

CONCERNING LIFE'S CONTINUITY

People of all shades of religious belief, and even those who think they have **none**, are interested in the question of life's continuity. Whatever we believe or accept as supported by revelation concerning the penalties or progress that await human beings beyond this Kindergarten school of life, reason itself leads us to conclude that the mental and spiritual conditions of individual life **afterwards** must be influenced more or less by the interests, experiences and ambitions of our lives here. That truth itself would encourage the isolated "I" in each human being to seek to practice the golden rule, and would also, with reflection, enlighten us as to the relative value of mere material or monetary "wealth," and the folly of letting its attainment **dominate** the life and efforts of individual souls in this world. . . .

We do not think we can do better, in opening a column on this subject—to which we shall give space as copy, correspondence, and other conditions warrant—than publish the following lines entitled "Vision and Answer." They were sent to the editor of this Magazine some time ago by Rev. Thomas Gillieson, one of the early graduates of Westminster Hall, Vancouver, and for some time minister of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church here, and now minister of St. Bride's Parish, Edinburgh.

It may be in place to add that in a personal letter which accompanied the lines, Mr. Gillieson, not for the first time since going overseas, refers to this Magazine in a way that is not without interest. Mr. Gillieson was among the original group who began the publication from which the B.C.M. (under its present editor) evolved; and continuity of unselfish interest in worth while work is as commendable a characteristic in ministers as in other men.

Some Vancouver readers of the B.C.M. will be glad to know that Mr. Gillieson has been making steady headway in service in another part of the Empire. Particulars of his work in Edinburgh must be withheld meantime, but, in a reference to the lines below, Mr. Gillieson writes: "Here is the report of a spiritual experience—a dream indeed—which you may care to publish. It is a memory of my old friend, and guide of my youth, Dr. (afterwards Sir) James Cameron Lees, Dean of Chapel Royal, and minister of St. Giles. It is weird but interesting."

VISION AND ANSWER.

Hour after hour my mind had questing gone
To probe the fortunes of that HIGHER SELF
Persistent when the garment of the flesh is put aside—

Folded in sleep, this was the scene disclosed to my craving eyes—

Within a caverned chamber chill and dark,
Fed by a light that knew no source of earth,
In marble majesty a once-revered form appeared
Dressed out and laid upon a stoney shelf,
The chiselled features no less pure and strong,
Graceful and firm in death as life.
Forward I stept to fold the wonted hand in mine—
(Strange that the touch of life should quicken life)
For as I grasped the fingers cold,
Quick as a thought the graven figure vital grew,
And into every limb reviving life distilled—

O'ercome with awe I fall upon my knees
And instant supplicate a blessing—
"With all my heart my Benediction would be yours
But it is not mine to give but GOD'S.

Ask rather He through me should pour
The bounty of His Spirit on thy head,
For such I will impart and do, as God's ambassador and voice.

'Twas then the answer to my questioning of years
Rang full and sure to no interrogating word of mine
(Thought matching thought without the coin of speech)
"YES, THERE IS A TIME OF WAITING."

Not purgatorial durance nor penitential strain,
But as in silent quiet the fly lies in the dormant chrysalis,
E'en so the soul of man abides awhile the will of God,
Perchance awaiting such access of strength
As peace and patient rest alone can give,
For that last lap on God's highway to God.
As husky seeds and buds await the touch of Spring;
So by heaven's grace hibernate lies the soul of man,
Before at last it goeth face to face with GOD.

THE IMMORTAL HOPE

By Principal W. H. Smith, D.D.

If hope in immortality is necessary for personal comfort and inspiration in worthy work, the question of its reasonable accord with human experience becomes at once personal and urgent. This question may for a time remain in the background. Some, like Dr. Osler, even claim that the attitude of the majority of men toward death is that of inattention or evasion. Be that as it may the time comes to every one when indifference to immortality and even denial of it pass away and personal interest becomes almost a consuming desire. James Montgomery has pictured the desire of the saints of God as their sun in setting in the western sky and they look out from Mount Nebo with wistful eye toward the mountain peaks of the promised land where the sun never goes down;—

Heaven's broad day hath o'er me broken,
Far beyond earth's span of sky;
I am dead; nay, by this token
Know that I have ceased to die.
Would you solve the mystery?
Come up hither—come and see.

But to those who have not thus become enraptured, the trying hours come. When they first consciously face death and know that soon they must pass from the known to the unknown, the seen to the unseen, men seriously ask what it means. Or when with noiseless tread death unexpectedly and unwelcome comes and takes from the circle one whose presence was as the sun in his shining and whose voice was as the gentle music of the angels of love and mercy, even the most careless men and women are aroused and the desire for some assurance of immortality becomes unquenchable. When men recognize the worth of any fellowship its condition beyond the present becomes a personal interest. The soul seeks assurance. Is immortality reasonable? Is it according to what we know of life and the universe? Was the Scottish mother right in her view of her bairn who had been snatched away from her embrace but not from her heart?