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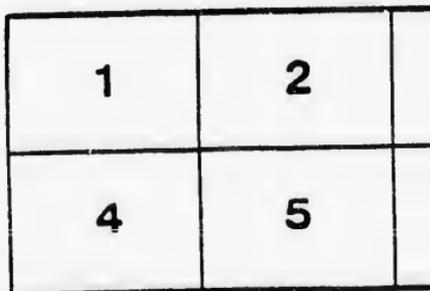
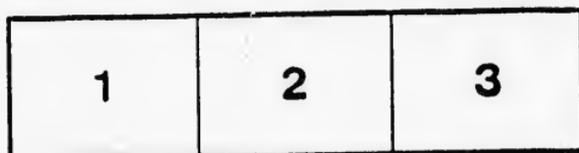
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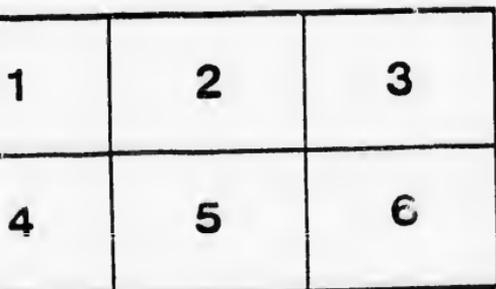
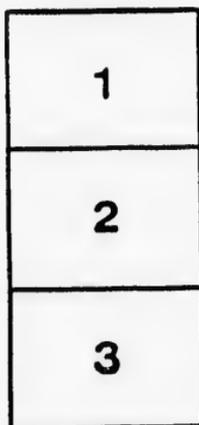
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WALKING WITH GOD

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# WALKING WITH GOD

THOUGHTS ON THE ASSURANCE OF  
SALVATION.

BY

JOHN HALDANE,

Author of "Is the Sabbath Binding on the Christian Conscience?"

TORONTO:  
WILLIAM BRIGGS,  
29-33 Richmond Street West.  
1900.

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ENTERED according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand nine hundred, by JOHN HALDANE, at the Department of Agriculture.

To the Rev. Mark Turnbull, A.M.,

Rector of St. George's, Goderich:

MY DEAR RECTOR,—It affords me much pleasure to dedicate my Treatise, "Walking with God," to you, because of the warm interest you personally take in the subject of it. Your kindly appreciation of the manuscript emboldens me to its publication.

It is right to do our best to prevent our religion lapsing into a listless, self-deluding formalism, and to assert her right to our thoughtful consideration by showing her inherent power, not only to provide a remedy for the evils of our present life, but to assure us of a peaceful serenity of mind in regard to our momentous *hereafter*—a duty beneficial alike to the writer in the evening of his life and to the deeply-interested reader.

Believe me,

My dear Rector,

Very faithfully yours,

JOHN HALDANE.

TORONTO, Feb. 14th, 1900.

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## WALKING WITH GOD

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“Nearer, my God, to Thee!  
Nearer to Thee!”

“And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him.” (Gen. v. 24.)



BRILLIANT gem in the dark history of the first stage of this world, recording the fall of Adam,\* his hiding from God, the murder by his first born of a “believing” brother,† and the general depravity of man,‡ ending with the flood—a sentence concise, but comprehending much. It brings up the great question of human life, with the central power for regulating aright all its activities. It exhibits an encouraging exemplar to him “who wills,” of the blessings of the Covenant of Grace, couched first in the mysterious promise that the seed of the

\* Gen. iii. 6. † Gen. iv. 8. ‡ Jude 14, 15; Gen. vi. 7.

woman would bruise the head of the serpent; \* more fully explained by St. Paul to the Romans, iii. 19-31, and who, moreover, so declared to the Corinthians, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." †

It introduces moreover a type of those who will be alive at Christ's second advent, and who, the same apostle declares to the Thessalonians, "will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." ‡

To a rational and thoughtful man the blessing of all blessings is the privilege of walking with his Creator as his Heavenly Father, and he regards with the deepest anxiety whether he be justified in believing that the privilege extends to him: because, judging the world generally by conversation and otherwise, he cannot see that people act as if they feel themselves entitled to it, for if they did he can hardly credit the fact that they would appear to be so indifferent—many, indeed, so callous—to it.

Their apparent apathy produces within himself a feeling that it is an unwarrantable presumption in him to entertain the idea that he stands on higher ground, and is entitled to individual consideration. The general habits of life are extremely depressing, and he regards the quotation from

\* Gen. iii. 15.    † 1 Cor. xv. 22.    ‡ 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18.

Scripture as applicable only to a higher class of the race.

In the depths of his thoughts the veil that has hitherto darkened his vision of the Creator, obscuring Him as unapproachable, and far removed from man, ruling with unquestionable power, now rises, and it dawns upon him that although, as a creature, he has no right of question, "Why hast Thou made me thus?"\* he has a right by nature to ask, "To what purpose hast Thou made me?" "I desire to know Thee, who thou art, and I pray for light and a responsive spirit to enable me to fulfil Thy will in this darkened world." He thus claims a natural right to approach his Creator, and to beg for help in case of a difficulty through an enemy. Again, from his own innate feelings of a father, that, if overcome by an enemy, he would not be denied access to Him, to implore for forgiveness, and restoration to His favor, on expressing due penitence for his folly. Moreover, as regards his Creator, judging from the impulsive desire of a man to foil the scheme of an evil designer, and to recover his abducted son, sometimes at a great cost, so he believes that the Great Creator must desire to foil his enemy, and to recover his ruined creature, man, though necessarily at a great cost for satisfying the offended dignity

\* Romans ix. 20.

of His moral law—the more so, as man is capable of being restored to His service by imparting to him a new spirit, as the works of a valuable watch, stopped by the breaking of its mainspring, may be again regulated, and set in motion, though not by mending the old spring, which has become useless, but by putting in a new spring.

Again man, thus recovered, becomes a most glorious demonstration of His infinite holiness and justice, and pre-eminently of His infinite goodness, before all other intelligences; and now a new creature of more value because more reliable by a severer trial, and more loyally devoted by a bond of gratitude, strengthened by the remembrance of his evil plight, the gravity of which can only be measured by the solemn value of the sacrifice demanded.

Such serious thoughts are so far good as affording strong grounds for a favorable reception of the Covenant of Grace; but peace of mind can only be reached by an authoritative revelation of how far they are reconcilable with the infinite justice of God, and our thoughtful inquirer now turns with true *earnestness* to the Scriptures for guidance. Here, to his satisfaction, his doubts, based on a human standard, are removed, and he is told, and feels as if the words were addressed to himself individually, "My thoughts are not your thoughts,

neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.\* For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts," and he earnestly prays, "Oh, send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me."†

And here he reads, among other encouraging invitations, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"‡ and in the concluding words of Scripture, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come."§ Moreover, he considers thoughtfully how Jesus Christ Himself instructed His disciples how to address God when approaching Him in prayer: "When ye pray," He said, say, "Our Father which art in heaven."|| Here the idea of fellowship is sweetened with all the endearments of home associations, so congenial to the human heart. Again, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," "Abide in me, and I in you."¶

Moreover, to allay any doubt whether the invitation was restricted to any particular class of men, he further reads, as declared again by Christ Himself, "For God so loved the world" (the ruined world) "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,"\*\* and still again, "I am not

\* Isaiah lv. 8, 9. † Psalm xliii. 3 ‡ Matt. xi. 28. § Rev. xxii. 17.

|| Matt. vi. 9. ¶ St. John xv. 5, 4. \*\* John iii. 16.

come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."\* "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." †

The thoughtful man thus sees, and is convinced on the authority of Scripture, that, as the air is common to all, so are these invitations to fellowship with their Creator. Believing such a connection to be of all others, by comparison, the most desirable, he humbly claims his high privilege. Feeling elevated above the darkening clouds of life, from its whirl of fashion, its all absorbing business anxieties, its delirious passing pleasures and embarrassing extravagances, he is convinced that the nearer he approaches the model quoted the more pure will be his self-satisfying enjoyment, and the more perfect will his manhood become for qualifying him for the great purposes of his existence; and he feels assured that, if only faithful to himself, he will be enabled to reach this great object. He fondly anticipates that the happy results to himself will be that from a nascent consciousness of the love of God he will realize a maturing confidence in His protecting guidance, amidst his surrounding difficulties, as experienced by King David, who says, "He will not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the

\* Matt. ix. 13. † St. John xiv. 23.

Lord."\* He feels assured that, in all his perplexities about the present or the future, he will receive a responsive assistance; and again, in his relations to man, that he will experience, by integrity of action and Christian courtesy, the respect and genial good-will of all outside, and the high esteem and cordial affection of his family circle.

Now, how is a connection to produce so glorious an end to be formed? Mankind generally are strangers to it. How few comparatively walk through life with a conscious assurance of God's approving countenance, and their ultimate salvation. How few even of well-disposed persons will venture further than a "hope," and yet this is a very solemn thought, for true religion, as its name really imports, demands the unclouded and unbounded confidence of the creature in the Fatherhood of his Creator, strengthened with unfeigned gratitude and rejoicing in the promises of His revealed Covenant of Grace.

God is pleased with the simple confidence of man in His promises, He is displeased with the least shadow of distrust.† He claims our perfect love and faith in Him as our Father in Heaven.

Acceptable worship requires, therefore, that the worshiper is sincerely earnest in his petitions and convinced that he is addressing a reconciled and

\* Psalm cxii. 7. † Hebrew xi. 6.

reliable God who will answer him according to his best interests. Any other worship is *vain*.

If such be true, and true it undoubtedly is, our subject becomes one of the deepest importance—yea, one of individual interest.

The simple story of the Highland lad is to the point. Asked by some English tourists, would he, for a valuable consideration, if they tied him safely with a rope, allow himself to be held over the precipitous rock to search the birds' nests for eggs, he answered, thoughtfully, "Yes, if my father has hold of the rope." Child-like unclouded confidence. He doubted not his father though conscious perhaps of many acts of disobedience meriting his displeasure. Such a faith in God is one which many an anxious soul desires to realize. Let us look into it. If the parent tie be so strong and so lovingly trusted, how much more so should that of our "Father in Heaven be?"

Can the fond mother e'er forget  
The infant whom she bore;  
And can its plaintive cries be heard  
Nor move compassion more?

She may forget, Nature may fail  
A parent's heart to move;  
But Zion on my heart shall dwell  
In everlasting love.

—*Par. xxiv., line 5.*

Now, God is invisible. He "is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."\* But spirit is a pure, subtle essence, incapable of discernment by our senses. How, then, can guilty, earthly man ever hope to realize the blessed privilege of personal communion with Him? of coming, as it were, in touch with Him? Do our relations with each other help us to any conception of the idea?

Suppose a young man has never, through domestic circumstances, seen his father. He knows him only through his acts and by correspondence. Arrangements have been made for his comfort, maintenance and education, which unmistakably identify the provider as his father, and of whose existence he has not the slightest doubt. Though separated by distance their minds come, as it were, into contact through correspondence, by means of which their thoughts are interchanged, and they quite understand each other. The son takes pleasure in acknowledging in detail each apartment with its comfortable arrangements, and the father feels a secret pride and gratification with his son's recognition of his kindness. They are drawn closer to each other in mutual confidence and affection. The father makes known his instructions and his wishes. His son obediently

\* John iv. 24.

responds, chiefly when satisfied with the loving forethought on the part of his father for advancing his present and his future interests; and their mutual relations may, moreover, be confirmed by the favorable report of a reliable middleman, whom the father has sent to interview his son in verification of his letters, with fresh assurances of his own good-will. How different would be their relations if the son were indifferent to his surroundings, and so insensible to kindness as to grudge, except for form's sake, to take any notice of them.

Similarly we get a knowledge of the Creator through His works, His revelation, His Son. One very important distinction, however, exists, that, whereas distance actually separates the father and son, the Creator, though invisible, is omnipresent, thus adding a deep solemnity to the comparison in favor of our subject.

Let us examine His works. This involves very much. They are wonderful, indeed, but practically disregarded: yea, even unknown by the many. Indeed, a great many, from their waking moments till their return to rest, are so absorbed in their respective businesses in the great struggle of life, that they seem to have no time to consider the works of God, and thereby one of the main means of becoming acquainted with their Creator is lost.

Indeed, they are more instructive to a certain extent than His Word. We more readily and easily acquire knowledge through our senses. His works are ever before us, and, indeed, all our operations for life are dependent upon them.

King David, with a comparatively limited knowledge of science, rejoiced in meditating on the works of God. Veiling his downfalls and viewing them, with those of St. Paul's, as evidences of the degradation to which even a godly man can descend when walking by himself, let us regard him as he walks with God. His psalms are interspersed with solemn thoughts on the works of the great Creator, and he gives vent to his excited feelings in many hymns, clothed in beautiful poetic imagery. The 104th Psalm gives evidence of his devout mind and his deep interest in Nature. "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great: thou art clothed with honour and majesty." Then follows an interesting detailed narration of His various works. Though not versed in the depths of astronomy, he exclaims, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."\* There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their daily silent, undeviating courses are more instructive than high-sounding words.

The "Benedictus" hymn in the morning service of the Church of England brings up a panoramic view of Nature, giving language to its different agents and powers, and calling upon all to join in one universal praise of the great Creator.

There is no accounting for what we sometimes meet with in life. The author once heard, at a vestry meeting, a learned professor object to the use of this hymn as monotonous, and dealing too much with the frost and snow. As the millionaire despises the shillings and pence which led up to his wealth, he seemed to despise the elements of true knowledge. But the impassioned soul loves details. The conqueror feels proudly happy in narrating particularly the varied incidents of his campaign.

Milton, referring to his blindness, touchingly lingers over the objects of sight. "Not to me returns day, or the sweet approach of even or morn; or sight of vernal blooms, or summer rose, or flocks, or herds, or human face divine." We love to dwell on the varied acts of kindness of a benefactor, or the heroic deeds of an illustrious patriotic ancestor. So the man of intelligence, with pleasing gratitude, lovingly and reverentially lingers in detailing the different works and powers of God, and calls upon them "to praise and magnify His name together." By our estimate of a son who, as before supposed, indifferent to his father's kindnesses, grudging, but for form's sake, to notice them, let

us judge ourselves or anyone who fails to recognize with admiring and loving gratitude the works of God.

It may be that scientific knowledge is beyond the reach of many, yet a knowledge sufficient to teach us the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator may be reached by all. And first, as we may suppose the young man before referred to would likely engage himself in looking over the apartments provided for him by his father, let us survey our habitation—this earth. The general aspect commands our admiration when we behold the beautiful landscapes of land and water, diversified with dales, hills and mountains covered with vegetation, ranging from the giant trees, with their luxuriant foliage, to the lichen clinging to the rocks, enlivened with the various birds and animals suited to their respective climates. Again, when we look up to the sun by day and the silent moon and the twinkling stars in the depths of night, we feel awe-stricken with solemn thoughts. We wonder not that they were objects of savage worship.

Such is the habitation provided for us by our bountiful Creator.

If the young man feels grateful to his father for providing him with a home suited to his conditions in life, not only such as may be deemed necessary, but one of pleasing interest, how much do we owe to our Heavenly Father ?

Let us descend into particulars, taking advantage of science as far as it may be intelligible to all.

First, we find that our earth is only one of a system, consisting of eight planets, which move round a common centre—the *Sun*. The first four are Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars. The next four, the least of which is larger than the previous four united, are Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune. Between these are small bodies called planetoids, numbering, as far as known, about one hundred. Most planets are surrounded by satellites. Our earth has one, the Moon; Jupiter has four; Saturn eight; Uranus eight; Neptune two. There are, moreover, comets which move in very eccentric circles.

The small diagram on the page opposite may assist the reader.

Let us particularize :

The sun is 1,250,000 times larger than our earth, and 700 times larger than all the planets together.

Thou material God !

And representative of the unknown,  
Who chose thee for his shadow ! Thou chief star !

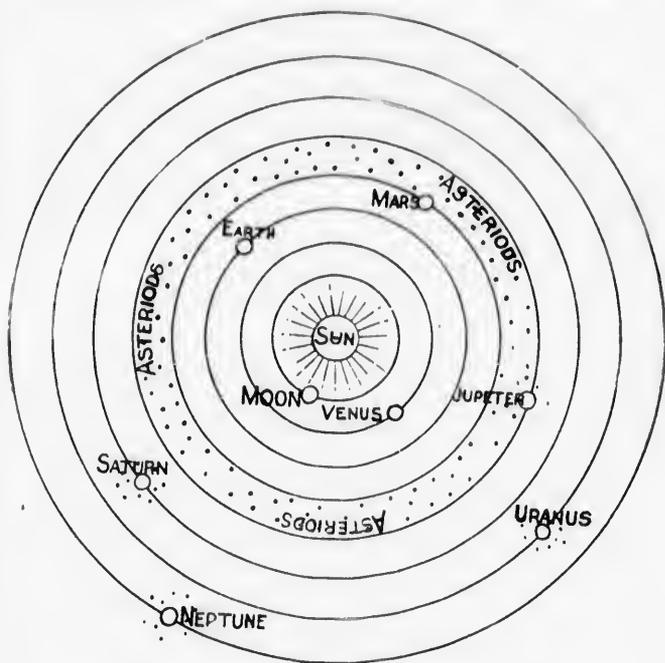
Centre of many stars ! Which mak'st our earth  
Endurable, and temperest the lives

And hearts of all who walk within thy rays !  
Sire of the seasons ! Monarch of the elimes

And those who dwell in them, near or far,  
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee !

E'en as our outward aspects, thou dost rise  
And shine, and sit in glory.

—Byron.



A solemn and instructive scene for a thoughtful mind! Well may we exclaim, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"\*

"And when on joyful wing,  
 Cleaving the sky,  
 Sun, moon and stars all passed,  
 Upward I fly;  
 Still all my song shall be,  
 Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
 Nearer to Thee."

The nearest, Mercury, is about 45,000,000 miles from the sun.

Our Earth is about 92,000,000 miles from the sun.

The farthest, Neptune, is about 2,862,000,000 miles from the sun.

By the law of gravitation every body has an attractive force in proportion to its weight and distance. Each acts while it is acted upon.

Their revolutions are effected by centripetal and centrifugal forces.\*

The times and swiftness of revolution are dependent on distance from the central power.

The nearest, Mercury, revolves in 88 of our days.

The farthest, Neptune, revolves in 164 years.

Our Earth in about 365 days, marking one year, going at the rate of about 68,000 miles an hour, or 120 times more swiftly than a cannon-ball. It revolves also on its axis every twenty-four hours, marking one day, at the rate of 1,000 miles an hour, to places on the equator.

Our Moon, about 240,000 miles distant from the earth, revolves in its orbit in about thirty days, marking one month.

\* Centripetal is due to the force of the sun, the common central point. Centrifugal to the power by which the body was first projected into space in a straight line. Revolution to the two forces acting simultaneously, resulting in a curvilinear elliptical orbit.

“ Soon as the evening shades prevail,  
The moon takes up her wondrous tale ;  
And nightly to the list’ning earth  
Repeats the story of her birth.”

#### AN OPEN BIBLE!

Before us is a scene, not of the imagination, but a reality, demanding continuously the superintending providence of omnipotent wisdom, verifying Christ’s remark, “ My Father worketh hitherto.”

Our chief interest lies in the earth. Looking into it particularly we find it parcelled out among tribes, nations, kingdoms, whose inter-relations are respected and governed by international law, and whose respective individual relations are protected by national, civil, municipal and domestic laws, inspired all from the common centre of all law—God Himself—the Eternal Ruler of all.\*

The differences between the creature and the Creator are so inconceivable that we gladly avail ourselves of any stepping-stone to help our conception.

An idea through our senses may enable us to utilize the fugitive idea of infinity in forming some little comprehension of our own comparative littleness. Let a man consider how much of the ocean he could raise by his own physical strength ;

\* Acts xvii. 23-28.

and then, referring to the diagram of the solar system, let him behold among the planets our earth with its oceans, its rocky mountains, and its habitations of man, revolving in its orbit in the hands of Omnipotence as a very light thing. He will then be sensible of his own insignificance.

Similarly, by the diagram, let him weigh his wisdom and other mental powers, chiefly that of love, with those of his Creator, who is essentially *Love*, whose every act results from the concentrated co-operation of all His attributes, and in the true interests of all his creatures.

He will then see a door opening to the wonders of His Covenant of Grace, as revealed in Scripture.

Overwhelmed with an idea of his own comparative worthlessness, he here reads that God so sympathized with His ruined creatures that He sent His only begotten Son to assume our nature, in order to effect our redemption and restoration by keeping perfectly as our substitute the covenant of works which we had broken, and by suffering the death penalty of Eden for our transgression of it. And, wondrous indeed, he learns that when Christ, on one occasion, was informed that His mother and His brethren desired to speak to Him, He answered, "Who is my mother or my brethren? And looking round about him he said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do

the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."\*

What higher object of life can be presented to any rational man than to attain an honor so great?

Now some, indifferent to any object beyond the passing things of life, some influenced by its fascinating pleasures, some absorbed in business schemes, may view this wondrous scene with comparative apathy, or it may be some even with an intellectual interest, but not with any moral advantage. A man may be shown the splendid arrangements for a public celebration, and he may be pleased with a detailed account of the delicacies on the festive board, and feel gratified even with their fragrance: but without actually partaking of them his physical condition would in no way be bettered, so this scene before him must be taken in by the intellect and digested by the affections before his spiritual nature can be advanced by it. Knowledge may be heaped up as wealth often is, yielding to their respective owners nothing beyond the pleasure of accumulation. They may never derive any personal benefit from its use.

Let the reader, anticipating his higher life, when his disembodied soul will traverse boundless space, allow his mind, leaving its earthly tenement, to

\* Mark iii. 32-35.

view our solar system. Beholding the far-off ponderous orbs by means of his amplified vision, he would see them revolving in their vastness, with great wonderment. As he nears our earth, revolving with its oceans, its mountains and its inhabitants, with inconceivable velocity, he stands amazed with a wondrous interest; but approaching the sun, he stands aghast at an object more than one million times larger, viewing the tremendous perturbations on its surface, its whirlpools of fire, its volcanic eruptions, with bellowing incandescent clouds—a sight unknown on earth.

His narration, far exceeding all others relating to adventures on earth, would be listened to with a rapturous attention. It would give rise to solemn, suggestive thought. As a system consisting of parts acting and being acted on is dependent on each part contributing its individual influence, the question arises, were the whole orbs forming our solar system simultaneously projected into space by the omnipotent Creator?

Again, when we consider the deep knowledge necessary for determining the delicately adjusted distances of those bodies from each other and from their great common centre—the sun—to maintain their mutual relations, and to prevent collisions from which such awful consequences would result, we may well wonder at the incomprehensible

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wisdom of the great Creator. Each body, during thousands of years, has revolved undeviatingly in its orbit, producing one harmonious whole, giving evidence of being governed by an omnipotent Ruler, under one unalterable, eternal law.

Moreover, measuring the inconceivable evils which would result from any breach of the law governing the natural world, the habitation provided by God for His intelligent creatures, how can we possibly form any idea of a breach of His moral law for the government of them in their duties to himself and to each other.

If even an asteroid, deviating from its orbit, would disturb the general harmony of Nature, and lead to disaster much to be dreaded, every breach of the moral law must similarly lead to disturbance tending to the dishonor of God, the misery of the transgressor, and the disquietude of many.

And here let us consider. As God has appointed the sun to be the central power of attraction to the various bodies revolving round him, He is Himself the central power of attraction to those made after "His own image." If they have deviated from Him, a superhuman influence from Himself is necessary to recall those of the eccentric wanderers "who will," in order to enable them to regain and maintain their connection with Him. Such is afforded by the Covenant of Grace.

But for the security of all under His government it is absolutely necessary to exclude all "who will not" by an irresistible coercion in eternal imprisonment.

Sin, then, however glossed over with human erring imaginations, is the avowed enemy of God and man; and it is utterly impossible that any man who indulges in it, or rather, who does not shrink from its polluting and blighting touch as from a malignant, moral poison, can walk with God, for "can two walk together who are not agreed?"\*

And lastly, has our earth alone been guilty of disloyalty to its Creator? the only one upon which He has chosen to demonstrate His eternal attributes—justice and holiness, and pre-eminently of all others, His infinite goodness—by a sacrifice so great as Jesus Christ Incarnate, and Him crucified.

And now, looking upwards, we view with awe in the depths of space innumerable twinkling stars. While a sight of wonderment, they do not seem in the distance to affect directly our earth, but astronomy teaches us that each, like our sun, is the centre of its own system, and that the light of some, travelling at the rate of 100,000 miles a second, is only after 1,000 years reaching us, involving the idea that space is infinite. We learn,

\* Amos iii. 3.

moreover, that the sun, with all his attendants, is revolving round some unknown centre.

In a lecture at the Royal Institution, Sir Robert Ball stated that we now know the existence of 30,000,000 of stars or suns, many of them much more magnificent than the one which gives light to our system. The majority of them are not visible to the eye or even recognizable by the telescope, but sensitized photographic plates have revealed their existence beyond all doubt or question, though the most of them are inconceivably distant, thousands or tens of thousands of times as far off as our sun. A telegraphic message, for example, which would reach the sun in eight minutes would not reach some of these stars in 1,800 years. An average of only ten planets to each sun indicates the existence within the narrow range to which human observation is still confined of at least 300,000,000 of separate worlds, many of them doubtless of gigantic size, and it is nearly inconceivable that those worlds can be wholly devoid of living and sentient beings upon them, probably mortal in our sense, as all matters must decay—certainly finite; and then what is the relative position of mankind?

How awful the over-ruling God! How insignificant is man!

As the young man before referred to examines

further the different things sent by his father, and feels drawn to him more closely in confiding affection as he discovers the usefulness of each, and its adaptation to his wants and his comforts, so let us examine the varied ruling and contributing agents of Nature, and we will find ourselves drawn gradually more closely to God, not only as the great Creator, but much more as our Heavenly Father, when we mark His benevolent forethought in providing so liberally, not only for all our possible wants, but for our gratification and happiness. Space forbids going deeply into particulars, as this small treatise is only intended to promote a desire for more enlarged views by consulting special works on each subject brought up for thought.

The first objects that strike our notice are the sun and moon. They are the *two ruling* powers of our earth. They set in motion and govern its whole machinery. "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. . . . And God said, let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years."\*

They determine our standards of time—the moon our month; the sun our day, our year, our seasons—they regulate our chronometers.

Though the earth, relatively to the sun, changes

\* Gen. i. 14, 16.

its position every hour, the noon at any place will come to-day at the same moment it did thousands of years before.

Different celestial revolutions harmonizing determine certain periods called soli-lunar cycles. These regulate the chronometer of heaven. Advanced astronomical science shows them to be identical with the mysterious times of the prophet Daniel, thus authenticating him, a man unacquainted with astronomy, as a true prophet from God. The intelligent student may trace out the works of the great Creator upon a higher scale of study by following out the fulfilment of prophecies on the pages of history. Let him consult Guinness by reading his work "Light on the Last Days."

By their joint influences the slow secular alteration of the direction of the earth's axis in succession to every point in a circle in the northern heavens marks a period of 25,850 years. There is a second motion of our earth's axis called "nutation," by the influence of the moon alone, making a cycle of nineteen years.

Their joint influences cause the "tides," so essential for purifying the great reservoirs of water, the oceans, into which innumerable rivers and streams are continually depositing the filth of villages, towns and cities. They exercise a mighty and mysterious electrical and magnetic influence over the whole earth. They are the causes of eclipses.

The sun is the fountain of light and heat—the enlivening influence of nature. Without him the crimson tide would stagnate in the veins of animated beings. “No longer would the fig tree blossom, nor fruit be in the vine. The labor of the olive would fail, and the field could yield no meat. The flocks must be cut off from the folds, and there would be no herd in the stalls.”\* “He penetrates the beds of metal, and finds his way to the place of sapphires.”

His light, that inestimable and indispensable blessing, reaches us in about eight minutes, or at the rate of 200,000 miles a second, a velocity inconceivable when it is calculated that, travelling with the swiftness of a cannon-ball, it would take thirty-two years to reach us, or with that of sound seventeen years. Passing through the air as a protecting medium, his rays are prevented from blinding us by their force and effulgence. He is the source of cheerfulness. “While he enlivens nature with his presence he cheers it with his gifts. To him the rose owes her blushing beauties and the violet its modest blue.”

#### THE HEALTHFULNESS OF SUNSHINE.

“It is really astonishing how few people there are who properly estimate the hygienic value of the

\* Habakkuk iii. 17.

sun's rays. A valuable lesson on this point may be learned by observing the lower animals, none of which ever neglects an opportunity to bask in the sun. And the nearer man approaches to his primitive condition the more he is inclined to follow the example of the animals. It is a natural instinct, which civilization has partly destroyed in the human race. The effect of sunshine is not merely thermal: its rays have chemical and electrical functions. It is more than possible that sunshine produces vibrations and changes of particles in the deeper tissues of the body as effective as those of electricity. Many know by experience that the relief it affords to wearing pain, neuralgic and inflammatory, is more effective and more lasting than that of any application whatever. Those who have face-ache should prove it for themselves, sitting in a sunny window, where the warmth falls full on the cheek. For nervous disability and insomnia the treatment of all others is rest and sunshine."—*The Family Doctor*.

How healthful a sun-bath!

The sun's heat, the chief power for producing terrestrial changes and motion, is enormous. "It is calculated that 26,000 tons of ice would be melted in one hour on one square mile at noon at the equator, during which time the whole earth receives 50,000,000 times as much heat—sufficient, if

evenly distributed over the surface, to boil a frozen ocean sixty miles deep in the course of a year."

He originates and governs the systems of our air currents and water circulation. "To produce one day's steady rain over a surface equal, say to the County of Middlesex, England, demands a force equivalent to the mechanical power necessary to raise 1,000,000,000 tons to the height of three miles." What force then is necessary for the constant watering of the whole world? The sun and moon are, respectively and unitedly productive of many wonderful phenomena, too numerous to bring forward in a detailed form, but which may be studied with much interest and profit from books on popular philosophy.

If the sun's power in relation to our earth is so wonderfully great, what is the aggregate of his forces upon all the planets which revolve round him?

He verily appears the material god of our solar system. Our air is wonderfully framed and admirably constituted for the very important purposes it is meant to answer. It is a compound fluid, independent of aqueous vapours and various exhalations, and it is ordinarily composed, as stated by Professor Jameson, of 75.55 nitrogen, or azotic gas, 23.32 oxygen gas, 1.03 aqueous vapor, 0.10 carbonic (acid gas) per cent. It extends upwards about

forty-five miles. Its lower region contains chiefly nitrogen and oxygen with exhalations from the earth; its upper region, a large proportion of hydrogen, a lighter gas, occasionally set on fire by electricity, and the apparent cause of aurora borealis and fire balls. Its principal constituent, nitrogen, is totally unfit for animal life. Oxygen in itself, is equally so, with contrary effects. The two, in the proportion stated, constitute the vital element for the maintenance of animal life: but this proportion is continually subject to change by the latter's exhaustive demands. It is essential, however, to their existence that the proper proportion be maintained. Everyone knows how suffocating a small, crowded room becomes; again, that a burning taper under a glass receiver will become extinguished. A supply must be provided for the exhaustion. The vegetable creation chiefly furnishes it. Under the action of the sun, as Sir H. Davy says, "When the leaves of vegetables perform their healthy functions they purify the air." Moreover what the tides and the currents with its saltness are to the ocean for its purification, the air currents, the storms and the fiery meteors, chiefly in the upper regions to which noxious exhalations ascend, are to the air.

The omniscient Creator could alone have provided the required remedy, so essentially necessary

for maintaining the existence of man, by such a delicate adjustment of the disturbed proportions. The air is the medium through which, by refraction and reflection of the sun's rays, we are protected from their otherwise unendurable heat and dazzling brightness; moreover, from the sudden, unpleasant changes from darkness to light at sunrise, and from light to darkness at sunset. By its weight and condensing power the air is forced and compressed into the lungs, while by its elastic and expanding property it is thrown out again in the act of breathing. The two processes of inspiration and expiration generally alternate with each other, while the body is at rest, about twenty times a minute. A full-grown person respires about 48,000 cubic inches in an hour.

The weight of the superincumbent air is equal to 15 lbs. on every square inch, or about 40,000 lbs. on the body of an ordinary man; but by the wisdom of the Creator the elasticity or spring of the internal air within all bodies balances that which is without: so much so that instead of being a crushing and intolerable incumbrance it gives an agreeable impetus to our movements.

Air is indeed the essence of what life is made, and its properties are so invaluable that it demands a separate special treatise. Human, animal and vegetable life depend upon it. By it fire, so

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essential to life, is fed and cherished. It possesses power also for dissolving bodies which would prove injurious to the world, by reducing them to their first principles. Through it the human voice, the sound of music, the warbling of birds, and the perfume of roses, the violet, and the honeysuckle, are conveyed to our organs of sense. By it we are warned of evils by the sound of danger in the distance. It forms the wondrous mirage. It produces the rainbow. It is the highway of the birds. It fills the canvas of the ships. It impels machinery.

It is the medium for carrying out the working of our water system. The circulation of water is to the globe what the circulation of blood is to the animal frame. "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place from where the rivers come thither they return again." The power required for the work, and actually exerted by the sun, is, as before shown, enormous.

And water itself is another blessing from our Bountiful Creator. While essential to life it administers to our wants, our conveniences and our pleasures, in its varied forms of liquid, ice, vapour and steam. Interesting, indeed, are its constitution and the arrangements for its circulation through nature, which, as stated, is as necessary as the circulation of blood in the animal system. It also,

in consideration of its importance, is entitled to a special treatise, to trace out its sources, its rivers, its reservoir, the ocean.

The earth, our bountiful "mother," unfolds her precious treasures, while she provides a liberal supply of food convenient for our physical frames. She brings forth her stores of delicious and tempting fruits in every variety, and with exuberant benevolence she captivates us with her beautiful and fragrant flowers in scattered profusion, many of them yielding perfumes of sweetest scent. Every plant is an instructive organism from its embryo state to its maturity.

Again, the animal kingdom claims special attention. Not only are they given to us for food and clothing as necessaries, but for luxuries, even to the honeycomb from the industrious bee and the much-valued material from the silk-worm. Moreover, by a provident Creator they are intended for performing many of our arduous labors, and adding very materially to our comforts and pleasures. The intelligent student will realize a gratified curiosity in studying their different species, their peculiar habits and structures suited to their respective environments in air, earth and water.

Geology, too, unfolds the wondrous treasures of the earth. In her bosom are stored building material, metals, and beds of fuel so essentially

necessary for the purposes of life—truly admirable stores!

But best, indeed, is man, for whom all is provided, endowed, as he is, with necessary organs to find out his Creator, with intellect to know Him, and with affections to love and to adore Him.

“These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good!  
Almighty, Thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair: thyself how wondrous then!  
Unspeakable.”

If such is earth with all its treasures, what must heaven be?

Here let us stop for thought.

Whilst his moral nature stamps man as the lord of creation and indicates the great possibilities of his momentous future, his physical organism and his relations to life are wonderfully adapted to carry out the purposes of his being. To understand aright the arrangements provided for him, let us imagine him *alone*, devoid of the sympathies of a common humanity, unknowing and unknown, solitary and cheerless. How far otherwise is the wise provision by a benevolent Creator for his present happiness, and the development of character to suit him for his great future.

What better conceivable method for this purpose than the division of the race into families?

To carry out this Nature asserts her authority. She has implanted in the breast of each an ever-controlling desire to build up his individual household. How pathetic Christ's remark, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh."

By the division into families a man passing through the stages of infancy, youth, manhood, and old age, when incapable of the activities of life, acquires an education fitted for his chief end, "To glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." What better guardians than parents in infancy? What more instructive object lessons than parents for imparting a sense of duteous love to the Great Creator? What better connection than with brothers and sisters to learn the duties of manhood? What more deeply felt consciousness can old age acquire of the Fatherhood of God, in view of soon leaving life, than a man's own innate feelings of a father to his son, chiefly the returning penitent prodigal?

Again, in manhood, how pleasing by the division of labor is the congenial and beneficial intercourse of society. What a wonderful blessing is language for the interchange of thought, instructive or expressive, of schemes for ameliorating the evils of life, or of mutual confidences, or of warm affection.

or of reciprocated love! or especially of thought in connection with our higher nature, our Christian duties, the benevolent Fatherhood of God, our eternal future!

But alas! as evidence of our corrupt nature, how often do we find discords in families, and our organs intended for good employed for evil! How often do we find the arm given to protect raised to commit deeds of violence! How often do we find our tongues, graciously given us for sweetening life, used as instruments for vilifying character and hurting the feelings of others!

Let us pursue this interesting subject further, for the especial duty of man is to study man.

“The proper study of mankind is man.”

How pleasing to see our friend face to face, to observe by ourselves his changing features and movements which animate conversation; to view the beautiful landscape in all its varied aspects of mountain, hill and valley, with meandering streams and clothed with beautiful foliage and grateful shades, resonant with the warbling notes of birds and fragrant with the perfumes of the varied flowers. How wonderful to watch the sun rising, pursuing his daily course, and his gorgeous setting; to regard thoughtfully the moon “looking down alone.” and the innumerable stars glittering in the

depths of illimitable space. What a glorious privilege when our souls, leaving their earthly habitations, can traverse the world from pole to pole, and visit the celestial bodies which demonstrate more forcibly than language the infinite perfections of the great Creator! How pleasingly instructive when we can indulge in thoughts beyond the ken or restraints of man, but in secret communion with God, laying the foundation-stones of a perfect manhood! Again, how pleasantly agreeable to have it in our power to recall by memory many of the happy scenes of youth, the pleasantries of social life, and to live over again the never-to-be-forgotten gatherings of the home circle.

Moreover, what a boon is the power of correspondence. When the necessary engagements of life separate the members of a family, or intimate relations or friends, how pleasing to be able to recall by correspondence the many pleasing reminiscences of the past, and to interchange thoughts on the interesting events of the day! Again, without the means of correspondence how could the business of life be carried on?

The thoughtful man, availing himself of all his privileges, is daily adding to his stores of knowledge and accumulating resources within himself which make him independent altogether of outside attractions.

Our inquirer is now personally convinced of the truth of Solomon's conclusion, who, surfeited with the gaities and pleasures of life, exclaims :

“O happy is the man who hears  
 Instruction's warning voice,  
 And who celestial wisdom makes,  
 His early, only choice.

For she has treasures greater far,  
 Than east or west unfold,  
 And her rewards more precious are,  
 Than all their stores of gold.”

—*Par. vi. 1, 2; Prov. iii. 13-17.*

It is true that the sentence, “In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread,” entails a great draught upon our best efforts and time; in some cases, comparatively greater because of misfortune, in others unnecessarily grievous because of extravagances; but in mercy it is remedial to the prudent, who in their daily intercourse with each other, through the interchange of their respective labors, embrace every opportunity of cultivating a character of industry, charity and integrity.

Alas! the thoughtless, by a perversity of character, often, as before mentioned, employ the powers and opportunities given to them for good to the injury of others and their own ruin.

Yea, many well-disposed persons often forego the present pure enjoyment of the blessings offered

them, and indulge in an habitual melancholy, which they think more becoming erring mortals, and more consistent with a religious life. They are ever seeing clouds rising in the horizon of their vision contrary to Scripture doctrine. "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice."

Surely it is more consistent with reason to take all the pleasure we can out of a present good than to cloud it with an imaginary prospective evil. If to-day is sunshine let us enjoy it to the full, without fancying a possible storm to-morrow; as the old Roman poet advises, who says, "*Carpe diem*" (enjoy the day), or rather as Christ counselled, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."\*

That "His name is near His wondrous works declare;" but we feel consciously brought more closely to our Creator, and in touch, as it were, with Him through Jesus Christ His Son. He was promised in Eden as "the seed of the woman" to "bruise the head of the serpent." His arrival was foretold by prophets, chiefly by Isaiah, over 700 years before the event. He says, "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."† Again, "Unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder:

\* Matthew vi. 34.

† Isaiah vii. 14.

and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."<sup>3</sup>

He is the central figure of the world's history. The Romans enrolled their hero among their gods with the ideal investiture of divinity. He was then their idol, with his human senses supposed to be intensified by his elevation; and a worshipper, by a necessary reaction, became more selfish, or more cruel, or more sensual, as his idol was supposed to have been while on earth.

As our body receives warmth or cold from the body with which it comes in contact, so the worshipper the spirit of his idol, chiefly under the emotional influence of prayer,

Contrariwise, the Head of the Christian church, very God of very God, assumed humanity for its purification and assimilation to Himself. O glorious thought! Yea, and ever blessed be His holy name.

Man cannot see God and live, but Jesus Christ, the express image of His person, deigns in gracious condescension to visit us veiled in human form, and, wondrous and inconceivable indeed, to work out our salvation by His life and death; moreover, to leave after Him an exemplary standard of perfect humanity for our imitation.†

i. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah ix. 6.    † Hebrews i. 3.

As God-man He constrains our deepest reverence, because our Creator, and excites our warmest affections by His sympathies as man.

He is of all other conceivable beings the greatest friend of man, in whose name and for whose sake alone we are entitled to ask for or expect to receive any blessing. Who else, or what other object, more worthy of our thoughtful and pleasing meditation ?

" Though now ascended up on high,  
He bends on earth a brother's eye ;  
Partaker of the human name,  
He knows the frailty of our frame."

" And I," said He, " If I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." \*

But whilst our honest inquirer after truth feels lost in admiring awe while contemplating the power, the wisdom and the goodness of the great Creator, in beholding His works, and from the perusal of His Word, he sees clearly from his own consciousness and his knowledge of general life that man, the chief and main object of His works, is out of correspondence with Him ?

#### WHAT SHOULD BE THE CASE ?

If any subjects, by comparison, should interest a man, these should surely be his *Whence*, and his

\* John xii. 32.

*Here*, and his *Whither*—his Whence, the great Being who made him, and in whose hands his present and his eternal future are centred : his Here, when considered in relation to the whence and to his whither : his solemn Whither, when regarded as his final, eternal house.

WHAT IS THE REAL STATE OF THINGS ?

While the scriptural seven thousand (Isa. xliv. 18) will ever be found in fulfilment of the counsels of Jehovah, many wise in their estimate of comparative values of earthly things, seem indisposed to consider aright spiritual things. They seem unconcerned about any difference between them and their Creator. Some even view religious subjects with dislike : some as not more than of secondary value, and that, too, only when not interfering with the conveniences of life. Some, no doubt better disposed, think seriously, but with a confusion of thought unproductive of much good. Their system of religion, of a purely moral character, is based upon their ideal standard of possible human perfection—a very unsatisfactory one. Others indeed, on a professedly higher scale, based on a gracious amnesty from God through Jesus Christ, but so clouded with human suggestions as to render it suitable to the service of two masters—God and mammon—incapable of yielding any personal comfort.

Indeed, the main object seems to be to escape a hell rather than to gain a heaven, inconsistent altogether with the character of true religion—supreme love to God. Looking anxiously to such an inheritance, of which it is said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for those who love him," is a very influential factor in the building up of a pure character.

Do we ever hear as earnest conversations about such an inheritance as we hear about prospects of a valuable earthly estate?

Rousing himself from his reverie, our inquirer is determined to reach the truth, undisguised and free from human inventions and delusive formalisms. As a descendant from guilty Adam, he considers thoughtfully his fallen condition. From his survey of nature he is satisfied that its harmonious uniformity is dependent upon law eternally uniform, and that any deviation would lead to disaster. Similarly, or rather much more so, as formerly considered, that any deviation from the moral law, founded upon eternal principles, constituting His essential character, must be dishonoring to the Creator, injurious to His creatures, and specially, as he now sees, to himself, and that any transgressor must necessarily be punished, for example sake, and excluded forever from His

kingdom. Such would be his conclusions from a human standard of judgment. He now reads the Scriptures as a revelation from heaven. He may have read them from his youth, but with such a monotonous vagueness that they have afforded him but little satisfaction. Indeed, he has heard and read their truths so blurred by human specious arguments and disturbing sophistry that his faith in them had become shaken and unsteady. Now he reads in earnest for himself. The prophet Isaiah aids him in his search by the encouraging offer, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."\*

Again he fancies himself a listener personally to the conversations between Jesus Christ and Nicodemus, and from the lips of Christ Himself he learns that a man must "be born again," and that unless born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, but that "God so loved the world" (the ruined world), "that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."† Again, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."<sup>‡</sup> Moreover, the prophet Jeremiah announces, "After those days, saith the Lord, I will

\* Isaiah i. 18. † John iii. 3, 16. ‡ Matt. ix. 13.

put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.\* And still again, Jesus told His disciples, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you."† "When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."‡ All human suggestions to the contrary, he views as utterly, by comparison, inadmissible. With "such lights" he searches deeper, and disregarding all human controversies upon subjects of question, he simply seeks for such further information as may show him his way to perfect peace and oneness with God.

A man, sleeping unconsciously in an apartment of a burning building, when roused by the alarm cry of fire, delays not with questions about its origin, or the movements of others, but imploringly asks for information by what way to escape if his usual entrance is in flames, and he never falters till he has reached a place of safety. Then he may take leisure for further inquiries.

Our inquirer still feels embarrassed, however, in claiming to have reached a higher stage in religion than many, apparently very near the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, as evidenced by their professions and habits.

\* Jer. xxxi. 33. † John xvi. 7. ‡ John xvi. 13.

They conduct family worship, go regularly to church, respond devoutly to the prayers, appear elated with enthusiasm on festival days, and are foremost in works of benevolence. But these, when asked the crucial question as to their expectations of the great future, seem to give an evasive answer, or at least to express only a hope that all will be right. This is most unsatisfactory and depressing, as the Christian religion assures us of a present joyous peace and a future heavenly home. Something must be wrong.

His personal anxieties urge him to look into this with all seriousness in order to reach a true solution of his embarrassment. First he desires to clear the subject of all extraneous matter, for, as before mentioned, there are many classes of professing Christians. It is now as it was in the days of Christ: the proportionate number of true Christians is small. He counsels in His noted sermon, and where true religion was supposed to be found. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."\*

Leaving out the apathetic, the formalist, the

moral philosophy Christian, for each of whom more suitable treatises are necessary, he limits the number for his investigation to those who, like himself, have reached the anxious stage of our religion, but who cannot conscientiously say that they feel conscious of enjoying its wondrous privileges.

We may form, he thinks, a more correct idea of the Covenant of Grace by a proper discrimination between things temporal and spiritual. For this purpose he begins by examining human contracts in all their bearings.

Agreements in relation to our movable property may be proved by parole testimony, but signature is necessary in the case of landed property, before a witness, who, in further security from possible fraud, is required to be sworn to the fact by a proper officer of court. In a will two witnesses are necessary, who declare that they sign the document at the request of the testator, in his presenee, and in the presenee of each other.

But the spiritual gift of the Covenant of Grace demands what alone is capable of its reception—a pure disposition of soul. The conferring and the reception are beyond human evidence. The completion is proved by results—known and read of all men (2 Cor. iii. 2) and conclusively by the Holy Spirit (Romans viii. 16).

Again a written offer of sale of landed property, based on the payment of its equivalent price, may be delivered, duly signed by the vendor, for acceptance by the vendee, but he would only thereby acquire a right *ad rem*. (to the property), not to the usufruct until he pays down the price, and signs it. Then, and not till then, he acquires a right *in re* (in the property) and to all the advantages and privileges accruing to ownership.

And still another view may be taken, for the subject is one of such vital importance that it should be viewed from every standpoint. An insidious cloud is ever darkening our vision and disturbing our minds—a blinding innate feeling of self-power to earn, in part at least, our own salvation, and the necessity of putting forth every effort for this purpose.

Now there is a kind of sale of property which may explain:

An owner may sell by taking back a mortgage for the price. Such a transaction may be carried on satisfactorily as between man and man, but not as between God and man. Yet many, with a confused idea of what is human and what is divine, profess thus to sign the Covenant of Grace. They sign it rightly, as they think, by giving a mortgage, as it were, for the due fulfilment of the required duties as the price. Of these there are two classes.

One comprehending those who, ignorant of the intrinsic value of righteousness and the inherent evil of sin, regarding God as marking down all absentees from religious services, are most scrupulous in their regular attendance on them at home and abroad, with liberal donations to charitable institutions of every kind. They live a quiescent life under the sanction of a moral philosophy: indeed, they flatter themselves as being good examplars to society. They have no disturbing thought of their great future, though they have no comforting assurances of it. They regard the Covenant of Grace in the view of a supplementary act as modifying the stern demands of the Covenant of Works. Another of those who, more sensitive in their ideas of good and evil, try hard to comply with the supposed requirements. But they never feel satisfied, for, even in their own estimation, their performances are so imperfect that they seem rather to deepen their obligations than to discharge them. Their experiences are ever perplexing, and tend sometimes to despondency of ever acquiring the unchallenged ownership of the blessings promised. Both classes of mortgagors are wrong. They are both travelling roads parallel to the broad highway to ruin.

## HOW DOES THE CASE STAND?

Our God-man substitute, Jesus Christ, by His death on the Cross, discharged the judgment of Eden against us. By His perfect fulfilment of the law while He lived on earth He *earned* for us the grace of God. Thereby we are transferred from the jurisdiction of the Covenant of Works to that of *Grace*. What are the terms of its law? Follow me with perfect faith. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "Abide in me and I in you." "I am the vine, ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me."\*

By virtue of My life on earth and My death as your substitute I will present you at last as blameless. "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me."†

St. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, declares, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."‡

While human transactions may be carried on by the interchanging of equivalents, we have no equivalent which we can offer to God. He is Himself by creation owner of ourselves and of all we possess. As transgressors we have nothing to offer for a stay

\* St. John xv. † St. John xiv. ‡ Rom. viii. 1.

of judgment, less for amnesty, and much less for *Grace*, offering reconciliation and favor. After our Fall, upon which judgment proceeded, it would surely be thoughtlessly impious to offer, in our degenerated state, good works as having any supposed merit to earn the grace of God—as an equivalent for its inestimable worth.

In human transactions, indeed, to offer counterfeit money to a creditor in satisfaction of his judgment would be considered insulting.

“ Vain are the hopes the sons of men  
Upon their works have built ;  
Their hearts by nature are unclean,  
Their actions full of guilt.  
Silent let Jew and Gentile stand,  
Without one vaunting word,  
And humbled low confess their guilt,  
Before heaven’s righteous Lord.

“ No hope can on the law be built  
Of justifying grace ;  
The law that shows the sinner’s guilt  
Condemns him to his face.  
Jesus, how glorions is Thy grace,  
When in Thy name we trust  
Our faith receives a righteousness  
That makes the sinner just.”

—*Par. xlii. ; Rom. iii. 19, 22 ; Par. xiv.*

The only acceptable return we can offer are contrition unfeigned and the unconditional surrender of ourselves, soul and body, to Him as our Heavenly

Father, under the ruling influences of a truly faith-inspiring gratitude. Indeed, such an offering would be alone appropriate for our enjoyment of the blessing proposed. It is true that the gracious Donor, in the exuberance of His mercy, may extend the acceptance of His gifts to the term of life, but until His Covenant of Grace is accepted, on its own terms, no man is entitled to its promised privileges. His life before acceptance is overshadowed with very dark clouds, relieved only by the flickering faith of a covenant of mercy in offer.

Some there are who consider themselves entitled to take an "enlarged view" of the Covenant of Grace, by thinking that, in consideration of the weakness of human nature, it is permissive of a relaxation of the stern demands of the Covenant of Works, and that, through the infinite mercies of God, many for Christ's sake shall be saved.

This is a very grievous, nay, impious error.

The Covenant being remedial is entitled to a very strict and delicate interpretation. Christ Himself, as before quoted, said expressly, "Except a man be born again he *cannot* see the kingdom of God," and his disciple, John, with characteristic finality, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."\*

\* 1 John iii. 9.

Our inquirer, bent upon clearing away every doubt, reviews with deeper earnestness the charter of our religion, the Covenant of Grace, as described by St. Paul in Romans iii. 19 to 31.

Here the offended Creator offers by a Covenant of Grace to each ruined man an amnesty, nay, reconciliation, comprehending the re-implanting the image of Himself which he had lost, beyond his own effort to regain, or the power of any mortal man to restore. He who accepts with gratitude will, nay, must realize a personal consciousness of pardon and reconciliation. His acceptance in simple faith meets with the approbation of his Creator, while hesitating doubts of acceptance meet with much disapprobation, for they call in question His honor.\*

With such enlightenment from Scripture the inconsistency that any anxiously serious man should fail to realize a present joy, and an assurance of his future salvation, is perplexing to every thoughtful man. Our inquirer tries still further to reach a solution of the mystery by a possible case in life.

Suppose a grandfather is in deep sympathy with a grandchild, destitute and homeless through the extravagant folly of his father, who has been roughly excluded, with all his family and his be-

\* Heb. xi. 6.

longings, from the ancestral home and any claim to it. He offers him restoration to forfeited favor and comforts. The surprised grandson doubts the invitation as incredible. He consults a reliable friend acquainted with all the circumstances. By him he is assured of the sincerity of his grandfather and the authenticity of the invitation on the terms laid down, namely, change of habits in accord with the family circle and the cultivation of a disposition for the enjoyment of its pleasures.

Being convinced, he cordially accepts the invitation and responds. *Then*, and not till *then*, he *feels* restored. Here a perfect *faith* precedes and produces an *assured feeling* as cause and effect.

This supposed case gives a right direction to his thoughts. The two cases, however, are only analogous on some points. There is an essential distinction to be observed.

The case supposed is with human beings, governed by human feelings. The case for consideration is between God and man, whose mind is now out of correspondence with God.

As the grandson sought the counsel of a friend, the anxious man in his doubt seeks also for friendly advice, but the only reliable medium between God and man is the Holy Spirit, as clearly shown by St. Paul.\*

\* 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

He is offered to all. His office is not only to give a clear idea of the Gospel, but to instil a new spirit for its due reception, to change the spirit of man, now out of correspondence with God, by implanting a new spirit in accord with Him, to re-implant, indeed, the lost "image of God," a work which can be effected by Him alone.

As the microscope, and it alone, makes objects clearer and brings to light things otherwise invisible, so the Holy Spirit enlightens us in things spiritual. He shows us the love of God. He gives a new coloring to the Scriptures. He awakens us to a reality of our natural state, and the true value of the grace offered, by implanting a new spirit, which, gradually developing, exterminates the old carnal dead spirit and gives joy, peace, godliness and assurance of future bliss.

He plainly sees that the cause of many anxious minds failing to secure their much-desired object, the not feeling an assurance, is due to their stopping short in the middle of the proper course to be pursued for that end. We must not only believe in the mission of Christ, but that whosoever believeth in Him shall have eternal life. They are anxiously but wrongly awaiting some special but uncovenanted manifestation of the Spirit, some divine afflatus such as was offered at Pentecost to the Church as being necessary to establish it in its

first efforts to gain a foothold in an idolatrous world, by affording indubitable evidence of the mission of its Founder being from God. It is unnecessary now.

The word of God is His only witness. There is no other. The office of the Holy Spirit now is to implant a new spirit by the enlightenment of its truths. His services are offered to all who desire them, but we must be submissively responsive to His teachings. The daily sensible changes of our affections and desires from evil to good is evidence of His ministrations in our behalf, and warrant the conscious assurance of our adoption into the family of God, and the rightful enjoyment of all its privileges. The Holy Spirit can *alone* effect the change. Believing this, it seems only consistent with reason to assume that the Being who awakens us to spiritual life and implants a new spirit will follow up His work to a completion—our restoration, and our assurance of it. It is scriptural.\*

Our inquirer desires to discover aright the part we have to follow up. He consults St. Paul, who says, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."† But the same St. Paul, in writing to the Philippians, says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."‡

\* Phil. i. 6. † Romans iii. 28. ‡ Phil. ii. 12.

These quotations, apparently inconsistent, must be reconcilable, for St. Paul's yea is yea, and his nay is nay. By reading further he finds following the latter quotation: "For it is God who worketh in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure." He considers the case of the supposed grandson. The moving power was the unexpected love of his grandfather, who, in addition to his invitation, sends the means for facilitating the return of his grandson. The grandfather may thus be said to work on his grandson both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

In counselling a young man to avail himself of all his evident advantages through friends to rise to distinction, we would urge him in the more graphic language, "work out your destiny," though we merely expect him to put himself in the way of using his advantages.

Now, the love of God is as the sun that shines, manifest to all. A thoughtful man studies a blade of grass. He traces its fibrous structure. He cannot discover its life, but he wonders at its inherent power of sustaining the life of animals. He examines a stalk of wheat yielding food for man. He regards with a deep interest the various trees yielding their delicious fruits; and finally, with much admiration, the flower whose beauty and fragrance specially bespeak the goodness of God in

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so richly providing for man's physical nature. But in His revealed will he reads unmistakable declarations of His infinite love, summed up in the comprehensive words, "Jesus Christ Incarnate, and him crucified."

Love is the originating and ruling power here; so it is in the case supposed. How is it received? The grandson considers thoughtfully his comparative degradation, to which a growing apathy, so commonly following a downfall, had nearly rendered him perhaps insensible, he realizes the attractive advantages offered him and on an assurance from his friend of the sincerity of the invitation, he thankfully accepts it. He is now quite prepared to leave his home and to give up his present connections of every sort, and anxiously and carefully begins to cultivate the habits of those with whom he is to be associated in terms of the invitation.

The man who accepts the Covenant of Grace should act similarly in accordance with its terms. Even so must the serious seeker after truth acquit himself. But dealing with spiritual, not human, ideas, he must continue with his spiritual counsellor and guide, who is *alone* reliable to instruct and influence him. He is not justified in waiting with anxious expectancy for a special divine afflatus, but it is his duty to study the Scriptures, which contain

the whole subject, most devoutly, earnestly praying for aid to reach a deep and practical knowledge of them. He must thus co-operate, without which assistance may be denied him.

It is true that some, like St. Paul, were visited with overpowering manifestations of the Holy Spirit, but they were intended in the unquestionable providence of God for special general service. No private individual has any right to expect more than is covenanted for.

As the earth, with moisture and heat, germinates and maintains life physical; so the Word of God, with the influences of the Holy Spirit, germinates and maintains life spiritual.

Our inquirer now sees that the subject is rising to the enlarged proportions of an assurance on the solid foundation of cause and effect; and that any failure must be due to a faltering faith on our part. A sincere faith is the very core of a true reception of the Covenant. Of this he is the more assured when earth-born mists from the habits and arguments of his associates in life are continually clouding the mind, and demand his anxious and careful investigation to meet them in their every variety. He thus argues with himself:

The offer, Grace, is without price—without money.\* It is consistent that we should pray to

\* Rom. iii. 24; Isa. lv. 1

realize its full meaning and value; not that we may, by any personal efforts, be enabled to earn it, because, forsooth, it is unpurchasable.\* The honest acceptance of the Covenant on its own terms will strengthen us to do Covenant of Grace works. Again we read, "God is love." † His love is free to all, as the sun that shines. His *royal* gift, worthy of Himself, is not to be tarnished by any human restrictions. Earth-born clouds may obscure our mental vision, but an honest inquirer after truth earnestly prays for light, and he will assuredly receive a favorable response. Simple Grace is intelligible in itself to him whose eye is single; ‡ but clogged with human inventions, it is confusing and perplexing.

The offer is Grace, the condition Faith. The condition of faith is in the grace. Our estimate of the grace determines the strength and purity of the faith. Faith in ourselves to earn a title to faith, and thereby to grace, lowers the true value and power of grace. True faith, the outcome of our self-conscious, utter inability, clings with perfect confidence to grace; and St. Paul declares "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." §

Now, a human contract, after signature by one of the contracting parties, cannot be in any way

\* Rom. iv. 4, 5. † John iv. 8. ‡ Matt. vi. 22. § Rom. viii. 1.

modified by the other before signing it without incurring the charge of forgery. Much more so, our charter, the Covenant of Grace, signed, sealed and delivered by God to Abraham, the *representative* of the human race, cannot, in consideration of its solemn importance, admit of the least alteration by man, each of whom is bound personally to sign it, because entailed to such only as would be of like disposition with himself.\*

Here it may be asked, How can a man sign it? The Jew signed it under his symbolic dispensation, by the right of circumcision; the Christian signs it under the Christian dispensation, by its anti-type, "in the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh."†

The faith required is in God alone. It is not to be enlarged with any idea of being required in ourselves, the occasion of darkness and much discomfort to many. We are not called upon to have faith in ourselves, by ascertaining through a course of self-examination whether by an anxious preparation we are by good deeds yet in a fit and proper condition to warrant our right to accept so valuable a gift by signing the Covenant. Such a construction of the faith required would be utterly at variance with the spirit of the Covenant. Christ himself expressly declared, "I am not come to call

\* Rom. iv. 16, 17. † Col. ii. 10, 11; Romans ii. 28, 29; Phil. iii. 3

the righteous, but sinners to repentance.\* The proper frame of mind is penitence. The beggarly condition and contrition of the prodigal son, who in his plight arose, and with the voice of nature exclaimed, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." † As the return of the prodigal brought about through his father a restoration to his home and its comforts, the signing of the Covenant will bring about a favorable change in the penitent, qualifying him for the service of his Creator by the convincing assurance of His love.

The wretched prodigal,  
 In misery lying low,  
 Whom vice had sunk from high estate,  
 And plunged in want and woe ;  
 " While I, despis'd and scorn'd," he cries,  
 " Starve in a foreign land,  
 The meanest of my father's house  
 Is fed with bounteous hand.

" I'll go, and with a mourning voice  
 Fall down before His face :  
 Father, I've sinned 'gainst heaven and thee.  
 Nor can deserve thy grace,"  
 He said, and hastened to his home,  
 To seek his father's love ;  
 The father sees him from afar,  
 And all his bowels move.

5 \* Matt. ix. 13. † Luke xv. 18, 19.

He ran and fell upon his neck,  
 Embraced and kiss'd his son,  
 The grieving prodigal bewail'd  
 The follies he had done :  
 " No more, my father, can I hope  
 To find paternal grace ;  
 My utmost hope is to obtain  
 A servant's humble place."

" Bring forth the fairest robe for him,"  
 The joyful father said,  
 " To him each mark of grace be shown  
 And ev'ry honor paid ;  
 A day of feasting I ordain,  
 Let mirth and song abound ;  
 My son was dead, and lives again,  
 Was lost, and now is found."

Thus joy abounds in paradise,  
 Among the hosts of heaven,  
 Soon as the sinner quits his sins,  
 Repents, and is forgiven. \*

—*Luke xv. 13-25 ; Par. xl.*

An authoritative and instructive object-lesson,  
 for a clear understanding of the subject.

Now, this faith, the only possible power for  
 effecting this, is the result of due continued medi-  
 tation on the works of God and His revealed will  
 under the promised influence of the Holy Spirit.  
 His awful wisdom, so clearly demonstrated in the  
 creation and government of our solar system,  
 attracts and engages our intellects, and His

bountiful goodness, so clearly shown in His considerate provision for the welfare of His creatures, especially in His inestimable gift under the Covenant of Grace, captivates our affections, and our whole soul becomes subjected to a heart-felt service. But meditation is as necessary to produce this result as putting food into our mouths and swallowing it, is for bodily strength by digestion. Now, spiritual things can be laid hold of by spirits only; and it is to be noted that, although we reach truth readily by our senses, as a matter of fact things seen lose their freshness through time; whereas by faith they are constantly brought up before the mind and become daily more vividly impressed upon it, through its different faculties brought into exercise for their fuller development. Thus faith is more likely to arouse and intensify our better, our higher feelings.

The Covenant of Grace is now in force, and he who signs it is a member, and entitled at once to all its privileges.\* He who does not sign it, but keeps on doubting, is not a member, and never will be till he signs it. Otherwise the Covenant is a fiction, and meaningless. He may have signed it by proxy in infancy, and continued a nominal member as a matter of custom; but he must sign it himself spiritually and in earnest faith.

\* John iii. 2.

It is thought by some that a man who claims to feel conscious of being a true member of the Covenant, and a participator in its privileges, is self-opinionated and guilty of an unwarrantable assumption; but he has the warrant of Scripture. Indeed, one of his first duties is to rejoice as a result of his new membership. St. Paul writes to his converts, the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."\* And again to the Galatians, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,† taking precedence of all the other virtues.

Judging by our own experiences, such rejoicing is surely due to our gracious Benefactor. A benevolent man, who has a secret pleasure in relieving a friend from a rapacious creditor, would feel mortified if he appeared indifferent, or still distressed with imaginary troubles from his persecutor, while his goodly feelings would be gratified by a responsive gratitude and cheerfulness. So we may feel assured that the most acceptable tribute we can offer to God is a grateful and joyful recognition of His mercy.

Do I delight in sorrow's dress?  
 Saith He who reigns above;  
 The hanging head and rueful look,  
 Will they attract my love?

\* Phil. iv. 4. † Gal. v. 22.

Let such as feel oppression's load  
Thy tender pity share,  
And let the helpless, homeless poor  
Be thy peculiar care.

Go, bid the hungry orphan be  
With thy abundance blest ;  
Invite the wanderer to thy gate  
And spread the couch of rest.

Let him who pines with piercing cold  
By thee be warmed and clad ;  
Be thine the blissful task to make  
The downcast mourners glad.

Then bright as morning shall come forth  
In peace and joy thy days,  
And glory from the Lord above  
Shall shine on all thy ways.

—*Par. xxviii.*

Again, it is thought that assuming such a rejoicing spirit is not only an extravagant self-conceit, but a hindrance to pure morality. But what is our experience? Suppose a drunkard has entertained the idea of reformation, even on human principles and arrangements. He is pressed by a friend to attend his Temperance lodge. He feels half-persuaded to join, but hesitates. So long as he does so he will keep on indulging, till summoning all his determination he takes his last "drink" and signs the pledge. He assumes the "badge." He now feels himself under a powerful influence to abandon

his evil habit—yea, he rejoices in a conscious deliverance from its tyrannous dominion over him, and he feels daily more strengthened by an increasing acquaintance with the principles of the society he has joined, and by the nascent consciousness of the comparative happiness of his new life.

The soul's stirring hope of the benediction, "Well done, good and faithful servant," with the prospect of a heaven so glorious, is not only the cause of rejoicing to the Christian, but a most influencing power, not only to maintain the title to it, but to qualify more perfectly for its pure enjoyment.

Indeed, we have scriptural authority, for St. John declares, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God. . . . And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure;"\* and with characteristic finality, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."† So that the consciousness of salvation is not an unwarranted presumption, a self-conceit, but a Covenant privilege, a powerful factor in forming Christian character, and a solemn duty enjoined in Scripture: Indeed, the first Psalm in the Morning Service of the Church of England is most appropriate, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation."

\*1 John iii. 2, 3. †1 John iii. 9.

A severe test it is of a truly religious service, for without this consciousness, its appropriate impulsive feeling, the service is one of the lips, not of the heart; consequently not a religious service, and more honored in the breach than in the observance.

Our inquirer is now satisfied that the reason for so many having no comfort of a conscious salvation is due to erroneous and undefined ideas of the Covenant of Grace. He now tries to account for it in the face of the solemn declaration of "The Creed." This professes a detailed account of the principles which make up a system: "I believe in God, . . . Jesus Christ, . . . and the Holy Ghost," . . . with the relative position of these personal powers in carrying out its object, . . . "the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting."

Now a Hindoo might *unconcernedly* quote these words in giving a history of the Christian religion, but surely a professing Christian must feel that he is personally forgiven, that he personally will be raised up again, and that he personally will enjoy eternal life, otherwise his avowed declaration before God and the congregation is of no more religious value than the Hindoo's statement. It is rather, indeed, a solemn mockery. Real Christianity is not a creed. It is a life.

Here again he is satisfied that many, a great

many, mistreat the service, and go through it more as "statute labor," than as a sincere expression of the heart, and consequently not as a religious act, and affording no personal comfort.

Similarly as regards the model Lord's Prayer. What child in Christendom has not been taught this prayer? What professedly Christian man or woman does not daily offer it? The address, "Our Father, which art in heaven," indicates that the worshipper considers himself a member of a family having one common Father, their Creator, to whom they can confidently apply as their only Provider and Protector. And the first three petitions give evidence of a truly filial devotion, inspired by a perfect faith and loving confidence in His government. They are the expressions of an impassioned soul. A worshipper who uses them aright could not help feeling an inward consciousness of oneness with God, and he would have no hesitation in answering at once a question as to his future salvation, that he felt an assurance of it. But the general result is quite otherwise. From the daily conduct of the many it is evident that they seem to say the prayer, as has been remarked in regard to the creed, as a duty of the character of "statute labor," in accordance with the manner in which some of them perhaps were taught in infancy. Indeed, were some of them honestly to

confess the truth, they by a habit earnestly pray for what they really do not desire to be granted them. How can the worldly man or the sensualist, or the indifferent, a large element of society, pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," not according to, but rather contrary to, their real wishes? Indeed, if a man believes himself to be outside the pale of God's family he only stultifies himself by using the prayer. He should in his supposed exclusion be pleading for admission into it.

We pity an otherwise intelligent heathen, bowing down to the idol which his own hands have made. More so have we reason to pity a professing Christian bowing down before God in the attitude and with the solemn expressions of prayer, imploring for what he habitually treats with a careless indifference. The former attributes knowledge to his lifeless figure, the latter ignorance to the Omniscient. Yes, true again, the solemn address and petition often simply mouthed with an artificial solemnity, and unaccompanied by the desire of the heart, are meaningless and vain;\* and, as Mr. Ruskin well remarks, "Better, much better, unsaid. True prayer is the language of the soul—not of the lips."

Again, take the spiritual ejaculation, "The grace

\* James i. 7.

of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us now and forever." How often by many is this hailed as the conclusion of a tedious service rather than the earnest expression of a devotional spirit.

Moreover, when our inquirer hesitates not to set aside the opinions of atheists, infidels, agnostics, sensualists and worldly men, he views with astonishment that such high subjects as our Creator, the Great Eternal—His wondrous works, His revelation—involving our deepest interest for time and eternity, should apparently be comparatively undervalued by many otherwise intelligent and well-meaning people. It is difficult to see by what process of thought they conclude that religion should grow apace with the arts and sciences, and become more refined, more adapted to the improving condition of man in this progressive age. As railroads have greatly facilitated and made easy and more comfortable our mode of travelling, so they think our religion, with human modifications, might be rendered less restrictive and more congenial; especially that the Sabbath, which used to be kept, as originally set apart by the Creator, for the spiritual improvement of His creatures, by special communion with Himself, should now be devoted rather to promote physical vigour and intellectual improvement. It does seem surprising

they do not see that, however consistent with reason it may be, that man's physical and mental conditions are improvable by progressive knowledge and experience, it is inconsistent with reason that his spiritual condition can be improved by any modification of the revealed moral law of the Eternal. It is, as the law governing our solar system, essentially unalterable. Its doctrine is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." While progressive knowledge may advantageously relieve the Sabbath of many uselessly human embrous innovations and morose formalisms, so denounced by Christ, it is simply presumptuous arrogance to alter its original institution by substituting creature subjects for the Creator Himself. The arts and sciences are useful hand-maidens to religion, but in spite of the efforts of man to the contrary, the Great Eternal, His works, His Word, will ever command and maintain a comparatively pre-eminent superiority. It may well be asked if the Sabbath was originally instituted as its type, what idea do they form of the employment of heaven?

The incongruous habits of life with professions of religion are to a searcher after truth for his own guidance very disquieting, but our inquirer is satisfied that they are to be disregarded in seeking a guide for determining a proper course of life

here preparatory to our eternal life. He sees that they are based upon undefined and undetermined thought—a faltering between two opinions regarding our relations to earth and heaven, with a strong leaning to the former, and an unwarranted tendency to accommodate the requirements of the latter to suit its conveniences.\* This double-mindedness is unsuitable to the development of a true character. He resolves upon rising above the world, and pursuing his course independently upon a higher scale, under the directions of a reliable guide. His object is the highest conceivable by mortal man—to walk with his Creator—a perfect security for his happiness here and for eternity. The *how* to reach it is beyond human guidance or conception.

His first obstacle, that of earning it, is removed. He is *invited*, on the authority of Scripture, to enjoy this high privilege. The Covenant of Grace, originating from God and offered to all, chiefly the poor penitent, is not a vain, boasting document, but one intended for a good and glorious purpose, to be carried out by the decree of the Omnipotent; † and he who signs it in true faith may be assured of its privileges. It is essentially necessary to understand it aright. As before remarked, there is no initiatory fee required of money or good works.

\* James i. 8. <sup>2/11/18</sup>  
† Isaiah lv. 11.

It is a Covenant of Grace on the part of God, to be received on the part of man with faith.\* Human good works for founding a title to sign are like counterfeit coin, worthless. When convinced of his evil plight by nature, and that the delusive pleasures of life are as "husks" in the comparison with those of his father's house, the "prodigal son" hastens to return, in the hope of being received by faith alone in his father's goodness. When a man signs the Covenant and becomes a member, a new spirit will be implanted to enable him to perform Covenant of Grace works.† His hesitancy to sign because he is convinced, by self-examination, that his works are not such as to entitle him to sign, that his clothing is not respectable enough now to admit him, is contrary altogether to the spirit of the Covenant. His plea should be:

"Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me;  
And that Thou bidd'et me come to Thee.  
O Lamb of God, I come.

"Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot;  
To Thee, whose Blood can cleanse each spot.  
O Lamb of God, I come."

Those waiting till they feel satisfied that they are qualified to sign the Covenant wait in vain and

\* Isaiah lv. 1. † John xvi. 13.

lose its benefits. The grace offered is a gift—a gift worthy of the great Donor.

As we have gone into some particulars as regards the works of God, we may now do so as regards His Word by further enlargement.

If we refer to Genesis iii., we find that the prohibition was couched in the words, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The act of disobedience involved the constitutional consequence—*Death*. The details are interesting and instructive—the temptation the fall, the consciousness of a changed nature, now out of correspondence with the Creator; the hiding amongst the trees of the garden. Where art thou? I heard Thy voice and I hid myself. Adam's excuse when questioned, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Eve, when questioned, "What is this that thou hast done?" "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." The judgments—without question the arch enemy is cursed, and his main project foiled, through a new covenant to be made with man in the very mysterious words, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman (to become the instrument of my vengeance upon thee) and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Having thus determined, the offended Creator, turning to the offend-

ers, staid the judgment of the broken law, death, and granted a reprieve to give them an opportunity of accepting the new Covenant, as announced to the serpent in their hearing. He declares to the woman, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception" (through means of which the great deliverance would be effected) and to the man, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground."

Now, this Covenant of Grace is fully interpreted throughout Scripture, and the evil resulting from a transgression of the Covenant of Works law being constitutional, is a strong feature ever to be held in view for a proper understanding of it.

But if one transgression of the Covenant of Works caused such disastrous consequences, the Covenant of Grace, remedial in character, is surely entitled to a very critical and delicate interpretation.

It is not intended to supersede the Covenant of Works, or to discount it by way of compromise or any modification of its terms. To refute such an idea, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, after declaring his doctrine of justification by faith, asks the question as if by anticipation, "Do we then make void the law through faith?" and answers with much warmth, "God forbid: yea, we establish the law."\*

\* Rom. iii. 31.

It effects our reconciliation with God by a scheme inconceivable by guilty man. It provides a substitute, one fully qualified for His mighty undertaking, uncreated, independent of law in its judicial character; and yet, as a man in a generic sense, He must personally perform the Covenant of Works on earth, so as by a perfect obedience He may earn the reward forfeited by man through disobedience, and He must atone by *death* for man's transgression. Having established His title, He becomes entitled to offer His meritorious rewards to His faithful followers \* It is most unaccountable that the great eternal Creator should offer reconciliation by grace to guilty man and that he should be indifferent to it. Man is thus no longer subject to the jurisdiction of the Covenant of Works. He is now transferred to that of his substitute under the Covenant of Grace, the terms of which are, "Follow me in all true faith," as fully explained in Scripture, which points, as our only refuge, to Him as "Jesus Christ Incarnate, and him crucified." When asked by the jailer at Philippi, "What shall I do to be saved?" St. Paul answers, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." †

Truly wonderful are the works of God, and His government of our earth; more so is His moral government, especially under the Covenant of

\* Romans viii. 1.      † Acts xvi. 31.

Grace; but incredible, indeed, is the apparent apathy of man, the transgressor. Some natural defect is evident—a seeming inaptitude to the terms—yea, rather an apparent callousness to its precious offer. There is a lurking disposition to trust in self-power for his recovery, but a mended spring is unreliable to regulate correctly the movements of a watch. It requires a new spring to ensure its keeping true time.

The Covenant of Grace has its peculiar characteristics. It is not an arbitrary law. It is a law in offer only, inoperative as regards those who do not sign it personally and in good faith, but who continue under the broken Covenant of Works, with its direful consequences.

He who signed it in good faith has the assurance \* that in his conscious weakness he will be divinely sustained to carry out his part of its terms successfully. He must believe that he is now a member of God's family, that *his* sins are forgiven; that a title is now given to him to rejoice in a consciousness of God's approbation; that a new spirit is implanted in him, and that his death will only be a passport to heaven. Without such a faith a man cannot be said to have signed the Covenant, and his religious acts cannot be considered as acts of the Christian religion, which

alone can now be acceptable, according to the general principles of law which govern our judges in their adjudication of civil cases. A man should not be asked if he feels conscious of his future salvation, but if he has signed the Covenant.\*

God's grace demands, and is entitled to, the faith unfeigned of a worshipper. The least shadow of a doubt dishonors Him in the face of His solemn declarations, conveyed to us through His works, His revelation, and His Son. It mars what is intended to be a religious service.

Christ struck the true key-note of prayer. "When ye pray," He instructed us to say, "Our Father, which art in Heaven." The more we realize the Fatherhood of God, the more pure our religion, the more sincere our prayer.

Instance a standard family for instruction. Suppose one of distinguished worthiness, a father, prudent and kind; a loving mother; the children respectful and loving, vying with each other to maintain the family name, and shrinking from any act that would tarnish its time-honored respectability. Their loving confidence in the head of their circle produces peaceful happiness. But suppose a dark cloud of distrust enters, all is changed. A double-minded feeling now reigns.

Such is incompatible with the condition of the

\* Romans v. 1.

family of God. He is essentially Love, and He demands unequivocally, as His right, the loving confidence of all His creatures. Such is constitutionally necessary, for "Love," and it alone, casteth out all fear, for fear hath torment."\*

To walk with God does not necessitate a separation from mankind, a retirement to a cloister. Enoch, who walked with God, was actively engaged in His service. A man may be on terms of intimacy with his king, a good ruler, and he may be privileged to walk with him; but he should not consider himself above his fellow-citizens, for if of the same mind with the ruler, he would feel more disposed by such a connection to aid them by employing all his advantages from his exalted position. Indeed, he would have a secret pleasure in recommending to them his goodly disposition towards them, and carrying back to him their protestation of true loyalty.†

Besides, to walk with God does not debar us from the amenities of social life, nor from the necessary recreation for body and mind, nor from indulging in all harmless and pleasing amusements. It calls upon us to engage in the healthful exercise of all our privileges, and adds a zest to our full enjoyment of them.

The bountiful Creator has not only provided us

\* 1 John iv. 18.      † Jude 14, 15.

with necessary food and raiment, but with lovely scenery, resonant with the melody of birds, and ornamented with flowers of beauty, fragrant with delightful perfumes. But there are poisonous animals and noxious plants, which, though outwardly fascinating, are to be religiously avoided.

Our inquirer, revolving all, is struck with wonder that a world so fair—so abounding with good and requiring a superintending Omnipotence to maintain it—should have been provided for a being so inconsiderate as man. He naturally considers himself. He feels conscious that he has certainly undervalued his relations to the great Creator. It instinctively occurs to him—Am I personally known to one so great? He reads, with the deepest interest, the cxxxix. Psalm: "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. . . . Thou knowest my thoughts afar off. . . . Thou art acquainted with all my ways, for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." He feels arising in his own mind above the listless crowd, like a man watching unconcernedly a national festival when called upon to assume an official position. He considers what post he is now called upon to fill, what missions he may yet be sent upon in the great future, for, judging of our dealings with servants here, he sees that any man expecting maintenance is called upon to perform duty.

As a fact, many, a great many, think they came into this world in the ordinary course of nature, through a father and a mother; that they have to play a certain part in life, personally unknown to the great Creator—or, at all events, unheeded by Him—and then pass away whither they really do not know. But a rational man reflects that, as creatures cannot create, he certainly owes his existence to the Creator, and that man, for whom such a habitation as this world was provided, must be an object of great regard to his Creator. Again, that to be sensible of His regard should be the main object of man's life. Indeed, so jealous is God of this, His right, that no service but that tested by trial is acceptable. The commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," is the required measure of His law.

Feeling aright one's self-importance in creation is a first step towards a desire for acquiring an education and power for conducting ourselves properly.

But what conceivable honor so great as to walk with God? Our inquirer, hitherto doubtful of his ever being able to look for such a privilege, finds now from Scripture, to his inexpressible comfort, that he is invited to do so, without money, without preliminary works, but by grace with faith, and he

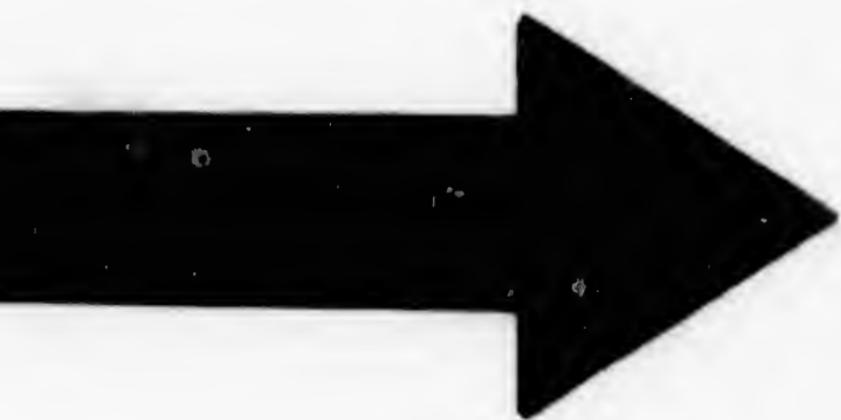
now sets about it in good earnest to cultivate this latter. This can only be effected by knowing God—not afar off in the sovereignty of His power, but in His fatherly connections and dealings with His ruined creature, man. Now, God is a spirit. Our knowledge of Him cannot be completed through our intellects only, but through our intellects with our affections, our spirits, and in connection with this it would be well, before going further, to understand aright the nature of the service required by God. How do we act with each other? A man wanting work done for a purpose of his own employs a workman, and pays him for the labor an equivalent, taking a discharge. They may not even know each other. Our obligations arising from our dependence on each other are based upon giving and receiving a *quid pro quo*. Self-interest rules all our transactions. Otherwise are our relations to God. He is the great independent power—the Creator—far beyond being influenced by self-interest as a motive power. He needs and could derive nothing from any creature. His attributes co-operate for one purpose—good to all. His character, as described by St. John, is “God is love.” The tribute demanded from His creatures are unclouded faith with admiration and gratitude, which are the proper guiding influences of life, and constitute the true happiness of His creatures.

The character of gratitude is determined by the good-will of the donor and the value of the benefit received. A man may save his friend at no personal risk, or it may be by his death, the greatest possible test of regard, as declared by Christ, who said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."\*

Again, a man may be saved from injury — or from death the most bitter. By such considerations the gratitude of the Christian should be of the purest kind, merging to the most cordial service. A service from any other motive is not only vain but displeasing. But the knowledge of God is the foundation-stone, and our inquirer now re-studies carefully the general plan of our solar system, not occasionally, but habitually, for the avowed purpose of knowing his Creator, not on theory, but as a governing power. At every turn of his life he regards himself as a beneficiary of His goodness. As he awakes each morning he reflects that the Being who slumbers not nor sleeps has been directing the necessary revolutions of our earth to bring about the dawning day and the approaching season. He regards with a deep interest the rising of that bright and wondrous luminary, the sun—the lamp of heaven, to enlighten man—"who goeth forth to his work and to his labour till the evening,"† to

\* John xv. 13.      † Psa. civ. 23.





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perform his mighty necessary work, as before shown, and to gladden all. He regards his food as a provision from his Heavenly Father, who alone can provide it, giving thanks, not as a matter of form, but as an expression of his feelings. He views with a pleasing gratitude every arrangement for his comfort and happiness, as from a benevolent Father, and in his connection with others, as God is love, he cultivates and feels a kindly disposition to all, deriving a conscious pleasure from all his deeds of good-will, originated and carried on from a desire to please God. At close of day he watches with solemn interest the sun setting in all his glorious brilliancy, and at eventide he goes out, like Isaac of old, to meditate.\*

He feels that it is as necessary for him to maintain God in his soul as his central power of action, as for a planet to keep its orbit round its central power, the sun.

His deep thoughts on His omnipotence and infinite wisdom, and, as revealed, His infinite truth, His infinite justice, and His infinite goodness, are blessed with a reflex influence on his own heart, and confirm his daily increasing faith. He is sensible of a new spirit becoming evolved from his contemplation.

Like the young man living in daily correspondence

\* Gen. xxiv. 63.

with his father, expressing his pleasure and gratitude, and awaiting letters with joyful expectancy, with a hearty desire to carry out all his commands and requests, he daily offers his tribute of praise and thankfulness to God, and peruses His revealed word with all carefulness and obedience, looking forward, like the young man, with a pleasing anticipation for the invitation to join the family circle and receive the loving home greetings.

Indeed, his soul becomes so filled with such deep subjects that they gradually exterminate all unruly passions, and he becomes fortified, not only to resist all evil, but to feel an assured gladness from a conscious feeling of the good-will of a reconciled and approving Creator.

To those who, like himself but lately, are now hovering round the walls, doubtful of their right to enter without the charge of intrusion, he can now say, Accept your invitation in all good faith: and, oh, taste and see that the Lord is gracious.\*

Yea, in his further earnest research he finds, to his inexpressible wonderment, that he is much more than invited. He reads the pathetic declaration of Christ himself: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."†

\* *Psa.* xxxiv. 8. † *Rev.* iii. 20.

Wonderful condescension indeed! Away with every shadow of a doubt!

Here Christ waits for an invitation, and hereby convinces us of His warm interest to aid us by an interchange of thought in the quiet seclusion and kindly influences of home life. If He, with anxious love, waits for the opening of the door, with what approving love will He meet the man who responds and opens the door. Surely such a man, if true to himself, must feel assured of his immediate safety from all evil. The letter to the Laodicean Church should be carefully read. The interior of the house was not required to be cleaned up, and proper arrangements made before entering, nor was the man required to change his garment and appear washed. All needed changes would be effected by the presence of Christ.

The Covenant of Works offered life as a reward for works perfectly performed. His terms were, "Do this and live." Man fell.

The Covenant of Grace offers life to the penitent transgressor, as *Grace*. Its terms are, "Live and do this." It is not a vain nugatory document, but in full force and offered to all under very solemn attestations.

Now, Grace is the cure, and Faith the means of acceptance.

An ointment, infallible when *pure* for curing a

wound, would, if mixed with any adverse element, keep it open or irritate it to become incurable.

Grace, pure, is in *itself* an infallible cure for the evils of the penitent. If adulterated with human inventions, it fails, and to the amount of the adulteration the penitent is kept struggling with his evils.

A mortifying wound, with all the efforts of the sufferer, will never produce from itself a healing ointment.

The evils of a penitent, with all his vain efforts, will never produce from themselves their only cure. Grace, the spontaneous gift of God.

An infallible ointment may not effect a perfect cure immediately, but if kept continuously on the wound it will eventually heal it.

Grace may not instantly cure a penitent even, but the moment he comes under its benign influence he feels conscious of his safety, and by constant faith he acquires increasing assurance of it. He begins to feel like the seaman's son, who said "he feared no storm if his father had hold of the helm."

Faith is by knowledge. We may know a medical man intimately, and yet have no faith in his curing us; but we may know another by his reputation only, and we have full confidence in him.

Faith in God springs from knowing Him, through contemplation of His works, His Word, and His Son, and this is as necessary for faith, as before remarked, as putting food into the mouth and swallowing it is for strength.

The true doctrine is not "God loves us because we first loved Him," but "we love Him because He first loved us,"\* And as St. John says, in his first Epistle, 4th chapter, which should be carefully read throughout, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because, as he is, so are we in this present world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." †

Do our relations with each other help us to form a clearer idea of this touching statement? Suppose a man has a judgment against him to meet on a certain day, involving ruin in case of failure, but a friend, knowing his inability to meet it, promises to help, how would he feel? Having only his word, and knowing well the uncertainty of all human promises, dependent much upon unforeseen changes in life, he would not be able to divest himself of an anxious uncertainty. So the nominal Christian with a superficial knowledge. But, at the same time, if his friend were in earnest and

\* 1 John iv. 19. † 1 John iv. 17, 18.

perfectly able to help, he would feel displeased at the failure of his generosity to produce the grateful feeling he had expected, and he would feel mortified at the want of faith in his ability and sincerity. So must our substitute for sin.

If, however, the amount necessary to pay the judgment is deposited in the bank for that purpose, how different would be the debtor's feelings. He would have a present and continuous joy, and chiefly so on the day of payment. So the true Christian with an intelligent knowledge. He stands, indeed, upon higher ground. His debt is fully discharged, and his increasing faith produces increasing love as life is ebbing, and perfect love casteth out fear. The influencing power of his life is beyond the silvery bond of a mother's love, it is the golden bond of his Creator's love.

And surely, by the same standard of comparison with which we estimate the relative value of men and things, our Creator, the Eternal, whose Fatherhood is influenced by His infinite wisdom, infinite truth, infinite goodness, with omnipotence, which constitute His essential character, *Love*, is worthy of our every thought, our every word, our every action, and our perfect faith. Truly, our greatest conceivable privilege is to walk with Him, in view of our *here* and our *hereafter*.

Walking by himself, a professing Christian is

like a musical instrument before it is tuned, sending forth grating sounds discordant to a delicately trained ear.

Walking with God he feels in perfect harmony with himself and with all the world, and he is beloved by all with whom he is connected, as one to be perfectly trusted.

Two men may live together, work together, go to church together, engage in the same recreations and amusements. One may be indifferent to the first table of the law, but may enjoy the confidence of his fellow creature in his punctual observance of the second. The other may be making the first table of the law the prime object of his life, and the governing power in his observance of the second, with a secret pleasure unknown to his neighbor, and at death he will carry with him not only a certificate of good conduct from his fellow creature, but an assurance of the approbation of his Creator.

Let us concentrate the argument.

God is *Love*.

Jesus Christ, our Head, as God-man, is the greatest, the wisest and the best of beings, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.\* Our Whence, our Here, our Whither. To those seeking deliverance from sin and disquietude, the "Covenant of Grace" offers forgiveness, a new spirit, eternal life.

\* John i. 3 : xv. 5 : xiv. 3.

True faith accepts and realizes a *present* consciousness of *peace* and grateful *joy*. Christ, with anxious love, has been waiting at the door and knocking. He joyfully meets him who opens with approving love, assuring him of His protection from all evils here or in the dark hereafter.

“Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.”

“Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,  
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies,  
Heaven’s morning breaks, and earth’s vain shadows flee,  
In Life, in Death, O Lord, abide with me.”

*Lyle.*

“For tho’ from out our bourne of Time and Place,  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my *Pilot* face to face  
When I have crost the bar.”

— *Tennyson.*

And who knows but that just as we came unconscious into existence, and when issuing, in the throes of a mother, from our living tomb, were received by loving hands, we may not similarly, in the benevolent arrangement of our Creator, be received by those we loved on earth, awaiting our arrival to introduce us with great rejoicing into that kingdom where God Himself dwells, and where He shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

