

Father hath appointed unto Me : that ye may eat and drank at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

A table with meat and drink upon it ! And thrones of judgment ! Here are symbols which might easily set the mind on material visions of the future. But we have only to bring them into the light of other places in Scripture where these very symbols, or the realities they refer to, are mentioned, to see how spiritual those realities are. Ail through the Bible, a table is the symbol of fellowship with God, of sharing His life, and of the joy which there is in this sharing of His life. The thirty-sixth Psalm assures us that those who take refuge in God shall eat of the fatness of God's house, and drink of the river of His pleasures ; and the meaning there can only be that they shall be satisfied with what satisfies Him, and glad wherein He is glad. Our Lord Himself makes clear to us, in those passages in which He speaks of our eating His flesh and drinking His blood, that it is to spiritual realities, to truth concerning Him, and to such fellowship in His life as we can enter by faith, that He is referring. And just this is the essential reality of the life in heaven, which He holds up to His as yet dimly apprehending disciples under the symbol of the table in His kingdom at which they were to eat and drink.

But what elements underlie the symbol of the judgment thrones ? First of all, the element which we know in our present life as prayer ; and next, the element of spiritual discernment. The life in heaven, as we have already seen, is but the development of the life God's people are leading here. And here, on this side of the grave, He has admitted His people to a share with Himself in the government of the world. By their prayers they move the hand that moves the world. It is to them He has committed the great educative trust of spiri-

tual influence—by which Christian opinion is to be formed. They come to God bringing their own wants to His fullness—and the world's need as well. They come asking help to do His will ; asking Him to put forth His power through the instruments He has chosen. Prayer in this light is just spiritual suffrage. And it is only in the sphere of Christian prayer where a word sometimes used in ordinary politics is perfectly true—that the *Demos* is *Rex*. Christ has conferred kingship on His people, has placed them even in this life on His throne. Prayer means the recording of a vote—the presenting of a petition—in the government of His kingdom ; prevailing prayer is an actual share in that government. And judgment is simply the moral condition of such prayer. Judgment on the evil in the world, on evil deeds, on evil ways, belongs to the very action of Christian thought. There will be no formal thrones—no visible judgments ; but there will be for all who are true to Christ here, and are faithful unto death—the perfect fruition and action of what we now know as prayer and discerning of spirits.

VIII.

Rest, I need hardly say, will be a great element in the life of heaven. It is one which many circumstances of our earthly life tend to make us think of as material. " Rest to the weary," we say, as the spent frame of our beloved quietens down into death. But the rest which Jesus promised to those who " labour and are heavy-laden " was rest for the soul. It was the rest which He Himself had found for His own soul ; and the secret of attaining it He disclosed from His own experience as a son.

As a son serving the Father, He also laboured and was heavy-laden. His earthly life was fulfilled under all the burden of oppression and injustice which then lay upon His native land, and under the common burdens which lie at all