commence, or the reign of saints upon earth. So Daniel expressly informs us that the kingdom of Christ and the saints will be raised upon the ruin of antichrist. It is, I conceive, to these great events (the fall of antichrist, the re-establishment of the Jews, and the beginning of the glorious millennium) that the three different dates in Daniel (of twelve hundred and sixty days, and twelve hundred and ninety days, and thirteen hundred and thirty-five days) are to be referred. And as Daniel saith, ‘Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days’ (Dan. xii. 12); so St. John saith, ‘Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.’ Blessed and happy indeed will be this period; and it is very observable that the martyrs and confessors of Jesus, in papist as well as in pagan times, will be raised to partake of this felicity. Then shall all those gracious promises in the

Old Testament be fulfilled, of the amplitude and extent of the peace and prosperity, of the glory and happiness, of the Church in the latter days. Then in the full sense of the words, shall the kingdoms of this world 'become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.' (Rev. xi. 15.)"

According to tradition, these thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints will be the seventh millenary of the world; for as God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, so the world, it is argued, will continue six thousand years, and the seventh thousand will be the great sabbatism, or holy rest of the people of God. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. iii. 8.) According to tradition, these thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints are the great day of judgment of antichrist, and the first resurrection; and in the evening or conclusion thereof shall be the general resurrection of the dead, small and great, "and they shall be judged every man according to his works."

Such is the representation of one of the strongest advocates of the millennium and of those who believe in Christ's reigning personally on earth during the period of one thousand years. In spite

of this plausible theory, advocated by men of unquestioned piety and great ability, this doctrine has never been accepted by the Christian Church, and many of the greatest thinkers have ever opposed it as too sensual to be accepted and at variance with the true understanding of the kingdom of God. The following observations from Jones's "Cyclopaedia" contain a sober and logical discussion of the subject that covers the ground remarkably well:

"Some have supposed that the passage (Rev. xx. 4) is to be taken literally, importing that at that time Jesus Christ will come in his human nature from heaven to earth and set his kingdom up here, reigning visibly and personally, with distinguished glory on earth; that the bodies of the martyrs and other eminent Christians will then be raised from the dead, in which they shall live and reign with Christ here on earth a thousand years. And this, they suppose, is meant by the first resurrection. Those who agree in general in this notion of the millennium differ with respect to many circumstances, which it is needless to mention here. Others have understood this paragraph of Scripture in a figurative sense: that by this reign of Christ on earth is not meant his coming from heaven to earth in his human visible nature, but his taking to himself his power and utterly over-

throwing the kingdom of Satan, and setting up his own kingdom throughout the world, which, before this, had been confined to very narrow bounds; subduing all hearts to a willing subjection, and thus reigning generally over the men who shall then be in the world and live in that thousand years. And by the 'souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands,' living again and reigning with Christ a thousand years, they suppose is not meant a literal resurrection of their bodies, or their being raised to life; but that they shall live again, and reign with Christ in the revival, prosperity, reign, and triumph of that cause and interest in which they lived, and for the promotion of which they died; and in whose death the cause seemed to languish and become extinct. Thus they shall live again in their successors, who shall live, arise, and stand up with the same spirit and in the same cause in which they lived and died, agreeable to ancient prophecies. 'The meek shall inherit the earth.' 'And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; whose

kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.' And they suppose that this revival of the cause of Christ, which had been, in a great degree, dead and lost, represents a resurrection of the souls of men by the renovation of the Holy Ghost. That this important passage of Scripture is to be understood in the figurative sense last mentioned is probable, and the following considerations are thought sufficient to support it:

“ 1. Most, if not all, the prophecies in this book are delivered in figurative language, referring to types and events recorded in the Old Testament, and in imitation of the language of the ancient prophets. And this was proper, and even necessary, in the best manner to answer the ends of prophecy, as might easily be shown were it necessary. The first part of this passage, all must allow, is figurative. Satan cannot be bound with a literal, material chain. The key, the great chain, and the soul cannot be understood literally. The whole is a figure, and can mean no more than that when the time of the millennium arrives, or rather previous to it, Jesus Christ will lay effectual restraints on Satan, so that his powerful and prevailing influence, by which he had before deceived and destroyed a great part of mankind,

shall be wholly taken from him for a thousand years. And it is most natural to understand the other part of the description of this remarkable event to be represented in the same figurative language, as the whole is a representation of one scene; especially since no reason can be given why it should not be so understood.

“2. To suppose that Christ shall come in his human nature to this earth, and live here in his whole person visible a thousand years before the day of judgment, appears to be contrary to several passages of Scripture. The coming of Christ, and his appearing at the day of judgment in his human nature, is said to be his second appearance, answering to his first appearance, in his human nature on earth, from his birth to his ascension into heaven, which was past. ‘And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.’ (Heb. ix. 27, 28.) The appearance here spoken of is the appearance of Christ at the day of judgment. The coming of Christ does not always intend his coming visibly in his human nature; but he is said to come when he destroyed the temple and nation of the Jews and appeared

in favor of his Church. So his destruction of heathen Rome, and delivering his Church from that persecuting power, was an instance of his coming. And he will, in the same way, come to destroy antichrist and the kingdom of Satan in the world, and introduce the millennium; and in these instances and others he may be said to appear. But his coming to judgment and appearing to complete the final destruction of his enemies and to perfect the salvation of his Church are his last coming and appearance. But if he were here on earth, visible in human nature, and reigning in his glorified body during the millennium, he would be already here to attend the last judgment, and he could not be properly said to come from heaven, because this was done a thousand years before. Besides, that Christ should come from heaven and appear and reign in his human nature and presence before the day of judgment, seems to be contrary to the following scriptures: 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.' (1 Thess. iv. 16.) 'And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that

know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints.' (2 Thess. i. 7-10.) This is evidently his appearing the second time, for the salvation of all them that look for him; but were he on earth before this, in human nature, during the time of the millennium, how could he be said to be revealed to descend and come from heaven to judge the world?

“ 3. There is nothing expressly said of the resurrection of the body in this passage. (Rev. xx. 4.) The apostle John saw the souls of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, etc., and they lived and reigned with Christ. The resurrection of the body is nowhere expressed in Scripture by the souls living. And as there is nothing said of the body, and he only saw their souls to live, this does not appear to be a proper expression to denote the resurrection of the body, and their living in that. As this, therefore, does not seem to be the natural meaning of the words, and certainly is not the necessary meaning, we are warranted to look for another meaning and to acquiesce in it, if one can be found which is more easy

and natural and more agreeable to the whole passage and to the Scripture in general. Therefore,

“4. The most easy and probable meaning is, that the souls of the martyrs and all the faithful followers of Christ who have lived in the world and have died before the millennium shall commence shall revive and live again in their successors, who shall rise up in the same spirit and in the same character in which they lived and died; and be in the revival and flourishing of that cause which they espoused and spent their lives in promoting. This is therefore a spiritual resurrection denoting that all Christ's people shall appear in the spirit and power of those martyrs and holy men who had before lived in the world, and who shall live again in these their successors, and in the revival of their cause or in the resurrection of the Church, from the very low state in which it had been before the millennium, to a state of great prosperity and glory. This is agreeable to the way of representing things in Scripture in other instances. John the Baptist was Elijah, because he rose in the spirit of Elijah, and promoted the same cause in which Elijah lived and died; and Elijah revived and lived in John the Baptist, because he went before Christ in the spirit and power of Elijah: ‘And he shall go before him in

the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke i. 17.) Therefore Christ says of John: "This is Elias which was for to come." (Matt. xi. 14.)

"With regard to the nature of the millennial state or the blessings which shall be more particularly enjoyed during that period, the following things seem to be marked out in the prophecy:

"1. It is expressly said of those who shall partake of this first resurrection that they shall be 'blessed and holy,' by which the inspired writer seems to denote that it will be a time of eminent holiness. This will constitute the peculiar glory and the source of happiness of the millennium state. See Zech. xiv. 20, 21. And that such will be the case we may infer, also, from the consideration that

"2. There is reason to expect a remarkable effusion of the Spirit about the commencement of this happy period, even as there was at the first setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world. Besides the promises of the Spirit which were accomplished in the apostolic age, there are others which from the connection appear to refer to the time we are now speaking of. Thus Isaiah, after having described Christ's kingdom, which

was set up at his first coming, and then the succeeding desolate state of the Jews, represents this as continuing ‘until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.’ See Isaiah xxxii. 15–19. The apostle Paul, speaking of the conversion of the Jews at this period, refers to a passage in Isaiah where a promise of the Spirit is made to them: ‘As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever.’ (Isa. lix. 21; also Rom. xi. 26, 27.) The Lord having mentioned the forlorn, dispersed state of Israel throughout the nations, among whom they had profaned his name, promises to gather them, cleanse them, and give them a new heart and spirit, and adds: ‘And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.’ (Ezek. xxxvi. 27; also xxxix. 28, 29.) The promise of pouring on them the spirit of grace and supplication has also a view to this period. (Zech. xii. 10.) Though we are not to expect the miraculous gifts of the

apostolic age, the work of the Spirit will abundantly appear in qualifying men for propagating the gospel throughout the world, filling them with light, zeal, courage, and activity in that work; in giving success and effect to the gospel by converting multitudes to the faith, quickening the dead in trespasses and sins, and translating them into the kingdom of Christ; and in enlightening, quickening, purifying, and comforting the children of God, stirring them up to greater liveliness, love, zeal, activity, and fruitfulness in his service.

“3. A universal spread of the gospel, diffusing the knowledge of the Lord throughout the world in a more extensive and effectual manner than ever it was before. This is repeatedly promised, ‘The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea’; and this shall take place in that day when the Gentiles shall seek to the branch of the root of Jesse, whose rest shall be glorious, and when ‘the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people,’ and ‘shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.’ (Isa. xi. 9-12.) The same promise of the universal knowledge of the glory of the Lord is repeated in

Habakkuk ii. 14. This will be attended with corresponding effects: 'All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.' (Ps. xxii. 27.) 'Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.' (Ps. lxxii. 11.) And though we may not imagine that all the inhabitants of the globe will have the true and saving knowledge of the Lord, we may expect such a universal spread of light and religious knowledge as shall root up pagan, Mohammedan, and antichristian delusions and produce many good effects upon those who are not really regenerated, by awing their minds, taming their ferocity, improving their morals, and making them peaceable and humane.

“ 4. The Jew will then be converted to the faith of the Messiah and partake with the Gentiles of the blessings of his kingdom. The apostle Paul, in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, treats of this at large and confirms it from the prophecies of the Old Testament. He is speaking of Israel in a literal sense, the natural posterity of Abraham; for he distinguishes them both from the believing Gentiles and the Jewish converts of his time, and describes them as the rest who were blinded, had stumbled and fallen,

and so had not obtained, but were broken off and cast away. (Rom. xi. 7-17.) Yet he denies that they have stumbled that they should fall—that is, irrecoverably, so as in no future period to be restored; but shows that God's design in permitting this was that through their fall salvation might come unto the Gentiles, and that this again might provoke them to jealousy or emulation. He argues that if their fall and diminishing were the riches of the Gentiles, and the casting away of them was the reconciling of the world, their fullness will be much more so, and the receiving of them be life from the dead. (Verses 12-15.) He further argues that, if the Gentiles were 'grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?' (Verse 24.) Nor did he consider this event as merely probable, but as absolutely certain; for he shows that the present blindness and future conversion of that people is the mystery or hidden sense of prophecies concerning them, and he cites two of these prophecies where the context foretells both their rejection and recovery. (Isa. lix. 20, 21, and xxvii. 9.)

“5. The purity of visible Church communion, worship, and discipline will then be restored ac-

ording to the primitive apostolic pattern. During the reign of antichrist a corrupt form of Christianity was drawn over the nations, and established in the political constitutions of the kingdoms which were subject to that power. By this means the children of God were either mixed in visible religious communion with the profane world, in direct opposition to the word of God, or persecuted for their nonconformity. In reference to this state of things the angel commands St. John to leave out the court which is without the temple, and not to measure it, for this reason, because 'it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months' (Rev. xi. 2)—that is, they shall pollute and profane the worship and communion of the Church during the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of antichrist's reign. So that it cannot be measured by the rule of God's word. But when the period we are speaking of shall arrive the sanctuary shall be cleansed (Dan. viii. 14); the visible communion, worship, order, and discipline of the house of God will then be restored to their primitive purity, and accord with the rule of the New Testament. So it is promised to Zion: 'Henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.'

(Isa. lii. 1.) ‘Thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.’ (Isa. lx. 21.) ‘And in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.’ (Zech. xiv. 21.)

“6. The Lord’s special presence and residence will then be in the midst of his people. Christ hath promised to be with his people in every period of the Church, even unto the end of the world. (Matt. xviii. 20.) He also calls them to purity of communion and personal holiness, and promises to dwell in them and walk in them (2 Cor. vi. 16, 17); but this will be fulfilled in an eminent and remarkable manner during the millennial period. The Lord, having promised to raise Israel out of their graves, to gather them from among the heathen, and bring them into the Church and kingdom of Christ, as one fold having one shepherd, adds: ‘And I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’ (Ezek. xxxvii. 11–27.) This alludes to his dwelling among Israel in the tabernacle and sanctuary of old (Lev. xxvi. 11, 12), and imports his manifesting himself unto them, admitting them into the most inti-

mate correspondence and communion with himself, in his ordinances, communicating light, life, and consolation to them by his Spirit, and also his protection and care of them as his peculiar people. It is intimated that there will be such visible tokens of the divine presence and residence among them as will fall under the notice of the world and produce conviction and awe, as was in some measure the case in the first churches (Acts ii. 47; v. 11-13; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25); for it is added: 'And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.' (Ezek. xxxvii. 28.) Indeed, this is that very promise represented to St. John as accomplished. 'And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.' (Rev. xxi. 3.)

“7. This will be a time of universal peace, tranquillity, and safety. Persons naturally of the most savage, ferocious, and cruel dispositions will then be tame and harmless; so it is promised. (Isa. xi. 6-10.) Whether we consider the persons represented by these hurtful animals to be converted or not, it is certain they will then be effectually restrained from doing harm, or perse-

cutting the saints. There shall be no war nor bloodshed among the nations during this happy period; for we are told that in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it, the Lord 'shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.' (Isa. ii. 4.) The same promise is repeated word for word in the prophecies of Micah iv. 3. Much to the same purpose is the promise in Hosea ii. 18. Though war has hitherto deluged the world with human blood, and been a source of complicated calamities to mankind, yet, when Satan is bound, his influence upon wicked men restrained, and the saints bear rule, it must necessarily cease.

“8. The civil rulers and judges shall then all be maintainers of peace and righteousness. Though Christ will put down all that rule, power, and authority which opposeth the peace and prosperity of his kingdom; yet the rulers are the ordinance of God, and his ministers for good; as some form of government seems absolutely necessary to the

order and happiness of society in this world, it is thought that when the kingdoms of this world are become our Lord's and his Christ's the promise will be accomplished, 'I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness'; and in consequence of this, 'violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.' (Isa. lx. 17, 18.) Peace and righteousness are the two great ends of government. Christ himself is King of Righteousness and King of Peace, and the civil rulers during that happy period will resemble him in their character and administration; for then shall that promise be fulfilled: 'In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.' (Isa. liv. 14.)

"9. The saints shall then have the dominion, and the wicked shall then be in subjection. This is clear from the united voice of prophecy: 'The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.' (Dan. vii. 27.) 'The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever.' (Dan. vii. 18.) The meek shall 'inherit the earth'

(Matt. v. 5), 'shall reign on the earth' (Rev. v. 10), shall reign 'with Christ a thousand years' (Rev. xx. 4); 'they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years' (Rev. xx. 6). The saints are at present made kings and priests unto God, a kingly priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 9); but then they shall be more eminently so, when, by the holiness of their lives, the purity of their faith and worship, and their diligence in promoting pure and undefiled religion, the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Then shall that promise be fully accomplished, 'Ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God.' (Isa. lxi. 6.) With regard to the nature of their reign it will undoubtedly correspond in all respects with the spiritual and heavenly nature of Christ's kingdom, to the promotion of which all their power will be subservient. Those who cannot conceive of any reign upon earth but such as consists of lordly and oppressive dominion, maintained by policy and force, and made subservient to the purposes of pride, ambition, avarice, and other worldly lusts, can have no idea at all of this reign of the saints with Christ, which is a reign of peace on earth and good will to men; a reign of truth and righteousness, of true godliness and uni-

versal humanity. In short, it is the prevalence and triumph of the cause of Christ in this world over that of Satan and all his instruments. How delightful, then, the prospects which open upon the eye of faith in the prophetic vision! Christianity prevails universally, and the consequences are most blissful. Our race assumes the appearance of one vast virtuous and peaceful family. Our world becomes the seat of one grand, triumphant, adoring assembly. At length the scene mingles with the heavens, and, rising in brightness, is blended with the glories on high. The mysteries of God on earth are finished, the times of the regeneration are fulfilled. The Son of God descends. The scene closes with divine grandeur: 'And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.' 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.' 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.' 'And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he

will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.' ”

Thus we have the doctrine of the millennium, and the second coming of Christ as clearly stated as it will probably ever be; but I wish to add some observations which will no doubt make the above more striking to us in this age of Christian progress and enlightened thought.

1. The idea of a personal, corporeal reign of Christ on the earth stood in the way of his first apostles, and accounts for their dullness in apprehending the nature of his kingdom. It was expedient that he should go away from them, that, under the enlightening influence of the Holy Ghost, they might understand the nature of his kingdom, and fulfill his purpose in propagating the gospel in the world.

The tenacity with which they hung to the idea that he would restore the kingdom to Israel and establish a temporal reign on earth seems never to have been gotten out of some of them fully, and they all clung to it with tenacity until after the Holy Ghost was given. Just on the eve of his ascension, “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them: It is not for you to know the

times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 6-8.)

The humanity of our Lord seems to have stood between these disciples and a full apprehension of the spiritual nature of his kingdom. This is seen in the defectiveness of their faith. All Israel was so blinded that a Gentile rose above them, and was honored by Christ, as possessing the greatest faith he had found on earth. "And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” (Luke vii. 2-9.) Here was one man, and he a Roman centurion, who believed in the omnipresence of Christ. He did not think it necessary for Christ to be present in his human nature in order to heal his sick servant. No Jew had so apprehended the power of the Son of God. They could only be blessed by his human presence. And those who insist on a corporeal reign of Christ on earth fall down to a Jewish level, and do not stand with the centurion on this higher plane.

2. This failure to understand the true spiritual nature of the kingdom of God led the disciples to hold an election to fill the place of Judas Iscariot, before the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they selected two men, and prayed to know which of the two the Lord would choose, and the lot fell on Matthias—that is, they elected him; it never having occurred to them that the Lord might choose some one else, which he did do in the person of

Saul of Tarsus. The very argument they used for the election of Matthias was the Lord's reason for selecting some other person. "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us," was their reason for electing Matthias. They believed he must be one who had seen the Lord in his human nature, while their knowledge of Christ's humanity had made it impossible for them to know him as they ought. This idea led the first disciples to persecute St. Paul. They denied his apostleship, because he had not seen the Lord in the flesh; hence his defense of himself: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Christ Jesus, our Lord? are ye not my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." (1 Cor. ix. 1, 2.) And again: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." (2 Cor. v. 16.)

St. Paul is the greatest of the apostles, and the gospel he preached is on a higher spiritual plane, in many respects, than that of any of the rest of them. He knew Christ in a higher and better sense than any man who based his knowledge on personal con-

tact with his humanity. To him Christ was a living, spiritual force. While he rejoiced in the anticipation of seeing and being present with Christ when he should be separated from the body, he declared: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) He knew that his gospel was the final and complete statement of the plan of salvation, and by it the world should be judged. He is bold to make this declaration: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (Rom. ii. 16.) He alone is bold to declare that the time of Christ's coming is not at hand. The Church began to be troubled with erroneous teaching on this subject in the apostle's day, and he made a deliverance on the subject which was necessary to counteract it: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be

revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. ii. 1-4.) It is not our purpose to explain what is meant by this apostasy, but we simply wish to call attention to the fact that St. Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, declared that the coming of Christ would not take place until certain events in human history should be accomplished. These events have no doubt taken place; the falling away is past, and we are living in the dawn of that glorious time of which we have spoken at length.

3. The present century has witnessed the grandest progress of the gospel ever seen in human history. Many inventions and discoveries have been made, and wonderful have been the achievements of science; but above the progress of human thought and human enterprise waves the banner of the cross; not only abreast, but leading the van, are the soldiers of Jesus Christ, until he must be blind indeed who does not see signs of the coming day. Another century of Christian progress, such as we have every reason to expect, will bring a period of happiness to the world never before seen. Remove sin out of the world, and poverty and suf-

fering will go with it; and the thoughtful student of our times cannot fail to see that progress is being made on all lines of Christian endeavor. Human suffering is greatly alleviated by the discovery of medical science, and the period of human life is constantly increasing, while its ills are greatly lessened and its enjoyments multiplied. These things are not brought about by miraculous power, but by a wise understanding of natural laws and spiritual forces, in keeping with the wise purposes and plans of our beneficent Creator.

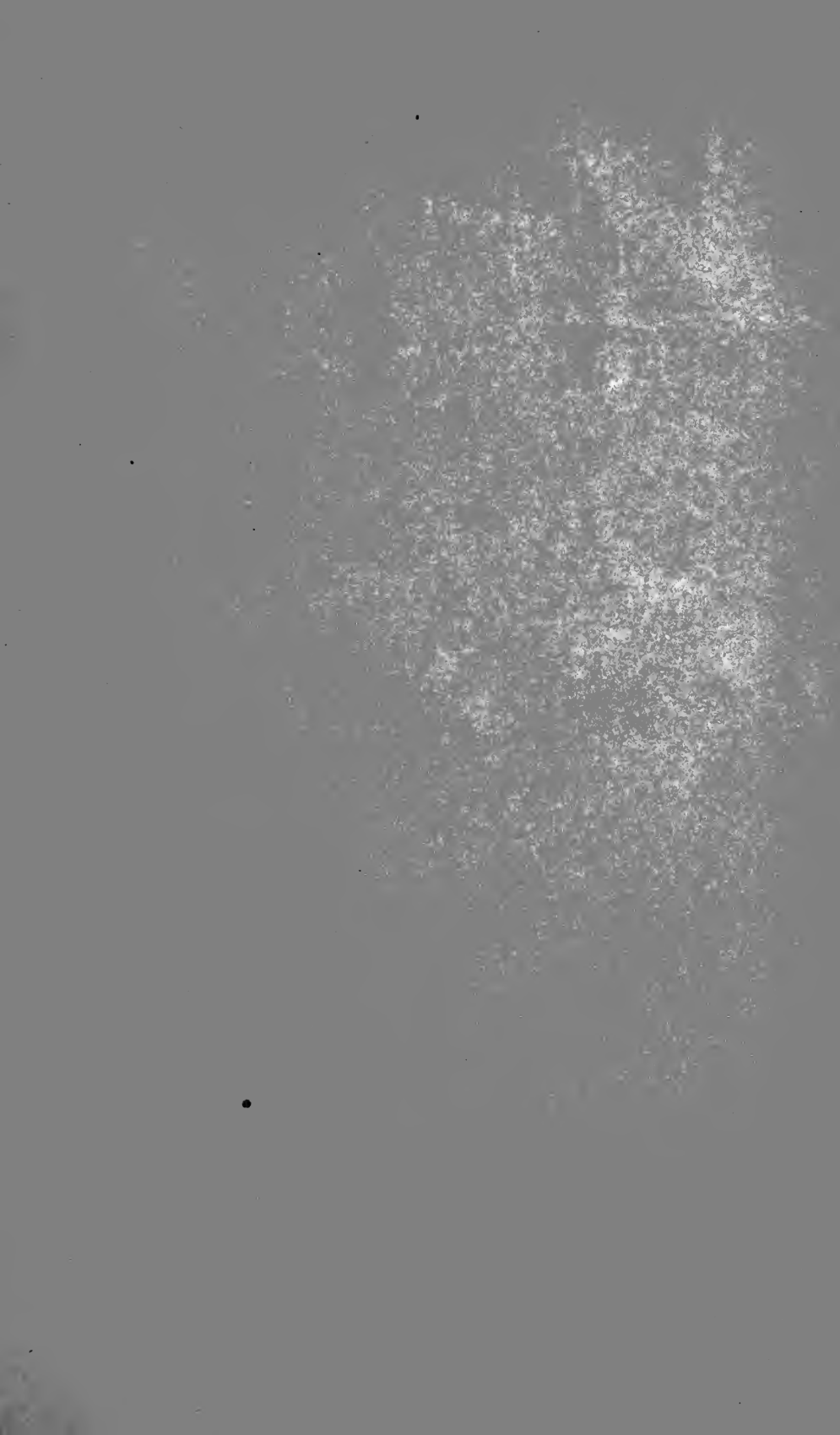
4. There is much more in every utterance of Jesus Christ than we have yet been able to fathom. The disciples of our Lord could not understand why he should say to them, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John xvi. 7.) His spiritual kingdom could not be established upon the earth in all its fullness and power without a withdrawal of his human presence. If he should return in his glorious humanity to reign upon the earth, it would immediately result in the depopulation of every other part of the globe except that where his throne shall be, for every lover of Jesus would at once flock to see him as soon as he could be assured that he

had come to earth. Hence he counsels his followers not to be deceived by any such announcements. "Then if any shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt. xxiv. 23-27.) His coming to establish his kingdom, and to bring on the glorious millennial day, will be like the lightning, bearing to all lands the light and power of spiritual life, unheralded by any advent of his glorious human presence. These flashes of light now girdle the earth. They spread wider and wider with each decade; and as the centuries roll by the heavens will become aflame with this glorious light, and the world will be prepared for the hour of his coming to judgment. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of earth mourn, and then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with

power and great glory.” (Matt. xxiv. 30.) . Yes, while his coming to judgment will bring joy to the redeemed, the tribes of earth who have rejected him, and many who have died without his salvation, shall mourn.

5. An erroneous faith on this subject opens the way to many serious and damaging heresies; while it is ground for thankfulness that all who have erred here have not gone into the extremes of some, yet this is the root from which has sprung a materialism as foreign to the Christian faith as it is possible for any doctrine to be. One of the heresies immediately connected with this Millenarian error is that the world is growing rapidly worse; that the gospel under this glorious dispensation is a failure; and that there is no remedy for this evil but the human presence and personal reign of Christ. Another error held by some is that there is nothing in man but matter, and at death soul and body both cease to exist. It is surprising that any one claiming to believe the Scriptures at all could for one moment give countenance to such gross materialism, yet when men turn away from the true spiritual kingdom of Christ they may fall into as rank materialism as an atheist. Under this delusion the Scriptures are perverted, and their plainest declarations wrested out of their true connection, and the whole

system of divine truth made null and void. But, thanks be unto God! “we have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.” (2 Pet. i. 19.) For when our Lord shall come in person it will unquestionably put an end to this earth. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” (2 Pet. iii. 10.)







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