

story affair,—the earth flat, the heaven a dome overhead through which the snow and rain came down ; and, just above was heaven where the angels lived. And the world of spirits was nothing but a cellar beneath. All was a tiny, baby-house affair.

The universe of the Middle Ages was no improvement on this. Only in modern times have we gained a conception that makes the universe worthy to be the home of an Infinite Being.

Next, we will have a grander conception of God. Mark you, friends, those men are shallow who think that theism will be lost. The most famous of them have to define matter to make room for what we mean by spirit. Materialism is dead ; and it is science that has killed it, not the church

We have, then, a grander God than the old,—a God here, a God as really throughout his universe as I am throughout this body. He is no less personal, in the sense that the essential thing in personality is consciousness ; so that we can call him Father, knowing that not only the cry, but the thought, finds conscious echo in his heart.

We are not troubled by complaints against the Bible and its revelations. We can pick out the truths from all the Bibles of God over all the world. Revelation is all-divine truth, God's word, ever growing, ever unfolding, as the faculties of men unfold to meet it.

And incarnation, can we believe in that ? There is to be a nobler doctrine of incarnation than any age has ever held. We are going to believe that humanity is God's child, each and all of us. The doctrine that has been taught concerning Jesus is only a prophecy of what shall some day be true of every man.

And mediation,—will that play any part ? Yes : every man who is true to his ideal is a mediator : he helps to atone. His suffering is vicarious : he lifts and leads the race toward his ideal. He, in his degree, is helper and savior, as truly as was he of Nazareth.

And now let us turn to the church. Is there to be a church in the coming ages ? Why, friends, it both saddens and amuses me when I am asked such a question. What is religion but the eternal search of the race for the fulness of life ? Being, then, the most important interest of the race, it cannot help becoming incarnate. Religion must organize always, as naturally as the elements that go to make a crystal, only I like not a crystal, for a crystal does not grow.

There is to be a church as much grander, as much nobler than the past has known, as the human imagination can see. Will it have symbols, rituals, sacraments ? That will be as its members shall choose. They may be as simple as the Friends, they may be as elaborate as the Roman Catholics. The symbols, the rituals, if they exist, must be vital. I believe it will have rituals and

symbols ; that it will glorify itself with all the beauty that man can devise.

Worship, in the minds of some, is thought of as to pass away. They must have curious ideas as to what worship means. It is the noblest characteristic of man : it is the upward look, the bending soul, in recognition of that which transcends it. To ask whether there will be worship, then, is to ask whether man will keep his noblest nature.

And will they pray in this church of the future ? Friends, the conception of prayer that is to dominate the future is as much higher than any conception of the past as the conception of a child nestling in its father's arms is nobler than the petulant begging of the child for playthings. We have outgrown that conception of prayer which thinks that we petulant children can ask God to change the laws that he has made.

If I supposed that any word of mine could interfere with the working of the universe, I should never dare speak again.

Prayer is more than begging. There is the communion, the trust, the strength, that thrills down from this high trust into our hearts. There is all left that Jesus dared ask for, for never did Jesus beg as I was taught in my childhood.

Such, then, in regard to these great points of belief in the church of the future, is my belief.

Now I want to speak of the method of the religious growth of the coming time. There will be no orthodoxy and no heresy ; for there will be no infallible standard of truth, in the old sense, by which man can be tried and be found wanting.

In no scientific society has there been such a thing as heresy. Whatever is verified as true is accepted by all intelligent people because it is true. No man ever voluntarily turned against the truth. It has been the assumption of infallibility by human beings that has made the heresy and its persecutions of the past. In the coming time nobody will think that any intelligent man wishes to deny the truth. All will seek it, and there will be no refusal to see and accept it when found.

So there will be no reason for persecution, for hatred. The religious men of the future will be looking after the truth, trying to live it ; and it will never occur to them to think disagreement an offence,—disagreement at least on those questions about which there is no possibility of knowing anything.

The work of the Inquisition appears like the doings of insane men. The future church will be sane : in all the departments of life it will be seeking to find the truth, and to get into ever closer and closer relations with God. There will be no more breaks and upheavals, but change, like the change of dawn. The old evils will be outgrown and left behind ; and the " low, sad music of humanity " will sink down and back until it is forgotten, to be succeeded by glad songs of joy and thanksgiving.