more than neigh. sonals," even more ders and robberies

ed world, yes, and lesome and needful through the enter. do not undervalue spaper. Men and kely to be danger. they should know. rough and through things they would ll one can say about makes stronger the us information and ess of religion. 80 d this paper, to take to read it. It will

THE SPIRITUAL

ON THE FIRST SUNDAY IALCOLM MACCOLL.

Lweek.)

ay say that no one ghty love can save. is by the sinner him. ay, and we have no puked one who asked be saved?" by the er in at the straight r idle curiosity, for r practical conduct.

his own calling and God's never-failing g sinner. The quesalways forgive, but . God's forgiveness s never sure. Every lessens its power of me habits, and the e will may become tance may be imposthrough all created oliability, indecision; change. The tree, ned to bend in any ached maturity and though it may break hape. So it is with cy is to grow from ixity. The greatest perhaps of all time, f human nature, so treatise on ethics has n universities, came ance in evil habits cter which he calls amendment, a will lusing the evil and self-doomed to the st and finding none." sin in the beginning, he first step on the ou, or whether you is. It is not, let me iness to forgive, but e become captive to to break its chains. r, you will see that ate, is the abode of but that their conndefinitely, from the g to the purity and from the penitent Jesus loved." It

the Kingdom pre-id the Church of the liturgies and monu r peace, repose, light, departed, including —even the Blessed e idea of purgatorial Christians are conrmediate state into l souls were believed ess, and, therefore, e Church on earth. e state as a penale faithful departed heaven before the 1. The early Church ief, as attested by

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is note in common,

or less incomplete,

liturgies, epitaphs, [and other evidence, all souls remain in the intermediate state till the Second Advent. But I have not time to pursue that part of our subject to-night, interesting though it be. I cannot, however, conclude without some reference to two other points, one of which at least may sug-

gest a difficulty to some minds.

If it be true that heaven is an abode of "many mansions," varying in splendour according to the spiritual elevation and capacity of their inhabitants, does it follow that there must needs be a separation, an absence of intercourse and intercommunion between persons of different characters and endowments—that husbands and wives, parents and children, loving friends and neighbours, who have loved each other on earth, will be separated in heaven according to their differing degrees of sanctity and receptivity? It does not follow, and we may find illustrations of the fact even here. In this world persons may live side by side in close intercourse, and yet occupy, so to speak, different "mansions," and enjoy different scenes and sources of happiness. Place a man born blind alongside of one who sees, and there is no separation in one sense; but there is in another. The man who sees is in a world of which the blind man knows nothing—the world of form and colour; a beautiful world, but requiring eyes to see it. Let the blind man be deaf in addition, and a second world is closed to him, touching him, embracing, penetrating him—the world of music—a world of exquisite beauty, but which does not exist for the deaf because they lack the sense of hearing. But, in addition to all this, photography and spectrum analysis have proved that there are worlds within worlds close to us now and here, of which our gross senses can take no cognizance. Photography has shown that there are multitudes of stars beyond reach of the most powerful telescopes, and that the light of these stars is ever playing on our earth. So distant are they, and so attenuated are their rays, that it takes countless billions of these luminous vibrations to make an impression on the photographer's plate. "The waves beating from the Atlantic in long course of time," says one of our leading astronomers, "have gradually altered the face of the shore. But in one second of time there are as many minute waves of light beating in on one plate as the Atlantic has sent in during a million years—a whole geological period. The human eye is colour-blind to a vast proportion of the rays which come in from the stars. But the photo-plate sees all these invisible rays a great deal better than our eyes see the visible rays." It bewilders the intellect, and makes the imagination giddy, to learn that within the petals of a flower, even within a speck of blood dissolved in a drop of water, the seven colours of the rainbow are seen as distinctly as in the bow which spans our sky. Yet that is one of the marvels which chemical analysis has revealed to us. Do not these things show how possible it may be for the inhabitants of Heaven to occupy different spheres of being and enjoy the glories of different worlds—sounds and sights being visible to some which are inaudible and invisible to others—and yet be all the while in close communion with each other? The material conditions under which we live here—let me say again—do not apply at all to the spiritual world. Loving hearts are not sundered in heaven any more than here because one may be purer and more richly endowed than the other, and therefore capable of receiving impressions to which the other is insensible. Just as the trained eye of the man of science can see a perfect rainbow in the lily or the rose—a world of beauty beyond the beauty seen by unskilled eyes—so different saints may see different worlds of splendour in the Beatific Vision, each receiving all that his spiritual conditions can appreciate.

But what do we mean by the Beatific Vision? Speaking generally, it means the highest vision of the Divine glory of which created intelligence is capable. St. Paul tells us that even in the intermediate state there are splendours too wonderful to find expression in any language of earth. How much more in heaven! Great names in theology believe that God the Father will never be seen by created eyes in His uncreated majesty and glory; and there are passages in the Bible which seem to bear that mean-You remember the very striking incident related in Exodus xxxiii. 18, and following verses.

Moses prayed God to allow him to see His glory—
"I beseech Thee show me Thy glory." But he was told that he had asked an impossible thing: "Thou canst not see me canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen." Only the afterglow of the Divine Glory could be borne by human eyes. The unclouded vision of God would scorch and consume the beholder; and hence it is that it is an opinion among theologians that men will never see the

Divine Glory as it is in itself in the bosom of the Father; that they will only see it even in Heaven as it is reflected in the Incarnate Son. Our Lord uses an expression in His prayer to the Father in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, which seems to bear out this view: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me." St. Paul is still more clear and decided, for he says expressly, in the sixth chapter of I Timothy, that God "dwelleth in the unapproachable light, which no man hath seen nor can see." The expression is emphatic-literally, "whom not one of men, none of the human race, hath seen or can see." He puts no limit of time. Taking Holy Scripture for our guide, then, it seems that the Beatific Vision will consist in the closest view of Divine glory which the creature can bear, as it is seen reflected in the Incarnate Son-"the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," as St. Paul puts it. There will be degrees of happiness, some seeing more, some less; the saints differing from each other as one star differs from another star in glory. All will be as happy as their several natures will permit. All will be full, but not equally full—like vessels dropped into a well-each coming up full, but not equally full, and each expanding more and receiving more according to the capacity of each; "going on from strength to strength" in an endless journey into fresh worlds of greater splendour and increased happiness.

These surely are suitable thoughts on the last evening of the year. We are too much tempted to regard this world as if it were the real world, and the world to come as if it were unreal, shadowy, vague, unsubstantial, distant, somewhere beyond the fixed stars. But, in matter of fact, it is this world which is unreal, phenomenal, unstable, never continuing in one stay. And how short our tenure of it is, even if it were eternal! We are not eternally in it. We cannot tell how soon we may be summoned out of it; but we know the longest life has but a short time to remain here. On the other hand, the next world is eternal, stable, not distant, not beyond the stars embraces this world, penetrates it through and through, is quite close to us, holding our treasures those who are lost and gone from us, and whom we may hope to meet again, and even now are near us, though we have no organs to see and hear them. Let us take that thought home with us. How reverent it ought to make us, how careful, how cautious! Let us remember, then, on the eve of the New Year on which we are entering, that this world is not our home; that we are but pilgrims passing through it, and that its only importance, its only value to us, is that it is a school, a training place, "a clift of the rock," in which, like Moses on the Mount, we may

prepare ourselves to meet our God.

A CONGREGATIONAL DECLARATION ON CHURCH UNITY.

Another response to the Quadrilateral of our House of Bishops has been sent out in the shape of a declaration on Church Unity, from the Congregational Association of New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland and the District of Columbia. The course taken by this association, at its meeting on April 18, was preparatory to general action among the Congregationalists, as to the reception of the basis of unity offered by the Protestant Episcopal Church of

The declaration has been sent to other Congrega tional bodies throughout the country, and is recommended as a basis for action at the next National Council. In a preamble to their proposition for

unity the New Jersey Congregationalists say:
"Whereas, the spiritual unity and acknowledged fellowship of all bodies which seek to maintain discipleship of Christ is an object to be aimed at only second to the discipling of all men to Christ our Lord; and whereas the visible corporate unity of such Christian bodies will be the best evidence to their own consciousness and to the world of their spiritual unity; and whereas, such formal and corporate unity can only be secured by much preliminary consultation between various Christian bodies,

and whereas, honourable example in this regard has been already set pre-eminently by our brethren of the Protestant Episcopal Church; . . . we invite correspondence with, and propose to the various Protestant Churches, a union based on:

"(1) The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, inspired by the Holy Spirit, as containing all things necessary to salvation, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of Christian faith. (2) Discipleship of Jesus Christ, the Divine Saviour and Teacher of the world. (3) The Church of Christ or dained by Him to preach His Gospel to the world. (4) Liberty of conscience in the interpretation of the Scriptures and in the administration of the Church. Such an alliance of these Churches should have regular meetings of their representatives, and should have for its objects, among others: (1) Mutual acquaintance and fellowship. (2) Co-operation in foreign and domestic missions. (3) The prevention of rivalries between competing Churches in the same field. (4) The ultimate organic union of the whole visible Body of Christ. Voted, that this paper be communicated to other State Associations and Conferences, and to the National Council for their consideration and action.

"Signed by AMORY H. BRADFORD, WILLIAM HAYES WARD, STEPHEN M. NEWMAN, FRITZ W. BALDWIN, CORNELIUS H. PATTON, DANIEL A. WATERS, THEO. F.

SEWARD."

With regard to the proposition of the bishops, the resolutions of the association say: "The Protestant Episcopal Church, having proposed union on the basis of the Chicago-Lambeth articles, we believe that the Congregational churches can accept unity on this basis, if these articles can be interpreted with such latitude as to allow to the terms used the various interpretations admitted by the contracting parties. The first article, the acceptance of the Holy Scriptures 'as containing all things necessary to salvation, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith,' is one upon which we also would insist. The second article recognizes two of the early creeds of the Church as containing the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. While regarding only the Holy Scriptures as authoritative, we also pay especial honour to these ancient creeds, and accept them as a 'sufficient statement of the Christian faith.' The third article requires the acceptance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper 'ministered with unfailing use of our Lord's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.' As this is the habit of our churches, it can be accepted without difficulty. The fourth article requires the Historic Episcopate, with necessary local adaptations. This article is phrased with a happy indefiniteness purposely to allow latitude of interpretation and embrace the different views of the Episcopate prevailing in the Protestant Episcopal Church. It also carefully avoids terms imposing a diocesan Episcopate or any theory of episcopal succession. Inasmuch as the view of the Historic Episcopate prevails among us which holds the Episcopate to have been originally over the local Church, and inasmuch as this view also has large prevalence among scholars of the Anglican and American Episcopal Churches, this article can be accepted by the Congregational churches if interpreted in such a way as to give liberty to views of the Historic Episcopate prevailing in both bodies.

"If, however, by Historic Episcopate is meant the diocesan Episcopate, we are willing to treat for unity on this interpretation. We could extend our system of missionary superintendents so that it shall become general, and we could ordain them as superintending bishops, without local charge, over the territory occupied in part by our local bishops, and might give them such responsible duties as can be performed without interference with the local churches and local bishops. We could, when we desired, invite their bishops to unite with us in the ordination of our bishors and other ministers. This we could do, not because we believe the system necessary, but for the sake of meeting our brethren and accommodating our practice to theirs; and we think it could be done without interfering with the independence of our churches. We would, therefore, favour negotiation with the Protestant Episcopal Church on these terms, and earnestly hope that our next National Council will appoint a committee to correspond with the duly appointed representatives of that Church."

About this time of the year in a countless number of churches, parish priests are preparing candidates for Holy Confirmation. This sacred ordinance is sacramental in its nature, inasmuch as it possesses an outward and visible sign (the laying on of Apostolic hands) and an inward and spiritual grace (the bestowal of the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Ghost.) Holy Confirmation ought to be easerly sought by all believers in the Bible. Valid Orders can only be had from an Apostolic Bishop, so also valid Confirmation. In the Church God founded there were three Orders of the ministry, Apostles to ordain, Confirm, Govern Dioceses, etc. Priests or Presbyters to administer Sacraments and govern parishes, and deacons to assist the priests. Everybody ought to receive Apostolic Confirmation. We say Apostolic Confirmation for there is a body of Christians who profess to give confirmation, namely, the Lutherans. Lutheran Confirmation is not real Confirmation because it is given by a minister. A minister can no more give real Confirmation than he can give real Orders. Real Confirmation can only be had from an Apostolic Bishop. The Apostles were the first Apostolic Bishops of the Church; their successors by unbroken consecrations are in the Church to-day. In the book of Acts, 8th Chapter, we are told that St. Philip, the minister at Samaria, baptized people, but could not confirm them, so the Apostolic Bishops, Sts. Peter and Paul, had to journey from Jerusalem to Samaria, a great distance, to confirm those bap-tized, which they did by laying their hands on them