

to God, and necessarily produce philanthropy or benevolence to man. On these principles, which the wise men of this world on other subjects call philosophical, does the christian religion proceed.

The rudiments of christianity, or the first lesson which it imparts, are comprehended in one sentence, viz. "God is love." This does not, in its scriptural connexions, represent him as having no other perfections, natural or moral, but that of love; but it represents him in his procedure to men, in the whole origin and process of the work of reconciliation, in the amelioration of the character and condition of men, as supereminently displaying benevolence or philanthropy.

To bring men to love God and one another, is the high end of the christian religion. This is happiness. The happiness of heaven is the happiness of perfect love. The intelligent christian expects to be introduced into a society of the most refined and exalted intelligences, whose love to each other will be incapable of augmentation. Hence the standard of christian perfection is graduated by love to the brethren—and just in so far as we have progressed in the cultivation of complacent affection and benevolence, so far have we obtained a taste for the society of the saved.

One leading design of the institution called the church, was to give its members a taste for the society of heaven; for the fact is, but very few have any taste for such society, and for such entertainments as the intelligent and perfect christian pants after, in the upper world. Many christians talk a good deal about heaven; but from their taste, as it exhibits itself, they would like, it is true, to be in the palace of the Great King, but they would rather be in the kitchen amongst the servants, than amidst his attendants that wait upon his royal person. They think more upon being safe than upon the high enjoyments, and talk more of escaping the burning lake than on all the rational delights of pure and exalted spirits before the throne of the Almighty.

Men have made many attempts to promote good will amongst a few—whom nature, interest, solemn pledges, climate or country had united. But these are poor substitutes for the grand scheme of consociation devised and published by the Almighty. Every tie has been broken or worn out, which men have devised as a substitute for the ties of enlightened christian affection. But what consideration can unite men in the purest affection, as the manifold cords of the christian religion? The one faith, the one hope, the one Spirit, the one Lord, open a new world of relationships. Christians are united by the highest, strong-