

the teachings of Jesus. In the very first of his sermons he said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." I see in this a very strong evidence of the loving character of God. This differs diametrically from the common teaching now. In religious revivals the attention of the people is almost always called to the terrible result that will follow if they do not accept Christ and do not repent. God, they are told, will cast them into eternal misery, and that he is angry with man because of his transgression; and they are appealed to to turn from their wicked ways that they may escape the judgment.

Now, Jesus did not take this course. Remember, he was speaking to a highly cultured people as well as publicans and sinners. Jesus said to these people to repent—cease from the evil of their ways and learn to do well. That is all there is to repentance. It is not the accepting of any theory, but the stopping of wrong-doing and the turning to the right. "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand" was Christ's reason. Not that God will blot you off from the face of the earth and consign you to eternal punishment if you do not.

Where God reigns there is heaven. Heaven is not a local place away beyond the stars. Heaven is not a place with four square walls, with God on a throne as a personal being. God is everywhere, and heaven may be in every heart. The kingdom of God is within you. That is Christ's teaching, and that is the truth.

Our experience tallies with this. When we have done wrong we experience disturbance within. When we amend—and it is not necessary to have formal words; just a resolution will answer—then we are happy. When we know that we are obedient to the divine law, then we know that the kingdom of heaven is set up within us. And to those who have strayed the farthest the invitation is just the same. When they leave off from the

evil of their way and turn around and do the thing that is right, happiness is the sequel. To me this is a far higher incentive for a man to live right than the fear of punishment.

That tender, touching, most pathetic invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," reaches every condition, doubt, despondency, or anxiety. We cannot go to Jesus in the body; he is not here, but at the right hand of God. The divine immanence in a man, as is represented by the man Christ Jesus—to this we must go, and in silence let us wait till the voice speaks in the soul.

It brings rest, not a state of quiescence in which there is nothing for the soul to do. Rest is heaven. This opposes the idea held by the evangelical churches. In every man are found all the dispositions that are found in animal life, and therefore it is that God comes to man's support. We find God in David, who was forgiven for one of the most heinous sins known to the moral law. Those who have been ruled by love have been kept from the commission of sin.

Another of those teachings in which Jesus presents still further the loving side of God is the parable of the prodigal son. We see the prodigal spending his life in improper relations till he sinks to the lowest position known to the Jewish race—a swineherd. This means that we are willing to make some profession of religion rather than that the soul get down to the deepest depths. But when he came to full repentance, the fattened calf was the bill of fare, and no third party was needed to conciliate the father. All that was necessary was just to go to him, and the father's arms were about him. Here is all that is necessary for our return. To-day, just as much as in any age in the world, God stands reaching out his hands lovingly to man, no matter how far off, and obstinate.