

ing, is not to be gained in a moment. One cannot say, "Let me be perfect," and by that word or resolve become perfect at once. The Christian, as every one knows, has many a battle to fight, many an Apollyon with his fiery darts to overcome, many a Hill Difficulty to climb, many a poisonous weed to uproot. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. Paul knew nothing of the modern doctrine of "Holiness" — "Sanctification" — the "sinless state." He felt that even he—who had preached the gospel to others—might himself become a cast-away, and so "must keep his body under." There was in his case a perpetual war between flesh and spirit. "When he would do good evil was present with him."

The conflict will have an end, however, and, although we shall never attain unto "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," we shall become more and more like him, as we struggle on through life, "purifying ourselves as he is pure" under the inspiration of the blessed hope that we shall at last "see him as he is and be like him," and "be satisfied." And so he shall indeed be, as the Father foreordained, the "first-born among many brethren," and "see the travail of his soul and be satisfied," when he shall have "brought many sons to glory."—*Christian Evangelist.*

CONCERNING DIVISIONS.

If, among men, honor were always conferred upon those to whom it belongs, the words of Paul, "Honor to whom honor," would never have been written: neither would our Saviour have said: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." Quite frequently one person receives the glory that belongs to another. The bold and self-conscious whose consciences will allow it, step forward and take the crowns that of right should be placed upon the heads of others; and too often, in human pride and blindness, an honor is conferred upon men which should be given to God only. The church at Corinth made a most serious mistake in this respect, which is set forth in Paul's pointed words of rebuke:

"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" (I. Cor. i. 12, 13.)

It has often been said that Paul here places those who said "I am of Christ." in the same condemnation with those who claimed Paul or Apollos or Cephas as their leader. But nothing could be farther from the truth. He first simply states the fact, that at Corinth the honor of leadership was divided between Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ. So far the lines of difference are not drawn. But how clear become these lines when he asks: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" That is to say, Christ is not divided; Paul was not crucified for you; ye were not baptized into his name; he is not your Christ; he is not your leader. They would at once infer that the same was true of Apollos and Cephas. But as Christ their only Saviour had been crucified for them, and they had been baptized into his name, taking him as their leader, not one of the objections which Paul mentions can apply to those who made the direct and truthful claim, "I am of Christ." Who dare challenge these with the questions, was Christ crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Christ? As long as this challenge can not be made, so long will those who say, "I am of Christ," be vindicated in this respect, and those

who give the names of men the place that belongs to Christ's name alone, will not remain blameless. Paul regarded this matter as an exceedingly serious one. He besought his brethren in the most earnest way in respect to their duty in putting themselves right as to scrives about leadership. He says "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you." They had not yet separated into different religious bodies. They were not refusing each other Christian fellowship. They worshipped together still, and partook of bread and wine from the same table. Yet Paul saw among them divisions and contentions utterly out of harmony with the one undivided and supreme place of exaltation occupied by Christ as the Lord and Saviour of men, divisions and contentions that were clearly at war with that oneness among believers which formed the burden of the Saviour's petitions when his soul went out to his Father in behalf of his churches throughout the ages.

These things being true, it is not to be believed that the unity for which the Saviour besought his Father is realized at the present time, notwithstanding the existence of many religious bodies wearing different names. True, there is now much more brotherly love, as well as less unbrotherly hate, manifested among those who go to the sacred Scriptures for religious instruction, than was seen when instruments of torture were used to lead men's thoughts in the ways that others deemed right. Indeed, there are now and then outbursts of brotherly love and Christian fellowship which, disregarding all denominational barriers, carry sweetness and grace to all who love our Lord and Saviour; and for the moment we are almost made to feel that the barriers are all down, and that Christian love abounds much more than the sin of division. But immediately some representative asks, "Who are the Congregationalists?" and another publishes to the world that the Disciples deny the divinity of the Lord, and still another declares that they teach baptismal regeneration; and then the news comes that several good brethren have been reimmersed because the body whose fellowship they seek would not recognize their baptism as Christian, and then the spell is broken, and we see the fences all up again, and the streams of love that were flowing with such power, appear to have hid themselves in the sand, and the sin of division is seen to abound as oneness of mind and heart does not abound. And is not this a fact?

In the cities the sin of division does not appear at its worst. As a rule, in the cities, places of worship are not too numerous for the population, though often the churches are thinly attended; and there is comparatively little strife between the various denominations in the city churches. The sin stands out in the small towns and villages most prominently. Who has not seen in a town of three or four hundred inhabitants five or six churches, representing as many different denominations, struggling, to keep a preacher constantly in their employment, when one building of small capacity would hold the entire church-going community? It is under such circumstances that the burden which religious divisions impose are felt to be most heavy and grievous to be borne. Strifes and jealousies abound, and the spirit of love and good-will depart. Usually the rivalry, and the deceptive methods that are employed to gain hearers and converts, are not surpassed by business men to bring custom to themselves in their various lines of trade. Misrepresentations are heard on every hand. This ought not so to be. Paul would certainly say now as in the early days, "Are ye not carnal and walk as men?"—*Christian Standard.*

STANDING BEFORE GOD.

And now St. John declares that when he passed behind the veil he saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. Do you not see what that means? Out of all the lower presences with which they have made themselves contented; out of all the chambers where the little easy judges sit, with their compromising codes of conduct, with their ideas worked over and worked down to suit the conditions of this earthly life; out of all these partial and imperfect judgment chambers, when men die they are all carried up into the presence of the perfect righteousness, and are judged by that. All previous judgments go for nothing, unless they find their confirmation there. Men who have been the pets and favorites of society, and of the populace, and of their own self-esteem, the change that death has made to them is that they have been compelled to face another standard, and to feel its unfamiliar awfulness.

Just think of it. A man who, all his life on earth since he was a child, has never once asked himself about any action, about any plan of his, is it right? Suddenly, when he is dead, behold he finds himself in a new world, where that is the only question about everything. His old questions as to whether a thing was comfortable, or was popular, or was profitable, are all gone. The very atmosphere of this new world kills them. And upon the amazed soul, from every side, there pours this new, strange, searching question, "Is it right?" That is what it is for that dead man to "stand before God."

But, then, there is another soul which, before it passed through death, while it was in this world, had always been struggling after higher presences. Refusing to ask whether acts were popular and profitable, refusing even to care much whether they were comfortable or beautiful, it had insisted upon asking whether each act was right. It had always struggled to keep its moral vision clear. It had climbed to heights of self-sacrifice that it might get above the miasma of low standards that lay upon the earth. In every darkness about what was right it had been true to the best light it could see. It grew into a greater and greater incapacity to live in any other presence, as it had struggled longer and longer for this highest company. Think what it must be for that soul, when, for it, too, death sweeps every other chamber back and lifts the nature into the pure light of the unclouded righteousness. Now for it, too, the question, "Is it right?" rings from every side; but in that question this soul hears the echo of its own best-loved standard. Not in mockery, but in invitation; not tauntingly, but temptingly; the everlasting goodness seems to look in upon the soul from all that touches it. That is what it is for that soul to "stand before God." God opens his own heart to that soul, and is both judgment and love. They are not separate. He is love because he is judgment; for to be judged by him, to meet his judgment, is what the soul has been long and ardently desiring. Tell me, when two such souls as these stand together "before God," are they not judged by their very standing there? Are not the deep content of one and the perplexed distress of the other already their heaven and their hell? Do you need a pit of fire and a city of gold to emphasize their difference? When the dead, small and great, stand before God, is not the book already opened, and are not the dead already judged?—*Brooks.*

The same measure of trouble being laid upon two men, is far lighter to him that bears it with patience. Of how pure wood soever an instrument is made, yet if it warp with the sun, or crack with the weather, we dislike it. Let us not lose our credit of the holiness by the least murmur of impatience.—*Adams.*