

more than the other, has any reference to what is usually meant by the future state or life; "the life that now is" meaning the things pertaining to this life—its business, its wealth, its pleasures, &c. (compare Ps. xvii., 14, 1 Cor. vi., 3, 4, and xv., 19), and "the life which is to come," the things "pertaining to life and Godliness." The new life, begun by the teaching, and life, and death of Christ, and still *coming* in its greater manifestation, (compare John v., 40, xxi., 31, 1 John v., 12, Rom. vi., 4, Ephes. v., 14.)

But this letter is long enough, and perhaps some other correspondent may be suggesting some other passages that will throw more light on the subject; if not, I may in another letter state how the gospel appears to me to bring life and immortality to light.

SENEX.

"THE FUTURE LIFE."

SIR,—Will you permit me to say a few words on this subject. I am a simple citizen, and may well be pardoned if I do not rise to the height of this great question. I have read the several articles which have appeared in the SPECTATOR, and the paper by the Rev. Dr. Wilkes appears to me the clearest exposition of the subject; the four articles by "Christian," able as they undoubtedly are, failed to convince me. In his opening paper "Christian" says: "I do not expect that I shall make it quite clear to any one. It is not quite clear to my own mind." How, then, can I do more than set down what I feel on this question. I do not object to the thorough discussion of this or any other subject, but my own convictions are so deeply rooted, that as yet they have not been shaken.

Man is authorised to say to the world that there is a God, for he believes in God; and surely he is entitled to say what he thinks of himself, his being, his prayers, and his destiny. The voice of nature interrogates him, asking "Who art thou?—whence coming, and whither going?" and his reply—the reply of all ages, the reply of all countries—has been: "I am the child of God; I am the heir of immortality." Men of intellect, instructed minds have at different times avowed their disbelief in immortality, and even in the Deity, yet they have never been found so in affinity with the common sense and feeling of mankind as for any course of time to establish their blank negation in the world. It may have prevailed for a time, but it has soon passed away; they might be addressed in the language of the bard to Edward:

"Fond, impious man! think'st thou yon sanguine cloud
Raised by thy breath, has quenched the orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And glads the nations with redoubled ray."

And so has ever the faith in God and immortality risen from these seasons of eclipse, and poured forth a brighter and stronger tide of light upon the nations.

The notion of a future life—of immortality—has always presented itself as a religious idea; it has always assumed the form, the character, the relations of a religious idea. There are passions of the earth that rule, and run their course in reference to earthly things. Ambition delights in the tumult of battle, the shout of victory, the formation and the conquest of empires. Avarice accumulates its stores, and drives its thriving trade, with reference either to the mere possession of wealth, or to the various uses and advantages which wealth gives in society. The poet pours forth his song, because the thought is burning within him, and he must speak and give it utterance. Human passions, affections, interests, build up, and have ever built up, family relations. They all pursue their earthly course, they might pursue that same course if religion entered not at all into the human mind. But when the religious sentiment is excited, then the hope of immortality appears in strength and beauty and glory. Place man in the light of religious sentiment, and he sees beyond the dark portals of the grave. When the choral song of multitudes is swelling in adoration of the God and Father of all; when the spirit is in unison with the harmonies of nature, and drinks in delight and instruction from every object of sight or sound, luxuriating, as it were, in the beauties of the fields, the woods, the blue heavens, or the boundless ocean; when meditation communes with its own heart upon its bed, and is still, and in the silence hears the low voice within, whispering holy oracles; when bereavement stands by the yet uncovered grave, weeping over its blighted hopes,—then, and in all circumstances inducing similar states of emotion, exciting the religious sentiments, human nature feels that a future life is an undoubted reality; and when is human nature more to be trusted than under such circumstances?

Indeed, what is religion without this? It may be only a secondary idea; but does not the primal one of Deity, by close affinity, bring this in its train? Can man call God his Father without implying his own childhood, and in that filial relation, his own future destiny? Does he not feel the truth of the saying, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living?" Must he not have the conviction that "all live to Him?"

In that melody, "Art thou not from everlasting to everlasting, O God, mine Holy One? We shall not die,"—is there not a sequence of thoughts as close as in the most logical chain of causes and effects that was ever linked together? If religion were capable of existing in its proper strength and greatness, without the immortality of man, it would become fainter as we approach the verge of our existence; it would grow less and less in the prospect of dissolution; it would partake of that oblivion which is spread over wealth and power, and so many other things by which man's passions and ambition are excited in their most active moments. Is this the fact? Is it not most directly the reverse? Is not the triumph of religion, the hope of immortality, always greater at such times? Is not the death-bed scene, the peculiar scene, of the vigour of the religious sentiment, including this as one essential idea, though only a secondary one, of that religious sentiment? So it was rightly judged by him who sang that Hope would

"Light her torch at Nature's funeral pile."

She lights it at the funeral pile of the individual, as well as at that of congregated Nature,

"Unfading Hope! When life's last embers burn,
When soul to soul and dust to dust return,
Heaven to thy charge resigns that awful hour,
Oh! then thy kingdom comes, immortal Power!"

If we take it from the ground of a logical deduction, it is not a lowering, but a raising of it, for we place it on the same footing with the existence and perfection of the Divinity. There may it stand—Independent of tradition and legend—not resting upon the questionable testimony of historical evidence—unlinked from an association with preternatural wonders—but resting and remaining, like the enduring pyramids, or rather like some mountain heaved up by Nature herself, to tower aloft and hold communion with the skies—those skies which are the type of Divinity. "Love to God and love to man" was the summary of the stone tables of natural and Christian duty. There is a summary of the religion of Nature inscribed on the tables of the heart, and that summary is,— "The perfection of Divinity—the immortality of humanity."

SPES.

THE MILL OF ST. HERBOT—A BRETON STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PATTY."

CHAPTER XII. (Continued.)

"Oh, my little one, be reasonable; you will break my heart." He spoke so tenderly that the girl was thrilled through with surprise; "Louise, if you guessed how I love, you would not be so cruel."

Louise looked at him for a moment, the imploring appeal in his eyes swayed her weak nature.

"I do not ask you to marry me now," he said; "I only ask you to listen to my love, and to give up Christophe."

He waited, but no answer came; he pressed her hand tightly in his. "I will not leave you," he said, "until you promise to give him up."

Louise looked round in terror; if she screamed ever so loud she would not be heard at the mill, for the noise of the cascade deadened all sound around the cottage. She had no strength to free herself from the tight grasp on her hand, and she knew she might stand there for hours for the chance of a passer-by, and Christophe had said he should not come that evening.

"Promise!" Jean Marie's eyes never left her face, and again they seemed to fascinate her by some irresistible power.

"Oh, how cruel you are; if you loved me you would not frighten me so."

She repented her words as she said them. Jean Marie pressed her hand to his lips, and covered it with kisses.

"It is you who make me cruel, my beloved," he said passionately. "Say you give him up and I release you; you are driving me mad, Louise—I cannot answer for myself." She looked up in sudden fear; his face was working strangely and his eyes glared wildly.

"Yes, yes, I give him up—let me go." The girl was half-crazed with terror, and the strange tumult of conflicting feeling which the man's wild, passionate love had stirred in her unawakened nature.

Jean Marie stood as if paralyzed with the sudden joy; he put his hand to his head, clasping his brow tightly with his fingers; then he loosened his grasp of her hand, but still held it tight enough to prevent her escape.

"God bless you, child,—I have one more word to which you must listen, Louise. To-day I swore a solemn oath that you should never be the living wife of Christophe, and I have never failed to keep an oath, see that you keep yours," he said in a stern voice; then more gently, "Now I will take what every lover has a right to take, and then I will walk with you to the mill." He stooped and kissed her, but Louise struggled and slipped from his grasp, then she fled away before he could stop her—not towards the mill, for Jean Marie stood in the path upwards, but downwards towards St. Herbot.

He looked after her for a moment, and then he went back among the trees.

Louise ran on till her breath and knees alike failed, and then she stood gasping, leaning against a tree.

"What have I done?" she sobbed; "oh, what have I done?"

She had stopped mechanically where the path ended in an almost open space; in front of her was a ruined cottage—probably the former abode of some sabotier or charcoal-burner, for there were many in the district, spite of the wolves which in winter came out of their forest dens, and prowled in the woods. The cottage was quite deserted and overgrown with brambles. Since their betrothal it had been a favorite trysting-place for Christophe and Louise, and the sight of it made her self-reproach yet more bitter.

"Oh how could I listen to him for one moment," she cried; "what will Christophe say to me?"

The upward path through the wood was narrow, and encroached on by a thick growth of trees, but here the trees had been cut down, or were more sparsely planted, and the path beside which the ruined cottage stood went right and left straight for only a little way, and then both ends of the path struck downwards towards the avenue which leads to St. Herbot.

The noise of the cascade was faint at this distance, and as Louise stood shivering with fear and grief, she heard a sound which checked her sobs, and made her listen with hope, and with straining ears. The sound was the swing of the gate at the end of the avenue, and her hope was that the person who had passed through the gate might be coming through the wood, instead of merely skirting it by continuing along the avenue. Whoever it might be, she should ask for protection or companionship. She felt that she dared not meet Jean Marie alone again, or pass alone through the wood to the mill.

For some time she was in anxious doubt. Though the trees were sparsely planted, their boles were larger here, and she could not distinguish a figure beneath the trees in that fast waning light; but suddenly it came nearer. She gave a scream of joy as she recognised the tall, alert figure of Christophe. She sprang forward, but he had seen her and was beside her in a moment.

"Oh, Christophe," she cried, and her tears came freely now, as she threw both arms round his neck, and sobbed like a frightened child on his breast.

He put her gently away with one hand, and looked surprised in her tear-stained face.

"What is it, my poor little one; who has frightened you, my Louise?" She drew herself away, and shook her head.