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A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH.

The most enduring conception the average Christian permits to himself is that of heaven. His thoughts of eternity and infinity centre round that ideal state of being, consciousness, bliss. It is true he is somewhat vague in any account he offers of his belief; but still it is present with him as a real destiny to be achieved, solacing in sorrow, dimly realised in joy. His ideas are chiefly based upon old Persian and Jewish beliefs, which in turn are derived from descriptions of some of the subjective states of consciousness through which the soul passes after death.

The conception of heaven which Jesus gave to His followers, and preserved by them, is quite different from the modern belief. It was not a place, but a state or condition of mind, and the kingdom of heaven was to be sought within. Even should a man die and find himself in a relatively objective state of consciousness, the kingdom of heaven would still be within. Without the interior peace that passes understanding (*nous*, mind, *manas*) a man could enjoy no consciousness of heaven, even if he were located on the plane of the very Throne of Life itself.

All manifested conditions are transient, unabiding. The things that are seen are temporal; the things that are not seen are age-enduring. As they become manifest, they too must give way to more perfect expressions of the Divine. Here we have no continuing city, but seek a city which is to come, æonian in the heavens; not in the skies, as most people imagine, but in that kingdom of the heavens, the realm of the Over-world, which is within. This is spoken of by St. John of the

Apocalypse, when he describes the new heaven and the new earth which was to follow his own age. Heaven itself is not an everlasting, but only an age-lasting condition.

All outward things—the external creation, the physical body or garment of life—are but the expression of the inward thought and life for which they serve as vehicles. The new earth is preceded by the new heaven, which is itself the result of the experience gained and the evolution attained on the previous earth. Man is preparing his own heaven as he lives his daily life. His rest after death is the necessary cessation from physical activity; in that rest the character he has formed will be assimilated into his being, will become part of his nature, and will show itself in his actions when he returns in a new body to pass through the earthly conditions which he will find as the result of his previous earth-life. The new incarnation of each man is a fulfillment of the allegory of the new heaven and the new earth.

As this is the case with man individually, as it is of the Universe as a whole, so it is also of groups of individuals, nations, religions. The religious world of the present day, in so far as it has been seeking the inner kingdom of heaven, has been realising the spiritual truths of that kingdom. The outer expression of that realisation will surely follow. Old-world types of thought, ancient creeds and dogmas, no longer ensouled, but vitiated and corrupt, must pass away, as all former things must yield to the inevitable law of change. "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." They