

until it is offered by the whole body of the redeemed, and be expressed in the song from ten thousand times ten thousand voices, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour and glory, dominion and power for ever and ever."

II.—"FEAR NOT."

St. John once said, "Perfect love casteth out fear." Why then was he now afraid? This fear, however, was not one that "had torment." It was but the awe of a human spirit which, though still living in the flesh, for the first time gained a vision of the solemn grandeur of worlds hitherto unseen. There must also have been in his case a remembrance of old familiar days of humiliation and sorrow, which being now recalled in the light of this heavenly glory, could not but have filled his soul with an overwhelming sense of the mystery and love and sacrifice of Redemption. He who was thus alive and in such ineffable glory, had been known to St. John as dead and buried. It is no wonder, then, that his awe and fear were so insupportable, that he fell at those feet himself as one dead.

There is often found among professing Christians a lightness of thought, a trifling sentimentality, a conceited forwardness, and an easy and familiar way of talking of the mighty realities with which we are dealing, utterly inconsistent with deep knowledge, or strong faith in the things of God. If true faith and love dispel "the fear that hath torment," they, in proportion to their strength, increase the godly fear and solemn awe which every heart must experience, which at all realises the things said to be believed in. There is a sober gravity of spirit which possesses every one capable of feeling, when at some new crisis of life they are placed in circumstances of serious import. Hence the tears which are often shed at marriages as well as before long partings. Hence the oppression of heart at all august spectacles,

such as when a proclamation of peace is made after a long war, or at the meeting of mighty throngs to welcome some one associated with noble deeds. In these and similar circumstances, we are more inclined to shed tears than to smile. And is it conceivable that a man should truly believe in the tremendous verities of his faith, and not be awed thereby? Can he believe that he has offended the living God, that the Almighty has been angry with him, that he has lived in His sight for years as a condemned criminal, liable to judgment at any moment and not experience awe at the thought of his escape? Can he hope that he is now pardoned by the grace of God through the sacrifice of Jesus, and has no awe under a deliverance so effected? Surely no thoughtful man can look forward even on such an occasion as the beginning of a new year without similar awe arising from the sense of the unknown as well as from what he does know. He knows not, for example, what this year or any one week in it may bring forth, what sickness may befall his mortal body, what torture may meet it, what accident crush it. He knows not what sights he may have to witness in his family or among his friends, what dreary voids may be made in his beloved circle. The sense of ignorance on such matters is enough to sober a man but the fool who escapes all fear, avoiding all thought. But in addition to the things unknown, are those we know must come sooner or later. There is the certain death of those who are in earthly life, one by one passing away until they are lost to memory almost forgotten graves. And there is our own death which must come, and our own entrance into the world of the dead of all ages—and the era of judgment, and the meeting with Christ, and the manifestation of the eternal world people of all who have ever lived, and the beginning of our own everlasting existence.