

held a place and a large place in the express, formal, and solemn teaching of the great Master. These are not all indeed ; for he also spake of love to God, and of faith in his own interposing help, and of penitence to be felt, and forgiveness to be sought after, and of heaven to be gained.

But again ; let us look at the reason of the thing. We have been speaking of natural and revealed religion. Does the latter found itself upon the former, or does it not ? Does revealed religion recognise as just, our natural sense of rectitude, or does it not ? To be more specific — when the Bible uses the words — good, holy, righteous, upright — does it mean by them what the natural human conscience understands, or does it mean something else ? If it does mean that, then our teaching is right. If it does not mean that, then what does it mean ? Some mystic secret, some dark insignia, does it propose to shadow forth, as the very condition of salvation ! Then of what dreadful and fatal misleading is the Bible guilty ! It tells us to be good, pure, just, righteous — gentle, compassionate, disinterested, holy — lovers of men — lovers of God ; it takes these very words that were in our mouths, and gives not a hint that it uses them in any new or mysterious sense ; and yet here comes a theological casuist who says that all this is no religion ; that the preaching of all this, is no preaching ; that nobody is to be converted with such teaching, no matter how thorough and earnest it be ; that true, vital, saving godliness is altogether a different thing.

My friends, this, to me, is the most deplorable distortion of Christianity, to which it has ever been subjected. There have been theological errors, I know, many and dark, but they are all nothing to this — this tying up of