

the idea of eternity. It is far more the opposite of that which has beginning and ending than the extension or prolongation of it. Time and space are laws of our being; but they are not laws of the being of God. His life does not unfold as ours like beats of a clock, in pulses of the heart, in events; but as a perpetual Here and Now. It is idle to try to explain it. All we can affirm with certainty is that it is a life in which change, death, and succession of events have no place. It is the life we know the manifestations of as spirit, holiness, goodness, long-suffering, mercy, and truth. But whatever further developments of it there may be—whatever blooms and powers unknown hitherto it shall yet put forth—into a child's share of these, and into all not yet conceivable which the life may be, they shall be admitted who in the present world have possession of the life of Christ.

VI.

In their anticipations of heaven the Christians of the Middle Ages made much of the Beatific Vision. To them this was the fulfilment of life, the crown and glory of all that can be experienced. Having attained to this, the grand end was reached. But in the teaching of the Lord this is not an end, but a beginning—the pure heart of the child coming into the light of the presence which is to be strength and joy to it in all its after service. The vision Christ promises to those who accept Him includes admission into the kingdom as much as sight of it. It is nearness to God, the nearness which kinship and fellowship reach, and specially that nearness to which He Himself admits us. I am recalling, as I say this, that aspect of the vision which our Lord discloses in the prayer He offered with His disciples: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me." For saints in glory this will probably always be the vision of God. Then as

now, the Father may veil His face. We shall hear His voice, we shall see His footprints, we shall know ourselves to be in a world where everything tells of His love; but the very glory of that presence, His person, the vision of Him as we might have of a fellow-creature—the only approach to this we are justified in expecting is the vision to which we shall be admitted when we shall see that glory disclosed in the face of Jesus Christ.

VII.

We are accustomed to think of heaven as a place of rewards. Nothing more clearly exhibits the spiritual character of its life than the rewards mentioned by our Lord. Open acknowledgment of secret prayer; comfort after persecution; increase of faculties of well-doing to those who have well used them on earth; a vision of God to the pure in heart:—these and such as these are the traits of the future life which our Lord brings forward when speaking of rewards. But once or twice His teaching is so wrapped up in symbol that it may be well to pause for a little on one or two of them, and disentangle the truths they enclose. A strife had arisen among the disciples as to which should be the greatest. And let me say in passing that this strife is not so evil a thing as at first sight it seems to be. What it reveals is much more the childish inexperience of the disciples than what we should call ambition. Just before the strife arose, the Lord had told that one of them was to betray Him. Straightway arose the questioning as to which of them it could be. Who so base, so unfaithful as to do that evil? Their strife is the mere rebound from this questioning—the mere next step in a natural enough process of reasoning; it is the question, Which of us shall prove *most* faithful? So like children they still are! Well, in connection with that conversation, our Lord says, what I am anxious to show the meaning of—"I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My