

or in value, from the most repulsive forms of moral depravity to the fairest impulses of social affection; but they are all equally remote from the preparatory life of heaven, in so far as they are felt apart from God, in so far as they would equally exist, were God conceived to exist no more.

Here then, is the ground and substance of the aversion which religion brings against the world. It is not that the world does not abound with manifestations of moral as well as of physical beauty. It is not that many fair and admirable impulses and principles of action are not every day witnessed by men,—that the family relation, that the larger social relations have not their virtues respected and honoured amongst us. This is not what the Gospel asserts when it speaks of the heart of man as utterly depraved, of the world as a moral ruin. What it does assert is this,—that all which is excellent in the natural man is excellent, irrespectively of his God; that he loves, hates, prefers, rejects,—and often rightly too,—but without any thought of God's law of preference and rejection, that thus all—and there is much—that is beautiful in his best impulses, is beautiful only as the flower, or as the landscape is beautiful; his heart as little moving through its circle of social kindness from a desire to approve itself to the God who has commanded them, as the flower expands its petals and sheds its fragrance in voluntary obedience to Him who created it,—the one beauty being as much and as little *religious* as the other. But as we have argued, if every motive must be comparatively worthless for the activities of eternity, but that which connects us directly with our God; if with the earthly frame worth the earthly impulses shall in death be dissipated and the immortal spirit be left to those alone which can stand the fiery test of God's tremendous presence,—then do we press it upon you that that which is worthless for heaven must be foreign to the heavenly life on earth; then do we bring all the weight of the immortal world to bear upon the perishable; then do we argue from the future to the present, from what shall be yet to what ought to be now; and beseech you to reflect that no virtue but godliness, no excellence but that which springs from God, no affection, but that which tends to God, no rule of life but that which God has sanctioned, and which trains for God, can ever be the virtue, or the excellence, or the affection or the rule which is fitted for a creature travelling hourly on through time to God's own eternity.—*Archer Butler.*

CHRIST AND THE BELIEVER.

The soul in its pressure and want having found Christ, Christ is now the great animating presence. Man needs to be stimulated and lifted up. He needs a chief motive that is divine, and an inspiration that is divine. The cross with the God-man hanging thereon is the power. Church history mentions a striking incident connected with the life of Constantine. He was about to commence a war; and being at a loss to know to what deity he should apply for help, he concluded to betake himself to the one Almighty God. To him he therefore applied, praying that he would reveal himself to him and lend him the protection of his arm in the approaching contest. While thus praying a short time after noon, he beheld spread in the face of the heavens a glittering cross, and above it the inscription,—“By this conquer.” The emperor and his whole army now just about to commence their march towards Italy, were seized with awe. While Constantine was still pondering the import of this sign, night came on; and in a dream Christ appeared to him with the same symbol which he had seen in the heavens, and directed him to cause a banner to be prepared after the same pattern, and to use it as his protection against the power of the enemy. The emperor obeyed; he caused to be made, after the pattern he had seen, the resplendent banner of the cross. This was carried forward in the presence of his soldiers as the inspiring symbol of vic-