

His kingdom shall be high and uplifted above all thrones. Would that we felt our absolute dependence upon God; that we are not things whirled onwards, the sport of laws, the atoms of chance, but that we ever dwell in the eye of a Personal God; that the very secrets of our heart are open before Him; that He alone can determine how many more beats our heart will give, and how many more hours we shall possess this life, and all that gladdens it or makes it sad to our eyes; that He alone can determine where and how we are to live after death; and that every attempt to escape from His all-seeing eye, to question His supreme authority, and to resist His absolute disposal of us—all arguments, threats, blasphemies, reasonings—are utterly useless and vain to alter the fact of His complete possession of us and ours, and His right to dispose of us as He thinks proper.

Now, this fact of the government of God, if truly believed in, must give rise to earnest questionings regarding its character. To know merely that a personal God reigns, will by no means of itself make a man happy. For no one could possibly rejoice in the thought, and welcome it, though he were compelled to submit to it, until he knows the moral principles of the divine government, and how these affect the good and happiness of man. Mere power terrifies, and the more irresistible it is, the more terrible, until we know *how* this power is to be exercised. Is it a demon power, or a holy power? Is it eternally and universally on the side of right or wrong? What has love and mercy, justice, goodness, and truth to do with it? Are those its unerring guides, or shall cruelty and injustice move its sceptre? It is when such questions as these become not speculative ones, but questions of life and death, and of such interest to us, that all others fade before them, that the inward ear catches up with joy the words, "The sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness," "Thou lovest righteous-

ness," and sends them to the heart, where they are clasped as the voice of eternal right; and to the spirit, where they are adored as the beauty of holiness: and to the hopes and longings of men, where they are rejoiced in as containing the assurance of everlasting good and joy to the universe of God. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth be glad!" For "the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity."

God "loves righteousness." God looks upon a man as he is. He deals with living persons—with their words, with their actions. Saints and sinners are naked before Him; and the saint will be tried by the same rule (and by a stricter rule, if possible) as the sinner. God does look on each man just as he is; and He *does* see the sins of the saint—his sins of lip, and of heart, and of temper—just as they are in all their vileness, even as Jesus looked on Peter just as he was, when He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan," or on that night when Peter "went out and wept bitterly." He will see us as we are in judgment, and He sees us exactly as we are now, even when justified by Christ's righteousness, and accepted in Him. He loves righteousness in us and hates the iniquity. "Let us no man deceive you by vain words." Right and wrong are eternal; and Jesus never lived or died in order that sin should be anything else than sin in a good man, or righteousness anything else than righteousness; and no robe of righteousness will so conceal from the righteous God the wrong of a Moses, or of a David, or of a Peter, that He shall not hate it, or so alter the nature of things that He shall not be pleased with what is most delightful to Him.

Further, God rewards righteousness. Here is a word at which some men start; but we have to do not with words, but with facts; and the fact is, that God does "reward us according to our righteousness and the cleanness of our hands,"