

child. And here we come into the presence of a great secret of the blessedness of heaven. Looking to one aspect of God we have learned to speak of Him as the Ancient of Days; but there is an aspect as real which justifies us in thinking of Him as the Eternal Youth. The life of heaven is a life of eternal youth. There is neither age nor decay in the life which God leads, but a fresh-springing flow of the strength and joyousness of youth. And such will be the life of His children in the world to come. Many a time, no doubt, the Lord repeated among His disciples the words of Psalm ciii., "Thy youth is renewed as the eagles," where the glad strength and upsoaring power of the eagle are used to set forth this very fact. But He brings it in the most explicit way into His teaching as well. Those passages where He commends the spirit of childhood and advances its life as the type of the life to which knowledge of God and entrance into the kingdom are promised, are prophecies as much as illustrations. Heaven is opened to us in the life, trust, innocence and joy of children. "Such is the kingdom of heaven." It is in one aspect the central fact concerning the life of heaven. Its freshness, newness, spontaneousness, springing up as water in a living spring does, lifting up its face to the Father for its supplies: all these are included in its youthfulness. It is life strong with the strength of youth, free from care and without the root from which care springs; life to which all things are new, which sees itself at every step in a new wonderland, which takes no anxious thought for the morrow, which enjoys the present because the present is set for it in the light of God. It is a life that does not grow old, that is incorruptible, that abides for ever. Our present life advances by inevitable marches over all powers of our being to decay, to death. Everything is at last touched by the spoiler. Moths waste; thieves break in and steal. But the life of heaven—of which a

child's is the type—advances ever to more perfect forms of the youth, strength, and joyousness of God.

V.

The joy of eternal youth! The secret of this part of our hope is the fact that the life we are to inherit in heaven is the life of our Father who is in heaven. It is life our Lord invites us to in the gospel: and it is at last into life those who accept His invitation enter. Life—"life eternal" our Lord calls it. This is not immortality only, although we often, by putting a narrow meaning into the words, think of it as that. It is the life we know of as salvation. This occupies a great place in the Lord's teaching, and underlies what He offers to us under the symbols of His flesh and blood and bread and water and light. It is life. It is the life which has the open vision, which sees the kingdom, which has the opening word, which can enter into the kingdom, the Divine password at the lines between earth and heaven. And it is the life of God: the life He poured out into Christ for us; the life which the Son brought near to us and made over to us; the life which carried Him through all His trials and into His conquests; the life which the miracles expressed, which gave forth the parables, which uttered wondrous words of invitation, which went near to outcasts, which had fellowship with the Father in joys of service, in agonies of prayer, whose home was God and which Christ carried with Him when He returned to hat home.

It is the very life which God lives, which He had always lived, which He will always live—the eternal life. Let us not be surprised that we find it difficult to apprehend the eternity of this life. Eternity is not a subject of which it is easy to think. We are on a very narrow line of the track when we are trying to conceive of it as mere prolongation of time, duration without end. Duration no doubt lies somewhere in the texture of it: but only as a single thread. Beginning and ending are ideas foreign to