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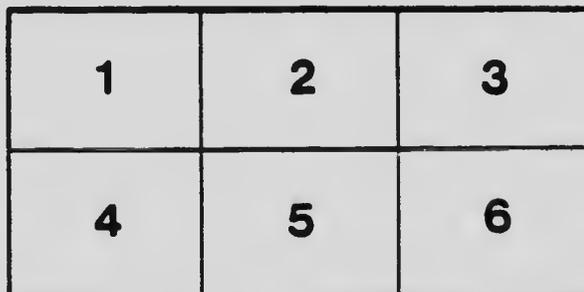
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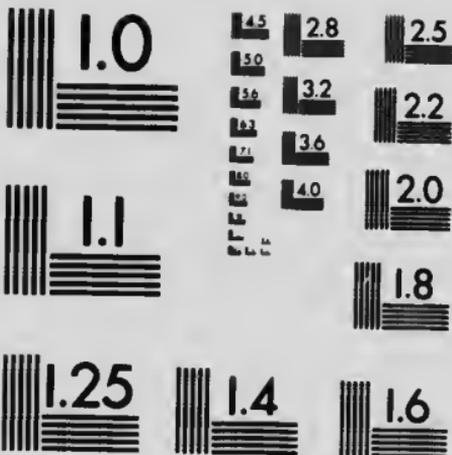
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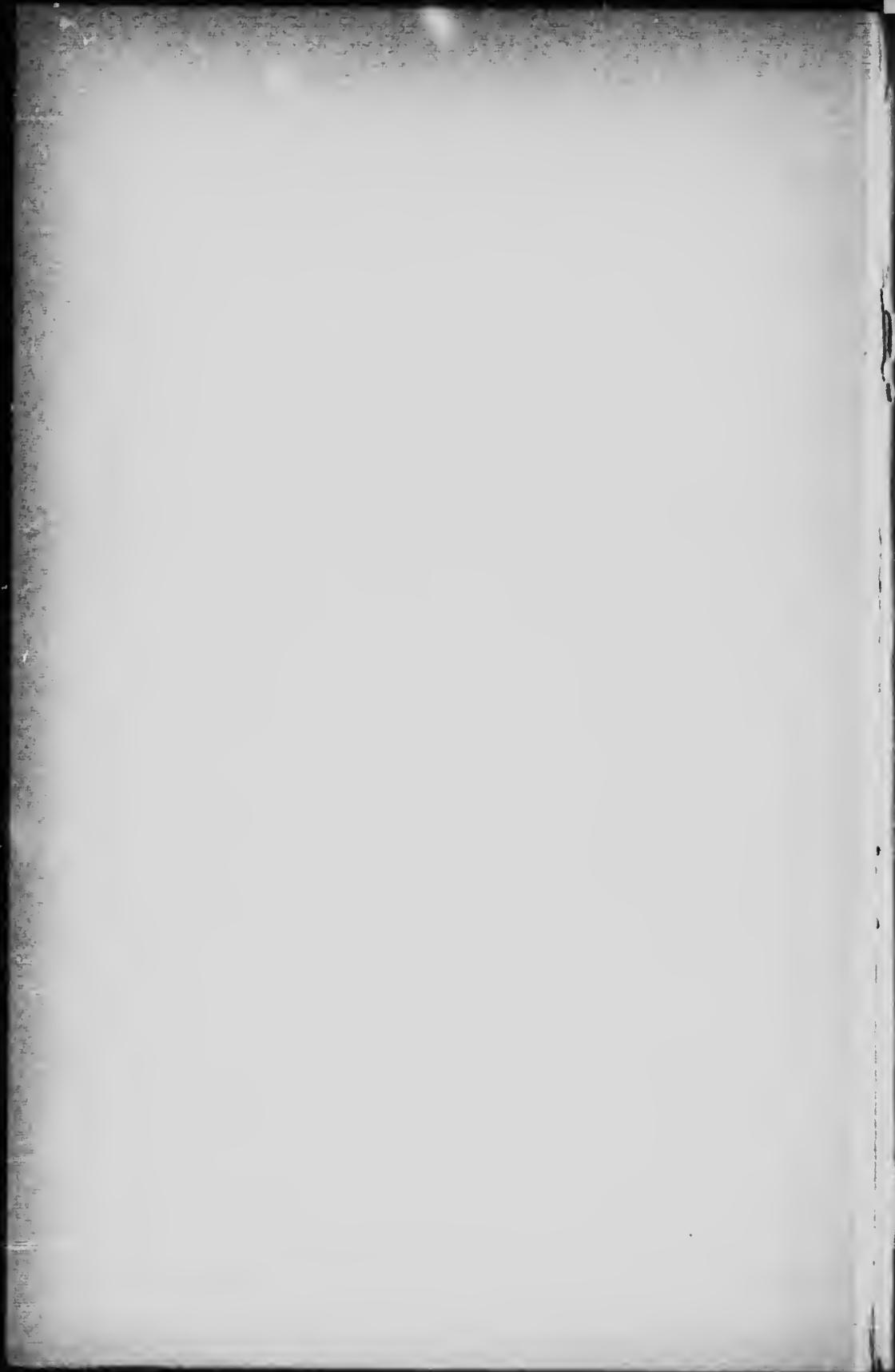
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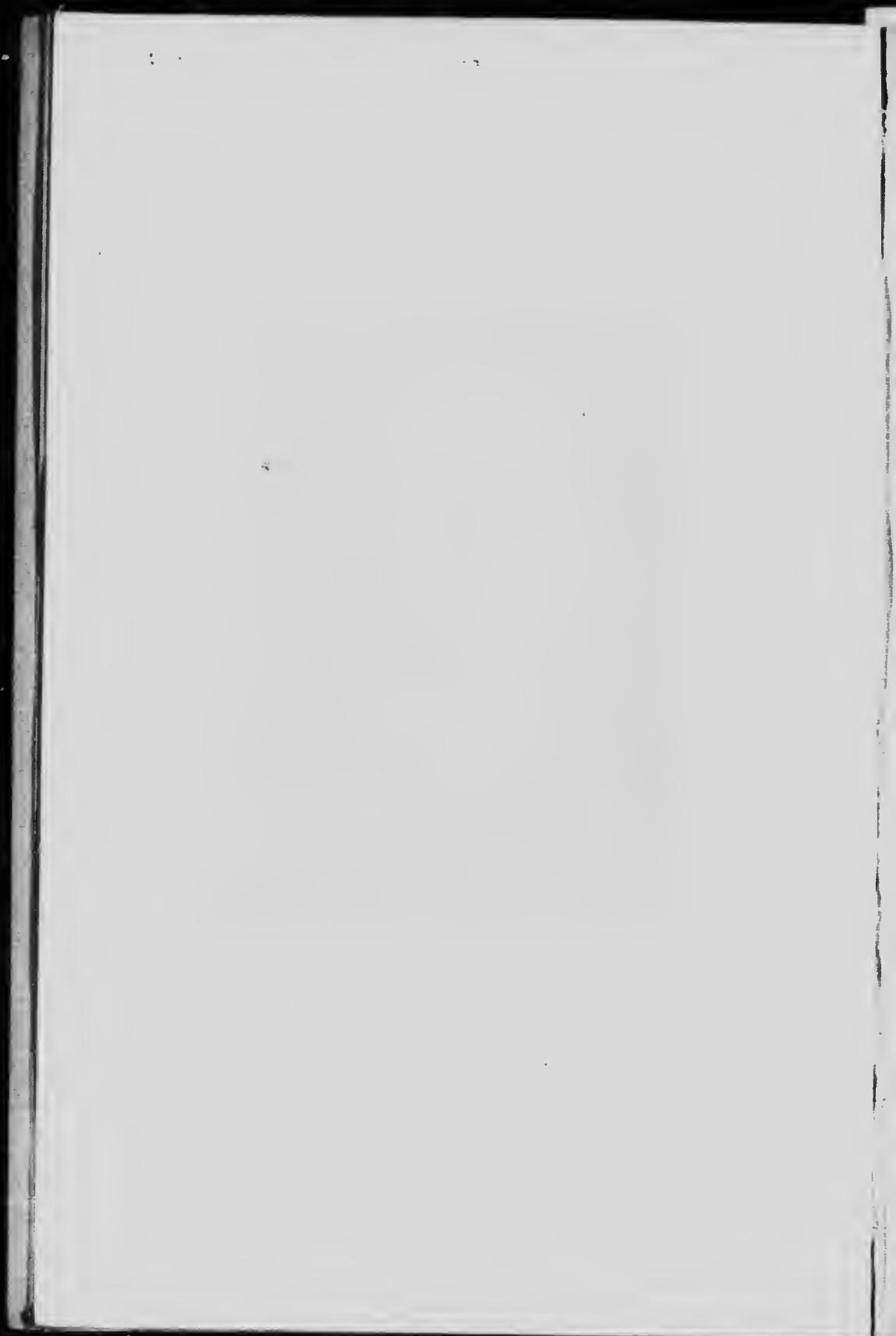
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Minister of the Christian Gospel at Ashfield, Huron County, Ontario.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."—Rom. xiv. 17.

"I myself, am hell."—*Paradise Lost.*

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SOUL=SCIENCE SERIES.

The following Volumes by the same author are about ready for the press, each Volume being complete in itself :

VOLUME I. Soul-Science. Here both science and philosophy are discussed in their application to the soul and its religion; the scientific basis of the Bible; Epistemology, or the science of cognition, or of knowledge and knowledge-taking; modern psychology and religion; the science of comparative religion; and the state of the heathen from a religious point of view.

VOLUME III. The Human Psychine, or Soul and Spirit. Here are discussed the soul, or *psyche*, as an "enswathment" of the spirit, or, the spirit-body; the subjects treated by the London Society for Psychical Research, including spiritism, faith-healing, hypnotism, telepathy, and automatism. These are discussed both from the view-point of science and the Bible.

VOLUME IV. The Disembodied Soul, or, Between Death and the Resurrection. This subject is treated from the point of view supplied by the Bible and biblical principles, and, as here discussed, contains a considerable amount of new evidence, as well as additions to evidence already presented by other writers.

* * * The present volume is the second in the series.

INTRODUCTION.

Knowledge is progressive, and in this progress every age is placed in a more advantageous position for the comprehension of any subject than the last. Every enquirer, therefore, finds himself on higher ground than his predecessors; he can avail himself of their latest acquisitions without the labour of original discovery, and thus with unbroken spirits and unsubdued vigour, he can commence his career at the boundary of theirs.—*Bailey.*

The present work contains part of the results of the study engaged in, and the experience gained, in a ministry of over a quarter of a century. For little less than the half of this period the ministry was exercised in two congregations successively in Scotland, the country where the writer was born and bred; and the remainder of the ministry was exercised in two congregations successively in the Dominion of Canada.

The present volume may perhaps be described as semi-popular in style, and is the first one published of a series of four volumes on the subject of *Soul-Science*. The first volume, which will be the second published, has for its subject *Soul-Science*, and is more scientific and philosophic than the present one; but each volume is complete in itself, and each is nearly ready for the press.

Volume I. discusses *inter alia* the application of science and of philosophy to the soul and its religion. It also discusses the significance, and part of the history, of religious *Epistemology*. *Epistemology*

is defined in the standard dictionary as "the theory of the grounds of knowledge"; but I take a wider view of the science than is here indicated, and view and treat it as being the science of cognition, or of knowledge and knowledge-taking. *Inter alia*, this science deals with the important question: how do I know that I know correctly? As the science is comparatively new, more liberty than might otherwise be seemly may, perhaps, be exercised regarding what is, or ought to be, included therein.

Modern psychology sometimes essays to deal with inner religion, but it does so only as if *ex gratia*, or in amateur fashion. The treatment of religion by the psychology of the day is as a rule exceedingly unscientific. Its procedure is frequently self-inconsistent and otherwise illogical; but perhaps its most radical defect is that the branch of the science which deals with religion is engaged in, as a rule, by men who have no direct, or first-hand, access to the main materials which form their professed subject-matter. In other words, these men are personally inexperienced on the subject of which they undertake to treat scientifically. They can, therefore, proceed at best only on hearsay, which, it is needless to say, no competent scientist ever attempts to do. These men must, therefore, lack the essential inner verifying conditions for dealing with their subject. For instance, the spiritual teaching of the Bible must be to them at best only an unverified and unverifiable hypothesis. Two whole chapters, and part of other chapters, in the first volume of the series on *Soul-Science* are devoted to a discussion of this subject.

The Science of Comparative Religion is a science

which is receiving considerable attention now-a-days ; and this is well. But its present basis, I venture to assert, is hardly scientific. It defines religion somewhat analogously to a definition of food as being that which one eats. Of course, one can eat poison also, which is not food. Further, this new science, being professedly of an inductive nature, essays to gather materials from a review of all the chief religions in the world, and then to deduce from a consideration of these materials the nature of the true religion. But the standard, or ideal, in the light of which the final decision is to be made, is not yet brought into view by this new science. Moreover, there seems to be something self-inconsistent in professing Christians of the living type proceeding in this fashion, as if *they* were capable of holding their own ideal *sub rosa*, or neutrally in their pockets, whilst they are sitting in judgment on other religions. Again, our scientists of Comparative Religion seem to confound *religion* with the *natural basis* of religion, or that which is gifted to man by Nature for the purpose of building up his religion thereon. This forms another of the topics of discussion in the first volume of the present series.

In the present volume the truth of the Bible teaching on spiritual matters is assumed. In the first volume the scientific and philosophic basis of this teaching is sought to be set forth. All that need be said at present on this basis is that whosoever complies with the *conditions* for verification set forth in the Bible itself will find the resultant verification all that he can desire ; and there is no inner experience, which does not come in a mere natural manner, but requires compliance with certain conditions for its realisation. The conditions

for the inner realisation of the truth of the spiritual teaching of the Bible are entirely *moral*, not *magical*; in other words, they partake of the nature of that virtue which Bishop Butler avers that "every one you meet puts on the shew of."

Inductive science has been defined as "the knowledge of causes." This is a more comprehensive definition of the knowledge-part of inductive science than may at first sight appear. There are the efficient, instrumental, conditional, and final causes. But ere the study of causes is logically entered on, there must be the contemplation of the phenomena pertaining to the subject-matter to be studied, or scientifically treated. In the present volume these phenomena are taken from Scripture teaching on spiritual matters, a teaching the truth of which is sealed by all those who have complied with the requisite conditions. The phenomena, or the materials, for an inductive science of soul-religion, or of the soul and its religion, are the materials set forth in the second chapter of the present volume, although not there set forth for the technical purposes of inductive science. The form which some of the headings of chapters in the present volume assume is accounted for by the nature of the definition of inductive science which has just been given. The treatment, however, is not technically scientific. Yet the materials set forth in chapter ii. are the materials to which, if the Christian religion be true, the science of religion demands that first-hand access be had by all competent scientists in religion. Those who essay to be scientists without direct access to the materials of their science, lack what we may call *science-virtue*, and they thus exhibit an incapability for being competent or trustworthy scientists in *any* domain.

The psychology of the present day makes much of what has come to be called the "subliminal region" of human consciousness. There is a sub-conscious region in man's mind, where the stores of his memory and several other materials are. Materials come up ever and anon from this sub-conscious or "subliminal" region into the supra-liminal, or working consciousness. Although the "subliminal" is mentioned in the present volume, it cannot in any sense be said to be treated herein. It is, however, treated in the first volume.

The researches of the London Society for Psychical Research have brought to the front several subjects of the most absorbing interest for religion. These subjects include spiritism, telepathy, hypnotism, sensory and motor automatisms, and the other subjects described in the two posthumous volumes by the late F. W. H. Myers, who was for over twenty-five years secretary of the Society named. The volumes are entitled "Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death." The late Mr. W. E. Gladstone said that the subjects studied by this Society are beyond all other subjects fraught with the greatest interest for science. These subjects are discussed in their biblical and scientific aspects in the third volume of the present series, and under the title *The Human Psychine*, or *The Soul and Spirit*. The *psychine* is the name I have ventured to give, for convenience of discussion, to what in Scripture is often called the *soul*, or the Greek *psyche*, or *psuche*. The *psychine* I take to be an "enswaithment," or the ethereal body, or envelope, of the spirit, and is probably the *post-mortem* spirit-body. In the New Testament the term *soul* is most frequently employed to signify both the spirit and its

“enswaithment,” or the container and the contained, although sometimes in holy writ the soul is discriminated from the spirit. In the present volume the *psychine* is mentioned, although but little use is made of the *theory* regarding it.

Another subject of absorbing interest with many people in the present day is that which is concerned with the state of the soul between the death of the body and the final resurrection. This forms the subject of volume iv. of the present series. The subject is treated on the basis of Bible statements, and deductions from biblical principles. Several writers have already dealt with the important subject, some of them profusely, but, as I venture to think, none of them exhaustively. I make no pretence to deal exhaustively with the subject, for there is sure to be more light which will yet break forth from Scripture thereon. Yet I seek to bring forward considerable evidence which I have not seen treated elsewhere, and to much of the evidence adduced by others I add several further items.

The late Professor Salmond of Aberdeen can hardly be said to have dealt satisfactorily with this subject in his well-known volume. Neither does W. R. Alger, in his “Doctrine of a Future Life.” Bishop Dahle, in his “Life After Death,” deals much more thoroughly with the subject; yet his volume is considerably weakened, as I think, by highly speculative discussions on the Apocalypse. Bishop Dahle misses some important parts of the Bible evidence. The Rev. Arthur Chambers, in his volume, “Our Life After Death,” grapples fairly well with the part of the biblical evidence which he deals with.

There is a valuable discussion of the subject

in a volume published in 1721, in London, England, the author of which is "the Honourable Archibald Campbell." The volume includes discussions on the same subject by several other learned men of Campbell's day. All the discussions are logical, but all the evidence is not treated; and, moreover, a feature which characterises the most of the works on the subject by divines of the English church, Campbell's work is occupied to a large extent with a discussion on the subject of Prayers for the Dead. This work is referred to by the late Prof. C. Hodge in Vol. III. of his Systematic Theology (p. 741).

The future state is discussed in several volumes issued on the basis of the work of the London Society for Psychical Research, or on a similar basis, and where Scripture evidence is not discussed. But the writers of these works give little information of the state of departed spirits from a religious point of view, at least as far as I have yet seen. However, if they can succeed in establishing, from their own point of view, the existence of a spirit-world, they will do very much indeed. But were this existence *fully* established upon this basis, or on any other scientific basis, would not that living by faith which is characteristic of the Christian economy be to a great extent superseded? And are we prepared to live by sight? These questions, however, are not here asked for the purpose of suggesting that science ought not to proceed as far as she can feel her way in the line indicated; but they are asked for the purpose of suggesting that science here, in her apparent hopes of what she may come yet to prove in her present line of procedure, may be in conflict with the biblical system of spiritual living in the present world.

In the present volume considerable attention is devoted to the question of the probable state of the majority of people professing Christianity. This is both a serious and a delicate question. In seeking to come to right conclusions with regard to it, one ought to be on his guard against laying too much stress upon sentiment or feeling in connection with Christianity. It is true, as Jonathan says, that true religion consists for the most part in the affections ; but, as he also says, and devotes the major partion of his work on *The Religious Affections* to shew, it is the *nature* of the affections, as this nature shews itself in the earth-life, that is the true criterion, and not merely the *existence* of affections, feelings, or sentiments of any seemingly good kind, that is the proper test as to whether living Christianity is in the soul.

The people in Isaiah's time, and also in the time of our Lord, had abundant feelings and sentiments connected with religion ; but what kind of feelings and sentiments were they ? The stony-ground and the thorny-ground hearers have feelings and sentiments, and, as far as they go, true enough feelings and sentiments also connected with the right religion. So likewise have the foolish virgins.

As already said, each human being has been created with a natural basis for religion. This basis will cause one to become attached to, and in several instances to have more or less feelings and sentiments connected with, the religion in which he has been brought up, whether it be true or false ; and one tends to become fossilised in heart around his religion, and to think it true, whether it be in reality so or not, as a miser gets fossilised in heart around his shining coin. Whatever religion is presented to one's natural basis, if it have the sanction

of custom and tradition in one's district, one will embrace that religion in nine cases out of every ten, even if false, unless or until he be evangelised ; and after a certain time of life very many resist all attempts at evangelising them.

Let it be further and very particularly noted, it sometimes matters not whether it be the true or a false religion that is presented to the natural basis ; the acceptance thereof by the soul is not real nor genuine. Suppose that the physical system of every individual craved for pills, and, of course, pills of the right kind for the system. In that case anything in the form of pills, having the sanction of custom and tradition, will be taken, whether they be the right pills or not. But if the pills remain whole, or un-broken-up, in one's inside, they will have none of the right effects on the system ; and in that case it matters not whether they be the right pills or not that one takes. But if one has been in the habit of taking certain pills, he will adhere to these, and will, if needful, fight for them, no matter whether they be the right ones or not. All the more likely will he become bigotted, fanatical, or prejudiced in connection with the pills if they are false, or even if true if they be not broken up. If they are broken up, however, then the true pills will be probably known by their effects on the inner system. But if not broken up, it matters not whether they be the true pills or not that are taken, there are none of the genuine effects of the right pills experienced in that case within the system. In that case also, there is sure to be much made of the colour of the pills, the manner of putting them into the mouth, the times for taking them, etc. ; and this will be so because the genuine effects of the true pills are not experienced.

Were the true effects experienced, it would soon become known that the colour, the manner and mode and time of taking them make no difference. So it is that those who are seen to quarrel about and make much of non-essentials in religion, suggest strongly that the pills that they are taking do not get broken up in their system, and that, therefore, it makes no difference whether they are zealous about the true or the false pills. The Pharisee is zealous about his pills, that is, his religion ; but he puts store on non-essentials because the pills he takes are not broken up in his system, and he, therefore, does not experience the inner effects of the true pills.

A religion gets broken up when one understands it, applies it in self-examination, embraces it in truth, and carries its precepts out in daily life. If one does all this, *except the last*, the religion does not get broken up, but is swallowed whole, and remains whole until it passes away from the system. The seed sown may be the good seed in that case, but its husk is not broken, and the forces in the kernel do not combine with those in the soil in order to cause growth and ultimately give a harvest. The foolish virgins have neither the seed nor the soul broken up. Notwithstanding all the ado which they may make, yet the pills remain whole in the inside. So also with the slothful servant in the parable of the talents ; and similarly with all those who try to love God and also mammon of any kind. Religion is un-broken-up in all these, if they have any of it at all ; or, which is the same thing, they do not permit religion to break up their souls to the core. In that case, if of the Pharisaic disposition, they will be zealous about the form, colour, and size of the pill, that is, about forms,

platitudes, attitudes, and the appendages of religion, and will be ready to fight the battles of the Lord with the devil's weapons. The Romish church would, if the civil law permitted, fight the battles of the Lord with the sword; for she once did this, and, of course, she is infallible, and cannot change. But if she knew better the real effect of the pills on the system, she would know that this mode, and many other modes which she adopts for thrusting the pills down people's throats, are not the right way for causing the pills to get broken up so as to save the system.

The two disciples who wished to call down fire from heaven to consume certain opponents, were told that they did not know what spirit they were of. Yet they were in a saved state even then; but they were at that time saved with that salvation which the Baptist was saved with, who had not come into the new form of the kingdom of heaven. The disciples were afterwards converted from this spirit of vengeance, as well as from their pride, exclusiveness, self-sufficiency, and worldliness. But after the gospel light shone, what had been permissible in the darkness, or compatible with a saved state before then, might not be so after this full light had come. If New Testament professed saints did all that even David did in his polygamy and concubinage, they could hardly be considered as in a saved state.

The science of religion is a science which is coming to the front in the present day. Even modern psychology is getting more courage to handle religion, although still, as I believe, very unscientifically. One thing in particular is left out by the major part of the modern science of religion, especially when that science embraces

a consideration of Christianity. Suppose religion to be the corn which the mill, that is, the human mind with all its furnishings is engaged in grinding, and suppose further that this corn, as it passes through the mill, has effects of a beneficial sort on the machinery of the mill. Then our modern scientists of religion study all they can about the machinery of the mill, but omit to study either the corn ground by the mill, or the effects of this corn on the machinery.

Indeed Professor W. James, of Harvard, U.S.A., professor of philosophy and psychology in the university there, says in effect that it is a sort of natural motion of the machinery of the mill that brings the corn into being, that is, such corn as there is. There may, indeed, be no real corn at all, he says; but if the mind *think* there is, it is all the same whether there be real corn or not. Illusion is as good as actuality, that is, in religion, although nowhere else. Further, this psychologist tells us that alcohol, ether, nitrous oxide, chloroform, etc., will cause the mill to go, and will produce by it the very best corn indeed. A bad liver, or a weak stomach, will have similarly good effects. But one must not be too curious to scrutinize his religion, we are told, or the motion of the mill, or else he may discover the folly of the whole thing; then the steam would cool, and the machinery would slow down and stop. So this engineer would have a ticket placed up above the engine-room door with the words: *No admittance, even on business.* The real religious leader must be a "cranky," "psychopathic," "Arab-in-the-Desert," individual, "inflicting" rather than teaching his religion. Further discussion of this subject will be found in the first volume of this series.*

* See Gifford Lecture by Prof. James.

All that need be added to what has been already said in this introduction is that some parts of the present volume consist of what had been delivered by the writer in the form of public addresses, and this circumstance partly accounts for the form in which these portions now appear ; and, no doubt, the author's habit of making direct personal appeals and application will account for the hortatory, or semi-hortatory, garb in which a few of the sentences appear. Yet, in the view of several possible readers, no apology would need to be tendered for this form, or garb ; they will wish rather that this form had been somewhat more pronounced than it here is.

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CHAPTER I.

HEAVEN EXISTS ON EARTH.

We are probably disposed to dwell on these glorious pictures of the holy city without a sufficient recognition of the fact that they represent a development and a new creation of the religious life.—*Blunt.*

Heaven Above can be entered only by those who enter Heaven below.

Let us suppose that in the direction in which a man is walking daily, he will come upon the ocean if he continues on walking in the same direction. When he reaches the ocean, if he be still walking, he will fall over the harbour, let us suppose, and run the risk of being drowned; for, let us say, it gets dark occasionally during the traveller's journey, and always does so more and more as he nears the ocean, so that he will not know when he comes to it, or is nearing it.

But let us suppose also that close by the traveller, as he is walking daily, there is a river flowing in the same direction as that in which he is walking, and on this river there is a boat sailing down with the stream, and keeping pace with the traveller. The boat has a rope attached to it, the other end of the rope stretching out towards the side of the river on which the traveller is walking. At any moment which he chooses, the traveller can lay hold of this rope, and by using some energy he can, by means of the rope, pull the boat to the side of the river next him, and get into it. If he does this, then

he will sail down the river in the boat, and when he reaches the place where the harbour is, he will still sail onwards and out into the ocean. He cannot in this case fall over the harbour or be drowned. Let us suppose further that the waters of the river are of the same kind as the waters of the ocean itself, and that the river moves onward and out into the ocean until its current cannot be discerned from the shore.

We have, then, in this supposition an illustration of what occurs among people in gospel lands in reference to their journey to the next world. It is open to each traveller to enter heaven now on earth, and to pass onwards therein into heaven on the other side. If the traveller venture to move onwards in the direction of the ocean without getting into heaven here, he may come upon the harbour at a moment when he is not looking for it, fall over and be drowned. The darkness may begin to envelope him in the midst of the light.

If the traveller has a distaste for being in the boat on the waters of the river, and prefers walking on land because of the pleasures and pursuits he there enjoys, he will have this distaste, let us say, grow upon him more and more the longer he walks on land. So it is that as people move onwards towards the next world who have not come into heaven here below, they get a greater distaste for heaven the longer they refrain from entering it here. They have their sensibilities for discerning heaven, and "taking" to it, more and more marred by the pleasurable but destructive winds and miasmas on land. But the river breezes, let us say, cause the weakened sensibilities and the marred vision to recuperate and come to healthful function.

Many that are brought up under the full light of the gospel expect to get to heaven when they die, who yet give no sign whatsoever that they have entered heaven here below. Several of them do many things that those do who have entered heaven here ; but they do these things without having first entered heaven, and, therefore, what they do counts for nothing in preparing them for heaven on the other side. Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. In so giving and so doing, I would be acting merely in a way analogous to the jackdaw that would expect to be turned into a peacock by sticking a few peacock's feathers into its black coat. This manœuvre would not convert the jackdaw into a peacock ; it would be still a jackdaw even after it had covered itself all over with peacock's feathers. Let it first turn, if possible, into a peacock, and then peacock's feathers will *grow* naturally upon it ; its black coat will then soon be radically changed. To adopt the simile of our Lord, first make the tree good, and then its fruit will be good ; you cannot produce heaven's fruit until the tree be first planted in heaven.

There may be various sentiments and feelings accompanying "good works" in the case of many who have not entered heaven here below ; but there is as much difference between feelings and sentiments of this sort, though raised about religious subjects, and the real spiritual sentiments and feelings of those who have entered heaven here, as there is between water raised by natural heat to the boiling point and water turned into wine. Those who have entered into the boat are analogous to the water turned into wine ; those who travel

on land are analogous to water which is still water, whether it be cold or warm water.

No amount of good works done outside of heaven here below can have any effect in preparing the soul for heaven above ; they are all " dead works." But even a cup of cold water given a disciple in the name of a disciple, after the giver has entered heaven here, will in nowise lose its inner effect in putting more of heaven into the soul of the giver. If one take a violin in his hand, holds itself and the bow properly, and practices faithfully according to right rules, he will by and by come to hear his own music on the instrument ; but one who merely takes up the *picture* of a violin into his hand, holds it there, and tries thus to go through the performance of playing, will never hear any music brought by him out of this picture of the instrument. Those who try to do some or many things here below to prepare themselves to join the choir above, but who have not come into heaven here, are like the one who tries to play on an instrument by handling merely the picture of that instrument. Heaven's music must be learned here below ; and those who have no musical ear here will not have one on the other side. There is no concert for a deaf man, nor any sights for a blind man.

Very many comfort themselves with the idea that since no one is perfect, and yet many get to heaven notwithstanding, they also may get to heaven although they are not perfect, provided they do here what the saints do. The saints, however, are already in heaven here in what they do ; but those who are not saints are not in heaven here, and whatever the latter do they do it on the *outside* of heaven, and it counts for nothing.

God is merciful, say some, and they hope on that

account to "get off," although they are not perfect. Yes, God is merciful in having provided us with the boat, the means of salvation. But that he should further bring to heaven at last any who have not entered heaven here, is a very different thing; and whatever God may do in the case of those who never heard the gospel, those who are brought up under gospel light and who yet refuse God's invitations to enter heaven here have no solid ground to expect that they can ever see heaven above.

God is able to save to the uttermost, say others, and he may save me, says one, although I may never come to heaven here below. But what God is *able* to do is not our rule, but what God declares he *will* do; that is our rule. God *could* save a man who should cast himself down a precipice, or he could save one from drowning who should cast himself into mid-ocean; he could make the latter walk on the water, as Jesus did. But has God *promised* so to act in these circumstances? Unless one use ordinary means to save himself from danger, he has no warrant to expect that God will save him from it. God tells the soul to come into heaven here below, and the soul that disregards this invitation has no right to expect that God will bring it to heaven above when the harbour is reached; and especially it has no warrant to expect this since God himself expressly declares that he will not do so.

*Heaven Above is of the same Nature
as Heaven Below.*

It might be an unspeakable boon to many to have it proved to them that heaven here is of

the very same nature as heaven above ; that the waters of the river, to revert to our illustration, are of the very same kind as the waters of the mighty main. Were they convinced of this fact, they might then see that if they have not sufficient taste for heaven to enter it here, it is certain they will not have any taste for heaven above ; and those who have no taste for heaven above will never enter that heaven.

Heaven above is precisely the same heaven as is here below ; the one is not only like the other, but is exactly and in reality the other, as far as the *nature* of each is concerned. The light to which you come at length in the railway tunnel, and before you reach the end of the tunnel, is the very same light exactly, as far as its nature is concerned, as the light into which you come at the end of the tunnel ; and the light which shines from the end *into* the tunnel increases more and more from its first shining until you reach the full light at the end. So the wise man says that the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The light of the perfect day is the same as the light that shines in the path all along, and that began to shine even ere the sun was up. The lights are in nowise different except in degree.

Some say : " Let us do our duty here, and let the future take care of itself." But our duty and privilege here are to enter heaven here, live in it, breathe its atmosphere, rejoice in it, and grow in its spirit ; to live thus is the best and only way of reaching an assurance that the future will take care of itself. The future and the present are not separate for the true people. There is a much greater change in souls that enter heaven here

than in souls that pass out of the present heaven into the heaven beyond. So Scripture represents matters, as we shall presently see.

A workman's wages are not of the same nature, as a general rule, as are the materials with which he works. The road into the city is not of the same nature as is the city itself with its buildings and inhabitants. Yet heaven above and heaven here are not thus disparate from one another in nature. Grace is glory in the bud ; glory is grace in the full flower or fruitage. Grace is the light of the rising sun ; glory is the light of this very same sun when in its meridian splendour. The stream rises in the soul on earth which flows in the soul through the episode of physical death and into heaven above. The waters of the stream are muddy here, but they will be pure hereafter ; nevertheless the waters are the very same in kind here as they are above. As the man is virtually in the boy, so is heaven above in heaven here. As well may one expect to be translated into the state of a man who never was a boy, as that one may expect to be translated into heaven above who never had passed through heaven here. As the full-grown spreading oak is reflected all along in the sapling and in the young growing oak tree, so heaven above is reflected all along here in the soul-experiences of the pilgrim heaven-wards.

We are by nature inclined to fill our imaginations with distant things, which we are apt to suppose we understand and appreciate, whilst these very things themselves, when in a measure present already with us, we fail either to understand or appreciate. The Jews imagined they understood and appreciated God the Father, whilst God the Son, who was the brightness of the Father's glory

and the express image of His Person, they failed to understand, know, or appreciate. Even Philip imagined that if he would see the Father it would suffice him, not realising that the Father was virtually already exposed to his view. Martha of Bethany experienced no difficulty in believing that her brother would rise again at the resurrection at the last day ; but she could not believe, but mourned and wept, although the resurrection and the life were now present with her, and although she had been told that if she would believe she would see the divine glory. So many imagine that when they die they shall get to heaven, and will there rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, who think not that saints, or those who are being here below prepared for heaven above, have it as their privilege, as St. Peter says, to thus rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory even here, that is, full of the glory of heaven above. If we have a taste for rejoicing when we reach heaven above, we have this same taste for rejoicing in heaven here.

Our Lord spoke of the kingdom of heaven on earth as being like the earth which "bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark iv., 28). When the corn is cut down and is lying on the ground, and is afterwards put into the granary, it is the very same corn as had grown up to full maturity in the earth. So also the souls in the granary above are the very same souls as had grown up to maturity in heaven on earth. When they are transferred to heaven above, they are not tares which had been cut down on earth, and which somehow in the process of cutting had been transformed

into corn or wheat. Unless wheat will grow up as wheat in the earth, and be harvested as wheat, it will not turn into wheat in the act of cutting, or whilst it is being removed to the granary.

Entrance on Heaven Here is a Great Change.

The Bible represents this change as a translation out of darkness into light, out of the power and kingdom of Satan into the kingdom and power of God. The change is one said to be from death into life, from enmity to love, from esteeming the things of heaven as folly into the esteeming of them as the wisdom of God and the power of God. Old things are passed away and all things are made new. Outside of heaven here below the soul is blinded by the god of this world, the "strong man armed," who holds his "hall" and his "goods" in his own kind of "peace." The soul outside of heaven here is held captive by the enemy at his will. The light that may be in it is darkness. It dislikes the light; that is, the very light of heaven it has no taste for, neither cometh to the light, says our Lord.

The power which changes the soul from this terrible state is a *divine* power; it is the same power as wrought in Christ when He was raised from the dead (Eph. i., 19-20), and set at the right hand of God. God shines into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face, that is, in the life and work, of Jesus Christ. The soul thus changed is said to be even born again, born from above, born of the Spirit. It is made willing in a day of divine power; it is made a vessel of honour. It walks in newness of life. It is able to look in a

new manner into the unseen world, and has earnestness, postulations, and prophesyings here of the heaven which is above.

All this does certainly constitute a great and very decided change in the soul. Yet the change may come on so gradually, as far as the soul's own consciousness is concerned, and notwithstanding the soul-struggle, as that the soul may be in heaven below ere itself is fully aware of the fact. But if so, the soul will not *continue* thus unaware of the fact, even though it may afterwards sometimes, and perhaps often, fall momentarily from its assurance. It is not to be supposed that such a great change as this would not make itself known, nor that a change of such importance would be such as that it *could* not be known, nor realised, by those who undergo it. It may be easily understood how extremely anxious earnest souls would be were it not open to them to make sure of this change having taken place here below. It is, indeed, the case that many souls that are really inside heaven here below are not always in full assurance of that fact; yet if they are not, they are not easy-minded in that state. We know how the true spouse acted, as recorded in the Song of Songs, when she missed her Beloved. She rose and went about searching for him, even though she met with much opposition and evil treatment, and she did not give over her search until she found and embraced him, resolving in so doing that she would not again let him go. No matter whether the Song be an allegory or not; the laws of true love are always and everywhere the same.

In our next chapter we shall enter more fully into the details of the experiences of heaven as it exists in souls on earth, and we shall see that there

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II

is no room, either in the record of Christian experience or in Scripture, for any doubt that heaven is the same here as it is above, nor for any doubt, therefore, that souls that enter heaven above must first enter heaven here.

CHAPTER II.

HEAVEN EXISTS ON EARTH (CONTINUED).

Within and behind all that we see there lies a spiritual universe, in which are hidden the causes of this great natural scheme and order amid which we live.—*Cox.*

Christ in you the hope of glory.—*Paul.*

Let Comparisons be Made and Conclusions Drawn.

The main aim in this chapter is to supply materials for the making of comparisons between heaven above and heaven below, and affording the reader opportunities of drawing the proper conclusions with respect to his own state, or condition, personally, in reference both to heaven here and heaven above.

Under each heading in the chapter the reader may, if the wording of the sentences does not take the needful form, himself turn them into that form, and put the questions: Are these things true of heaven above, and are they equally true of heaven below? If they are equally true of each, then must not heaven be actually here, and offered to souls that they may enter thereon here and now? And if a soul enters not this heaven which here exists, is there any reasonable ground for hope that after the body dies the soul will enter on heaven above?

Righteousness of Position and Disposition.

Righteousness here means *rightness*. Souls that enter heaven above must be entirely *right*, or as they ought to be, both in position, or standing, and disposition. Their standing must be right even ere they enter heaven here below. The sentence of condemnation must be removed. God will not begin to heal the disposition of any soul until its *position* be first set right. St. Paul says that the kingdom of heaven consists in righteousness, that is, rightness, and in peace, and in joy in the Holy Ghost. It consists in these and similar things. (Rom. xiv., 17). Here below, those who have been delivered from condemnation greatly appreciate the fact, and they rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Rom. v., 1-5). And in heaven above the saints will never forget their deliverance from guilt through Jesus Christ, but will for ever sing praises to Him Who loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood. Heaven here, then, is the same as heaven above in this respect.

The *disposition* of saints is not perfect here, but it is constantly progressing towards perfection. They are growing in those Christian graces which culminate in glory. Their joy here is often a joy unspeakable and full of glory. This signifies that even here their joy is saturated with that glory in which it will eventually culminate.

Life and Light Everlasting.

Again and again do we read that he that believes hath even now a new life, and that this life is one which will be agelong, or eternal. The soul that

believes will never die. Because Jesus, Who is the life of this soul, will live for ever, so also must this soul itself live for evermore.

The life of the soul is begun here ; but this same life, not another, is that life which will be enjoyed in heaven above. Physical death has no power over it. "He that believeth in me," says Christ, "shall never die." He has already passed from death into life eternal. Jesus came to bestow this life in greater fulness, or, as He Himself puts it, He came that His own might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. He is, indeed, Himself that very life, and he that hath the Son now hath this life now ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. He that hath not life here will not have life hereafter.

In Christ there is life, and this life is the light of men now. Heaven above is described as a kingdom of light. The inhabitants there have no need of the sun, nor of the moon, nor of any candle, for the Lamb is the Lamp of this kingdom (Rev. xxi., 23). But He is the Lamp here below also for all those who follow Him. These shall not walk in darkness even now, He Himself says, but shall have the light of life. He is "the light of the world," as well as the light of heaven above. God has shined into hearts here to give this light in the face of Christ Jesus, that is, in His life, teaching, and work. St. Peter avers that those who attend to, and carry out in diligent practice, the divine teaching represented by the virtues which He enumerates, shall have the day dawn and the day star arise in their hearts. This star is the Star of Bethlehem, which is formed in hearts, and is to them the "hope of glory" above (2 Peter i.). If, then, this "dawn," "day star,"

“hope of glory,” are all here below, is not heaven here? And can one enjoy these above who is a stranger to them whilst here?

Spiritual Vision.

This vision is implied in the life and light already described. But Scripture often speaks of a capability of vision as well as of a light. For vision one needs eyes as well as light. Of course, if one actually sees the light, this is proof that he already possesses eyes. Yet eyes are not the same as light.

He who is born again *sees* the kingdom—that is, he inwardly experiences its spiritual power and graces. Regeneration is a washing, and imparts the beginning of that purity, that holiness, without which no man shall here below *see*, that is, experience, the Lord as being his God. But blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God both here and hereafter; and shall, therefore, have heaven here as well as there.

Jesus says that He will *manifest* Himself here on earth to the souls that love Him and keep His commandments. Mark, He does this here below. (John xiv., 21-23). Whatsoever doth make *manifest*, says the apostle, is light. To those who love and obey Jesus, the divine Spirit shews Jesus in Jesus' own light. The heart that turns to the Lord has the veils taken off it, and, in the unveiled condition, it here beholds the glory of the Lord reflected as in, or from, a mirror, and is being changed from glory to glory, until it come to be in the perfect image of its Lord (2 Cor. iii). This change which is carried on in the present earthly heaven,

is a change which is described as one which is proceeding from glory to glory. Observe, it is even *called* glory. It is the glory from above projecting itself here below, and causing the heaven below. The change which is being carried on here will be completed when the souls engaged in it come to see the glory of their Lord as it actually is. But both the agency and the effect will be at last in their nature what they actually are here below, *seeing* or *beholding*, and *change* into the divine image. In heaven above all saints shall see their Lord face to face ; but here also they see the divine glory in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. iv.)

It is said that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him. This glowing description applies especially to heaven above. But by no means exclusively to it, for the apostle says that God hath already revealed them to us by His Spirit (1 Cor. ii., 10), that same Spirit that searches all things, even the deep things of God.

Union and Communion with Christ and His People.

Bible readers know how very frequently, in one form or another, union with Christ on the part of Christ's people is spoken of in the New Testament. He is the Vine, they are the branches. He is the Head, they are the members of the body. They are new creatures *in* Christ Jesus. There is no condemnation to them because they are *in* Christ Jesus. He is formed *in* souls, the "hope of glory." St. Paul averred that it was not really he that lived, but Christ that lived *in* him. Christ dwells and walks *in* the Christian as in a temple.

Of the one who keeps his word Christ says: "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

This union of Christ will subsist in a still closer and more perfect form above. Our Lord prayed that all who believed in Him might come at length to be one with Himself and with the Father, even as He was already one with the Father; "that they also may be one in us." (John xvii., 21). Christ's people in their present imperfect union are growing up into Him Who is the Head. The present growth into union will be consummated in glory above, or even at the great marriage supper on the threshold of glory. Christ's people are now betrothed to Him; and even betrothal is a degree of marriage, for marriage is constituted by mutual consent. They are Christ's friends, and not merely His servants; and, in Bible signification, a friend is as one's own soul. Christ is, indeed, so close to every soul that he who sins against Him wrongs his own soul. (Prov. viii., 36). Christ is the life of the soul, and he who does not choose Christ is said to love death. The moth will eat up those who are against Christ, (Is. l., 9), and the moth originates in the garment itself. The consuming fire will originate in the souls of the rejectors.

It was prophesied that in the new dispensation saints should have the name *Baali* (my Master) taken out of their mouths, that is, out of the spirit of their service, and that they should no more serve in that spirit; they should call Christ *Ishi* (my Husband); for they would be married to Him. (Hos. ii., 16-20). As a young man marries a virgin, and rejoices over her, so Christ, it is said, would rejoice over His bride. He gave Himself for His

people, that He might wash them with water, and ultimately present them to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. * This washing is in process here ; it is sometimes represented as a refining process, and is watched over by the refiner Himself. (Mal. iii.)

No part of the washing, refining process will be carried on in heaven above, any more than the stones for Solomon's temple were dressed near the temple itself but in the quarries. But, then, the dressed stones could be seen even in the quarries. So also if souls are being dressed in heaven below, their dressing will have an effect here in the same way as it will have above. This dressing, in the proportion in which they will acquire it, will introduce them here into the experiences of heaven above. The true people have Christ here, and they have one another here, and the dressed state will fit them even now for that same union and communion which shall be perfected above. But it is above that the great organism will be complete. And those going before cannot attain completion even there until all those coming after shall have arrived. (Heb. xi., 40). But when all shall have been brought home, then shall be fulfilled the condition prayed for, " that they all may be one as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

We read of faith being the very " substance " of things hoped for, the " evidence," therefore, of things not yet seen. Faith is so described since, with sponge-like qualities, it draws Christ into the soul, and He is *par excellence* the very " substance " of glory. If, then, the soul that is in heaven here below has the very " substance " of glory presently in it, the very light and evidence

of the heaven above are there, yea, even that very heaven itself is in that soul. It has even more than earnest, more than foretastes of the inheritance above ; it possesses in a measure the very inheritance itself.

Christ is the Lamp of the final heaven ; but He also shines in the souls of all His followers here. He manifests Himself to them now. He is here the very Bread and the Water of life. His people eat and drink Him here. Here He gives unto them that water which will be in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life ; that is to say, the same water as they receive here will be the water which they will drink above. Christ says that he who drinketh this water here shall *never* thirst ; and no more could be said of those who drink the same water above. He shall there lead His people to living fountains of water ; but this water can be no other than the water He speaks of as being given to His followers here below. The river of the water of life issues from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and it courses through the Holy City here, that is, through the souls of the true people ; for these, with their Divine Head, constitute the Holy City. The ancient Psalmist spoke of the river which gladdens the city of God. So also Ezekiel had a vision of a river issuing from the threshold of the temple, and making fertile the land round about. The good man has his roots spread out beside this river, and is kept ever green and fruit-bearing. On either side of the river there grows the tree of life, which yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. These Scripture statements apply equally to heaven here and heaven above.

Springing from union with Christ, there is also

union with Christ's people. They are all members of one another, since they are members of His body. This oneness on their part is treated in the Twelfth of First Corinthians, and in the Fourth of Ephesians. This oneness anticipates the great organic union above.

Springing also out of union with Christ, there is communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and communion also among Christ's people themselves. St. John wrote his first Epistle so that this fellowship, or communion, might be enjoyed more largely. This communion is spoken of as being accompanied with feasting and great joy, and with rest, and with a peace which passeth all understanding. When saints shall all have gone home, then the great marriage supper shall commence. But even now there is joy in heaven over even one sinner that comes to the heaven here below. There is joy in the Father's heart, and among the members of the true household, when the prodigal returns. "Let us eat and drink, and be merry, for this, my son, was dead and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." There is a feast of fat things made here, and of wine on the lees well refined. (Is. xxv., 6.)

When the door of the heart is opened to the knocking Redeemer, the feast begins. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

On the last day Christ will say to each of His people: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." But He gives His own very joy here also: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Christ intended that the joy of His people should be full even in the present life ; and if it be so, then surely heaven above is not only in kind here, but in degree also ; as the dying saint said : " I question if I could have more joy even if I were in heaven itself." Believers who die are said to enter into the rest prepared for them by God, called both His rest and theirs. But to the weary and heavy-laden even here who come to Him, and who take His yoke upon them, Christ gives rest, His own rest, for they learn it of Him. His rest, His joy, His peace, His fellowship, union with Him, communion, light, bread, water, being changed into His image ; what more can saints enjoy in heaven above, except that in the final heaven there will be a greater degree of these blessings !

Heaven's Love.

Union and fellowship of the genuine kind cannot exist except in the atmosphere of love. Love is the bond of union, and the bond of perfectness. Christ reveals Himself here ; and in self-revelation there is love. Love both reveals and gives *self* to its object. Christ loved the Church and gave *Himself* for it. He loved the Father, and gave Himself to Him in perfect love and trust, so that He might make Himself a meeting-place for the Father and the true people. But this love on the side both of Christ and His people is so special a feature of both heaven above and heaven here, that the next two chapters will be devoted to this theme and its concomitants. We therefore need not dwell thereon at the present stage.

Service and Reward.

We read that Christ's servants shall serve Him in His temple above. But His servants serve Him here also. The love of Christ to them is powerful over their hearts here, and constrains them here to live not unto themselves but unto Him. The necessity of service is set forth in many places in the New Testament, and, among other places, in the parable of the talents, and that of the pounds. The final reward for faithful service is represented as an increase of that very thing which the service itself increased. There is love, joy, peace, and power communicated. These are some of the Master's goods, and not a few forget that they are given to be traded with. They desire the sweetness and assurance of them, but shirk the work and duties which the possession of them imposes. They would sit still, and merely drink of these good things for their own delectation, as a man sits in a tavern and drinks. Many lose their gifts, however, through lack of proper use.

But when the gifts are used, they are increased ; *these very things* are increased. Fellowship with the Master and with one another are increased, for there is capacity for this fellowship increased by work and endurance on the part of the faithful servant. And on the last day, the great day of reckoning, to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance of those very things which he at first obtained from the Master, and which he increased here below by faithful use. Expressed in other language, the abundance which the faithful servant will have given him will be, as we have already seen, entrance into the Master's joy, fellowship, love, rest, and glory. There is thus represented

a continuous growth of heaven below *into* heaven above ; the latter shall only be an increase of the former.

The cities which the righteous will, as we are told, be appointed to rule over, (Luke xix., 17-19), will be cities which will have a government of the very same kind as is exercised here below by the faithful ; for the qualification to rule is obtained by their knowledge gained, and by their practice here below. Holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, are moulding their hearts here, and are not held by them merely as a formal creed. They are here tried and proved, and being found faithful, they receive what becomes eternally their own property of spirit. (Luke xvi., 10-12).

Service here, to be acceptable, must proceed from love (I Cor. xiii.), and service *increases* love. Express love in word and deed, and you increase it. Thus it is that heaven is wrought into the soul even now, as one works a melody into his ear and soul by continuous practice in singing or playing it until it is securely lodged within. The rules for heavenly singing are presented in the gospel. The potentiality, at least, for the music is bestowed as nature's gift. The actual music begins to be heard at regeneration, and then also the voice comes : " Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." At last to the faithful servant who has learned to perform his part in the concert here below there will be said : " Come, enter, take possession ; thou hast exercised a loving spirit below ; enter now into the full enjoyment of that same love ; thou hast been practicing heaven's music below ; come now, join the choir above."

The Wedding Garment and the Oil in the Vessels.

The wedding garment I understand to be righteousness of position and disposition; not the former merely. This garment is to be had *only* here, and if had here, it must be also *worn* here; and if worn here, it also *functions* here. There is nothing which is had here of a heavenly nature which does not function here. It is, indeed, by functioning that it is increased. It is thus that it is realised to be what it is. And if the wedding garment is put to use here, this use will be somewhat of the same kind as its use at the marriage supper of the Lamb. It fits for fellowship here as well as there.

Similar things are true of the oil in the vessels along with the lamps. If this oil is had here it also functions here, and does so similarly to what it will do when the cry is heard: "Behold the Bridegroom, go ye out to meet Him." The oil is needed here below for meetings with the Bridegroom, as well as for the great final meeting. Many professing people have a species of flame, but have no oil far down in their souls,—none that will stand in the presence of the Bridegroom. They do not make thorough work of their Christianity. Their souls are too stony or too thorny; and the fact is concealed from many of them through those flesh-stirring exercises in which they engage in the church-meeting,—expedients which are made to do duty in the feelings meantime instead of the real oil.

Conclusions.

When one reflects on the several pronounced soul-experiences which characterise heaven here

below, one need not remain in much doubt as to whether or not he himself is an entire stranger to them. If heaven below go on improving one's disposition ; if it give life and light everlasting ; if it give spiritual vision of Jesus Himself, Jesus being to the soul inside this heaven, Bread, Water, Peace, Rest, and Joy. If the Lamp which illumines heaven be shining in the soul that is inside, so that the very "substance" of heaven is in that soul, it not being merely the soul itself that lives, but Christ that liveth in it : if there be union and communion with Christ and His people, along with the day star shining within, an entrance having been ministered abundantly into that kingdom which is everlasting ; and if there be a rejoicing with joy unspeakable and saturated with the glory of heaven above, how can there be room for us to doubt as to whether or not we are ourselves personally acquainted with heaven here below ?

If one be not in heaven here, let it be remembered that there is only one other kingdom in which one can be. The object of the Prince of the kingdom of light is to save souls by making them like himself. The object of the prince of the kingdom of darkness is to destroy souls by making them like himself. In the kingdom of darkness the main means for accomplishing the end in view are two, namely, first, operating by darkness, deceit, or delusion, so that the soul may be made, if possible, to imagine it is safe, or safe enough *meantime* ; and, secondly, its capabilities for coming to see and be a partaker of heavenly things here below are gradually atrophied and destroyed, so that the soul will not care as to what state it may now be in. Our Lord said that the prince of darkness was a liar

and a murderer from the beginning ; he is so still,
and he murders by first *deceiving*, as he did in the
beginning, and then by *rendering careless*.

CHAPTER III.

HEAVEN'S LOVE ON EARTH.

God loves more earnestly than man can do; for it is His essence, and He never changes.—*Stock.*

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.—*Paul.*

The Bible represents Perfect Love as the Soul's Perfection and Chief End.

We may take *love* as the representative of all the main heavenly experiences in the soul. These experiences may be said to consist in life, light, love itself, union, communion, and joy, or happiness. Wherever true love is present in the soul, all these other elements are also present. Love combines all these elements as the white light combines all the colours. We may, therefore, treat of love to God and our neighbour as summing up all the experiences of heaven in the soul. Perfect love is perfect heaven.

Christ's mission may be said to have consisted in the preparation of the means for bringing souls to the condition of perfect love. The Sinaitic law said: Love perfectly. It is here implied that if one love perfectly, he is himself perfect. So St. Paul also says, that he who loves perfectly is a

perfect man, and fulfils the whole law. And let it be noticed that there cannot be *two* kinds of soul-perfection,—one kind consisting in the condition of perfect love, and the other in something else. There are two covenants spoken of in the Bible, according to either of which one may, if able, be perfect, or reach perfection. According to the one covenant no help is given; but according to the gospel-covenant help is provided for fallen man by means of which he may, if willing, at length attain to perfection. But the perfection under each covenant is none other than the condition of perfect love. Perfect love is the sum of the Ten Commandments, and is also the sum of gospel requirements. According to the gospel, we reach perfect love by means of the provision which the gospel contains for reaching this end; but the point is, that whether under the gospel or the Sinaitic law-love is the end.

The entire teaching of the Bible, both direct and indirect, and all its exhortations in regard to spiritual matters, may be summed up in saying that they have reference to the production of love among human beings. The ultimate aim of God's providential dealings with His people, both His external and internal providences, is the production and perfecting of love. This is the aim of the promises, threatenings, instructions, accounts of missionary tours, of church-counsels, church-offices, preparations for work, etc., of which we read in the Bible. Faith and hope exist for the production and perfecting of love. Purity of heart enables us to see God, and to see also the souls of His people; and by seeing we love. Poverty of spirit, meekness, humility, and all the graces, prepare for love, or qualify the soul for its exercise.

The more direct teaching of Scripture about Love.

We read in Mat. xxii. 35-40, and in Mark xii. 28-34, about Jesus being questioned as to which was the first and great commandment of the law. Jesus replied in substance that it was the commandment which enjoined perfect love to God; and the second, He said, was like unto the first, namely, love to one's neighbour as to one's self. On these two commandments, says our Lord, hang all the law and the prophets. This signifies that all the teaching, types, shadows, symbols, religious days, civil polity, ceremonial, sacrifices, etc., of the law under the old dispensation existed for the sole purpose of preparing people to love. The preparation went on from age to age, and reached a great culmination when Jesus Christ came to the earth to open up the way for the Father's love to go forth, not, however, to *create* that love,—and to be Himself the embodiment of love, and to prepare and teach men to love. The entire teaching of the prophets, Jesus implies, had also for its object the preparation for love. Jesus came not, He Himself expressly says, to abolish the old commandment of love, but rather to restate, broaden, clarify, and emphasise it. In the first volume of the present series, the cause is set forth at length as to why God could not approach so near the people of the old dispensation with personal revelations of His love, as He can do under the new dispensation. This cause cannot be entered on here.

Very much was taught under shadow, type, and ceremonial, during the old-dispensation period. But the religious soul is evermore apt to come to adhere to the "*means*" as if they were the *ends*. This tendency culminated in ancient Israel in that

Pharisaism which, with its adherence to forms and erroneous creed, crucified the Lord of glory. The form and creed which are untranslatable into the living flesh and blood of spiritual love as manifested in daily life, is a form and a creed which is similarly Pharisaic, hypocritical, deadening, and blinding. Accordingly the prophets, our Lord, and His apostles, evermore recalled people from this fossilization of heart around "means" as if they were ends. Our Lord approved of the remark of His questioner to the effect that love was better than all formalities in religion, for the formalities exist for the sake of the love. Mercy pertains to love, and mercy is preferred by God to every kind of sacrifice or mere form in religion. (Mic. vi. 6-8 ; Mat. ix., 13).

A forgiving spirit pertains also to love, and even prayer itself is in vain without this branch of love. (Mark xi., 25-26).

On a certain occasion when a lawyer asked our Lord what he would do to inherit eternal life, the questioner was directed to what the commandments of love said. The love to one's neighbour was illustrated by the love of the Samaritan towards the man who fell among thieves. (Luke x., 25-27). See also Mat. xix., 16-22. The rich young man lacked one thing needful for true neighbourly love. Our Lord implied in saying that the law of love secures eternal life, when this law is perfect in the soul, that by whatever means this law shall come to be within, it must be placed perfectly there ere eternal life can be perfect. Of course He Himself came to open up the way and provide the means for placing this law perfectly within. Our Lord prayed that all His people might be at length one with Himself

and the Father, and this oneness implies perfect love. He expresses this Himself, and He also says that the end of His declaration of the Father's attributes was that the love wherewith the Father loved Him might also be in His people, and He in them. (Jo. xvii).

In Rom. xiii. 8-10, the apostle says: "Owe no man anything but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

St. Paul says to Timothy that the end of the commandment is love. (1 Tim. i., 5). This means that the ultimate object to be fulfilled by all the divine commandments is the production of love. When perfect love is produced, the end of the divine command is fulfilled. So also in Gal. v., 14, the same apostle says that "all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." St. James calls the law which commands love to one's neighbour the "royal law," as the rule: deal one with another as you would have another deal with you, is called "the golden rule."

In the Bible teaching which we have just been noticing, the perfection of love is regarded as the perfection of the soul, and as the perfection of eternal life in the soul. But if the Bible thus teaches that perfection of soul means practically perfection of love, we might anticipate that there

would be in the sacred volume a large body of teaching and direct exhortation about the exercise of love, without its being always added that perfect love is the soul's perfection ; and this is precisely what we do find.

A peculiar feature connected with the Bible representations about love is the prominent place which is given to love to man, to one's neighbour, to the brethren, the household of God, and even to one's enemies. It would almost seem that love to God, or to Christ, is elicited for the sake of preparing the heart to love one's fellow-men. No doubt love to God, or to Christ, is the first and chief love. This love opens the heart to love men. But love to men seems to be made most of in the New Testament as far as extensiveness of reference is concerned.

Man absolutely requires his equals for his perfection. God will be evermore infinitely above him. And man's relation to his equals must be that of the most intimate union and communion, if the relation is to be perfect ; and this relation cannot exist without love. If the relation is to be perfect, the love also must be perfect. We are apt, if religious, to chide ourselves for coldness towards God, or Christ, and well may we do so ; but we are not so apt to do the same thing when we feel cold towards our fellow-men, and especially towards the brethren. But the fact is that, as far as self-examination is concerned, love to one's brethren affords a better test of one's religious state than one's supposed love to God. None emphasises this fact more than the apostle John. St. John says, in substance, that if one speaks, thinks, or feels, as if he loved God ; and if at the same time he hates, or does not love, his brother, that one is a liar,

deceived, in darkness even until now, no matter how long he may have been making a profession ; for if one love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen ? The Divine command, he says, is that the one who loves God love his brother also.

The notable passage in Mat. xxv. is well known, where we read of love to Christ's brethren being the final test for admission into heaven above. Christ assumes His brethren to be on the same plane as Himself with respect to love ; love to them being *the* testing principle. All souls will be in organic union in heaven above, and love is the bond of union ; it is the silken enswaithment of the soul necessary for such close relationship. Here the physical body affords protection, so far, for the pearls of one's soul. But in heaven above all will be transparent, and, therefore, the love there must be perfect. The perfect organism above will be the perfection of humanity ; therefore, no wonder if love to the brethren be so much inculcated in the Bible. The best preparation here for heaven above is the acting of the same organism here as will live and act in heaven, and living and acting here in the same way, and with the same inspiring spirit as will obtain in heaven above. To regard and live as if God, or Christ, were a mere Master, issuing commands which must be obeyed because He is supreme, and in order to one's "getting off" at last, or getting the reward of obtaining an entrance into heaven, is a conception which betokens a slavish and selfish spirit, and is an entirely inadequate view of man's ultimate goal.

In the Thirteenth of First Corinthians we have love set forth in sharp contrast with even the *gifts* of the Spirit imparted for the edification of the

church. Among the "gifts" are included apostleship, the prophetic gift, the teaching gift, the gift of miracles, speaking with tongues, healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues, interpreting, etc. The apostle desires that the Corinthians covet earnestly the best of these gifts. But they might have these in great brilliancy, and yet be mere children in real spiritual attainments, that is, in true personal preparation for the great organic union above. And, as a matter of fact, the Corinthians who possessed these gifts manifested that they were merely children in this respect, walking as "unrenewed" men walk, and needing to be fed with milk. And how did the apostle make this out? Simply by means of the strifes and divisions among them. These strifes, heartburnings and vanities, were begotten of the flesh still rank in them, and shewed that they were still far from being fit for the organic union of love in heaven above, notwithstanding that the Spirit made use of them for certain ends. The Spirit can use even a Balaam for His ends, and can speak even by an ass, and the ass remain an ass still, and the Balaam whom He uses may still love the reward of unrighteousness.

Though I were able to speak with all the eloquence of a Demosthenes, or even of an archangel, had all the spiritual knowledge of Paul himself, or of all the apostles combined, had all miracle-working faith, and yet had not love, I should be simply *nothing* as far as fitness for heaven above is concerned. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, all of which is possible through ostentation or vanity, I would still be nothing without love.

Now observe in the description of love which

follows how much of this love refers to its exercise towards man :—

“ Love suffereth long and is kind ; love envieth not ; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up ; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.”

Here by far the greater part of the reference is to love to man. Love has faith and hope in it, and it will never end. The perpetuity of love refers, no doubt, to that love to man which the apostle had so largely in his mind. It is true we know God here only in part compared with our final knowledge of Him. But the same is also true of our knowledge of our fellow-men. Finally we shall know even as we shall be known ; we shall then know both God and man more intimately, and by the direct kind of knowledge by which God knows us now. But he that loveth here also knoweth here. Perfect knowledge implies perfect love. We could not be admitted to perfect knowledge, or vision, without perfect love, for sight of spirit imbibes spirit ; and where there is this latter there must be response of a proper kind, or else there would be a trampling on pearls.

There is some evidence to show that the apostle drew a sharp distinction between his own *gifts* as an apostle, and his *graces* as a personal Christian. Though he was an apostle, yet he had to strive for the crown in a lawful manner, as he expressed it, just as other Christians have to do ; and there is some ground to believe that the apostle feared he might not be able to distinguish in himself the fervor which came upon him as a gift for his apostleship,

and the fervor of real spirituality of mind and love. He feared lest whilst he preached the gospel to others, he himself should eventually prove a cast-away ; therefore he kept his body under, and he had undergone the loss of all things that he might personally win and know Christ, and be found in Him. (Phil. iii.)

The church in Ephesus had great knowledge, and tried those who said they were apostles, and were not, and had found them liars. She laboured in Christian work up to the very fainting-point ; yet she had not actually fainted, but had patience, and, for the sake of the great Name, had endured and gone on in her work. But nothing of all this could be accepted as a *substitute* for the warmth of her first love. From this warmth she had declined, and so serious was the delinquency regarded by her Lord, that she was told that unless she was zealous, and considered her former state, whence she had fallen, and unless she repented and did the first works, her Lord would come upon her in an hour when she did not expect him, and would remove her means of light, and break up her church-state. It was absolutely necessary that she should abide in her Lord's love in order to bear true fruit. If she should lose irrevocably her warmth of love to her Lord and to His people, she would be cast forth as a branch and withered. (Rev. ii.; John xv.)

The same was true of the Laodicean church, which had become lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot. She had been entirely misjudging her state. She imagined she was rich spiritually and increased with goods, as was true of her members temporally. But her fulness of bread had played havoc with her heart and her judgment, as was the case with

Sodom of old. Her Lord was placed outside her heart, and she knew it not. (Rev. iii.) The extreme in this line is reached by those of whom our Lord speaks when He says that the time would come when he that puts His people out of their churches, and will kill them, will think that he doeth God service.

When St. Paul had been in Ephesus the love of the Christians there had been very warm, (Acts xx. 36-38), and in his epistle to this church, he says that he had prayed that they might be strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, in order to come to know experimentally the wonderful love of Christ, though it actually passes knowledge. In this manner the Ephesian Christians would, as the apostle expresses it, be filled with all the fulness of God. (Eph. iii.)

These, then, are some of the New Testament teachings and exhortations about love, and in them all there is implied the fact that perfect love is the goal of soul-evolution. Especially is this implied in the teaching in the latter part of Mat. xxv., where we are informed that love will be the passport into heaven above. The reason of love being the passport will not be that those who loved were so good as to do what they were told, and that now they are to get their wages; the reason is that love will be absolutely necessary to be in exercise above as the bond of the great organic union there.

The same truths are prominent also in 1 Cor. xiii., where love is so much magnified beyond all things else in Christianity; all other things existing only for the sake of producing and fostering love. They, therefore, sadly mistake the meaning and spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who imagine

when right doctrines and forms of worship are successfully taught about, and made to prevail, that the main object of the gospel in the present life is fulfilled. Doctrines, creeds, confessions of faith, forms of worship, etc., which are no directions nor helps to the production or fostering of love, are not of much utility. All of these that are really good are translatable into love, either directly or indirectly. The doctrine of the cross is translatable into love, for the cross opened the way for love, gives an example of the exercise and self-denial of love, and is the procuring means of the Spirit of love.

CHAPTER IV.

HEAVEN'S LOVE ON EARTH (CONTINUED)

Love is a meek and blessed influence, coming in, as it were, unawares upon the heart. It comes gently and without excitement, it has no terrors, no gloom, no approaches. It does not rouse up the passions. . . . It is from the hands of its Author, glowing from the immediate presence of the great Spirit.—*Ruskin.*

Love as Affection

True love of every kind has more than one phase, and this is also the case with the personal love. Love as an *affection* is, perhaps, the phase of love that is best known, and most frequently thought of. Jonathan Edwards says that "True religion, in a great measure, consists in the affections," and he devotes a chapter in his "Religious Affections" to the proof of this.

The *affection* of love sometimes reaches a form of ravishment, but it does not usually continue in this high tide. Yet the affection of spiritual love ought not to be permitted to subside. We are taught this fact from the message to the church in Ephesus. (Rev. ii.)

The affection of love cannot be satisfied with anything short of union and communion with its object. It gives *self*, and it craves for the *self* that it loves. But affection may crave for this without remaining in the same form of affection as it had

at first. When food first comes into contact with the palate, if the food be sweet the sweetness is then felt. But when the food is eaten and assimilated, the sweetness is gone, but the strength of it is then experienced, and work can be done through this strength. There is no strength from it when the food is in the stage of mere sweetness.

A mother does not, perhaps, *seem* to love her child so much as the passing stranger appears to do. But let the child's life be in danger, and then see who loves the child more. Crises, such as danger, partings, meetings after long separations, misunderstandings, etc., often reveal a strength of love which had not been suspected as present at all. Much of the *psychine* (or soul)* is in the "subliminal region" of the inner man; only a comparatively small portion thereof comes up into the working consciousness except in times of crises. The time of emergency in war often brings out the real leader. Crises often brings up an amount of love from the subliminal, which had not been known in a direct manner to have been there at all. The approach of death often brings much of heaven up from the subliminal of the Christian, and often brings up foretastes of the antipodes of heaven from the subliminal of the non-Christian. We know not the full contents of our subliminals except in crises. But one ought to be most careful to have his subliminal stored with proper contents that will get incubated there, and will rise up in time of need.

But, as already said, that which takes strong hold of the system is often not experienced in a sentimental, ravishing, emotional, exciting form. The love in wedlock grows stronger as life, with its

* vide Introduction p. V.

ups and downs, proceeds ; that is, if everything is as it ought to be. But this love does not usually continue in the same form as on the marriage day ; not so exciting. The cause being that the love has gone through the entire system. The shallow stream is heard at a distance, because it *is* shallow ; the deep river moves along in its channel quietly, because it *is* deep. Love in the ravishment-stage is often demonstrative, because it has not yet taken deep hold ; yet love ought never to lose its demonstrativeness. But as it grows, it will be more steady and reliable in what it professes.

Husbands are exhorted to love their wives as their own bodies. But no man was ever seen hugging his own body in his love to it, nor making demonstrations over it ; and the cause is that his love to it is deeply ingrained into his soul. Thomas Goodwin, the old Puritan divine, remarks somewhere that many young converts in their first professions make clothes for themselves so very large that they hardly fill them all the rest of their lives. Yet joy at first, even if exuberant, is seemly and right, if it contain no censoriousness on those who are not so demonstrative. When the prodigal returned there was feasting and merry-making ; but this would not continue in the same form. The man healed at the beautiful gate of the temple, entered the temple walking, and leaping, and praising God ; but, of course, he would not be in all these exercises his whole life thereafter.

Love as Principle.

Love in this form contemplates itself as a duty. It seeks to consider and yield all the claims of its object. It keeps itself from whatever would

weaken it. This keeping of itself is incumbent on love where it is dutiful to give the love ; as, for instance, when it is plighted. It is our duty to seek to love our neighbour as ourselves ; and whatever habits are known, or may be known by careful enquiry, to weaken this love, ought to be carefully shunned. How many of us remember that when we are doing what weakens our love to our neighbour, or prevents it growing, we are denying our neighbour his rights. People of the world are apt to suppose that if they do their neighbour no positive wrong, their neighbour can say nothing against them.

Love as *principle* considers well its outgoing, and seeks to grow in knowledge of the proper objects of love, and of its right outgoing towards these objects. The phenomena of the outgoing of love would indicate that when love of certain kinds is given, there is a substance of some kind that goes out from the system. This substance may be the soul, or *psyche*, of the New Testament, which is sometimes distinguished from the spirit in a man. Because the term *soul* is commonly used to signify the entire inner religious man, let us provisionally call the substance in question by the name *psychine*. Let us, then, adopt meantime as an hypothesis,—as algebraists do with the letter *x*,—that the *psychine* exists, and that it can leave the body by conviction,—that is, without a conductor, as electricity can leave a body. The third volume of the present series is devoted to a discussion and exposition of the doctrine, or hypothesis, of the *psychine*. At present the verification of this hypothesis cannot be entered on.

The *psychine*, let us say, is the container of the physical life, is the medium between the body

and the spirit, and is an "enswaithment" of the spirit. The New Testament *soul* appears to be an envelope, or "enswaithment," of the spirit, so that when the soul is mentioned the entire inner man is usually meant.

The wise man says: "Guard thy heart with all thy guarding, for from it are the outgoings of life." (Prov. iv., 23). The heart here is the *psychine*, and the life meant is the physical life, along with the cheer which it affords when in health and vigour. The wise man means, therefore: take care what objects you love, for if you love unsuitably, or unworthily, so much of your life and cheer will be lost. So St. Paul prays that the love of the Philippians may grow in all knowledge and discernment,—that is, discernment of the objects that are worthy of love, for one may love unworthy objects. Let principle and knowledge guide your loves. The psalmist says of the good man that the law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide. (Ps. xxxvii., 31). The *psychine* is like a fluid, and the law of God is the true channel in which this fluid should be made to run. This means that we should love the objects that the law of God bids us love, and ought not to love where the law of God prohibits. If love be inadvertently given to an unsuitable object, the *psychine* ought to be in so mobile and disciplined a state as to be capable of being withdrawn without one meeting with that sorrow of the world that worketh death. One cannot love God and mammon. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. There can be love in the *spirit*, as well as in the *psychine*, and the spirit-love is subject to the same laws as the love of which the *psychine* is capable.

Husband and wife are one in *psychine*, but not necessarily one in *spirit*. If both are living Christians, they are also one spirit, and true and everlasting members of one another. Love in the spirit takes up into itself, and sanctifies, love in the *psychine*. On account of the common *psychine*-love between them, St. Peter exhorts believing wives who have unbelieving husbands, so to conduct themselves as that the *psychine*-love shall issue in the *spirit*-love. (1 Peter iii., 1-7).

When a worthy *self* is given in its love, the object ought to respond with *self*. It can do this by proper use of the means for so doing. Especially is this the case with spiritual love. When *spirit*-love, or even *psychine*-love, is given, if the object be unworthy, there may be an absorption of spirit, or *psychine*, and possibly a turning again and rending, as Delilah did with Samson, and as the Jews did with Christ. But the day of fire will eventually come which will restore all. When true love that ought to be responded to is rejected, there may be something absorbed that will kindle the fire within some day. Especially is this true of the rejection of Christ's love. There will be a consuming-fire kindled sooner or later in the soul that rejects His love. These things often happen in the case even of man's unrequited love to his equal. Christ revealed His love, and in it He revealed *Himself* so far to the Jews. But they were undiscerning and irresponsive. They disliked the qualities of holiness and righteousness in this love. But the sight of the love made them unconsciously absorb Christ's Spirit. They in a manner saw His pearls, and they trampled upon them, and turned and rent Him. The Baptist was unable to bring down *all* the mountains, or make *all* the crooked

things straight, so that Christ's self-revelation might be received in purity of heart and responded to. But the light which the Jews saw, and the absorption which took place, wasted the soil of their souls, and many of them could never more respond. The things which belonged to their peace became for ever hidden from their eyes.

To prevent similar things happening under the old dispensation, the revelation of self and of love on the part of God was sparing. But under the new dispensation the true people require the greater self-revelation; and this had, and has, therefore, to be made, even although unprepared souls should bring a judgment on themselves by absorption instead of reciprocation. The trees which receive the light and heat of the sun during their period of growth, and which fall eventually to the ground, get covered over with soil, and are at last embedded deep in the earth. These trees are often dug up millenniums later in the form of coals. These coals restore, under burning, the light and heat which they had absorbed millenniums before. So also souls that will not duly respond to the divine overtures of love here will at last fall to rise no more. But they will, in the season of future burning, be made to restore what they had absorbed here of divine goodness. They will not be released from the burning process until they shall have restored the last iota. When there is a self-revelation of love, and when the love is one which it is dutiful to respond to, there is either absorption or response. If the latter, then union is effected; if the former, there will be the fire of repentance, and that either in time or when too late.

Some hearts cannot be made to move out at all,

but are selfish and self-contained. The hearts of some move out in so many unworthy channels that they have no hearts left to move out in suitable ways. Hearts can become fossilised, hypnotised, fanaticised, etc., either in their reserves or in their outgoings. For instance, the miser's heart is hypnotised by his shining coin. So hearts get warm towards idols, or towards what has been long before them. Many get warm towards religious creeds, customs, traditions, etc.; which they have never examined and do not understand. Some *psychines* are somewhat like what the sea would become were there no salt nor storms there. The waters in that case would become putrid. So some *psychines* have not, on account of being possessed of temporal riches, been duly disciplined, or been made to go out energetically in the duties of life. They have managed to shun trials, and are not plagued as other *psychines* are. Therefore their old scent remains in them, as was the case with Moab of old, who, we are told, was not emptied from vessel to vessel, but was settled on his lees. Because they have not changes, says the Psalmist, therefore they fear not God. Thus the hearts of many remain in a manner stale in their affections; they care apparently little for either God or man.

God's love is entirely governed by righteousness in its outgoing. He gives or withholds His love as He pleases. It is *sovereign* love. Unless its outgoings were governed by righteousness, he would love wrongly. He cannot with safety reveal His love to consciences which remain dislocated. The evil conscience shews the presence of the absorbent, unreciprocating, trampling, rending elements within. The conscience I take to be the soul's consciousness of the truth that in God we live, move,

and have our being, and that He is our God. It echoes the sum of our moral relations to God. In the presence of the divine overtures of love and mercy, if the soul remain irresponsive, God cannot reveal His love *directly* to that soul. Further, the soul that is awakened to know its own real state in relation to God, demands a God that is holy and righteous, as well as loving. But it would have no God of this kind if it had only a God that would let His love go forth all the same, whether man kept His commands or broke them. The awakened conscience *demand*s an atonement. The conscience which is not thoroughly awakened does not see the need of such a thing.

The atonement is not the *cause* of the Father's love to men ; but it permits of the outgoings of that love in a direct manner through Christ. Christ has obtained everything needful for His people. But we have no space to enter here into the important question of the atonement.

When our Lord says that he who loves father, mother, sister, brother, wife, children, or his own life, better than he loves Christ Himself, is not worthy of Him and cannot be His disciple, He does not imply that one should try to balance his love of affection towards these various objects against his love of affection for Christ. It is to love as a *principle* that Christ here refers,—love as the sum of our normal relations to Himself. If His commands enter into competition with what would seem to advance our worldly interests, preserve our physical lives, or be in line with obedience to our friends, we ought always to obey Christ's commands, and trust Him with all our interests. If we have not this single eye we cannot see whither He may be leading ; we cannot hear

His voice on account of the din of other things in our ear ; and this is what is meant when it is said that we would not then be *worthy* of Him ; we would not, that is, be in a suitable seeing or hearing state. Jacob is said to have loved Rachel and hated Leah ; and God Himself is said to have loved Jacob and hated Esau. The meaning is not that there was hatred in these cases,—in our sense of the term hatred,—but that there was a preference for one object over the other. So one must *in this sense* hate his relatives, and even his own life also, when these compete against Christ's commands.

Love as a State.

A sympathetic man is not always sympathising, nor is a loving man always experiencing the *emotion* of love. A very loving father and husband will leave his home daily for his duties, and will have long spells in which he will not be thinking at all of his wife or children. Yet he is easily moved to the affection of love towards them by the sight of them, and especially by the appearance of crises. So also a living Christian is not always and equally in the conscious exercise of the love of affection, or emotion, towards spiritual objects. Often, indeed, he is colder than he ought to be. Yet he is kept from falling away. He can be reached by means that others will not choose to be reached by. He will sooner or later be moved out again from his chill into the warm currents.

Love as Character.

The *character* formed by love is formed when much has been learned, acted out habitually in life,

and suffered, in order to inform and strengthen the affection and principle of love. Often after acute and prolonged suffering, properly borne, the love of God comes to be shed abroad in the heart. (Rom. v., 1-5). Therefore the apostles gloried in tribulation. Thus love comes to be established, strengthened, and settled. The full formation of love as *character* takes considerable time; but when once it is formed, it is not so fickle as is love-ravishment too often seen to be. "Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny." The established *character* of love will be the passport to heaven above, which is the destiny of loving souls.

There are Varieties of Dispositions, Love, and Service in the Great Organic Union.

In the great organic union above, every soul needful for the organism will at length be present. The organism will not be complete until every soul essential to it will be brought home. Those going before will not be perfected until those coming after will have arrived. (Heb. xi., 40). The spirits of just men are said to be now made perfect; but this means that these spirits have finished their course on earth. The organism of the physical body would be incomplete were *any* part wanting. Every organ has some function to discharge towards other parts of the body as well as towards itself.

Every member of the organic union in heaven above will also have some function to perform towards the rest of the body there as well as towards itself. Every sheep in the Good Shepherd's flock has a name which no other sheep can hear

called out, nor even understand. There are many things which will be spoken by the great Head which can be heard alike by all. But there are some things which He speaks to the individual which are special, and dependent for understanding on the idiosyncracies of the individual. The individual can take out of Christ what no other can take,—something which is in Christ for that individual alone.

But the individual can mediate something also out of Christ for other individuals, which these other individuals cannot mediate directly for themselves. Others can thus see the infinite variety that is in Christ through what they are given to perceive in the individual. Christ reveals Himself here through individuals; and it is very probable He will do the same in heaven above.

The one who overcomes is promised the new name. (Rev. iii., 12). This means that the one who comes successfully through great tribulations, and is purified in them, will hear his name called. His manner of meeting the tribulations, when thrown on his own resources as far as appearances go, will cause him to know his own idiosyncracies better. He will look up and say: the Lord is my God; and God will look upon him and see the image of His Son in him according to the peculiar reflection which comes from that special soul. And God shall say: it is one of Mine; and He shall say this, as it were, within the very soul itself. (Zech. xiii. 9; Mal. iii., 1-4; iv., 1-2).

Those who are purified through much tribulation, and hear their names often, are not so apt to build wood, hay, and stubble into their souls as are other Christians who are not so much tried, or who manage in some measure to shirk their trials.

But the final day of fire will burn up the abnormal materials which fires here had not cleansed away, and then many souls that seemed of great proportions here will be there comparatively shrunken things. (I. Cor. iii., 12-15).

Every soul has a certain definite path laid out for it wherein to travel, so as to develop its own peculiar features. God has appointed all its times, and its bounds of habitation, so that it might in these seek Him, find Him, serve Him, and prepare to be with Him above. All this, however, is not to be done in isolation, but in the organic union which exists here below as well as above.

Now all these things betoken a great variety of soul and disposition as existing in the organic union both here and hereafter. St. Paul treats of the various members in the body, and he does this possibly because he had heard some Christians say that since certain others who professed Christianity did not walk with them, nor agree with them in all things, they could not be Christians (I. Cor. xii.). There are *various* members, says the apostle, but the same spirit pervades them all. All members have not the same functions. If all were an ear, where were the seeing? If all were a hand, where were the feet or the ability to walk? Between a bundle of hands, or feet, there could be no *union*, although there might be *uniformity*. Hands alone could not make up a human body. What if the hands should strike work until the feet should become like them; or if the feet should say: "We shall serve the trunk but not the hands, and we will carry the hands nowhere until they consent to become feet like us." Then the hands might say: "we will keep aloof from the feet, and if anything goes wrong with the

feet,—if a nail should get fixed in one of them,—we will let the feet take care of themselves, since they will not consent to become hands like us.” The feet seem, say the hands, to have a creed which suits only themselves, and we can have nothing to do with them until they abjure that creed and sign ours.

And what if a community of bachelors should be banded together in a vow that none of them would ever marry until all women should become men? And what if a community of spinsters should be similarly resolved that all men should become women ere they would entertain thoughts of accepting a proposal of marriage from any of them! What a mess would it make of social life were these ideas becoming prevalent! No man ever made the acquaintance of her who became his wife in the exact way that any other man did a similar thing; and no woman behaved in these circumstances exactly as any other woman ever behaved. But love can pervade all varieties in these respects. Did a peculiarity of behaviour indicate a deficiency in love, it would be a very different thing from its merely indicating the individual idiosyncrasy. Of course, people ought not to *aim* at peculiarities, nor make themselves eccentric of set purpose, or else they may succeed in making themselves merely ridiculous. People ought to aim at conforming to what is common and is right, and in seeking this aim there will be abundance of room for the shining forth of individuality even unconsciously to the individual.

There is no face exactly like any other face, although every human face is human. Neither is any human soul like any other soul in *all* details, although in general outlines all human souls are

alike. Every bird is not like every other bird, either in nature, construction of body, plumage, nest-building, habits, or song. No blade of grass is exactly like any other ; there are different kinds of animals, and even within the same species no individual is exactly like any other. No human voice is precisely like any other. Some can sing treble, some tenor, others bass, or alto. The variety here makes the harmony ; were there no variety, the music would be a dull and wearisome monotone. People do not sing every note on the same pitch, nor of the same length of time. We have intervals, rests, rythms, shakes, cresendoes, diminuendoes, etc. Nature craves for, and supplies, variety ; and nature here, as in much else, is a pattern of grace.

In heaven above there are many mansions. In fact each individual will have a mansion there for himself. This does not imply that there will be isolation. The mansion will be simply the room, or scope, for the individuality. There will be a loving and appreciative recognition of individuality. There ought to be so here below also. Everything there ought to be imitated, or rather produced, here. We ought to practice heaven here, its love, and its union, and its concert. A Luther can mediate courage to a Melancthon here and perhaps there ; and a Melancthon can mediate gentleness to a Luther. A John can mediate love to a Peter, and a Peter boldness to a John.

No doubt the individuality may become the cause of special errors. One may take up with erroneous views owing to his individuality not being properly treated. One might go about unwashed and unkempt, and plead that what is really filth and slovenliness are his individuality. There is

abundant scope within the gospel for the exercise and cultivation of individuality, although there should be agreement in regard to principal doctrines. One Christian is great in prayer, another in Christian work, upbuilding, or evangelisation, or in all. One signalises himself as a church lawyer, and another as a scholar, and so on.

But every part of one's creed ought to stand the test of the philosophical and biblical principle of love,—the love that shall never fail. What is the worth of eyes and ears that do not mediate to one from the outside world, nor put one in living and direct contact with that world? What would be the use of having the most correct doctrines about eyes and ears if we did not walk up to these doctrines, and make our eyes actually see, and our ears actually hear? So there is no practical use in having even a *correct* creed about love itself unless we turn our creed into vital, palpitating love. Much less will doctrines do us any good, but likely be an occasion for strife, if they be such as that no one can convert them into living flesh and blood. But if one, either with or without doctrines, have true love in exercise,—the love that shews itself in deeds, involving often much self-denial, flesh-crucifixion, and toil,—then he has the true creed in his instincts. It ought not, however, to be left there. His *credenda* ought to be converted into *intelligenda*.

CHAPTER V.

EFFICIENT CAUSATION OF HEAVEN ON EARTH.

Christ has been wielding his delegated sovereignty for men's salvation; and He has wielded it effectually.—*Candlish.*

We are his workmanship.—*Paul.*

Calvinists and Arminians.

We are now to begin an enquiry into the *efficient* cause, or causes, of heaven's love on earth. God is the primary efficient cause, whilst man himself has a secondary efficient causation in originating and sustaining heaven's love in the soul.

Not a few experience some difficulty in coming to any definite conclusions as to the part of God and the part of man himself, in the work of originating and sustaining heaven in the soul. Much of the difficulty has been exhibited in philosophic reasoning about what has been called the "freedom of the human will." Many have experienced a difficulty in taking the statements of Scripture on the point in what seems to be their plain meaning, and they have either left the Scripture teaching on the subject out of reckoning or else explained away the seemingly plain meaning of this teaching. Differences of view on the point in question divide Calvinists from Arminians,—Presbyterians from Methodists,—in point of doctrine.

Very much confusion in regard to the subject has arisen, and has been accentuated, through misunderstanding of some of the terms used in discussing the subject ; but this has not by any means been the sole cause of the differences of opinion which have manifested themselves.

By several Arminians it is thought that if God exerted any special agency in a direct manner on the soul, then the soul's own virtue, its responsibility, its *sense* of responsibility, and the vigour of its own efforts in its salvation would all be imperilled, if not destroyed. Moreover, it is thought that did God exert any special, overt, efficient agency in connection with some souls which He does not exert in connection with *all* souls, there would be an injustice done.

Of course this is philosophical reasoning, or what assumes the garb of such, as distinct from professing to take direct Scripture teaching. There are varieties of view on each side of this important question.

But, as I have said, much confusion has been introduced into discussions on the point through the want of all parties having the same understanding of the chief terms employed in the discussion. This has been the case very specially with respect to the terms—*will* and *freedom*.

The Human Will.

The human will is simply a faculty, or capability ; or, as some would call it, a *function* of the inner man, the soul, or the mind. The late Professor Max Müller disdained the employment of the term *function* in this connection, although the term is preferred by some modern scientists of repute.

In any case, the will is simply the capability which the inner man, or soul, possesses for resolving, deciding, choosing, etc. When the soul has chosen, and is in course of carrying out its choice, it is said to be in a *willing state*. The will is defined by others to be the inner man's capability of volition. This definition is the same in meaning as the other. A few define the will so as to include in the definition the motives, wishes, and inclinations which move to choice, or resolution. This definition is apt to lead to confusion. Better adopt the former one.

But even among those who adopt the former definition, there is often confusion arising out of treating, and speaking of, the will as if itself were the mind, or soul, whereas it is only the soul's capability, or power, for resolving. To speak of the *will* itself resolving, or choosing, will be seen to be a different thing, as far as the words go, from speaking of the *soul*, or *mind*, choosing or resolving. The power which the body has of walking, and the body itself, are two different things. It is not the power that walks, but the body through the power. Similarly it is not the will that resolves, but the soul; and the will is merely the name for the capability the soul has in this respect.

Jonathan Edwards, in his famous treatise on the Freedom of the Will, has no difficulty in cornering up those, chiefly Arminians, who treat of resolutions of the *will* instead of resolutions of the *soul*, or *mind*. He shews that if we speak of the will itself resolving, there must be a power of resolving in the will,—that is, there must be a will within the will; and for a similar reason there must be another will within that second will, and

so on. The late Mr. W. E. Gladstone, in his "Studies Subsidiary to Butler's Works," supposes that Jonathan Edwards is illogical in his reasoning in this respect. Obviously, however, Mr. Gladstone was mistaken, as he was also with reference to another point in Edwards' works, to be noticed after a little. It may be evident to anyone who takes sufficient time to think of the matter, that one cannot but be wrong if he attribute to the will itself what ought to be attributed to the soul or mind. Even Professor Julius Müller, in his great work on Sin, whilst discussing the Freedom of the Will, errs frequently in this direction, although he does not seem, like some Arminians, to be misled much, if any, by the error.

When the will is viewed and treated as if it were itself something like a mind, then certain erroneous things can be said of it with all the greater plausibility. Some Arminians, for instance, speak of the will being uninfluenced, having a "liberty of indifference," an "equilibrium," inclining neither to good nor evil, when the gospel comes before it; so the will can thus, it is said, be responsible for the decision to which it comes. If it were inclined either way it could not be made responsible. Others treat of the will as gaining in strength and character once it has decided and begun to practice, somewhat as one learns by practice to play with facility on a musical instrument. There are others again who maintain that after every act, or decision, the will has to return to its state of balance between good and evil, being inclined permanently to neither the one side nor the other. And once more, there are Arminians who suppose that there are influences playing on the will from good sources, and influences from evil sources, and that

these must be evenly balanced ere the will can be either virtuous or responsible in its decisions.

Professor Julius Müller has no difficulty in shewing that all these positions are unscientific, unphilosophical, and unscriptural. God could not have bestowed such an even balance on the will as that it would be decided neither for him nor against him to begin with. He would not have given such a freedom to the will as would be the ground-work of its virtue, dignity, responsibility, and its means of acceptance of the gospel-offer in true fashion,—a freedom which would also mean that the will must be so far *against* the divine law to begin with, as that it must not be in harmony with God's will any more than with evil.

God's will is set forth in the moral law, and into perfect harmony with that will every soul which will reach heaven above must at length be brought. The gospel is a means for enabling man to reach this conformity, so that he may at length love God with all his heart, and love his neighbour as himself. This is the philosophical and biblical principle for our testing of all principles in those "means" whereby man is to be brought to his final state. The fact that man is far from this state in his unevangelised condition will be very apparent to any one who really understands what perfect love implies. It is, therefore, impossible that the will, or, to express it more correctly, the mind, or soul, could at the outset be free with that freedom which means a balanced state between good and evil. And were it possible for it to be in this evenly-balanced state, it could never decide one way or the other, for whatever comes in to incline the scale to descend either the one way or the other must destroy the balance. The soul itself can never

move without an adequate moving cause. Every movement, or effect, must have an adequate cause to produce it. This is as true in religion as in physics. Moreover, no soul is ever in this evenly balanced state. Of course, to say that a soul in deciding for God must pass through an even balance at some point in its passage from the one side to the other is a mere quibble. To maintain seriously that it must stay at this point for some time in order to realise where it is, and in order to be virtuous, responsible, free, and then go ahead, is surely to trifle with a sacred subject.

The Scriptures assert that unregenerate man is spiritually dead, blind, at enmity against God and His law, esteeming spiritual things as foolishness, blinded and held captive by the god of this world, the "strong man armed," who holds his own palace and goods in his own sort of peace. Scripture also asserts with equal explicitness and emphasis that it is God by His Spirit that raises the soul from this spiritual death, that it is He who opens the eyes to see spiritual things, shines into the heart, translates the soul out of darkness, death and the power and kingdom of Satan into the power, kingdom, and marvellous light of God Himself. The soul thus dealt with is born again, born of the Spirit, goes through the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, is raised from spiritual death into life by the working of that same Almighty power which wrought in Christ when He was raised from the dead. (Eph. i., 18-20). We are *God's* workmanship, not our own merely. We are *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works. God gives faith: there is a power called the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is sent to operate in the soul, to free it from the power, or

law, of sin and death. All the Christian graces are represented as being the fruits of the Spirit ; and so is everything the Christian does from beginning to end said to be done in the Spirit. There is love in the Spirit, rendering of praise and thanksgiving in the Spirit, being stirred up by the Spirit, hoping in the Spirit, rejoicing in the Spirit, etc. We are taught of the Spirit to love one another. All this implies far more than that the Spirit merely *presents* the truth. He works in the soul to make the truth effective there. There is an entire Christian armour provided by God wherewith to war against the powers of darkness ; and the idea that the soul must be in a balance if it is to be virtuous and responsible is certainly directly opposed to all this express teaching of Scripture. Man would be for ever lost unless God wrought mightily in him both the will and the deed, and unless he obtained from God the new heart.

But God's manner of working in the soul does not destroy man's own efficiency in his salvation. God works from behind the soul's consciousness ; that is to say, the fact that God does work, or that it is *He* that is working, does not appear to the soul itself. It does not appear *directly* in our consciousness that it is in God that we live, move, and have our being. It does not appear in the consciousness of the mother that it is God who gives and sustains her love to her child. The birds have it not in their instincts that it is God that feeds them. God can bring motives to bear on the soul, and, *inter alia*, can take away its incapability to see spiritual things. When it sees, then it is stirred up to struggle for its salvation. But this brings us to the consideration of the question of freedom in connection with the soul's being willing.

Man's Free Agency.

The term *Freedom* has been employed in a variety of senses in this connection. A great many have employed the term to signify natural, chiefly external, freedom. For instance, a soul is not free to resolve that its body shall fly to the moon, because it knows this feat to be impossible; so we are not understood to choose, nor resolve on, the impossible. Neither is a soul understood to be free to do even natural things if it be insane, or if the body be paralysed. But apart from such conditions, the soul, or mind, some say, is *free*; or, as they oftener express it, the *will* is free. It is consciously free to do as it pleases.

But there is a deeper and a wider sense than this in which the term freedom is employed. The soul, or less accurately, the will, may *feel* free when it is far from being in reality free. The *feeling* free, and the *being* really free, are two very different things. The soul can have a will, or a power of willing as it pleases, and yet be really in bondage. The drunkard boasts of his freedom whilst he is really a slave. His soul is in fetters; yet he has a will; he can resolve as he pleases, and *feels* quite free. The *feeling* free is no guarantee whatsoever of the *possession* of real freedom.

Before we can say whether any act, movement, or energising, either in physical, moral, or religious matters is free, we require to know, to begin with, what the true aim, or ideal, is of the act, movement, or energising. Suppose a train to be making for a certain destination, and moving thereto on a certain line of rails. The train is free if nothing disturbs its movement in going in the direction of its destination. Whatever hinders it, on the other

hand, renders it so far *unfree*. So we require to know the soul's real destination, and the right condition for it to be in, and to be energising in, ere we can say what destroys or mars its freedom, or makes the soul a slave. If it be the soul's true state to be in, and advancing in, the kingdom of heaven here below, then whatever hinders this, whether externally or internally, if the hindrance be such that the soul can overcome, but does not do so for lack of will, then the soul is so far a slave ; it is *unfree*.

Some describe this latter kind of unfreedom as *disability* instead of unfreedom. We might almost describe it as the want of inclination, or, as some would put it, the want of *willingness*. But the disability is too deep, and has too great a hold, for its being described as the mere lack of inclination. We often speak of the lack of inclination to-day in directions wherein we may be inclined to move to-morrow. We may also speak of not being inclined at present, when a very little persuasion would make us inclined. So if we would describe this unfreedom as the mere want of adequate inclination, we might entirely mistake and misjudge, and lead others to misjudge, the depth of the seat of the unfreedom.

This unfreedom in the unregenerate has its seat very deep in the soul ; yet, be it particularly observed, it may appear in consciousness as an innocent weakness which may pass away upon a stronger resolution at any time. Thus the unfreedom is entirely misjudged by every one under it. It is certainly not some mere disinclination of a temporary sort which can be made to pass away by the kind of resolution which many think of. It cannot pass away without a great struggle, an

agonising to enter in at the straight gate. There must be a taking of heaven below by great force. Violence of a pronounced kind must be exercised for this end. The right hand, and the right eye, if they hinder, must be parted with. All one has must, if needful, be sold to buy the pearl of great price. The soul must energise from its basis, and must, so to speak, draw its entire self along with it ere its efforts to enter it at the straight gate are successful. This will entail a revolution, a perfect upheaval, within.

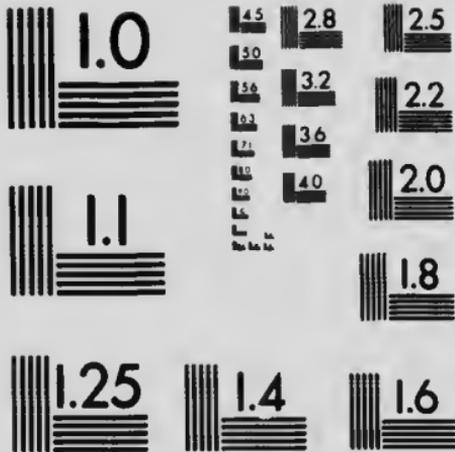
And, be it observed, all this is at the commencement of the spiritual life ; how then can we rationally suppose the soul to be in an even balance to begin with ? If it be so, where is it to obtain the great energy which is requisite to enter in immediately that it sees its duty ? It must grow with tremendous rapidity if it is to satisfy this philosophy. Some Calvinists think that Arminians *assume* a great deal of fervor. But the latter require to put on very much indeed if they are to leap from the even balance into the full fervor that will carry them in at the straight gate, or to go *per saltum* even from "common grace" into the full Christian state. Further, Arminians require to keep up this fervor, or natural heat, by assumptions and puttings on all the time afterwards, for what is virtuous at the outset must be so all along. And even after all, the Arminians say they may fall away, that is, after having had a taste of the kingdom. After being in heaven they may go to the other place. Of course they may if they themselves are the sole, or the main authors of their own energising ; and if no spiritual dynamic from above is to hold them, they must then keep up the fuss.

The soul is free with the wider and inner freedom in proportion as it realises no hindrance, or barriers, in the way of its advancement in the kingdom of heaven here below. There is a comparative freedom of this kind when the hindrances and impediments are not suffered to be effective in causing the soul to relinquish its onward movement. Complete freedom of this higher kind is not attained until the final perfection is reached.

It is comparative freedom of this sort that our Lord refers to when He says that if we continue in His word we shall be His real disciples, shall know the truth experimentally, and the truth shall make us free. One gets by practice freedom in playing on a musical instrument. So if we practice living Christ's word, and in the surrendered position, we shall by and by hear the heavenly music. We shall attain to freedom in walking in the true way. This will be Christ's principles making us free, or the Son Himself making us free, which is the same thing. Then we shall be free indeed. (John viii., 31-36). St. James also speaks of the perfect law of liberty, or the perfect law, which is liberty, or freedom-giving, when followed out consecratedly and carefully in the daily life as distinct from the mere hearing of the word, or mere hearing with the addition of rituals in worship. (James i., 22-27). Even a thorough willingness to do God's will bestows a measure of the true freedom, for it gives an ability to hear the Divine voice; and when this is heard there is a certain measure of spiritual freedom realised; the sheep hear and they follow, and this following betokens a measure of inner freedom.

All those who have not this inner freedom of movement towards, or within, heaven or earth,





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are in bondage. They are inwardly fettered, however strongly they may suppose they possess freedom. They are really disabled, but not with a disability that discharges them from unaccountability, or responsibility. We do not excuse an adulterer, murderer, thief, if he say that he is unable to give over his villainy. The laws of the land do not excuse him unless he be insane. We should think it strange, indeed, if our civil laws should excuse the wilful criminal, unless insane. This feeling on our part is a reflection of what it is right for the great Judge to do in the case of those who are under *moral* disability, especially since the way is open to get spiritual freedom. Of course, if men do not contemplate what real religion, or the kingdom of heaven on earth, actually is, and if they suppose it to be some unearthly, or magical experience, then they will not feel the same sense of responsibility in connection with their own efforts in commencing religion. They will satisfy themselves by asking: Who shall ascend to heaven, or go over the seas, for religion for us, and bring it to us, and make it level to our capacities? But man is responsible for his want of inclination itself in the moral and religious domain, even though we should describe it as the lack of *moral ability*.

Professor Julius Müller, in his work on Sin, treats of a *formal* freedom, as well as of what he calls a *real* freedom. The latter is substantially the freedom which I have just sought to describe as the wider freedom. The formal freedom Dr. Müller makes to be that possibility of sinning which is present to every one. If one were *forced* to be what he ought to be, he would not be possessed of freedom in every sense of the term. Therefore, in

opposition to his coercion, there must be liberty to be the opposite of what we ought to be, *if we so choose*. But this liberty, or possibility, although it exists at first, and exists in a sense all along during our earthly course, yet is meant to be annihilated by ourselves; that is, it is meant to be converted into an impossibility. This conversion is complete in heaven above.

It is, therefore, the case that God has a primary efficient agency in man's conversion, and man himself has a secondary efficient agency therein. Man is passive in regeneration, or the new birth; but he is active in conversion, which is his turning, and is the earliest result of his regeneration. Man ought to wrestle for God's help *until he obtains it*; he ought to "feel after Him" *until he find Him*. His very wrestling is meant to be a blessing by way of stirring up his entire soul to come, so that the whole of the soul may be saved. As far as consciousness is concerned, man feels as if he had the whole work to do alone. Yet he is not alone. It is not "the will of good pleasure" on God's part that struggling man should not succeed. But that God must have a part in man's entrance into the kingdom is plain, not merely from the direct statements of Scripture to that effect, but also from the representation made in Scripture of man's terrible condition whilst unregenerate.

*Divine Fore-ordination, Election and
Fore-knowledge.*

Those whom God regenerates He *intended* to regenerate. Man has no claim upon God. He forfeited all such claim. If man has any claim, then salvation is not any longer of grace. If

man can himself, and without special help from God, bring himself to salvation, then his ruin by the fall is not what Scripture represents it to be.

The divine election of an innumerable number to everlasting life ought not to discourage any soul from seeking salvation. Election must follow from the fact of God's help being absolutely required, and His help being certainly efficacious when rendered with the object of saving. Those who are actually saved are those whom God *intended* to save. Some ask whether God would create any man to damn Him. The fact is that some *are* damned, and why then did God create these since He knew what would happen in their case? If He cannot prevent damnation even if He would, then there is no use praying to Him to try, nor can He keep any from falling away, nor bring them to heaven above, even after they have come to heaven below. Such a God is not omnipotent, nor to be trusted. Here it is that some speak of free-will. But God can influence the will without destroying its freedom. If not, then He spoke inadvisedly in the many places in Scripture where He states that He was to bring about certain circumstances which involved the play of free-will, as it is called.

God foreknew all that was ever to come to pass. This implies that all was fixed to happen; that is, that all was certain to happen that God foresaw was to happen. Jonathan Edwards describes this as a *necessity* of happening, and the late Mr. Gladstone falls foul of him for so doing, because, says Mr. Gladstone, God's foreknowledge is not the *cause* of the things happening as foreseen. A knows B is at his dinner, and, therefore, B must

certainly be at dinner ; but, says Mr. Gladstone, A's knowledge is not the cause of B being at dinner. This is really quibbling on the implicates of the term necessity as employed by Edwards. But surely everyone that reads Edwards may know his meaning. If the word necessity implies causation, then let the word *fixed*, or *certain*, be employed instead. If God foreknew everything that was to happen, he could, say, have written it all down beforehand. Suppose, then, that in the case of a certain man we had a map of his whole life, we could truly say that this map was a fixture,—that the man would just go through the things set forth in the description. Now this fixture does not destroy the man's consciousness of freedom in anything he does. He might, indeed, feel hampered if he himself *knew* beforehand the course of his own life. But no one knows this in his own case. But God knows it in every case, and "therefore" every one's course is fixed.

Further, God foresaw also the very causation of every event. Many events that might seem trivial He foresaw would have millions upon millions of links in their chains of causes. But this foreknowledge would not deprive the actors of free-will in their acts. If, therefore, God *fore-ordained* everything, this would not deprive the free agents of their free-agency in their acts, for His decree would mean nothing more against free-agency than His foreknowledge would imply. And we cannot reasonably suppose that God decreed a certain number of things and left the remainder to chance, as we call it ; for the things left to chance might interfere with the decreed things. He decreed the good directly, and decreed to *permit* the evil. But everything is in His hand, and nothing

passes from under His control. He overrules evil for good.

God's election is simply a part of His universal fore-ordination. No one feels hampered by universal fore-ordination. Every one proceeds to do just as he wants to do, and what he thinks he can do. So if one wishes salvation let him proceed to seek it, and fore-ordination will not stand in his way. If he does not want it, then what has he to complain of if he be left to his own way and wishes? God is sincere in offering salvation to all, because whosoever will come will be saved; none that come will be cast out. Further, it is not God's purpose to announce beforehand who the saved are to be, because, were He to do so, this would slacken the efforts of the saved. The help He renders man must be so tempered, timed, and measured, as not to interfere with man's own free-agency. We are informed that the tares will be among the wheat till the end, and this is part of the divine scheme to stir the saved up, to make sure that they will not be among the tares. If they reach assurance, they must *win* it; and this circumstance will prevent their being settled down in their corruptions with their assurance; they will have purity of heart along therewith.

Let it be noticed in concluding this chapter that the Arminian creed does not represent man as being so completely ruined by the fall as the Calvinistic creed does. Therefore, according to the former creed, man does not need so much divine help and need not, therefore, be in such a hurry to come for it, nor pray for it so earnestly, nor be so thankful if he receive it, as the Calvinistic creed would lead him to be or do. Man on the easier creed need not

be so anxious to submit to God, nor take God's time nor way in order to receive God's help. This is what suits the worldling.

CHAPTER VI.

INSTRUMENTAL CAUSATION OF HEAVEN
ON EARTH.

The Christian, therefore, looks at duty. . . . Every act of it, done in faith, is an act of fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and by the grace of the Spirit, every act brings the Father's love through the Son's salvation into experience.—*Romaine.*

Love is to be Learned by Practicing it.

The late Mr. Beecher Stowe used to say that the way to do a thing is just to do it. The way to enter the kingdom of heaven on earth is to resolve to reach Christ, and actually to reach Him. The way to increase in the light and personal assurance peculiar to the kingdom, after we have taken our stand within it, is to *practice* the moral with Christ's help, and in union with Him. The way to learn to speak, write, play on an instrument, is simply to *practice* what we thus wish to learn. The mere formalities of worship will not, of themselves, impart the light and assurance of the kingdom.

People often Prefer Forms to Love and Virtue.

We find that in the old-dispensation period many souls sought the divine favour, and sought to reach a consciousness of that favour, by being diligent

in their *formal* religious duties. In Isaiah's time this was a common failing, as indeed it was in the time of every prophet.

In Isaiah's first chapter we read of the people spreading forth their hands and making many prayers; and of their sacrificing of their best, and observing with scrupulous exactness all the times, forms, and ceremonies of their religion. But all was of no avail. God hid His face from them. He described their attendance in the place of worship as a "trampling" of His courts. The people were guilty of unloving deeds in their daily lives; and they were exhorted to confess their sins, to wash themselves from their unkind and cruel deeds; then God would hear them.

Similarly in Isaiah lviii, we read of Israel attending faithfully on public religious ordinances, and even delighting to know God, and to meet Him in these ordinances of His own appointment. They fasted, and mourned, and did far more than many moderns do who attend church, for they wondered, and enquired anxiously why they did not meet the Lord, and why there were no answers to their prayers. They had a message sent them to the effect that their formalities were of no avail as long as they practiced unloving, cruel, and unjust deeds. God said to them:—

"Is this not the fast [the religion] that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou see'st the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine

health shall spring forth speedily : and thy righteousness shall go before thee ; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer ; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, ' Here I am.' If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity. And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul ; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones : and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not."

Here the light and assurance of heaven are represented as being brought into the soul by the practice of the moral. So at the last day we shall not be asked to what religious denomination we had belonged whilst on earth, but whether or not we had done kind, loving, self-denying deeds to Christ's brethren. The great thing, then, will be the proof of loving hearts. Though I give my body to be burned, and all my goods to feed the poor, and do it not in love, it will avail me nought, but will be merely trying to stick a few peacock's feathers into my jackdaw's coat.

How many there are that are dishonest and shady in their daily lives, and who yet attend church, and act in communion therewith as true Christians do. They are money-lovers ; and there are few, if any, that are so who are not also in some measure dishonest. If they know not, nor heed, that it is a fact that one cannot serve nor love both God and mammon, it is unlikely they will be upright enough to heed the strict rules of honesty and virtue. They cannot love their neighbour. Here is what

God says of one such in the old dispensation, namely, Jehoiakim, the son of King Josiah :—

“ Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong ; that useth his neighbour’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work. That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows ; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermillion. Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar ? Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him ? He judged the cause of the poor and needy ; then it was well with him ; was not this to know Me ? saith the Lord.” (Jer. xxii., 13-17).

These things of the flesh and of mammon will not bring the knowledge of God. He that *loveth* knoweth, and to know God is eternal life. “ Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But him that glorieth let him glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth ; for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord.” (Jer. ix., 23-24). This knowledge of God on the side of love is an *experimental* knowledge which comes from a cultivated affinity with God upon this same side, the main side of God’s active nature. It is neither ritual nor riches that will suffice ; but an experimental knowledge of God on the side of love, shewing itself in love to our neighbour.

The tendency of the worldly heart in religious matters is evermore to ask what is the correct form, platitude, materials for worship ? These are

important questions ; but they are not the first nor the chief ones. The formalist asks :—

“ Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God ? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old ? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil ? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? ” (Mic. vi., 6-8).

God desires that we shew mercy rather than that we be particular about the mere *form* of our sacrifice, or our worship. But we cannot have the loving, merciful, spirit, unless we have reached God in Christ, and walk thereafter humbly with our God. There will be shady deeds in commerce, politics, and all else, before then.

In the New Testament St. Peter explains at length how the day is to be made to dawn, and the day star is to be made to arise in our hearts. In other words, he shews how an entrance is to be ministered abundantly unto us into heaven below, which, at the same time, is an *everlasting* heaven. He says to the consecrated :—

“ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to you faith virtue ; and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance [or self-control] ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness [or godlikeness] ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness [or love to the brethren] ; and to brotherly kindness, charity [or love to all]. ”

All the virtues mentioned previously to the love are to cleanse and prepare the heart for the

exercise of the culminating love. And he that has these things, and abounds in them, will not, the apostle says, be either barren or unfruitful towards the knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom to know on the side of love is eternal life. He that loveth, knoweth. (2 Peter i.)

So it is with this apostle's teaching as it was with Isaiah's, namely, that exercise in *love* brings light and assurance. This is the true manner of reaching assurance of personal salvation, rather than by sort-cuts, and by quibbles with an intellectual belief of the record,—a belief with which some itinerant evangelists commit so much legerdemain, and turn out so many converts. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews agrees with St. Peter, and with Isaiah, in setting forth the deeds of love as the high road to assurance. He tells the Hebrews that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister"; and then he adds an exhortation, which is at the same time an explanation of the inner effects of such loving practices, and says: "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end." This full assurance was to be reached by diligent continuance in the same loving deeds as they had been already practiced in. Love and life and light are in eternal union. (Heb. vi., II).

Ethical and loving deeds were the preparation recommended for the due discernment and reception of the Son of God when He came to earth. Where the heart was not practiced in, nor moulded by these, Christ was in danger of coming as a blinding judgment, and so as to prove in reality a curse

instead of a blessing, as every undiscerned spiritual light still does. Malachi, referring to Christ's coming, and the needful preparation therefor, says :—

“ Behold I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord ; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

This announces a needful heart-preparation by means of loving deeds, so as to enter safely the additional light from heaven which was by and by to shine on earth. And the Baptist, who was the first new-dispensation Elijah, called on the people to level the mountains, exalt the valleys, make crooked things straight, and rough places plain, as a preparation for him who was to come shortly with the axe at hand, so as to cut down by a judgment of *undiscernment*, to begin with, all unfruitful trees. “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem hadst thou, even thou, known in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace ; but now they are for ever hidden from thine eyes.” The Baptist fulfilled his mission as to details in calling on the various classes of the people to do the deeds of love in their respective stations.

“ And the people asked him, saying, ‘ What shall we do then ? ’ He answered and saith unto them, ‘ He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none ; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.’ Then came also the publicans to be baptised, and said unto him, ‘ Master, and what shall we do ? ’ And he said unto them, ‘ Exact no more than that which is appointed you.’ And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, ‘ And what shall we

do ?' And he said unto them, 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely ; and be content with your wages.'" (Luke iii., 4-14).

The Baptist did not say to any of these classes : Be sure that you be found in the right church, and in the practice of the true ritual. Not a word of this. In this he reminds us of the prophets who counselled loving deeds as a means of light, and a means for the *discernment* of heaven's light.

Deeds of Love in Contrast with the Threskeia and the Gnosis.

So we see that in the New Testament the formalities of worship are said to be unacceptable when unaccompanied with love. The deeds of love are preferred to these formalities. But even the deeds of love themselves are not sufficient of themselves to keep the soul near Christ, and the fire burning on the altar. The activity of Martha is not of itself sufficient, even though it be expended in serving Christ. The imbibing, contemplative spirit of Mary must also be cultivated. Neither spirit is of itself sufficient ; the two must go together.

The deeds of love are placed by Paul, as we have seen, in contrast with even the gifts of the Spirit. Paul and James place the deeds of love in sharp contrast to the formalities of religious service. St. James calls the latter the *threskeia* ; and he sets the *threskeia* in contrast with the continuing in the royal law,—the law of liberty, that is, the law of love which gives freedom in love if practiced from the consecrated position ; as Jesus Himself says, if we continue in His word of love, we shall attain to real discipleship in spirit, and

to a personal experience of that freedom in well-doing with which the Son can make us free. Well-doing will then no longer be a drag to us ; the machinery will not creak, as it probably did in the case of the Ephesian Church of old after she had left her first love. St. James says that " pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," that is, love again, " and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Keep near Christ, so as to be able to perform the deeds of true love in the true spirit.

St. Paul also places love in contrast with the *gnosis*, or knowledge, even if it be knowledge of spiritual things by the intellect, knowledge of correct creed, doctrine, etc. Knowledge is useful when employed as a help to teach love ; otherwise even knowledge itself is apt to fester within, and produce atrophy of the spiritual sensibilities, as was the case with Chorazin, Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Jerusalem, under rejected light. We all have knowledge, says the apostle ; knowledge, mere *gnosis*, puffeth up, says he, love *buildeth* up. (1. Cor. xiii., 1-3). Some congregations may be an intellectual aristocracy in religion, but may be without sufficient love ; this is like a well-appointed steamboat, but with no sufficient water in which to paddle.

St. Paul, as well as the other apostles, and as well as our Lord Himself, deprecates placing much store on the *externals* in religious worship, such as the attitude of the body ; the sort of appeals often made to the senses, such as sights, sounds, touchings, tastings, handlings ; or days, months, times, seasons, etc. He treats of these things in Col. ii., and also in a few words in Gal. iv. There

may be said to be two special rules set forth in respect to these things, namely, first, that the appeals to the senses be simple and chaste, and not sensuous; and, secondly, that any particular external be not deemed essential to salvation. The great matter is the state of the inner spirit, particularly its state with respect to *spiritual* knowledge of God, and its state with respect to love.

The false teachers in Galatia taught that it was needful to keep the externals of Moses' law in order to be saved, although they did not deny that faith in Christ was also necessary. It was not, however, because the externals taught were those of Moses and not some other kind, that the apostle pronounces his anathemas against these teachers (Gal. i.); but because they mingled with the necessary state of the inner spirit a necessity also of an *external* kind in the way of formalities of worship. The introduction of such externals as necessities may be seen to be diametrically opposed to the spirit and genius of the gospel.

The *true* externals of the gospel are constituted by the deeds of love done in the spirit of love; and the spirit of love is reached when Christ is reached, and it is maintained and increased when the soul abides *in* Christ, and abides in the external fruit-bearing of love. "Abide in me, and I in you; for as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." But there must be a bearing of fruit, as well as an abiding in Christ, in order to grow in love.

The various lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, will sever from Christ, and will impair the heart so that it cannot exercise spiritual love, nor real love of any right kind, however

much *appearance* of love there may sometimes be accompanying these lusts of the flesh. Drunkards, lustful persons, mammon-lovers, cannot truly love. But all these sorts of individuals may *seem* to love. Yet how often by the quarrels, strifes, bickerings, injuries, and even homicides, that occur among such individuals, do we see that true love cannot be in their hearts, however much mawkish sentiment may at times shew itself there.

We are told that those guilty of the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God. They are not in this kingdom on earth, nor, if they do not repent, will they ever see this kingdom hereafter. Analyse the lists given us in the New Testament of the works of the flesh, and see how many of these are works which exhibit a spirit diametrically opposed to love, or which renders love impossible. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." A similar list is given in 1 Cor., vi. There it is said: "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you, but ye are washed, etc."

We have a third list in Rom. i., where we read of those who are "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things,

disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful : who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

In these lists we see how the opposite of love to one's neighbour prevails in one form or another. There will be no light about the kingdom of heaven where these things are practiced.

The lists of the fruits of the Spirit on the other hand, will, on analysis, be found to contain predominantly the fruits which come of love ; and they increase love.

" But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness temperance." (Gal. v., 22-23). The graces of the Spirit, including brokenness, humility, unselfishness, etc., are the very virtues which admit of those who have them, and practice them, entering into close union with their fellow-men. We naturally dislike the traits of pride, self-consequence, and the works of the flesh in all their forms, provided we ourselves are not guilty of them. A few of the very many instructions and exhortations given in the gospel as to our treatment of each other may be here noticed as instances of what pervades the entire gospel.

The Sermon on the Mount abounds in these instructions and exhortations. Anger against a brother without just cause is solemnly reprehended. Such anger is apt at length to kindle in the soul that fire which will never be quenched. Hatred to men, unless repented of, brings everlasting remorse. When this tabernacle of clay shall have been put off, we shall then see better the wounds

we have given when in our blindness, selfishness, lust, pride, false independence, tyranny we knew or felt no better than to speak or act as we did towards our neighbour, even if he had been our declared enemy. So we are constantly admonished to keep far from such a spirit, and from the source of habits which will induce it, such as lust, mammon-loving, deceit, self-importance, and the works of the flesh in general.

The exhortations, therefore, are : Do not return evil for evil in any form. Go two miles with the man who compels you to go one. Bless, pray for, do and wish good to, your enemies, that you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven, Who Himself does such things, and that you may be fitted to be with Him and His people at length. Do not be ready to judge your brother adversely. Think of the possible beam in your own eye. If you are receiving professions of penitence from a fallen brother, restore such an one, not with self-complacency on your part that you are not so bad as he, but considering thyself lest thou also be tempted and fall. Seek to gain your offended brother ere you offer your gift. When you pray, be sure of first having a forgiving spirit. Forgive until seventy times seven. Do good with your earthly possessions, and you shall be received into everlasting habitations. (Luke xvi., 9). Whosoever will be the greatest among you, let him be the servant of all. Christ will give His everlasting fellowship to those who are thus kind and considerate to His people.

So also with other parts of the New Testament. Shew mercy with cheerfulness, and let love be without dissimulation. Be kindly affectioned one towards another, with brotherly love, in honour

preferring one another. Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you, bless and curse not. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. Bear the infirmities of the weak, and do not aim at pleasing yourself ; and act in this spirit even in your religion, not deeming it faithfulness to act otherwise. Look not every man on his own things only, but also on the things of others. Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the laws of Christ. Look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled. With all lowliness and meekness forbear one another in love, not in high-mindedness nor self-complacency nor self-importance ; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrary-wise blessing ; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. So also husbands are exhorted to love their wives, and wives are exhorted to love and reverence their husbands, both dwelling together as co-heirs of eternal life. Children obey your parents

in the Lord ; parents provoke not your children to anger. Servants obey your masters, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of your hearts as rendering obedience to Christ. Masters, be just, kind and righteous towards your servants. Honour the king, and all magistrates, and those in authority. Honour all men. Provoke one another, not to anger but to love and good works.

These are only a comparatively few specimens of the teaching in which the New Testament abounds. This teaching has direct reference to our feelings and conduct towards our neighbour. The teaching is direct, explicit, emphatic, and extensive. There is no room for any doubt as to what it is. It is exactly the same kind of teaching as Isaiah gave the people of his time, and which he urged on them to hear and act by, instead of merely attending their church-meetings and going through the forms prescribed for these meetings.

The people *then*, however, always associated true religion with attending church on the exact days, times, seasons ; and going through the right forms, offering the best animals in sacrifice, spreading forth their hands and making many prayers, coming to God's courts, delighting to enquire about Him there, fasting, hanging their heads like bulrushes, etc. (Isaiah i, lviii). They put their religion, in short, entirely in the church-meeting, and in what could be done or gone through *there*. If there were any prescribed forms, or days, that they did not know of, they begged to be informed about these, so that they might observe them, in order to keep in the favour of Jehovah. Wherewith should they approach the Lord ? and what should they give the

Lord at the *meeting* ? These were the great questions.

But the prophets steadfastly urged the people to do right by their neighbour in their daily *earth-life*. Be honest, cease extortion, be kind to the weak, poor, and needy. Bring these to your houses, deal out your bread to them, clothe the naked, plead the cause of the widow and the orphan, and abound always in these and similar deeds ; cultivate a spirit of this kind. And what would follow ? Then shall thy light, that is, the heavenly light, assurance, and comfort, rise in obscurity ; this light should break forth as the morning. This implies that the people had been in darkness both spiritually and temporally, notwithstanding all their religious meetings. But when they would do the righteous and kind and beneficent things, then the Lord, they were told, would satisfy their souls in drought, that is, in the terrible spiritual and temporal drought in which they felt themselves to be through God's hiding His face notwithstanding all their religious approaches to Him. The Lord would then make their souls like a well-watered garden, and like "springs of water whose waters fail not."

It is precisely the same kind of teaching, as we have seen, that is given in the New Testament. We know of the continual controversy between our Lord and the Scribes and Pharisees with all the washings, formalities in religion, tithings of mint, anise and cummin in which these formalists engaged, but in which they met not the Lord notwithstanding all their ideas that they were doing the exact things prescribed in the Word of God. They confined these exact things to the church-meeting ; but *outside* the church-meeting they did

not mind what they did, or what spirit they cultivated. They were envious, money-lovers, and could devour widows' houses, etc. Our Lord reminded them of the saying of the prophet Hosea to the effect that the Lord wanted the exercise of *mercy*, and not mere *sacrifice*; that is, not mere forms, ceremonies, or postures at the church-meeting; for these latter constituted a very cheap sort of religion. God did not require of them to be strict sabbatarians merely. It was the weightier matters of the law,—justice, mercy, love, pity, compassion, courtesy, etc., that Christ urged them to place their religion in; if they did these things, then their church-meeting, being the expression of a really religious earth-life, would be acceptable to God.

It is the same throughout the entire New Testament. St. Paul, as we have seen, expresses his doubts about the religious state of the Galatians because they came to put so much of their religion in the observances of the church-meeting merely. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." The great thing, he points out, was to know God, for to know God was to love Him, and to possess eternal life. But to maintain this direct knowledge of God, and the religious experiences which spring from it, requires much self-denial, watchfulness, prayer, cutting off what hinders, laying aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness; and being afflicted, mourning, weeping, when there would be a falling from this experimental knowledge, and from the assurance that the Beloved is in the heart. This kind of religion requires people to let down their spiritual pride and vanity, and their imagining that *they*

are the only true people in God's favour. But to do these things in real fashion is not a tithe so easy as to be zealous about what the way is in which the church-meeting should be conducted, and what forms, creeds, ceremonies, etc., should prevail *there*. "But now," says the apostle, "after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements wherunto ye desire again to be in bondage." The weak and beggarly elements were the forms, and times, and ceremonies, and postures, connected with their church-meetings. To place store on these externals is always the mark of that Pharisaic spirit which knows little or nothing of God experimentally.

In the chain of exhortations which has been quoted a short way back from the New Testament about our feelings and conduct towards our neighbour, there is the clear indication of what the explicit teaching of the New Testament is about the true and acceptable religion, or at least, the second table thereof. The first table refers to our relation to God in Christ, and to the maintenance, in the manner already described, of union and communion with God in Christ. We must abide in Christ's love, that is, in the consciousness that He loves us. His love ought to be conspired abroad in our hearts. Thus shall we be able to bear fruit towards our neighbour in the manner set forth in the chain of exhortations already given. Such fruit cannot be born outside of Christ, nor unless the branch abide in the Vine. The mere attempt to treat one's neighbour according to New Testament instructions by going according to natural feelings, or natural morality,—here a little and there a little of a stooping sort of kindness,—is only sticking the

peacock's feathers into the black coat of the jackdaw. Though I give my body to be burned, and all my goods to feed the poor, for the sake of being in proper form in religion, this were no better than lifeless formalities in a church-meeting. Were I not possessed of the genuine love which is born and fostered only by coming to know Christ and abiding in Him, this new sort of action on my part would be merely diverting the stream of my unregenerate religion into another channel, as useless for me as the channel of cold and Pharisaic formalities of some church-meetings. Hundreds of ways do men try to escape from coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, and surrendering themselves to Him; and they try to find a cheaper method of pleasing Him than this self-denying way which is so inconsistent with that love of the world that reigns in their hearts. They will not let go the world nor self for the sake of Christ; and, therefore, no matter what forms their external religion may take, it is at best only the jackdaw in peacock's feathers.

A great part of the New Testament consists of instructions as to how to maintain in a living state our relations with God in Christ. In addition to our own direct efforts at keeping from those lusts which deaden the soul and grieve away the Spirit, we are directed as to how we should conduct ourselves in the many tribulations which are requisite to keep us in the needed purity of heart that will maintain its vision, and therefore its love, of God. We are instructed to be patient and trustful in our many tribulations, in order that the true ends may be accomplished in these trials. (Rom. v., 1-5). But it is as if all these things were to be undergone and to be observed by us in order to fit us

to comply, in real heart and power, with the exhortations as to how to feel and act toward our neighbour. Here is the grand and overt domain for Christian activity. Fall in, as if it were said, with all the details and the palpitating spirit of the chain of exhortations given already as to the treatment of our neighbour. Prepare with all your preparation for this activity. By your spirit and activity here you shall be finally judged. If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen ?

That to which the chain of exhortations points we may describe as *the second table of evangelical morality*. The first table refers to our relations to God in Christ ; and it would almost seem that the first table is to be observed in order to fit us for the observance of the second. The second table, when we persevere therein to the end, will fit us for the great organic union, the communion, love, joy, and service, above. This is the great end of the first and second tables.

Isaiah, and all the old-dispensation prophets, as well as our Lord and His apostles, describe the happy effects of observing, *in the consecrated, surrendered spirit*, the second table of evangelical morality. They all speak of the light, assurance, comfort, satisfaction, fellowship, freedom, entrance into the kingdom, etc., that accrue from consecratedly walking according to this second table. But please observe, they do not always add a description of these blessed effects *every* time they exhort to the treatment of our neighbour according to evangelical morality. Why should they ? They assume that *occasional* statement of these effects ought to be enough. But the exhortations

themselves are required *daily*, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

And once more, let it be particularly noted how little, how very little, is said in the midst of all these exhortations to the practice of evangelical morality, about the church-meeting, and how *it* should be conducted. It is as if men themselves were naturally inclined to put *all* their religion in the church-meeting, and in what they do and feel *there*. Still, there *are* exhortations in reference to the church-meeting also, but not as to what forms or ceremonies should there be had recourse to; nothing further in this latter line is said than that we should exhort one another, collect money for religious purposes, praise, pray, and let all things be done decently and in order. The great stress is laid on how we should treat our neighbour; against evangelical morality in this respect we are expressly told there is no law. (Gal. v., 23). But men will evermore find laws innumerable, or fancy they find them, against this or that *form*, ceremony, posture, etc., at the church-meeting.

Strifes about these things, however, are often as unprofitable as we are told strifes are about endless genealogies, and contentions about the law. We all have knowledge. Mere knowledge puffeth up; love *buildeth* up.

CHAPTER VII.

MORALITY AND RELIGION.

For the heart to be right toward man, it must be right with God.—*Spring.*

The writers of the New Testament have taken a larger and truer view of morality than multitudes of philosophers.—*Row.*

Evangelical, Legal, and Natural Morality.

There is mention made in our last chapter of a chain of New Testament exhortations as to how we should regard and feel and act towards our neighbour. A specimen of these exhortations has been given at some length. The exhortations were described as exhortations to *evangelical morality*. This evangelical morality is in the New Testament sharply contrasted with the forms, ceremonies, attitudes and postures of the body, at the church-meeting.

It is well to have a clear conception about the difference between evangelical, natural, and legal morality; and to this difference let us now turn our thoughts for a little.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism says in effect that the sum of the moral law is love to God with all our heart, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. It also says that this two-sided love is the sum of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments expand the description of this

two-sided love into further detail. Commentaries on the Shorter Catechism, as, for instance, Pater-son's, Fisher's, and Watson's, expand also the Ten Commandments themselves into detail. In fact, the entire teaching of the Bible on spiritual matters does the same thing. If a man *love* perfectly, as we are told over and over again, he is a perfect man.

But there cannot be *two* kinds of perfection for the soul, a Sinaitic perfection and a gospel or evangelical perfection. Soul-perfection always meant, and always will mean, the same thing, namely, perfection in the two-sided love. But the old covenant prescribed one way of reaching, or maintaining, soul-perfection, whilst the gospel makes provision for, and prescribes, another way of reaching this perfection. But, be it particularly observed, neither the Sinaitic law nor the gospel law, or rule of life, dispenses with the consecrated *practice* of love. The gospel requires this as certainly as did the old law. But if man falls, or comes short, as he often does, in this practice, the gospel contains provision for his rising and his setting out afresh; the old law contained no such provision. But if a man practice not love under the gospel, he will come short of ultimate perfection of soul as certainly as he would have come short of perfection by not practicing love under the old law. The root which leads to the practice of love is given in the new birth, and even if one dies before he has any opportunity of practicing love, if he have the root of this practice in him, he will be ultimately saved. But whosoever has the opportunity of practicing evangelical love, and does not practice it, cannot now be in a saved state, and is outside the kingdom of light.

The Westminster standards, therefore, make the sum of the moral, or ethical, to consist in the two-sided love mentioned. But it is to be particularly noticed that a man may endeavour to cultivate and practice this love in his own natural strength and state, that is, without coming, and surrendering himself, to Christ. If he do this in the expectation that God, or Christ, will accept of what he thus does, and will bring him to heaven for it when he dies, he is mistaken, and is acting in a self-righteous, or legal, morality. He is virtually working in the spirit of a servant for wages. He has, he thinks, or ought to think according to the strain he is on, to be legally paid by getting to heaven at last for being so good as to do as best he could what he was told to do.

But some men who are even unbelievers have a sort of morality. Several of them appear to realise within a kind of conscientious constraint to be moral. They have, as all have, a natural impulse to be kind and social to a certain degree. Many unbelievers may not have much, if any, of the conscientious feelings about being moral, and are moral only so far as mere nature prompts or the civil law enjoins; or they may be good and lend, hoping to receive as much again from others. This is mere so-called *natural* morality, with or without a strain of the natural conscience in it.

It is hardly right, however, to call this natural morality, for really natural in the best sense it is not. It is the morality of man's first, or unregenerate, nature; but the *evangelical* morality, or the morality of man's *renewed* nature, is the real kind of natural morality. This latter natural morality will tell most efficaciously, as we have

already abundantly seen, in working heaven into that soul that practices it from the surrendered position. The morality of the unbeliever will not do this ; neither will the *legal* morality do so of the one who is working for reward, but working on the *outside* of the kingdom of light. This last kind of morality deceives. Many will say to Christ on that day, " Lord, Lord, have we not done this and that," to whom the Judge will profess, " I never knew you."

*Resemblance between the Moral in God and
Evangelical Morality in Man.*

God's moral nature may be said to consist in " holiness, justice, goodness, and truth," as the Shorter Catechism expresses it. In these attributes we are bidden imitate God ; that is, we are bidden be godly, or God-like. *Goodness* includes love, pity, compassion, benevolence, etc. It is God's dynamical, or moving attribute. His other attributes move him also, but usually do so in some relation to love, when either accepted or abused. His goodness, or love, virtually includes all his other moral attributes ; for one will be just, consecrated, and true to one whom he really loves. God will be so, and so also will man himself.

God's *love* to man includes pity, compassion, desire to help, etc. Man's love to God does not include these, but includes reverence, a sense of dependence, trust, obedience, etc. But both loves include a desire for union and communion. Holiness, justice, and truth may be said to be substantially in God the same as they will be in perfect man, or as they are coming to be in evangelised man.

But God's moral attributes are different from God Himself, even though they are necessary for God, as a material object's qualities are different from the object itself. There is in evangelised man not only a morality resembling God's, but there is God Himself. God in Christ is united to him and dwells with him. This, then, is something additional to the man being merely evangelically moral; and it is this additional circumstance that constitutes the *religion* of the man, as being over and above, although embracing, his morality. There is, therefore, no evangelical morality apart from religion of the true kind, nor is there true religion apart from evangelical morality.

God cannot, consistently with His moral attributes, impart Himself to men that are wilful transgressors of the moral. Some think of God being free to pardon on confession of sin, and on repentance. But they forget that in salvation God imparts *Himself*, and becomes united to the soul, and dwells with it. Before all this can take place between God and the soul, both the *position* and the *disposition* of the soul must be dealt with by God Himself. Its position is altered when it comes to Christ, for then it is pardoned. Man's nature is moral at the core, and when really awakened, man demands a God that is perfectly moral, as well as unite in other ways. Man could not trust any other kind of God. St. Paul is, therefore, at pains to show that God is now perfectly just and holy, as well as loving, when He pardons the sinner who is in Christ. Man's nature, when he becomes conscious of sin, demands an atonement, or some means whereby God can remain just and yet pardon him, and become united to him. If he learns, on what professes to be God's own authority,

that God Himself has found a way to remain the perfect God which perfect morality demands, man is, if truly awakened, not particularly anxious to understand all the philosophy of the way that God has provided. If that way satisfies God Himself, the awakened man is satisfied also when he has evidence of this.

Awakened man is in sympathy, or has affinity, with a perfectly moral God. Perfect morality has great attractiveness and beauty in his eyes. He is, at the core, like God Himself. Upon this affinity evangelical faith is founded. Faith believes the record, not merely for the evidence that appeals to the intellect, but on account of the affinity with the moral which is revealed in the details of the record of the divine procedure in Christ. A mere intellectual faith in the divine record does not shew this affinity. The true faith possesses sponge-like qualities, and takes in Christ Himself to the soul, as well as that it credits the record; and it is because it thus takes in the Christ it reads of that it *believes* the record, just as if a man took in water to his thirsty system by his gazing on the fountain where the water was said to be. *That* man would believe that real water existed in the fountain. The record is required; but of itself the record is insufficient. How can ye believe, asks our Lord, who receive glory one of another? So how can one believe who is wilfully unmoral in any direction? He is out of affinity with the moral, and cannot, therefore, take in Christ into his soul, for his conscience is guilty; and though he may not be conscious of the cause of his inability, yet it is this guilty conscience that prevents him believing in God, or having affinity with the moral in God. But unless he close with God, and be a

co-efficient agent with God in Christ in working out his own salvation, he will not be saved. True belief, therefore, demands, for its existence, the moral in the form in which the moral is in God, that is, the holy, good, just, and true, as these reside in Him. As long as men are unwilling to be this, or, which is virtually the same thing, unwilling to come to God in Christ in order to be *made* this, they cannot believe in the true saving way.

*Butler's Description of Virtue and
Deductions Therefrom.*

Bishop Butler, in his second dissertation on the nature of virtue, says, among other things, that virtue "*is that which every one you meet puts on the shew of.*" (Italics mine). The virtuous is the same as the moral, and the law of the moral is written on the natural conscience. Every man you meet puts on the shew of being honest, candid, considerate, kind, obliging, humble, not thinking overmuch of himself, gentle, meek, forgiving, affable, mannerly, etc. Especially does every man put on the shew of being thus virtuous when holding intercourse with his superiors, or with those whom he greatly respects.

But men do not wish it to be understood that they are virtuous only on special occasions. They mean it to be understood that they are *always* what they appear to be on these occasions. This implies that every man you meet with has his *ideal* of what virtue is, and how it should be acted out in life.

Why is it that every man you meet with puts on the show of the virtuous or the moral? It is

because he believes it to be the right thing to be virtuous or moral, and he wishes others to believe him to be in reality what he appears to be. He feels that it would be an exceedingly disagreeable thing for him if all others, or even the best people only, believed him to be bad and immoral and vicious. He wants to keep the right side of respectable people. Now all this instinct on his part is a premonition, or reflex experience, of what will obtain in perfection in heaven above. The man also feels, say, in his apprehension, how disagreeable it would be to lose the respect and good opinion and intercourse of right-minded people; and thus he has some inkling of how sorrowful a place hell is.

What is it that fits for the close fellowship with perfect human beings in heaven above, as well as for fellowship with the Deity, but the perfection of this experience that is thus shadowed forth in the desire of a man to be as virtuous as will admit of fellowship with right-minded people here below? When this feeling or experience is perfect, it is simply the moral character of Jesus Himself.

If men were sincerely, and at the core, what they put on the shew of being, they would all be genuine Christians. But many men put on the shew of being what they really are not, except in a more or less superficial manner, compared with what they would be if they were at the core what they put on the shew of being. Men put on the shew of Christianity, but all men do not do so under that name; but it is what may be described as a natural reflex of Christianity, or what Christianity aims at bringing men to, notwithstanding that men do not look upon it as being this. Not that men refuse to call it this, but they do not know it to be what it actually is. The fact is, that many people regard true religion

as some kind of play at legerdemain, or as some occult, mysterious, unhuman thing that may be requisite to die with, for all they know to the contrary, but is not anything fit to live by. But no man ought to think this who appreciates social intercourse with his fellow-men, for the fitting of one for perfect social intercourse is what the true religion aims at.

Why, then, does not every man you meet with, who puts on the shew of the virtuous or the moral, and who appreciates social intercourse, not surrender to the heavenly Physician, in order that he may be made in perfection what he thinks so very much of as always to put on the shew of it? Why does every man not fit himself to drink largely at what he can, outside of Christ, only sip at in an imperfect manner? The cause is, that every man does not want to be in reality what he puts on the shew of being. Every man does not mean to be entirely virtuous or moral at the core. This means that many men desire to retain what they regard as their liberty to be unmoral, deceitful, haters, dishonest, uncandid, cheats, lustful, envious, etc., if it should ever suit their ends, or give them pleasure, or meet their wishes in any way, so to be. They are unwilling to set themselves apart, and come under the power of the good Physician, and on His terms, in order to be made in truth and sincerity what it suits them to put on the shew of when they choose. They will be moral when they choose, and when they choose they will be otherwise, at least at heart.

Many men have no intention to be otherwise than virtuous, who will nevertheless not give up their liberty to be what they may at some time, for all they presently know, come to desire, although

inconsistently with heart-virtue. In other words, they will not submit to be made moral for ever as Christ is moral. They do not desire to be always warm-hearted in the moral. They fancy they can be as virtuous as there is any need for by being their own masters in regard to the virtuous. Were they taking Christ into the efforts which they make to be virtuous, they would require to be under the eye of an omniscient One Whom they could not deceive by external appearances ; they would need, moreover, to watch against what cools their virtue, and use all the necessary means, and under an omniscient eye, to keep in the course which would prevent their virtue getting merely formal.

The fact is, that the unrenewed heart is averse to surrender itself, and what it reckons its liberty to be evil in the measure in which it may choose. Although Jesus Christ may be regarded as the embodiment of consecration to the right, and of goodness, or love, justice, righteousness, faithfulness and truth, yet the unrenewed heart is unwilling to consent to His ruling within ; and the only cause must be that this heart, if it understands what Jesus Christ is, desires to be in the opposite spirit of these qualities just when and where it may choose. It objects to the trouble of having itself put right, and of all the watchfulness and different kinds of activity which would be required to do its own part in maintaining itself in what is reckoned by all men virtuous and honourable feelings and conduct. It loves and hugs its corruption too much for *surrender* to the virtuous and honourable. When it sails along with the unvirtuous current, it may not realise itself to be the unvirtuous heart that it is. Saul of Tarsus did not realise himself to be the unvirtuous man that he

actually was whilst he sailed with the corrupt stream in his heart. (Rom. vii.)

The unrenewed heart is not virtuous or moral at the core, nor does it desire so to be. It is hard and stony. It is only the new heart that desires to be *entirely* virtuous. The latter heart is sometimes called in Scripture a heart of flesh ; but this is meant to be antithetical to the hard stony heart. The broken, mouldable heart mourns on account of its own corruptions. The unbroken heart is often complacent over its own morality ; but this is because it does not know itself, nor take pains to study itself properly. There is too much blindness to self in it, too much self-infatuation and self-flattery for it to see into its own real nature in regard to the truly moral or virtuous, either towards God or towards its neighbour. It can, with complacency, go a certain length in morality towards its neighbour, and thus it is itself blinded as to its real state ; and it often blinds others about its condition, for they suppose that there is no difference between its condition morally from the condition of the renewed heart.

The heart that sincerely desires to be moral at the core,—always and evermore moral,—may be said to have Jesus united to it, for He will not leave this heart to itself. It has affinity with Jesus, and draws Him into itself. If it has learned about Jesus, it loves Him because of His moral beauty ; it mourns when it realises itself unworthy of Him, and it takes to do with Him on His own terms. Jesus dwells in this heart and opens it up and puts it through the healing process. This is the heart that loves mankind. No other heart truly can do so. The heart must surrender to Jesus, Who is the omniscient One and the embodiment of the

perfectly moral, ere it can love men in the true and everlasting manner. The lower animals have a natural love to their kind ; and man, as an animal, also loves his kind, and he may sometimes have a strain of conscientiousness in his love, even if he be unrenewed ; yet this love will all die out at length unless the heart be broken evangelically, and renewed, or unless it have the great Healer and Rectifier in it. Man cannot neglect his capabilities as a rational-moral agent without falling at length into the condition of the devil and his angels.

Yet, as has been already remarked, the unrenewed man may, in the virtue or morality which he puts on the shew of, or which he really feels inclined to exercise in the way of sociality, neighbourliness, with possibly a strain of conscience in it have so far a reflex of heaven in him. But it is a bastard reflex. It is not born again ; not born from above. Yet even as it is, it may shew to the man so far what heaven is, and what Jesus is. It is so far the outcome of the gift of sociality, and of the real moral law, placed within by the Creator. And if man neglect these gifts and voices within, he will at last waken to see that heaven had been so far understood by him, and that Jesus had been very close to him. If the wakening be too late, the perception will fill him with agelong remorse. He will be then severed from everything, and everyone, for whose sake here on earth he thought it worth his while to put on the shew of virtue ; and he will go to be a companion of those whose character he abhorred whilst he was here.

The Soul's Struggle to Reach Christ.

Unregenerate souls take their hopes, cheer, and comfort for the support of the inner life from things

seen and temporal. From these things they take what we may call their *liveliness*. Every soul needs a measure of liveliness. Regenerate souls take both their inner life and their liveliness from the unseen world, that is, from spiritual and eternal sources. Now it is a great change, a radical upheaval in the soul, when it resolves to surrender its present source of liveliness in order to set out in the darkness for a new source. Let us suppose that the soul is a fluid, in which there is both rationality and sensitiveness. Let us further suppose that the body in which this soul, or fluid, resides is oblong in form, and that it has a hexagonal pipe connecting one end of it with a large hexagonal fountain a dozen feet off. At the other end of the oblong-shaped body there is a *round* pipe connecting the body with another fountain equally distant on the opposite side.

Now the proposal is made, say, to the fluid to move out in the hexagonal pipe towards the large fountain on *its* side of the body. But the fluid says: "No, I shall not move out in *that* direction, for were I to do so I would require to take the form of the hexagonal pipe as I moved through it, and also the form of the hexagonal fountain at the other end of the pipe; and I dislike this form." So when the fluid is invited to move out in this direction it presently solidifies, or freezes, to prevent itself from running out. But when invited to move out in the opposite direction it at once consents with pleasure, because it can itself put the other pipe in any form which it chooses, and can also put the fountain at the other end of this pipe into any shape it may desire.

But now let us further suppose that in the hexagonal fountain there are elements which purify

the fluid, and that the fluid will thus return purified from it every time it goes to that fountain. But there are elements of filth in the other fountain which will further pollute the fluid every time it goes there and returns. But the filth is not presently felt to be either a danger or a burden, owing to the affinity therewith on the part of the fluid itself; the fluid is filthy and muddy in itself.

Christ is the fountain on the one side of the soul ; and the soul that goes out to Him must resolve to take a holy, true, loving, just, righteous, form, according to the form of the fountain itself. It must evermore strive to get more and more into this form. Now souls in their unregenerate state realise going out in this spirit and direction and with this ultimate end in view, as directly opposed to what they love best. If the fluid should try to run in this direction, it would feel all its *liveliness* taken away, and would be similar to the spirit which, when ejected, goes through "dry places," through a wilderness of a waste, howling kind. But when it actually reaches the fountain, and is returned pure, then it experiences not only a *liveliness*, but also a *life* which is beyond in preciousness anything it ever before experienced. But many souls will not go through the first hard experiences of going out to Christ, the great Fountain. Though if only they would consent to put the matter to the proof, and go out to Him, then they would experience a return of themselves to themselves with a life that would never die. He that loses his life shall keep it unto life eternal.

But unregenerate souls prefer going out in the other direction, because they can thus have their

own way, and put both pipe and fountain in any shape they please. So the love of money, pleasure, lust, etc., warms many souls, and they find in themselves an affinity with these things. They liquefy still more when prospects of going out towards them, and having pleasure from them, present themselves to them. How then can they go out in both directions? They cannot. If they keep liquefied so as to go out in the one direction, they are bound to freeze, or solidify, under some influence or other, if the other direction is proposed to them. And a liquid that solidifies cannot run. By and by the habit of running out in the worldly direction will impart to the soul a quality which will evermore prevent its liquefying so as to go out, even though it should now be willing to undergo pain in going out, in the other direction.

When the soul of the *Christian* threatens to solidify, or get hard, so that it cannot run out in the true direction, God comes and breaks this solidifying soul, and it then gets into a liquid state again. He comes to some to break down their solidified state, but the result is only a lot of splinters. They never get liquefied again. They have run out too often in the other direction, and that also under the light which shines from the true fountain. And this light from the true direction shining on the soul that habitually goes in the wrong direction is the most effective means for causing the soul to go into the permanently solidified state, so that any providential dealings with it which are painful only put it into the form of splinters. Many souls resist even going into splinters until death itself will come, and then there will be no possibility of broken hearts, or contrite mouldable spirits, for them any more. They will thenceforth

have to support themselves in being and in self-identity, as far as their consciousness is concerned, by hatred of every person and every thing that is good. The hearts, however, that are broken in going Christward, and reaching Christ, Christ Himself will tenderly upbind, and He will give them themselves back with life in their hearts and with union and fellowship with Himself. But those who desire to be master of the moral, instead of permitting the moral to master them, will not submit to this state of matters.

The struggle of the soul in reaching Christ is due to the fact that the soul, even when awakened, is still corrupt, and desires to remain its own master, even as to its morality and its religion. The struggle is described by our Lord as a striving, or agonizing, to enter in at the straight gate, and as the violent taking the kingdom by force. Bunyan describes it under the figure of the Slough of Despond. It is somewhat analogous to the pushing of a boat out into the water, which is partly on the gravelly beach and partly already in the water.

But unless the soul actually reach Christ, it will not be suffused with Christ's Spirit. If an eighth part of an inch remain between a man's hands and the hands of the galvanic battery, the thrill of the current will not be experienced. If a similar distance remain between seed and soil there will be no growth, and no harvest. If a small pebble be under the ship's keel, it will often prevent the launching of the vessel. So it is with the soul in its struggles to reach Christ. If there be anything in the habits, or hopes, any reserves that the soul will not submit to the inspection and disposal of Christ, according to His own

principles, or morals, then the soul will not be launched. Nothing of heaven will come into it in this case.

The struggling soul sometimes feels as if it were getting near Christ ; then, perhaps, it looks back in regret, like Lot's wife, and feels it has lost somewhat, and it has to struggle still more earnestly to regain what it has thus lost. So the soul has its ups and downs, its advances and its backings when reaching Christ. In this manner it comes more and more to feel its own corruption, and also its danger ; and it thus comes more and more to appreciate the salvation that is in Christ. The first thing that the forces in the soil do to the seed is to break the husk ; then the forces in the soil combine with those in the kernel in order to send up a growth, and eventually give a harvest. So in the soul's struggles to reach Christ, the soul's self-will, in which it is apt to encase itself, gets broken down ; and when the soul reaches Christ, then the forces in Christ combine with the forces wakened in the soul itself in order to give growth into the likeness and fellowship of Christ.

It is at some point in the struggle just described that in several cases some church official comes and offers to make matters easier by the application of some form of the *opus operatum*, or some *fetish*, which is the same thing. This intervention we shall consider in a future chapter. But we may at once easily perceive how very demoralising and harmful such an intervention would be by its superseding the moral efforts absolutely necessary on the part of the soul to reach Christ at first-hand. Great moral ends are fulfilled by these efforts.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHURCH LIFE AS INSTRUMENTAL
CAUSATION.

The health of a Church depends not merely on the creed which she professes, not even on the wisdom and holiness of a few great Ecclesiastics, but on faith and virtue of its individual members.—*Kingsley*.

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—*Jesus*.

Meaning and Importance of the Church-Life.

By the *church-life* is here meant the exercises engaged in, and the soul-experiences had, by the living Christian at the religious meeting, and all that is done by him in connection with that meeting. The *church-life* in this sense of it is to be distinguished from the *earth-life*. But the one kind of life is, in the case of the living Christian, inter-related to the other.

When the religious meeting is in every respect what it ought to be, then it is, perhaps, the most direct and powerful means we possess for preparing souls for the final heaven. It is itself heaven upon earth. There is to be found in it, as nowhere else on earth, a foretaste of the final organic union with Christ and the redeemed above. All the elements are present there which will be present above. Jesus Christ Himself has promised His special presence there.

Union, in the religious sense, has great power, and it secures answers to prayer which would not otherwise be granted, as those know who are aware of Christ's special promises to this condition. We read in the Acts of the Apostles about those who laboured in apostolic times in the good cause being all united, all of one heart, of one mind, of one accord. Thus it was that their prayers had such efficacy. About a fortnight's steady and united prayer preceded the outpouring of Pentecost. Many forget this who somehow expect that the pulpit alone, if it be what it should be, would effect a pentecostal effusion. The oneness of heart and mind which then prevailed is a state often recommended throughout the New Testament. All things in the form of strife, divisions, separations, dispeace, unloving tempers, etc., connected with the church-life are directly opposed to the union, and the praying spirit, which bring the blessing. Those, therefore, incur a great responsibility, who, either by what they do, or by what they refrain from doing, tend to mar the harmony, union and mutual goodwill, which ought to reign in the church-life.

In the old dispensation the people were being taught the benefit of unity. Their religious feasts, their days for meeting together for other religious purposes, etc., taught them this. The ancient psalmist compared unity among the brethren to the condition which exists when the dew falls. The anointing oil of the divine Spirit flows down then on the church members. (Ps. cxxxiii.)

In the New Testament we are exhorted not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. We are bidden exhort one another even daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin,

lest any seem to have come short of the rest provided by God, lest any man fail of the grace of God, or be profane, like Esau of old, and underestimate his religious privileges, and thus bring upon himself at length, as Esau did, unavailing regret.

The Proper Treatment of the Church-Life.

In order that the church-meeting, or the religious meeting anywhere, may fulfil its real and intended end, certain means require to be faithfully used, and certain conditions complied with, in connection with this meeting. In connection therewith there needs to be meditation, and that particularly in the way of self-examination; and there needs to be resolution, proper private and family devotions, and the living of a right earth-life.

The self-examination, and the other needful parts of meditation, ought to mingle with the private devotions, and with the resolutions. Each one of these exercises ought to be made to impart quickening to the others. The whole requires to be earnestly, faithfully, and regularly done, and no superficial work made of any part thereof.

Now for material for self-examination we need not travel here beyond what has been already before us in our previous chapters, particularly what has been before us in our first two chapters, and also in connection with the necessity of love. In these means we have sufficient ultimate principle whereby to judge of our own religious state. But we cannot safely test ourselves with less than this.

We have already considered some of the inner experiences which the Scriptures declare are had, and necessarily had, by all living Christians. Every

living Christian has life, light, and union and communion with Christ and His people. The love which the living Christian has to Christ is greater than his love for any other object. He is always in the spirit of selling all he has, if needs be, for the Pearl of great Price. Many would thus sell out did the matter come before them by a message direct from heaven; but the genuine Christian discerns by his inner state whether anything undue has taken hold of his heart and stolen it, or part of it from Christ. The evil and adulterous generation seek for more signs than they already possess; the true Christian uses those he already has. He does not prefer his farm, oxen, merchandise, to calls to more direct religious duty.

As further materials for self-examination in view of the Church meeting, let it be noted that the living Christian has Christ in him as the "Substance" and "Lamp" of heaven, and, therefore, has heaven itself with its light within him. It is not virtually he that lives, but it is Christ that lives in him. He is no wayside, stony-ground, or thorny-ground hearer. He is acquainted with what his Lord teaches about the absolute necessity there is for the branch bearing fruit, and also the absolute necessity there is that, in order to bear fruit in the only acceptable manner, the branch must abide in the Vine. Separate from the Vine, or from abiding in the love of Christ, the Christian can do literally nothing acceptably, even were he bestowing all his goods to feed the poor, and giving his body to be burned. He knows, and probably often thinks on, the message to the ancient Church in Ephesus that left her first love, and also on the message to the Laodicean Church that got lukewarm. He is aware that all those who have ears

to hear are bidden hear what these messages were, that is, they are bidden ponder these messages in self-application.

The living Christian is aware from experience that the way is narrow, and that great and continuous efforts are required in order to walk therein,—so as to have the day star always shining within, and the dynamic of Christ's love always moving him. He knows by experience about the deceitfulness of sin, and how readily sin steals in and hardens the heart, and renders it cold and formal in religion. He remembers also that he is a partaker of Christ only on condition that he hold the beginning of the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end; and that Christ's seal as to His commands being kept in the true spirit is that He manifests Himself to the soul. "I will manifest myself unto him." "We will come unto him and make our abode with him," "I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me." In putting his talent to use by abiding in his Lord's love, the Christian increases that which he already hath. If he miss his Lord he searches for Him until he finds Him, as the spouse did. (Song of Songs, chap. iii. chap. v.)

The genuine Christian is aware by experience how very rapidly this world, so full of temptations, makes its impress on his heart in one or more of its many alluring forms, and that even a little of its leaven leavens the whole lump, spoils his prayers, fellowship, and love, and tends to make him a withered branch.

These, then, are some of the things which, in view of the church-meeting, the living Christian meditates on in self-examination. He finds he must seek to square his inner and outer life with

Scripture, and not with unexamined tradition or custom. These things, moreover, are true of *every* living Christian. Many professing people are apt to suppose that these things may be true and right, but that they themselves do not profess to have attained to them, and they expect in their heart of hearts to be finally saved at a much cheaper rate than by attaining in this world to this high standard of religion. Thus it is that countless numbers are probably deceived, and live and hope according to quite another Bible than the one they *profess* to believe. Scriptural religion is to them, when they are brought face to face with it, like a very high mountain in front of them, and which they have no intention, nor inclination, to try to climb. Several seem to wait to see whether it will become common among professing people to try to climb this mountain. Thus professing people incur much responsibility if they are not seen climbing the mountain. They hold many back if they say by their *profession* that they themselves are climbers, and by their *life* that they are not.

Now if one who makes a profession of Christianity finds, on self-examination, that he has not come into the soul-experiences just described, then he ought, as his bounden duty towards both himself and others, to bring his preparatory devotions and resolutions to bear very decidedly and thoroughly on his present state, and on the state in which he ought to be. He may feel assured that nothing of nearly so great importance to him could possibly meantime occupy his attention. If he does not realise all this, then he ought to set this failure down to his atrophy of spiritual sensibilities through his having been so long an outsider, and to the benumbing, blinding powers of darkness

having played so long on his soul. Especially if he has been under the gospel, as probably he has if a *professing* Christian, then the playing of gospel light on his soul, along with the playing also of the powers of darkness, will account for his benumbed sensibility,—a state that is bound to get worse and worse if he remain longer an outsider, and under those influences which have already played such havoc on his sensibilities.

If the professing one be the head of a family, with baptismal vows upon him, he has duties to the family, as well as to himself, in relation to the church-life. His family ought to be carefully instructed in religious knowledge, and inspired with reverence for everything sacred. Each member ought to be held in loving subjection with all gravity, according to St. Paul's idea.

But let it be remembered that one may try to do a number of the things which have been described, or may even try to do them all, but may not do them with that self-surrender, faith, and dependence which will bring him into living contact with Christ. One may try for a time to do a number of these things, and may experience a sort of holiness of feeling, or a quasi-solemnity, in going to church, in the church, and returning from it, without any other permanent effects than that after a little while he will be sunk further than ever in sin, carelessness, and corruption. One must make *thorough* work of this matter. No half-heartedness, nor sickly sentimentalities for a while, will do here. The enemies in this field are far too subtle, and far too powerful, for meeting them with mere fencing; they must be met and vanquished in the open field. There must be real agonising before one can enter in. The kingdom must be

taken by violence. This is man's side. God's side is that the soul needs to be born again ere it can see ; that is, have the soul-experiences of the kingdom. But if it agonise successfully, it will certainly see the kingdom of heaven here and now.

The contrast between what is, and what ought to be, in Church-life.

But one may come very near the kingdom and yet fail to enter, as a vessel may be kept from being launched by a very small pebble under the keel. We know how very different the behaviour of a boat is when on the water from what it is when on land, or when half in and half out of the water. Too many are, in their church-life, analogous to the boat on land, or half in and half out of the water ; and yet they expect to be viewed and treated as if they were out on the mighty deep, meeting all the contrary winds and currents there on their way to the opposite shore. They cannot but themselves know that they are not Christians inside the kingdom of heaven on earth, and yet they expect to be viewed, treated, and addressed from the pulpit, as if they had all the experiences, were performing the duties, and meeting the temptations, of the living Christian. Surely this is a terribly dislocated condition, and that, also, in the highest matters of all. These same people would never brooke to have their earthly affairs and worldly prospects in such a dislocated state, and have such inconsistent opinions, and unreasonable and strange notions about them, as too many permit to themselves in connection with their church-life, their eternity, and the matters of everlasting life or death. Does not the cause of all this

lie in the fact that too many do not *see*, but are benumbed and blinded by the god of this world? Were they able to see, would they comfortably remain in their present state, uncertain at the best as to where or how they stand? The light that shines, combined with the powers of darkness, is merely destroying their spiritual sensibilities.

Now Christ has a right, and He claims this right; our fellow-men have a right, and God demands that it be conceded; and those dependent on us, if any, have a right, which we have promised before God to observe, that we should prepare ourselves in every way open to us for the church-life, so that our light, and the seasoning of our salt, may be used by God in all the ways which *He* may see fit for the benefit of others, and for the advancement of His cause. We are not our own to go to the religious meeting, or to live our church-life, as we may choose. No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; living or dying, we are the Lord's. The least of us ought not to say, or think, that no one need follow our example, or heed what we may, or may not do, in religion. We are not our own to think thus, or argue thus, with ourselves. Our example is God's, and so are all our talents, to do with them as He may see fit. What the effect of our life may be is *God's* affair, after we live it aright; it is not our affair. He will certainly call each one of us to account for all the times and opportunities of each day.

The pulpit has an especial claim that we duly prepare ourselves for living the church-life aright. It has a right to ask that we be not represented by the wayside in the parable of the sower, and that we break up our stony ground, and pluck up the thorns and briars in our hearts, so that there

be not a useless sowing, or that the gospel be not a savor of death. No earthly farmer would sow his seed in fallow or unbroken soil. Had he to depend for a living on the results of such sowing, he would not live very long. But in religion many people seem to imagine that any soil will do for the heavenly seed. Now in the living Christian's meditations in relation to his church-life, surely he has abundant cause for deep and solemn thought and for earnest private devotion.

When the living Christian further surveys the state of society in relation to real Christianity, such Christianity as has been described already in our first two chapters, and partly in our present chapter, he will have cause to mourn, and to plead earnestly for an awakening from the terrible state in which far too many of his fellow-men appear to lie asleep. The appalling commonness of every kind of vice, selfishnesses, dishonesties, insincerities, disregard for the feelings and interests of others, and, above all, the extraordinary apathy and indifference of the greater part of the professing portion of society at the sight of the prevalence of these things, do not warrant any hope that living, Bible Christianity is all-pervading among us. There is too great a love of mammon, with its usual train of overreachings, dishonesties, chicaneries, and religiously deadening effects, to expect vital religion to be very common.

Parts of the press do speak out to some extent regarding this state of matters; but it is to be feared there is too much professionalism in the tone of the church's speaking for this speaking to have much effect. Some of us in the pulpit are, perhaps, too apt to be generally pleased with the state of the pew if there be a good appearance on

Sundays, and the occasional plain-speaking of our professionalism can be easily discounted. The number of dishonest, shady, worldly, mammon-loving people in the pew, are not always gripped as they ought to be. It is to be feared that part of the present pulpit feels itself too dependent on the state of the pew, and is, consequently, somewhat timid.

One with ordinarily careful attention to an open Bible cannot but know the state religiously of numbers in the pew in the present day. But is it not the case that there is apt to be a complacency in this state, provided only it be outwardly respectable and peaceable, and that it supports the pulpit liberally? The "bright services," the fine choirs, grand-sounding instruments, the solos, anthems, glees, services of praise, and what not, bespeak complacency with the state of the people as a whole. So do our evermore annual, flourishing congregational reports sent out to the public, every year so much better than the preceding one with *every* congregation; never do we read an adverse report, notwithstanding the amount of vice among us.

In all solemnity let it be asked, "What is the use of we who occupy the pulpit preaching sermons for Christians to people who have not yet come into the Christian state? It is deceiving them so to do; it is cruel. It is causing them to believe that if they manœuvre somewhat as they are on Sunday bidden do, they will get off at last, although even their manœuvring is not on the inside but on the outside of the kingdom. Is the question often pressed home as to whether those who make a profession have ever truly come inside the kingdom? What answer would the earth-life, the private devotional life, the family-altar life, the social life, give to this

question ? Is fruit borne, the talent put to steady use, by abiding in Christ's love ? Is the fervor of the first love maintained with steadfastness ? Is a meeting with Christ commonly expected at our church-meetings ? Are people commonly disappointed when they do not meet with Him ? And do they leave the church in these circumstances in a self-examining state, fearing the cold condition of their hearts, and fearing that this state will get worse unless promptly seen to ? Is it not the case that for large numbers of professing people a meeting with Christ at church is not earnestly pled for, is not expected, and is not at all missed when it does not take place ? Do not too many of our people leave the church with overmuch worldly jollity, gossip, and frivolity, to give ground for any honest observer to imagine that they either have met with the Redeemer of their souls there, or that they very much care ? These people would almost cause one to suppose that they would possibly prefer not to be embarrassed in their earth-life by meeting with Christ at church. We may, I think, set it down for certain that many of our people do not seriously miss Christ. Now I hold that when such people are in church, and especially in the profession of Christianity, they ought not, through the omissions of the pulpit, to be sent away pleased with their state, or regaled, or so stirred by organ or choir as to be made to suppose that they may be as good and religious as there is any use for. We have seen the very solemnity, and the tone and the manner, of the pulpit sometimes strongly suggest that there is much need for discrimination. One ought to see his own state reflected, either positively or negatively, just as he needs, in the doctrine, and in the very

manner itself, of the pulpit. But the grand *eclat* with which things are sometimes made to pass off in many of our churches leaves no room for such discriminations.

The pew may suppose that because it pays the musician it has a right to call for the tune, that is, a right to prescribe silently the style and matter of the preaching. It may profess otherwise until the pulpit displease it; but when it does so, or displeases the leaders in the pew, then the right of the pew to sit in judgment on the tune is sometimes virtually exercised.

Both pulpit and pew require to keep very near the Master of the vineyard, if the church-life is to have the effects which it is calculated and divinely intended to have.

CHAPTER IX.

DANGERS OF REJECTED LIGHT IN
CHURCH-LIFE.

They that have done good shall enjoy those good things that are in heaven, so they, who though they have no evil indeed to be charged with, yet have omitted to do any good they might have done, will be hurried away with them that have done evil into hell fire.—*Chrysostom.*

Action of Spiritual Light on Irresponsive Souls.

We have noticed this action already in incidental sentences ; but the matter is so very serious, and with many so very little thought of, that it may be well to devote a chapter to its consideration. And it is expedient to consider the subject in connection with the church-life, because it is there in an especial manner that gospel light is understood to be brought before souls, although the same light is also brought before them in several other ways. In the religious meeting personal appeals on gospel grounds are understood to be frequently made.

Gospel-light which is not complied with always hardens the heart, and, which is virtually the same thing, destroys those sensibilities which have at least *potentialities* in them for spiritual discernment. When this destructive work has proceeded for a certain time, or up to a certain point, there supervenes the remaining time when nothing whatsoever can produce repentance of an evangelical

kind. It is, indeed, true that whilst the lamp holds on to burn the greatest sinner *may* return. No doubt the door of mercy is always open for all living human beings ; but it is equally true that after a certain amount of refusal of the light, the sinner does not *desire* to enter. He cannot any more lay hold of forgiveness by the ordinary methods, and extraordinary ones will not be adopted in the case of any.

Probably the cause why Satan and other angels that kept not their first estate are incapable of forgiveness, is that they sinned against clear light, and they, therefore, could not apply forgiveness to themselves even if granted. So sinners who are hardened under the gospel are also incapable of forgiveness. To have the gospel a savour of death is to die of what someone has called "the gospel plague;"—the most awful death of all. Typhoid fever prevents the stomach digesting solid food. The "gospel plague" prevents the spiritual system digesting the promises, or the offers of forgiveness. The sin against the Holy Ghost destroys the spiritual furnishings of the soul, just as gazing long on the sun with the naked eye destroys the capability of physical vision.

We ought not to regard God as *unwilling* to forgive even the sinner who has sinned against the Holy Ghost. The case is rather that this kind of sinner is unfit to accept forgiveness, or to profit thereby even if he had it. There is no heaven for him. All his real reverence is gone. If the salt have lost its savor, a woman her modesty, or a rose its fragrance, it is difficult, and it may be impossible, to restore it to its pristine state.

*Increase of Light ought to Increase Reverence
and Obedience.*

If reverence be lost it can hardly ever, and in some cases cannot at all, be restored. And what would a soul do in heaven without reverence? It destroys people's reverence in some instances when sentence against their evil deeds, or their neglects, is not executed speedily; their hearts in that case, says the wise man, are fully set in them to do evil. (Eccles. viii., 11). The goodness of God in forbearing to execute judgment is divinely intended to give room for consideration and repentance. But by many this divine intention is misunderstood, and they are misled to imagine that because they are not interfered with by God, especially after they have heard and neglected so many warnings, the reason is that God is not the kind of God they had been afraid He was, but is a much more indulgent God. Thus, says the apostle, some heap up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath. (Rom. ii., 4-5).

Those who have been once illumined, and have turned back, it is impossible to renew again to repentance. They have lost something essential to salvation. There is the possibility of seeing exactly what is required in Christianity, and of refusing it after clearly seeing it. This is what brings reprobation. This is the sin that destroys the soul. To dislike, or hate, what is thus seen is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Many do not thus yet see nor understand. But by attendance on a faithful ministry there is evermore the likelihood of some souls coming to see, and yet to reject. Souls naturally *try* to see into things; but here the better they see the more they should make it a

point to *close* with what they see. Every fresh light ought to bring the feeling of reverence to the heart ; and, to make sure that this reverence is deepened, there ought either to be a vocal or a silent expression of the reverential attitude of the soul at every fresh view of divine things. This was the apostle Paul's habit, and we see it also even in the old-dispensation patriarchs. A stolid, uncouth, worldly frame of mind in the presence of gospel-light, or of holy things, is very dangerous. It brings on by degrees that inner state which culminates in the unforgiven sin.

Congregations, when vacant, look out for the minister who will, *inter alia*, best explain the truths of the gospel to them. It were well also if at this time they met to consecrate themselves afresh to *perform* according to what they thus expect to be given more clearly to see, lest additional vision bring judgments of hardening. Christ's coming to the world brought such judgments upon many people. He Himself said He had come as a judgment into the world. The Baptist was sent to prepare people lest the blinding judgment should be common, or even universal, and lest the earth should thus come to be smitten with a curse, as Malachi puts it, by the coming of the Son of God. So gospel-light always operates in this way upon people that do not prepare themselves, and that do not obey the gospel when once they know it.

Those we read of in Rom. i. saw divine light in the works of creation ; but when they saw they took not the right attitude, and they thus brought blindness on themselves. Yet they did not relinquish *all* religion ; but we read of the disgusting religion they afterwards came in their delusion to adopt. So it is that many who are irrevocably

hardened will continue to be religious, after their way of it, not realising their state, just as was the case with the Jews after our Lord wept over them. Those for ever excluded from the great supper were not told of their exclusion. (Luke xiv., 24).

*Some Instances of Evangelical Preaching
Bringing Reprobation.*

Even one refusal of the mission of the evangelising disciples brought irrevocable hardening. "Let your peace return unto you." The light of Noah's preaching prepared the antediluvians for their destruction by the flood. They had been hardened before then, and God had said that His Spirit would cease to strive with them, or be humbled among them. But the preaching of Noah was what fully ripened them for their doom.

Similarly Lot's preaching ripened Sodom for its doom; and the ripening process came to its climax when the angels appeared in the city. That neither Lot nor the heavenly messengers were recognised to bear messages from heaven made no difference. The point was that this *ought* to have been recognised; and had the inhabitants lived according to the light which they had in Lot's preaching, heaven would have come to be more clearly recognised in that preaching. But the people were in no mood for such things. The love of the world had distempered their hearts; but they would have, at the same time, discerned as much of the heavenly message as to see that it was against the kind of lives which they had been leading. This was quite enough to set them against it, and to set them in an adversely critical mood with respect to it; and it would have caused them,

moreover, to be secretly glad at every appearance of fault or failure in it, as the Jews were in regard to Christ's life and preaching.

God decided that the Jews in Isaiah's time could not be reclaimed unless they went into captivity. How then did the ripening come for this captivity? By Isaiah being sent them to proclaim the fact that God was ready to pardon, and to invite them to reason with God Himself for their pardon and acceptance; also to warn them of the results of the invitation not being accepted. All this matter and style of preaching, however, hardened the hearts of the people up to the point of being mature for the judgment. The people were in no mood to listen favourably to God's invitations, and therefore the inevitable consequence of hardening followed. Read carefully for this the first and sixth chapters of Isaiah. Also Luke xi., 45-54.

The same kind of results are described in the doom of the unfruitful vineyard on which divine labour had been expended, (Is. v.), in the parable of the barren figtree, and in the case of the ground that produces only thorns and briars under the rain and sunshine of heaven. Read the whole of Heb. vi. in this connection.

St. Paul directed Titus to reject a divider, or heretick, after the first and second admonition, knowing, says he, that such an one is "subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Once heaven's truth and invitation come into fair contact with the soul, if there is no affinity between heaven and the soul, the fact is then made overt, and a decision is made between heaven and the soul. Hatred in ignorance is different; I speak of hatred or refusal with knowledge. One might

speaking a word against the Son of man in ignorance of Who He is or was ; for He was in the form of a man. But he who hates or refuses the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit of heaven, refuses or hates the *spirit* of the thing, and not merely the form ; and spirit can be discerned only by spirit. So when spirit thus comes into contact with spirit, and when it is seen that there is no affinity, as is the case with fire and water, then the soul virtually decides its own doom. As already said, the soul may afterwards continue its relation to religion, but the relation is a dead one, or rather it is a relation which ripens for doom. It is an overwhelming thought to think that many people should be only ripening for doom under the preaching of the gospel.

*The Harmful Conception of Some about the
Ever-Open Door.*

It is a very harmful conception which many seem to entertain when they suppose that, conduct themselves as they may under the gospel, yet up till the hour of their death they will be as able to accept the gospel offer as they had been the first times they had ever heard it. The gospel itself does not warrant the certainty that such a supposition is correct. There may, indeed, be several things connected with the manner in which the gospel comes, or is presented to some people, which may set a certain section of them against it for the time being, who are not in their hearts against it if it were purely seen by them. But it is a rather risky matter for one who feels himself disinclined to accept the gospel offer to attribute his disinclination to any such accident. One ought to

know how very readily the carnal, worldly heart is to grasp at any sort of excuse for its declinature.

When the decision is made between the soul and heaven as to the fact that the two are in eternal variance and separation, this decision does not necessarily, nor usually, signalise itself to the soul itself. The soul may not know any difference in its state *after* this decision from its state before the decision. Though more of this presently.

But the decided fact is that God will be sacrificed either *by* or *upon* every soul that comes nigh to Him ; and every soul that has the gospel invitation made to it comes nigh God when by receiving that invitation. The gospel is thus either a savour of life or of death.

Secret Refusal and Secret Reprobation.

Nothing predisposes the soul to refuse finally, and that perhaps unawares to itself,—usually so indeed,—as a sinful life, though it were merely the sin of neglect. This defiles the conscience, and there may then be a secret disinclination in the heart, almost unawares to the heart itself, against the gospel ; and there may come a point in this state when the soul would have accepted the gospel because of its sight of its meaning ; but instead of accepting it, almost unconsciously and unobservedly to itself, it rejects it, and heaven then makes this rejection final. The soul ought not to suppose that if it reject the gospel finally, the fact must be such as that itself will know what it thus does, and know it in a very decided manner. Such may not be at all the case. We never read of its having been the case ; but the reprobation usually comes on secretly. The Jews did not know when it was

that the things which belonged to their peace were for ever hidden from their eyes. Those who refused the invitation to the great supper had not the sentence of eternal exclusion intimated to them. (Luke xiv., 24).

The final rejection of the gospel by a soul is often the end of a process which had been coming on gradually for a greater or less time, and this final action of rejection by the soul may have been quite imperceptible to the soul itself as being such an awful thing as it is. The soul may have crossed the border almost unconsciously to itself. If it should suppose such a thing unfair, then let it bear in solemn remembrance that it is not such a small affair to go on neglecting the gospel offer as it may have been in the habit of thinking it was,—probably always imagining that delay was nothing, and that there would come some other more convenient season.

Never is any soul justified, nor safe, in allowing itself, either consciously or unconsciously, to suppose that even one slight act of simple neglect under invitations, or under the promptings of its own conscience, is an insignificant act. The gospel is not to be trifled with with impunity. Every act of wilful neglect produces a disposition to neglect again, and thus there is the great danger of an increase of the *disposition* to neglect; and sentence not being for the time executed against it, the possibility is that the final act of rejection will come on silently and imperceptibly as already described.

Surely, then, the soul ought solemnly and thoroughly to prepare itself for attendance on the "outward and ordinary means of grace," since such solemn and awful things silently take place under

such means. It needs not that there be thunders and lightnings, storms and earthquakes, to signalise the presence of the Almighty. The most solemn decisions for eternity often take place in silence. Ought not souls, therefore, to prepare for drawing near God here below with all reverence and renewed consecration, laying apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, so that they may receive with meekness the ingrafted word which is able to save them? "Draw nigh to God," says St. James, "and He will draw nigh to you." And then the sacred writer immediately adds, as if advising due soul-preparation for thus drawing nigh: "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners: purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to heaviness. So also the psalmists speak of the purity of heart and action of those who shall, with benefit, ascend the hill of the Lord, and abide in His presence. (Ps. xv. and xxiv.)

St. Paul advises a man to examine himself before partaking of the holy communion, and that because a man in so partaking comes nigh God. The Corinthian Christians had, many of them, lost much of their reverence by drawing nigh unsuitably. They were disciplined for this error, some of them by the extreme discipline of physical chastisement, as if even Christians themselves who lose their reverence in great part, could profit so long by any means of grace under the present economy. To prevent similar things recurring, the apostle counsels self-examination, and it is likewise also personal consecration, before drawing nigh to the Lord, not because it was special to this time of drawing nigh rather than another, but because of the danger,

but the same principle applies in every drawing nigh to God. And about no drawing nigh are we so much and so frequently warned as the drawing nigh which is implied in the unsuitable hearing of the gospel invitation, for in this invitation we have, as it were, God's own heart, and the most precious pearls of the kingdom, placed before

But the apostle, at the same time, congratulated the Corinthians on the fact that God had intervened, even if the discipline had been severe; for this intervention, he points out, was a merciful one that they had not been left to themselves, bastards without chastening, to be consumed by the final overthrow which would overtake the world. But if people were permitted by God's providence to come nigh Him without His interposition, so that when they seem to be in a hardened and impenitent state, so that no counsels, nor exhortations nor warnings nor threatenings seem to have any appreciable effect upon them: then, in view of the solemn fact that such a thing as silent reprobation exists, have we not reason to tremble lest this apparently forsaken state may betoken one of reprobation?

“ There is a time we know not when ;
 A point, we know not where ;
 That marks the destiny of man
 To glory or despair.

There is a line by us unseen,
 That crosses every path ;
 The hidden boundary be'ween
 God's patience and his wrath.

To pass that line it is to die ;
 To die as it by stealth.
 It does not quench the beaming eye,
 Nor pale the glow of health.

The conscience may be still at ease ;
The spirits light and gay,
That which is pleasing still may please,
And care be thrust away.

But on that forehead God has set
Indelibly a mark ;
Unseen by man, for man as yet
Is blind and in the dark.

And yet the doomed man's path below,
Like Eden may have bloomed,
He did not, does not, will not know,
Nor feel that he is doomed.

He knows, he feels that all is well ;
And every fear is calmed,
He lives, he dies, and wakes in hell ;
Not only doomed, but damned.

O where is thy mysterious bourne,
By which our path is crossed ?
Beyond which God himself has sworn
That he who goes is lost ?

An answer from the skies is sent ;
Ye that from God depart ;
While it is called TO-DAY, *Repent,*
And harden not your heart "

CHAPTER X.

SUPERSEDEES AND HINDERERS OF
EVANGELICAL RELIGION.

There are many stuffed professors. They have all the externals of religion and morality; all they want is life.—*Spurgeon.*

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements.—*Paul.*

Recapitulation.

In accord with what has already been before us, let it be again noted that the individual soul requires to come itself to Christ, and requires to be truly religious by its own efforts. It needs itself to agonise to reach Christ, and must part with all that is needful to part with in order to reach Christ and serve Him. Nothing can, with safety to the soul itself, supersede the necessary efforts on its own part to reach and maintain itself in the evangelically moral.

We have also noted that in many cases a church comes through her officials and offers easier terms to struggling souls, and to souls that would come to the moral struggle were it not that the church intervenes. Man himself is evermore prone to adopt cheaper and easier ways to be religious, reconciled to God, and to be safe, than the way of

self-surrender, and the way of service in the evangelically moral.

In judging of the true means on the one hand, and spurious or inept means for salvation on the other, let us have before us the difference between what is effected through means between which and their results there is a *law*-connection; and, on the other hand, the effects supposed to be produced through a *magic*-connection between the means and their supposed results.

The majority of inept means, or *magic*-means, are employed connected with the church-life. The chief of these are the *gnosis*, the *form*, the *fetish*, the *flesh*, and the *short-cut*. We have noticed the first two already, yet we shall take a brief look at them again; then we shall notice the others mentioned.

The Gnosis.

Some of the ancients put the *gnosis*, or intellectual knowledge, in antithesis to the *pistis*, or faith. They held the former to be for philosophers and thinking people, and the latter to be for the common herd.

Some of whom better things might have been expected, depreciate the *gnosis* (knowledge), and doctrine, theology, etc., because these are not the *life* in religion. As well depreciate the pipe in which the water runs because it is not the water itself; as well depreciate science because it is not its own subject-matter, and the medical profession because it is not life and health, as depreciate intellectual or theoretic knowledge, doctrine, theology etc., because these are not the religious life or inner experiences which they direct us how to obtain and maintain.

A still worse fault, however, in connection with the *gnosis*, is the making of it, the acquisition of it, and faithfulness to it, a *substitute* for the reaching of Christ, and for that evangelically moral life which maintains the soul in personal nearness to Christ. Many put creed and doctrine instead of Christ. As well put the knowledge of the articles of food instead of the food itself, or suppose that a bill of fare will satisfy hunger as well as the food itself mentioned on the bill of fare. The doctrine or creed which is untranslatable, or is not actually translated, into the flesh and blood of religious life is not of much use. That which in this form is held only to fight and wrangle about is no better than the endless genealogies that some of the ancients used to wrangle about in their religion. Whatever parts of a creed we contend for, we should be ready to shew their connection with the practical life of the living Christian. And the great parts of the sound creed, according to New Testament teaching, are the parts that teach us about the evangelically moral, or love to God and to our neighbour.

And even were religion, or a great part thereof, to consist in correct opinions about the unpractical, or even the practical, parts of a creed, or doctrines, it is certain that those who are given most to make separations and divisions in churches, and form denominations or sects of their own, have not among them those who would be best qualified to come to correct opinions on these matters. Very few, if any, of the smaller denominations, or sects, who have separated themselves from larger religious bodies, could, or would like to try, to face the following questions, and be constrained to answer them under penalty of some divine judgment

unless their answers were correct :—(1) Have we any reasonable ground to hope, or to feel confident, that we have been more highly favoured by the *Holy Spirit's* guidance than those from whom we differ, so that we are guided better than they are to form correct views of religious doctrine? (2) Have we any good cause to suppose that we have better *intellects* than they have, and to think, if there should be a competition among our intellects by tests on any or all other subjects than religion, where the unseen affords protection to the charlatan, that our *intellects* would manifest themselves as so far superior to theirs as we reckon our religious views superior to theirs? (3) Do we, or any in our party, apply ourselves more to *learning* and *study* than they do, and are we better *scholars* than they? (4) Are we more *sincere* than they? and are they all hypocrites, undervaluing the soul's salvation—both their own and others—whilst all on our side value the salvation of the soul? (5) Do we shew clearly our greater estimate of the soul's salvation by our greater *labours* in the vineyard? (6) Have we any tangible ground whatsoever that we can advance before God on the great day, to shew that we can safely risk it that we have grounds to firmly believe that we are right, and that they are wrong, wherever we differ, or even on any one point in which we differ? (7) If we cannot reasonably, conscientiously, or intelligently, and with adequate information concerning what we are venturing to pronounce an opinion about, maintain before God that we believe we are more likely to be right than they: then is our hostile attitude towards these others, our separations, schisms, and divisions, not directly contrary to Scripture, and proving a barrier to that union

and amity with our fellow-Christians for which our Lord prayed, and which Scripture so earnestly exhorts us to cultivate ?

The Form.

Very many still contend for certain outward *forms* as being necessary to true religion. This was the contention which characterised the Pharisees of old. They did not meet with God in their divers washings, nor in their tithings of mint, anise, and cummin ; yet they remained attached to these externals. That a people should be seen contending for certain forms, is no sign whatsoever that they are religious in the true sense. It is rather a sign the other way ; for if they should know the spiritual life experimentally, they would be aware that this life can manifest itself in a variety of ways.

We have seen how ancient Israel evermore tended to leave vital religion and cleave to forms. We have also seen how the Apostle Paul viewed such cleavings, and the terrible anathemas he pronounced against those who taught that certain forms were necessary.

It may be clearly seen by any unprejudiced mind that a particular *form* of worship has nothing whatsoever to do with the soul's efforts to reach Christ and abide in Him. It is the *inward* and the *moral* that count here, and not the external. Not this mount or that, nor this attitude at prayer or singing, or that attitude. These are not the main questions, and are not questions which ought to be viewed as being the subject of any divine command any further than that all such things should be done in decency and order. If we

go further than this, and attach to forms a divine command, we are in danger of landing ourselves in the position of the false teachers in Galatia, and of some of the Galatians themselves who observed times, and seasons, and days, and months, and years, and about whom, in consequence, the apostle expresses his fear that he had bestowed on them labour in vain.

A young calf will not drink its milk out of the vessel at first unless a finger be put in its mouth. It has the instinct that the finger is a teat of its dam. If the finger be prematurely withdrawn, the calf will fight for it. But leave the finger with it and it will drink with great vigour. So also many want the finger, that is, the *form* to which they have been accustomed in public worship, or else they will take none of their sincere milk of the word. It is to be feared, however, that some have only the juices of the finger itself on which to feed, supposing that these juices are the true milk.

The Fetish.

In the standard dictionary the word fetish is thus defined :

“ A material object, believed to be the dwelling of a spirit, or to represent a spirit that may be induced or compelled to help the possessor ; an object of worship among savages ; any object of devotion or blind affection ; an image.”

Now notice here, first, that the object is usually a *material* object, that is, some object which we can see, handle, hear, taste, or smell, as distinct from an unseen thought or feeling, or God. Notice, secondly, that the affection given is *blind*. There can be *blind* affection. Our affection is blind when

we know not why it is given. Affection for our fellow-men is not blind, for it is natural, and so we explain it. But when we love some object without knowing why, the affection is blind. It is a *fossilization*. If we have proved the object's goodness, the affection can be so far thus explained, although even then a great deal of fossilized affection may be given the object. Heathen peoples have fossilized affections around several objects of a material kind which they believe to be the dwelling-place of spirits. In some cases, as in Formosa, the ancestral tablet, a piece of material about six inches long and four broad, is believed to contain the spirits of ancestors, and there is an ancestral tablet there in every family.

Professor W. Wundt of Leipsig, in his "Elements of Psychology"—a text-book used in Toronto University—treats of religion under the heading *Myths*. Wundt says that man has in him "an inveterate myth-making propensity." This is as true of civilized man, he says, as it was of primitive man. The standard dictionary defines a myth as "an imaginary or fictitious object or event. The myth," it says, "is purely the work of the imagination; the legend has a nucleus of fact."

Wundt says that primitive man worshipped stocks and stones, imagining that spirits resided in these. When he rose somewhat in the scale of being he began to worship moving and sounding things in nature, such as rivers, winds, sun, moon, stars, thunder, earthquakes, etc., imagining that the spirits on whom his destiny depended resided in these. As he kept rising his objects of worship came to be still more refined. The poets of a nation, as they got their inspiration amid the hills

and dales of their country, gave the gods, or the god, the quality of sentiment. When the exigencies of rhyme caused a new adjective to be invented, if the word proved a good one, it was employed to grace the latest god with the sentiment for which the word stood. The politicians gave the god his justice, and his sense of right and wrong, whilst the philosophers bestowed on him his wisdom.

But as man rose to the highest point to which he has attained, he found that an *abstract* god would do, a god that resides neither in winds nor stocks, but behind the clouds somewhere; and, as Professor James would tell us, removable at pleasure, or when he falls behind the age. All this will read like a fairy-tale to orthodox believers; but let me assure such that these conceptions are the serious convictions of the foremost psychologists of the age, professors of the science of the human mind in our greatest universities, where students for the Christian ministry receive part of their training. How will it fare with these students, many will be inclined to ask, unless they be wiser than their teachers?

There is little room for doubt, however, but that Wundt is right when he says that there is in man "an inveterate myth-making propensity"; but that this propensity goes so far as this psychologist avers is a different question. The myth-making propensity is not supposed, of course, to rise in every man to the pitch of genius so as to enable him to project a suitable god from his imagination—a god that will "take" with his nation. But the myth-making propensity in every man will cause him to *cleave* to the suitable god once it has been formed. It is a *myth-cleaving*, as well as a *myth-making*, propensity. If we call this myth-cleaving

propensity a fetish-cleaving propensity, the difference will not be radical.

There is, then, let us say a *fetish-cleaving propensity* in the human heart, as well as a form-cleaving propensity, in religion. It was this fetish-cleaving propensity that caused ancient Israel so frequently to depart into idolatry. The prophet Isaiah could not waken the people out of their fetish-dreams, notwithstanding all his fine flood of irony about the tree, the half of which the people made into a god, the other half being used to kindle a fire at which they warmed themselves, exclaiming, "Aha, I am warm." (Is. xlv.)

The great fetish in the ritualistic churches is "the apostolic succession," or, which is virtually the same thing, prelatial church-organisation. The *ritualistic* churches are the churches which admit to membership by means of ritual, whereas the churches which admit to membership all applicants who make a credible profession of their faith in Christ are called *evangelical* churches. There is a great difference between making one a member of Christ by means of a particular ritual, and, on the other hand, the applicant for church-membership having professed to have himself reached Christ, and now to be living in Him, and being received as a church-member on that profession. The churches who claim the "succession" are the churches whose clergy have been ordained by those who had been themselves in the line of apostolic succession, that is, a line of ordination reaching back to the apostles, who were directly commissioned to ordain by Jesus Christ Himself.

The "apostolic succession" is that which is supposed to give authority to organise such a church as that admission to it will of itself mean

union with Christ, and will secure salvation. The Romish Church and the Episcopal Church are the two ritualistic churches of special note. But the ritualistic churches supersede the agonising to enter in, for they offer salvation by means of, or through, the individual joining these churches themselves. The English church consents that the Romish church has the "succession," but the latter church does not consent that the former church possesses it.

All this is invalid in the conviction of every other church. Other churches, especially all the evangelical churches, hold that it can never be proved that any ordination of to-day reaches back in this fashion to the apostles ; and that even if this could be proved, it would amount to nothing whatsoever spiritually. It is placing store on *magic* instead of establishing a *law-connection* between means and results. To try to make out that God is the author of the magic makes the matter no better, but rather worse : for it shews the lack of an understanding of God's methods, and of the spirit of the gospel-dispensation. There is no magical connection between means and ends in the new dispensation. Between means and ends there is always a *law-connection*. There is no *magic-connection* between the elements used in the administration of the sacraments and the ends served by the sacraments. The Westminster divines were careful to state this fact, for they said that the efficacy of the sacraments does not arise "from any virtue in them, nor in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and by the working of the spirit in them that by faith receive them." (Shorter Cat., Q. 91).

The sacraments impart no grace to any one

who has not grace already ; and any grace which the sacraments impart can be got otherwise than through them by church members. The chief ends served by the sacraments are that they are badges of profession, signs, and seals. In the case of the Lord's Supper it is also a memorial service. But it is quite different to attribute *regenerating power* to the sacraments, as the church of Rome does and a certain section of the English church. These churches believe in baptismal regeneration.

Now it can be easily understood how such a system is apt to cut the sinews of moral effort to reach Christ, besides that it is unwarranted. The Romish church has seven sacraments. The English church has a large number of ritualistic ceremonies, each of which is understood to have *some* power. But the chief thing with this church is "the apostolic succession" ; the church must be prelatially organised, it is maintained, ere it can be rightly regarded as a church of Christ. No other kind of church can be looked on as a true church of Christ. Connection with a prelatial church gives salvation ; but connection with no other church does so.

Hundreds of the clergymen of the English church do not believe all this to be a right part of the creed of their church ; but I am not now enquiring what *individuals* may or may not believe. The question is, what is the creed of the church ? The type of creed just explained may be easily understood. What would the use be thought to be of a prelatially organised church, or of the "apostolic succession," unless these conferred benefits which other churches do not confer ? But that the "apostolic succession" is by no means a dead letter in the

creed of the English church, we may see, *inter alia*, from the reply made last year (1906) to the union committee of the presently negotiating churches in Canada by an assembly of English church divines. The following is the reply made to the query about the willingness of the English church to join in the negotiations for union, as reported in the *Toronto Globe* of 14th December, 1906 :—

“ A courteous response has also been received from the Anglicans to the proposal made to them, but though the way is open to take preliminary steps towards the end of union, the outlook is so far indefinite.”

“ The Church of England is willing to dispense with her liturgies and special forms of worship, but will require four cardinal points to be accepted by other denominations, viz., that the Bible is the sole rule of faith, that the Apostles' and Nicene creeds are the rule of doctrine, that the words ' the institution of,' must precede the names of the two sacraments, and that the historical continuity of the Church cannot be broken.”

No doubt all the other conditions were put in to keep company with the last one, which is by far the chief one, and means simply the “ apostolic succession.” There is not the least cause for suspicion that any of the other negotiating churches do not accept the other articles or creeds mentioned. The Bible is far more strictly the rule of faith with the other negotiating churches, especially with the Presbyterian church, than with the English church, for there is no scriptural authority to be found for the “ apostolic succession.” The most learned and scholarly of the English divines have admitted this fact. For instance the late Bishop Lightfoot, in his commentary on the Epistle

to the Philippians, expresses himself strongly on the point that the priesthood belongs to *all* believers, and says that the idea of confining it to the ministry is a great error. He avers, moreover, that "the facts do not allow us to unchurch other Christian communities differently organised," *i.e.*, differently from the Episcopate (p. 267). The same writer points out that the whole Christian people constitute a *kingdom of priests*. "There are," he says, "no specially holy places nor persons, for all places are holy, and all Christians are holy." He notes that the Christian nation has now the priesthood *reclaim* itself, which had been delegated to special functionaries on behalf of the people in the immature period of Israel. Dr. Lightfoot was of opinion that the idea of priesthood for the ministry came into the Christian society from the heathens who continued coming into the church in former times, and who all had some form of the priesthood in their former religions.

The late Principal W. Cunningham, of the New College, Edinburgh, attributes Pelagianism, the parent of Arminianism, to heathen origin. There may be more heathen elements in the church than we are aware of. The modern scientists of comparative religion tell us that the greater part of Christianity came from ancient Judaism, and that again from heathenism. Mr. Jordan, in his recent work on Comparative Religion, labours to make out this point.

Let it be noticed that when once a form or fetish becomes customary, or has the sanction of tradition, or of party, then the hearts of both learned and unlearned, wise and otherwise, begin to warm and then to fossilize around it. Fossilization, or

petrification, is different from the action of the religiously conservative principle in man. The latter is always ready to examine new theories, and possesses the nobility of the ancient Berceans; whereas fossilization, unless it go into latitudinarianism, will not do this, but if its idol is disturbed it will cry out: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," or some will say one thing and some another within the party, the greater part of them not knowing what they say. The conservative principle is described by St. Peter as a being "stablished, strengthened, and settled."

In Scotland at the present time there are ever so many Presbyterian denominations. There are, *inter alia*, the two great ones of the Established Church and the U.F. Church, the former church feeling sure that the right thing for the Government to do is to have their own very church established, whilst the latter church, clergy and laity, feel as certainly convinced that it is very wrong of the Government to do such a thing, and they petition the Government annually to do away with such an anomaly. Now is it to be supposed for an instant that all the clergy of the one church, and just because they happened to be brought up where they are, would have, by rational mental processes, come to be of the conviction which they thus entertain, whilst all the clergy of the other church have come as rationally to be of the opposite view? We never hear of transitions from the one denomination to the other from change of conviction, which we would assuredly hear of did not the *myth-cleaving* propensity exert a powerful influence even on these clergy. This is patent to the most casual observer.

Similar things are true of the prelatial churches—

clergy and laity. Were these able to rise above their myth-cleaving, or fetish-cleaving, propensity, and take an unprejudiced survey of their "apostolic succession," ornate and superabundant ritual, and prelatie organisation, would they not see that Scripture, science in her deliverances on natural law, philosophy in her "ultimate principles" for the test of "means," and even common-sense itself, do all unitedly proclaim that these things ought not to have the emphasis put upon them that are placed on them by the ritualistic churches. Everybody sees this except those within these churches themselves.

It is a most serious matter for the Episcopal church to aver, as she does by her creed,—whatever individuals in that church may do,—that no real Christian work has ever been accomplished outside the pale of the ritualistic churches, no souls ever converted except within, or by joining one or other of, these churches. Is all the work accomplished by Whitefield, the Wesleys, Chalmers, Spurgeon, Moody, and a host of other eminent workers, to be regarded as an evil work? Did they cast out Satan by Satan? St. Peter was open to conviction, and was actually convinced by the results which he saw before his eyes, that God had accepted the Gentiles; and he asks what was he that he should fight against God who gave such results. But what convinced Peter will not convince the ritualistic churches of our day. They are more embedded in the fetish-cleaving propensity than the apostle was, more so than *any* of the apostles were, for they were all convinced by St. Peter's account, although they seem to have had a due share of the conservative principle.

The teachers of error in Galatia of old did not

deny that faith in Christ was essential for salvation ; but they combined with that faith the teaching that the laws of Moses required to be kept. It was this combination, as we have seen, that drew from the apostle his terrible words recorded in Gal. I. In what way are the modern ritualistic churches any better than their ancient prototypes ?

CHAPTER XI.

SUPERSEDEES AND HINDERERS OF
EVANGELICAL RELIGION (CONTINUED).

The form of godliness is common, but the power of it is rare.

The form of godliness is cheap, but the power of it costs much.

The form of godliness is easy, but the power of it is difficult.

The form of godliness is a credit, but the power of it is a reproach.

The form of godliness may exist with secret and open wickedness, but the power of godliness cannot.

Brooks.

The Fetish in Evangelical Churches.

It is comparatively easy for us to see, or think we see, the errors in which others are bound hand and foot ; but it is not so easy for us to see as clearly the similar errors in which we ourselves may be similarly bound. This is human nature again ; especially is it undisciplined or prejudiced human nature. Protestants can see how the Roman Catholics are bound in religious superstitions ; but they cannot see so clearly their own similar bindings. The heart is apt, as already noticed, to fossilise around custom, be the custom right or wrong, as a miser's heart fossilises round his shining coin. When this stage comes in religion, then, in the case of many, good-bye for evermore

to honest and earnest enquiry. People who reach this stage esteem it their holy duty to repudiate for ever after every sort of doubt suggested about their position, or any part thereof.

“Be in possession, and thou art in right ;
The crowd will give thee help to keep it sacred.”

Generally speaking, whatever in the form of means, or supposed means, has not a moral nor a rational connection, has a *magic* connection between the means and the end, or ends, or the supposed end, or ends. Even if the means do effect the end, or ends, the latter may not be proper ends to have produced in religion. This I believe to be the case where there is an excess of flesh-stirring exercises in our churches by musical or other means. Again, some means may be inept for the production of what is intended, as well as that what is intended may not be itself right.

We have already abundantly seen what the right ends are. These consist, in the first place, of reaching Christ, and being united to Him. Then in growing up into full stature in him, or growing more and more like Him, so as to be filled with His fulness. This final result has for its chief soul-experiences, union, communion, love, life, light, and joy or happiness.

The way to reach Christ is just to come to Him, as already described. The way to become like Him is to express in word and act our love to Him and to our neighbour, and to keep ourselves unspotted from whatsoever would defile, or whatever would hinder this expression, or render it unacceptable. We also contemplate, or meditate on, that which calls forth our love, adoration, gratitude,

etc. We should *express* these once they are found within. The expression is in word, such as in prayer and praise, both in public and private—sometimes alone and sometimes along with others.

These are rational and moral means. There is a *law*-connection between themselves and their ends, and there is no *magic*, or legerdemain about the matter. But when we depart from these means into an excess of flesh-stirring exercises, or into belief in fetishes, or into excessive symbolization, short-cuts, etc., we go astray in the direction in which religious human nature is always very prone to go astray; that is, by way of endeavouring to get easier methods than the Scripture ones, easier ways than cutting off a right hand, plucking out a right eye, or parting with all, in order to enter the kingdom, or grow up in it.

No doubt the means described here as the true means would seem very bald to many people; but this may be all the stronger proof that departure from these means is not an advantage, for they ought not to be reckoned bald. There is abundance in Christ to fill us full, and if we are not on the way of being filled full by having the liberty of direct access to Him, then there is surely enough something wrong. And if there be something wrong here, it ought to be discovered and rectified, but not by employing any superseders or hinderers, but by being all the more desirous to see what we really are, and that without these. In certain physical ailments opium will relieve the trouble, and will, perhaps, cause the pain to cease entirely. But then the disease which had caused the pain may be making all the more secure progress towards a fatal issue on account of its not now causing any pain. So also there are opiates in religion

which will relieve and comfort, but at the expense of hiding one's standing from himself, and thus deceiving him.

The fetishes in evangelical churches are in some instances more subtle than those in the ritualistic churches. Anything can be made a fetish of; even right or legitimate objects or acts can be employed or treated as fetishes rather than as they are intended to be used. If, for instance, a certain ointment is intended to be applied regularly to a particular part of the body; and if, instead of so applying it, the box in which the ointment is is carried about in the pocket as a *charm*, then the ointment is made a fetish of rather than used as it ought to be used.

So in evangelical churches we find some people still make fetishes of the Bible, inspiration, creed, doctrine, confessions, buildings, certain days, certain persons, metallic tokens at communion seasons, standing at prayer and sitting at singing, singing the old-dispensation psalms *only* instead of hymns, and, in a few instances, of "giving out the line" in the singing, and of the sacraments, mannerisms, in preachers, such as the inflections of the voice, and certain other manoeuvres both in preachers and in saints, or supposed saints. People who make fetishes of these or of some of them, are not as a rule in the least aware of what they thus do, nor would they believe it though told of it, but would rather be shocked at the idea of their being thought to do such things. But there is nothing more certain than that notwithstanding this, many actually do make fetishes of some or all of these things. If, for instance, the very same sermon were preached to certain people by one kind of preacher, or some one with a great name, it would be

reckoned a great and wonderful sermon. But let the same identical sermon be delivered by a certain other sort of preacher, with a different style of delivery, and it would be considered of no value, but quite a tame and ordinary affair. This would happen even when the sermon would be equally well understood in each instance.

Many think, unknown to themselves, that there is some virtue even in reading the Bible, apart from understanding it, and apart especially from acting according to what they read, as if some special spirit, power, or influence resided in the words themselves, whether the words be understood or not. So also with all the other things mentioned. It is imagined that there is something sacred in each of them, and none of them will be either parted with or modified. Even the very language itself in which gospel is preached is made a fetish of by not a few.

Inspiration made a Fetish of.

A large number make a fetish of inspiration, not knowing, nor being willing to be taught, what the meaning and right use of inspiration are. So they will sing nothing in public worship except the old-dispensation psalms, and that because these psalms are inspired. It is of little or no use trying to reason with these people; they reckon it a sacred duty to oppose you if you try to do so, and they feel a certain elevation, as if a divine power were working in them, when they take up this attitude of opposition.

Of course, sensible people need not be told that the use of divine inspiration is that therein we have a guarantee that what is uttered by the inspired one

is true, good, and suitable. With respect to what is true, let it be noted that what is true *anywhere* is as true as what is true in the Bible, for there are no degrees in truth. Truth is the harmony between a representation and what is represented. A professed description of facts is a professed representation of these facts, and if the description is in exact harmony, or agreement, with the facts described, then the description is *true*, and inspiration could not make it any more true than it is. But all the Bible teaching on spiritual matters is as true as is the teaching, or description, of facts in the old-dispensation psalms. What is true in human hymns is as true as what is true in the psalms.

Now with regard to what is good and suitable for the production of the *ends* in view, we ought, if we ourselves are to be efficient agents in the production of these *ends*, to know what the *ends* are; and we ought, moreover, to know the connection between the good and suitable *means* we are supposed to use, and the good and suitable *ends* supposed to be effected by these means. Otherwise we are proceeding in the dark, or by a holy magic, legerdemain, charm, or by talismans, incantations, or in some other superstitious manner. It would never make an arithmetician of a boy at school if he merely copied the solution of arithmetic problems from his neighbour's slate or paper, even though the solutions thus copied should be the correct ones. To become an arithmetician the boy must himself learn to solve problems; and this means that he must understand thoroughly every step in the process of solution. The process must go through him, or through his intelligence, as well as that he must go through the process.

He must know what he is aiming at, and why it is that he adds, subtracts, multiplies, and divides, every time that he does any of these. Merely to put down figures on his paper, even should they be the right figures by chance, unless he understands the why and the when, would do him no good whatsoever. And it would not make the matter one whit better if he imagined the schoolmaster would be pleased with seeing him put down right figures without understanding what he was doing, or why he was doing it. The whole would only shew that he was far back in intelligence, and would hardly ever become an arithmetician. We cannot become truly religious either by being mere copiers of the forms of others, or by fetish-worship.

Now all the teaching of spiritual matters given us in the Bible is given for the guidance of our efforts in the evangelization or sanctification of our own souls and the souls of others, all being subservient to the manifestation of the divine glory, not to the increase of that glory—for that cannot be done—but to the *manifestation* of the glory to others. We form our love to God and our neighbour, our reverence, humility, joy, hope, faith, etc., as directed in the spiritual teaching of the Scriptures.

Old-Dispensation Psalms made a Fetish of.

But if we sing *intelligently*, and with proper movement within, we simply express in words what we understand, and what we *intend* to express, because what we are to express has already formed itself within; and, it may be, has already taken place, or may soon take place, in our lives. A

great part of our praises, as well as of our addresses to God in prayer, is formed on the basis of the kind of lives we live. We speak to God about our lives, and about the grace we need, and have been already receiving for our lives. This means that we are living what we are speaking to God about. We speak with our lives, and also in our inner and outer experience, much of what we express in song and in prayer. We address the same God, whether in song or prayer, and often in the very same words. We act out in life afterwards much of what we speak to God in song and prayer. For instance, we in our song or prayer express a desire for grace to overcome temptations, to love others more, to be more humble, more zealous and prudent in right directions, etc. Now why is it that we should suppose that if we speak these things to God in song we must employ the words of old-dispensation psalms, but that when we express the very same things to the very same God in prayer, we may use our own words? Does the rising and falling of the voice in uttering itself in song make the difference? Some people sing even their prayers. Ought *they* to adopt the prayers given in the Bible, because they express themselves to God thus in a singing manner in their prayers?

To say that God has commanded that we sing only old-dispensation psalms, is to say that for which there is no Scripture authority. It is adding to Scripture, and this is very far wrong, and we are expressly warned not to do it. (Rev. xxii., 18-19). Would it not have been easy for the author of Scripture to have given us clear, and even frequent exhortations on this matter, had he meant that we sing only old-dispensation psalms? The fact that these psalms were given to be sung in the

old-dispensation period, is no indication that even the old-dispensation people themselves were to be *confined* to these, nor especially is it any sign that new-dispensation Christians were intended to be confined to them. The sacrifices, and other ceremonial, of the Mosaic law were given in the former period for use *then*; but that is no reason why *we* should use them. It may be said, however, that the shadows and sacrifices of the former dispensation were done away with by express divine command. They were, indeed, so done away with, but that was because they were unsuitable after the *substance* came. It is not suitable to be occupied with the shadows, or symbols, when the reality itself is before us.

In the old-dispensation psalms, it is said, and said truly enough, that Christ is to be found; but then He is found there under shadows, in accord with the other parts of the old economy, for the people were not in a suitable state to have a nearer view of God, through Christ being more clearly revealed than through sacrifices, ceremonial, shadows, types, and symbols. What other cause could there have been for these representations in that period? God always acts with sufficient reason. The apostles tell us why God acted as He did in the old dispensation.

St. Paul contrasts very sharply the old dispensation of *shadows* with the new dispensation of *substance*. See his description in 2 Cor. iii. The old dispensation, he says, had no glory or excellence at all when we contrast it with the new. But he also says that there were many who did not perceive the glory of the new dispensation because the veil which was upon their hearts blinded them to the glory of this dispensation. They did not see





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the glory of the old dispensation either *in the true way*, for had they done so, they would also have seen the greater glory of the new one. They simply made a fetish of the shadow and ceremonial of the old dispensation; their hearts fossilised around these. Had it been otherwise they would have perceived the greater glory of the new and clearer dispensation, for it was simply an increase of the glory of the old one.

St. Paul tells us, further, that the real cause why people did not perceive the glory of the new dispensation, and were still living in the old dispensation after the latter had passed away, was that they were not *consecrated* enough to God. They made a fetish of God, as the Jews did who imagined God was their Father when they actually belonged, as Jesus told them, to quite another father. St. Paul says that when the hearts of certain people turned to the Lord, the veil would be taken away, and they would then behold the greater glory of the *substance*, and would not be cleaving to the *shadow*. (2 Cor. iii.)

Even the literal name *Jesus* was given by the angel, and is a powerful name in its influence over the hearts of living believers. They love to express this name in their song. They do not make a blind fetish of it, for they know why they use it. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Also the saint loves to sing, and that in all the clearness of the gospel history, about the finished work of Jesus, and all that results therefrom.

"Jesus the name I love so well,
The name I love to hear,
No saint on earth its worth can tell,
No heart conceive how dear.

This name shall shed its fragrance still
Along this thorny road,
Shall sweetly smooth the rugged hill
That leads me up to God."

Why should saints *now* be looking at Jesus through the dimness and shadows that were necessary in the old dispensation? Why sing of Him *now* under this dimness, mists, and shadows? Why not use clear words about Him, characteristic of the clearness of the new dispensation? Why but that some people still need the shadows and mists. Their inner eyes are still weak, and cannot stand clear light. It is a great matter to have light and freedom, but it is a still greater matter to be *prepared* for this light and freedom. Light and freedom give a nearer approach to God; but if any be impure in their hearts, or lives, or be spiteful, hateful, lazy, over-imaginative, tipplers in strong drink, not workers in the vineyard, near approaches to God might blind them, as the coming of Christ with His light blinded many. Many will not lay aside their filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness so as to approach God with purity; and it may be, therefore, that meantime their keeping themselves under the mists and shadows is a sort of safety-valve. It may be a mercy to them that they do not see, since they are not *prepared* to see. But when the heart shall more thoroughly turn to the Lord, then the veil shall be taken away. (2 Cor. iii.)

Yet it is both a sin and a shame for people, and is a testimony against them, that they do not prepare themselves to see better than many do in this dispensation of light and glory. If, say, the old-dispensation saints required green spectacles for their inner eyes—these eyes not being

fitted to look with clear light on Jesus and His work—that is no reason why we should look at Jesus and His work *now* through these same green spectacles? and that after we have read the history of Jesus and His work. Is it not a curious, “thrown” state, shall we say, when one insists on walking with crutches when the means is beside him to make himself perfectly whole, so as to walk without crutches? Could there be any clearer sign of fossilization around the crutches? The petrification of the heart, so that it cannot enquire, is a most serious state. It was this that prevented the Jews enquiring properly about Christ, and made them crucify Him.

Let it be again repeated that the New Testament prohibits in the strongest manner the reverting to types, shadows, and the rudiments of the former dispensation, after the *substance*, the *reality*, the great and glorious *fact*, had come; and especially does it utter itself strongly against those who would *teach* error in this respect by reverting to the ceremonial, shadows, dimnesses, mists of the former period, and living under them, although these were needful at that time. What was *spiritual* under the former dispensation was the same necessarily in its nature as what is spiritual under the new dispensation. That is, what has *direct* reference to the formation of the spirit of man is the same in both dispensations. But we are referring to the *externals* of the old dispensation; and the spirituals were then to a great extent couched under externals, owing to the state of the people. Let the Epistle of the Hebrews be particularly studied in this connection, and also the Epistle to the Galatians. An epitome of the former is given towards the end of Heb. xii. Let

the full significance of this epitome be understood. We are not, says the writer in effect, come to mere *externals*—sounds, sights, etc.,—but to *internals*, things of the spirit. God desires worshippers in spirit and sincerity, and not worshippers who lay stress on form, place, attitude or platitude of the body—not on this mount or that, this city or that—for worship. (John iv.) If any parts of the old-dispensation psalms can be used by us to express our inner state, then let us use them; but let us not suppose we are *confined* in our song to the use of these psalms.

*Excessive Symbolisation and Flesh-Stirring
Exercises in Public Worship.*

Types and symbols belonged to the old dispensation, not to the new except in a very sparing degree; and even that degree itself is permitted, or given, on account of the people's weakness. What is given of symbol in the sacraments is very chaste, and the symbol here has no power residing in itself. To employ the symbol as if there were power in itself is to make a fetish of it. The sacraments express what is true in our lives, or what *ought* to be true there, as well as what is true about God or Christ. Unless we have the truth which is symbolised in the sacraments expressed also in our lives, the symbolisation in the sacraments can do us no good, any more than Isaiah's people derived any good from their prescribed externals, since their earth-life was unmoral.

But the ritualistic churches add an excess of symbol to that simplicity and chastity which ought to characterise public worship. This is characteristic of the period of man's infancy—the old-

dispensation period. *Images* are expressly prohibited in worship. Their supposed aid in worshipping God is harmful, and this is the cause of the prohibition. We can understand our inner state all the better if we seek to come *direct* to God, without leaning on any help from either symbols or images. Symbols, or ornate ritual, tend to deceive us as to what sin, or backsliding, has made of us.

Along with much formal ritual in some churches, there is also very ornate music—instrumental and vocal—music a great part of which can in no sense be called congregational. Music of some kind we must have in our churches; but it ought to be simple and congregational, and always wedded to words that all the people can understand—words which express what has been already formed, or ought to have been formed, within. But when ornate pieces are played or sung—solos, anthems, glees, etc.—so that the people may listen to the fine performances, there is apt to be nothing for the great body of the people but a stirring of those feelings which are stirred in the theatre.

From the inner effects of all the ornate music and shewy ritual it would be well nigh, if not altogether, impossible to discriminate the heavenly experiences did they come. Is Christ expected to come in these clouds? Are they the clouds of heaven, in which His final advent is announced? It is much to be suspected that if Christ were to be formed, or born, within souls in the midst of such things He would be smothered with swaddling clothes. Many a dishonest man, many a villain in his daily life, feels trimmed-up by such exhilarating performances, and made to think that he is not so bad after all when he can be stirred at a religious meeting, and he hopes he may be swept

in somehow into the kingdom on the currents that are flowing past on the Sundays. Both the preaching and the other parts of the services ought to be made to have, both in manner and matter, a discriminating bearing on the people, distinguishing the outside of the kingdom from the inside, rather than that there should be the creation of grand, flesh-stirring currents on which saint and sinner can be alike borne along into new reaches of the kingdom.

The plea is sometimes heard that the ritual and the music are employed to stir up sluggish hearts. Better make sure of having the *new* heart first ; and then, perhaps other means will be found to be more appropriate for the purposes of inner stirring. Possibly the ritualistic churches find that they need some expedients of a pronounced fleshly sort to stir up the *omnium gatherum* admitted to salvation by means of their prelatial organisation, as the Arminians may find that they require to "put on" a great deal of fuss to make up for the lack of that assurance from heaven which the free-will portion of their creed does not admit of their enjoying.

It need not be difficult to perceive that all these ritualistic and flesh-stirring expedients are real hindrances to the moral efforts, the self-examination, repentance, etc., often required on the part of many who attend church. Especially is it demoralising to have any official organisation, or ritual, come in between a soul and Christ when that soul is struggling, as previously described, to reach Christ. Even Henry Newman resigned himself into the lap of the Romish Church when he wearied himself in his search for what he thought to be truth. The fetish-propensity gets scope in the

formalities of the ritual, and the flesh gets its spell in the musical parts. But if the stirring of sluggish hearts be all that is requisite, and if the ritualistic churches have authority, as they say they have, to devise whatever they choose for this end, then why not at once take a leaf out of the book of the Professor of Psychology in Harvard, and try alcohol, nitrous oxide, ether, and chloroform, to stir sluggish hearts? These means, it is said on the authority of a Professor of Psychology, will make one "one with truth" for the time being; and there is evidence to believe, we are told, that they will give one a genuine mystical revelation—the highest of all kinds of religious experience, according to the same authority. The authority who tells us these things is described by Professor Cheyne, of Oxford, England—Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis there—as a "brilliant psychologist," and is held up in regard to a certain part of his teaching as a model for the "higher critics." All the ritual referred to can at best be only symbol. But why adopt symbol when the *substance* has come? The symbol, shadow, type, figure, were characteristic of the old dispensation as already seen. The special intrinsic glory of the new dispensation is that it is the glory of the Spirit, of the *inward*, not the glory of the *outward*. The ritualistic churches have still only the old wine-skins in principle; well, perhaps, they need these. They may not be prepared for thinner media. But the old wine-skins were shaken, and even what remains of the external will yet be shaken. Heaven, that is, will be shaken as well as that the earth was shaken, so that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. The churches mentioned are still moving among

the earthly, shakeable things, where the appeal is strong to the senses, the outer man of the flesh, rather than to the inner man of the spirit.

Fancy a lover meeting the one to whom he is engaged, and whilst the two are in converse, face to face, he takes a phial every now and then from his pocket to take a sip of its contents, and he gazes intently every two or three minutes on a lock of her hair which he has. When asked by her why he did these things, he replies: "My dear, I wish to give my sluggish heart to love you." She would be as strange as himself, would she not? unless he had set her athinking of an asylum rather than an altar.

The heart that cannot be stirred sufficiently by direct contact with the professed object of its love is not likely to be stirred *in the true manner*, by *symbols* of that object. Give some men a glass or two of liquor, and then present the object of professedly dutiful love to them, and they will feel sure they love it.

In the English church are to be found, I believe, as scholarly, pious, and able writers on religious subjects as are to be found anywhere, and, perhaps, even more so than anywhere else in the present day. Yet the super-abundance of ritualistic and flesh-stirring expedients within that church, and, above all, the tenacious adherence to the dogma of "the apostolic succession," may remind one of the saying of our Lord: "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." The ritualistic, fetish-cleaving, and flesh-stirring, propensities, may cause certain excrescences to be formed on, and adhere to, the body-religious, until the final day of fire referred to by the apostle destroys the wood, hay, and stubble, which are amongst

the gold, silver, and precious stones. The altar of the heart, however, ought to have burning upon it only the fire kindled direct from heaven. This fire ought surely not to be so largely mingled with fire kindled by earthly expedients as we often find it to be.

The Short-Cut of Modern Hyper-Evangelism.

In some aspects of it, this is the worst and most dangerous form of the superseder of due moral preparation for heaven above. It tends to bring one at last to the marriage supper in his ordinary apparel, as, indeed, all forms of the superseder do. It is, moreover, the most unintelligent—I had almost said, the stupidest—form of the superseder. For one thing, it is self-inconsistent, and no exact thinker would be taken in its snare. Yet it is of a piece, in one respect, with every other form of the superseder, since it also exhibits the proneness of the human heart to adopt easy substitutes for the moral struggle requisite to reach, and to grow in, the kingdom of heaven on earth.

The standard formula of this sort of superseder may be given in the words of the late Professor Drummond. This writer says that the matter "is put to the individual in the following syllogism: 'You believe Christ died for sinners; you are a sinner; therefore Christ died for you; and hence you are saved.'" This "syllogism," the writer calls a "species of molluscan shell," "a trap for a benighted soul," a trap "ingeniously planned." "The apostles of parasitism," he says, "pick a blackguard from the streets, pass him through this plausible formula, and turn him out a convert in the space of as many minutes as it takes to tell

it." "Are there not men," he adds, "who can prove to you and to the world, by the irresistible logic of texts, that they are saved, whom you know to be not only unworthy of the Kingdom of God—which we all are—but absolutely incapable of entering it." ("Natural Law.")

Another writer says of the same style of proclaiming the gospel, that "it is just the gospel perverted to suit the taste of proud carnal man . . . the short stages of an easy journey to the hope of peace." (Dr. Kennedy in "Man's Relation to God.")

This is the form of gospel-preaching adopted by Arminianism when it is self-consistent, which, however, it seldom is. It is also the form employed by the body known as Morrisonians, or the Evangelical Union, and by the sect known as Darbyites, or Plymouth Brethren. Itinerant evangelists are under severe temptation to adopt this form also, because it can turn out converts easily, especially in the case of those who cannot think, and who know not their Bibles. Those who reach assurance by this method Jonathan Edwards calls evangelical hypocrites, in contradistinction to the legal hypocrites, and he says of the former that he scarcely ever knew one of them to be undeceived.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EARTH-LIFE AS INSTRUMENTAL
CAUSATION.

People, unless sick, come out of doors; so graces, if healthy, manifest themselves in the life.—*Anon.*

But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.—*Paul.*

If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things.—*Jesus.*

Christian Graces Exercised, Proved, and Strengthened in the Earth-Life.

The superseders of, and the hindrances to, the coming into, and the advancement in, the kingdom of heaven on earth, which have been noticed in our last chapter, are those particularly connected with the church-life. But the church-meeting, the prayers, praises, sermon, and all else, when these are what they ought to be, have special reference to the earth-life. We ask in church for grace to help us to live the earth-life as we ought, and we thank God for our experiences of Him in our daily lives. The sermon tells us how to view and treat our earth-life.

There are some even in the present day who have not yet learned to distinguish between the earth and the world—the world, that is, in the sense of the apostle John and other sacred writers,

with whom the term world is sometimes used to signify the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. Sometimes, however, the term world is used in Scripture to signify the *people* who are outside the kingdom of God, as well as to characterise the spirit of that people. But it is not used always in either of these senses. Often it is used in the same sense as the term earth is used, that is, for the present dwelling-place of human beings; and it is in this sense we employ the term world in the present chapter. The earth-life is the life we understand people to live outside the church-meeting.

Those who have *only* that kind of religion which manifests itself in the church-meeting, or on Sundays, have none of the true religion. The church-life, when true, is in great measure an expression of the earth-life; and the earth-life again is meant to carry into effect, prove, and strengthen, what is supposed to be obtained in the church-meeting. Where this is not the case, there is no true religion. Christianity is not a mere do-nothing sort of religion except attend church. The cream may rise on the milk which is "set" in the vessel, and while the vessel does nothing; but no man will find that the true cream of religion will rise in his soul if it be a mere do-nothing soul except attend church, sing psalms there, and see and hear what is going on.

That religion which is like the chiming of the church bells—chiming only on Sunday—is not a religion which will save the soul. Some seem to suppose that religion is like a language which a man may know but does not speak except very occasionally. For the most part this language is latent. But religion must shine all the time. If a

merchant be strictly honest every hour in the week, except one hour each week, or month, he is a dishonest merchant. So if a man is religious always, except on very rare occasions, he is not religious at all. A man who is sober all the year round, except intentionally every Christmas, is not a religious man.

When the Pope condemned the Irish "plan of campaign," an Irish member of the British Parliament, who, although a Roman Catholic, was displeased with the Pope's deliverance, exclaimed in his place in Parliament: "Religion from Rome, politics from home." So many say practically: "Religion from the church and on Sundays, but business and pleasure from the world"—in the evil sense of the term world. Religion is religion, say some, and business is business. These are honest in their actions whilst at church, for they take little or nothing to do there; but they are often dishonest in their business.

Some speak of religion only when under affliction, as some people use their old clothes to stick into broken panes of glass in their windows to keep out the rain and the cold. So religion with some is good only for rainy and cold, afflictive weather, not for the sunshine and heyday of life. When afflicted, some say piously: "God knows what is best for me," supposing that although they are religious only on the special occasions of bodily illness, God treats them as He treats those who are His own, and who are *truly* religious. With such persons religion is an exception; and if a young man shews any signs of being religious in his earth-life, they think he should study for the ministry, as if the earth-life were not the suitable place for real religion. Religion must be latent

there, and must shew itself only when the Sunday clothes are put on.

After an exceptional sermon on the Sunday, a sermon which frightens them, some keep religious for a day or two ; but they are rather awkward at the business, as one feels who seldom handles the violin, and takes it up, say, only once a year to try to play a tune on it. Like someone that Milton speaks of, they are " stupidly good." They soon find that religion does not agree well with them, as certain articles of diet do not agree well with weak stomachs.

But we have not many of the Christian graces in exercise in the church-meeting, or the religious meeting. Where is the room there for the exercise of love, hospitality, long-suffering, meekness, honesty, candour, etc. ? It is in the ups and downs, and the tear and wear of life that the virtues are exercised ; and, of course, by exercise and trial they are strengthened. The apostle asks what glory is it if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this, he says, is acceptable with God. Husbands are told to love their wives, parents are admonished to bring up their children aright, and the baptismal vows have reference principally to duties to children performed outside of the religious meeting. Servants are exhorted to obey their earthly masters, not only the good and gentle, but also the froward as well. They are asked to obey, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, with goodwill doing service, not as unto men but as unto Christ ; and if they serve thus faithfully, they are told they shall of Christ receive the reward of the inheritance, for in serving their

earthly masters, they are told, they are serving the Lord Christ. In so serving, they work the principles of the heavenly inheritance into their souls. But these things are all done outside the religious meeting.

We have seen in previous chapters the many instructions which the New Testament contains as to how we ought to treat each other; so abundant, indeed, are these instructions and exhortations that one might suppose that the giving of them was the main end for which the New Testament was written. But let the instructions and exhortations be carefully analysed, and it will be seen how few, how very few of them, can be carried out at the religious meeting, or in church. Because the Bible is made so much of, preached, heard, thought of, and honoured in the church-meeting, it is imagined that the church is the really religious place, *par excellence*, forgetting that the great thing about the Bible, namely, the acting of it out, and through acting it coming to experience its power, is not what can be done except to a limited extent in the religious meeting; it can be done in the fullest extent only in the earth-life.

If people think of others in the religious meeting, as to whether certain of these others are really religious or not, what is it that the mind is apt to have recourse to by way of test? Is it how these people sit in their pews? If they keep awake, and listen well, of course these things count for something. But what is the real test which comes up instinctively to the mind? The *earth-life*, and how it is lived. People when in church think also of their own earth-life if they wish to think of the test applicable to themselves. But, again, when in their earth-life, if they ever think of themselves

in connection with religion, they think of themselves in the religious meeting, and of what they are *there*. Thus religion is played off from pillar to post, and in such fashion as that there is no special time for it.

A Christian ploughman is religious when he is ploughing the field as truly as when he is attending church ; and, as Isaiah says (Chap. xxviii.), he can have the Spirit of the Lord to instruct him even in his ploughing, as Bezaleel and Aholiab had this Spirit to enable them to plan and construct the tabernacle. A house-wife who is cooking her household's dinner is performing a religious duty, if she be a Christian, as certainly as when she attends the prayer-meeting ; and if she neglect her household duties she is so far irreligious, however many prayer-meetings she may attend. A member of Parliament is religious, or ought so to be, when delivering a speech in Parliament, as certainly as a minister of the gospel is religious when he is delivering his sermon ; and if the member of Parliament, when delivering his speech, slander or malign a fellow-man, it is as wicked of him so to do as it would be for the preacher so to do in his sermon.

*The Earth-Life is intended to Expand the Soul,
Mould it, and otherwise Prepare it for Heaven.*

Men cannot be crowned except they overcome, and they cannot overcome except where they are tried to the core. It is in men's earth-life that they are thus tried. They have all their reason and wits exercised in their earth-life. They are deeply interested in its affairs, and where men are thus interested they can be tried and trained and

moulded. In the earth-life the soul is being trained in the exercise of every kind of rationality. The physical universe is full of rationalities, and as man works at his daily occupation, and attends to his other interests in the world, he must study the rationalities in the universe, and must harmonise his acts and plans with these, or else he will make a sorry business of his life's work. By the rationalities of life he gets so trained as not to give heed to irrationalities or superstitions in his church-life, where superseders and hinderers are so rife. He learns that the way to do a thing is just to do it. Frequently the rich and the idle give way to superseders of the moral, and they often have superabundance of ritual and symbolism and flesh-stirring expedients, as, for instance, in the ritualistic churches. The following are some of the kinds of rationalities which the earth-life trains one in.

The Rationalities of Life.

(1) Intuitive Rationality, or Pure Reason.

—Certain truths are perceived to be truths in a direct manner, or in their own light, such as the truths of arithmetic, mathematics, and abstract dynamics. Some of these truths are simple, like the axioms of the geometry, or as the truth that two bodies cannot occupy one and the same space at one and the same time. Some truths of this class are compounded of several simple truths, as, for instance, that the three angles of every triangle arc together equal to two right angles. But when the compound truths of this class are broken up into their simple elements, the mind can perceive them in a direct manner as true always, necessarily, and universally. A boy learning

arithmetic at school is getting trained in pure rationality. In the earth-life man is trained in pure rationality.

(2) **Instinctive Rationality.**—A young infant sucking its milk makes a vacuum in its mouth into which the milk is compelled to flow in accord with strict scientific principles. Yet the infant is not *consciously* a scientist in this matter. The bee, ant, and beaver, exhibit wonderful scientific results; yet they are not consciously scientists. Their rationality is of a *non-reflective* kind; it is of a kind, that is, which cannot reflect on itself as being a rationality. Were the infant to continue to suck until it attained years of discretion, and then became, say, a scientist, it could do with a reflective rationality what it had been doing all its life by means of the non-reflective rationality gifted to instinct.

So also a Christian has, especially at first, a great many non-reflective truths bound up and operative in his religious instincts. But he ought to rationalise these truths, and be ready to give a reason for the hope and the faith and the instincts that are in him. His *credenda* ought to be converted into *intelligenda*. He should take his inwards out, as it were, for self-examination, and after having them purified, they should be returned, in order that they might do by a reflective rationality the things previously done by the light of the non-reflective rationality bound up in their religious instincts. Now the earth-life is meant specially to waken and train this sort of rationality, so that it can be applied to religion properly so-called.

(3) **Empiric Rationality.**—We learn the laws

of nature by observation and experience. We cannot say why they are as they are. But once we have learned what they are, we can rely upon them being always the same in their operation. Thus we are taught that we must ascertain the laws, or the forces, working under directive principle, in the moral or religious world. Once we have learned these, we are not so apt to be imposed on by superstitions, or by superseders and hinderers, in religion.

(4) **Moral Rationality.**—This is simply rationality applied in the domain of the moral. It is a great matter to know that there are in this domain, as well as in the physical world, certain forces working under directive principles. There are pure, instinctive, and empiric rationalities in the moral domain, and these we should get acquainted with, and should have the mind trained, moulded, and expanded by exercise in them.

The rationalities in the physical universe place their correlatives in the inner world of man by constant contact with them on man's part, just as a man sees the correlative, or counterpart, of his countenance when he looks into a mirror. The physical universe, with its rationalities, comes to be set in our inner man. "He hath set the world in their hearts."

The rationalities in the moral world, and in the spiritual world, are the same rationalities, though exercised on different kinds of objects in each world, the one class of object, however, being to a great extent the pattern of the other and subsidiary to the other. The earth-life and the spirit-life proper are but two sides of the one life of the inner man. Were it not so, then every religious

man would be, as it were, playing two different tunes at one and the same time ; he would be so doing when attending both to his earth-life and his spirit-life ; or else he would be like a man trying to play on two different musical instruments at one and the same time. But earth and heaven harmonise with each other. Earth is a copy of heaven. We might well presuppose it would be so, since the earth has been prepared by God himself to be man's abode whilst in the body. The soul's mouldings which are received from the earth-life harmonise with the mouldings received from the spirit-life ; in fact, these two mouldings are merely two sides of the one moulding which the soul is meant to receive here below.

The Material a Basis for the Spiritual.

The *material* is an introduction and a help to the *spiritual*. There is first the natural body and then the spiritual body ; and the spiritual body grows out of the natural body, or else what would be the meaning or use of the natural body ? All Scripture is full of earthly imagery, and this would be inappropriate and confusing were not heaven the perfected copy of earth. Our Lord asked Nicodemus, how, if he could not understand earthly things, he could understand heavenly things, implying that the earthly things are an introduction to the heavenly things. We know that the final test of fitness to enter heaven is that we shall have love. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." But where are we to do these loving deeds ? Of course in the earth-life. *There* our earthly rationalities mingle with our heavenly love

in directing us when, where, and how to do the deeds of love. If, for instance, a tailor makes clothes for the poor occasionally, because he is a Christian, is he understood to sow in this work with a needle dropped from heaven, or handed him by an angel? Is he not understood rather to make use of the experience which he has gained in such a carnal manner as in making clothes for money in order to support himself? In doing the work that will stand the test of the judgment day, he is understood to employ earthly appliances, and just as he has learned to work with them. Here, then, earth mingles with heaven, and so it does also through all the extent of the Christian's life. Correlatives from heaven are always mingling in the soul with correlatives from earth, and these two kinds form but the one sacred class of correlatives. There are no divisions in the soul, one for each class of correlative, or moulding. Earth's mouldings are part of heaven's mouldings.

Earth's laws and special amenities are those of heaven also, if the former be right. One has no right from heaven to be unsocial, or a boor, because he is a saint. If he be living a Christian life, he ought to shew this by conformity to the social laws and customs of men, so far as these are not morally wrong. Jesus did this, and He was as holy as we can be. These are among the earthly things in which heaven is reflected; and if one see not heaven in these things, how can he see heaven in more spiritual things where the earthly does not aid his vision? Many could see a divine reflection in Solomon arrayed in all his glory, who could see very little, if any, of the divine in the beauty of the lilies of the field. But unless we see, and are trained to commune with, divine glory here, or in

earthly matters, how shall we be able to see and appreciate that glory if we advance to the greater spirituality of heaven above? If we are unable to commune with God's thoughts, and read them off as they are unfolded on earth, how shall we read or commune with them in the final heaven? Why has the present earth been given us?

Heaven, as the coming age, is reflected here even as the new dispensation was embedded in the old. Christ requested people not to suppose that He had come to do away with the old commandment, but rather to reaffirm and establish it. So heaven above is not meant to do away with experiences of God in the earth-life, but to confirm, establish, and build upon them. Probably *all* good things on earth have their analogues in heaven, as Origin, the most famous of the ancient Christian fathers, supposed and taught. This probability is strengthened by the parabolic teaching of our Lord. In this teaching we find a blending of earth with heaven. In the parable of the sower, for instance, the seed is the word of the kingdom. Neither natural nor spiritual seed will come to maturity in the rocky, thorny, or trodden earth. Superficiality of love is often overly-demonstrative in the social life, as is the case with the stony ground hearers in the spiritual life. The branch must abide in the native trunk in both the physical and spiritual domains ere it can bear fruit. Severance from the parent stock superinduces a withering process in each case. We must build on the rock, both physically and spiritually, if our house is to withstand the storms and the tempests. If the physical building, in which our souls are here tabernacled, should be dissolved, we have a building of God. Both here and there there is eating, drinking,

seeing, hearing, tasting, light, standing, walking, clothing, being naked, etc.

“What if earth
Be the shadow of heaven, and things therein
Each to each other like, more than on earth is thought.”

Trench, in his introduction to his well-known work on the Parables, has a very instructive treatment of this subject. He says that “all lovers of truth readily acknowledge these mysterious harmonies.” “To them the things on earth are copies of the things in heaven.” “This entire moral and visible world,” says he, “from first to last, with its kings and its subjects, its parents and its children, its sun and its moon, its sowing and its harvest, its light and its darkness, its sleeping and its waking, its birth and its death, is from beginning to end a mighty parable, a great teaching of supersensuous truth, a help at once to our faith and our understanding.” The probability is that the present earth will be fitted up to be the final and permanent abode of the true people who will have realised heaven here already.

Heaven Adumbrated in the March of Civilisation.

The onward movement of the world need not be difficult to perceive, especially when we take long periods in order to make comparisons, or contrasts, between the state of the world at the beginning, and the condition at the end, of any of these periods. The progress of invention and discovery has been great in these latter days, and has apparently proceeded in modern times with accelerated pace. The amount of machinery, instrumentalities,

devices, and high pressure in commercial and professional circles alike, make it imperative on men who engage in the world's affairs to exercise their intelligence and their wits expeditiously and correctly, if they are to hold their own and make a decent living. There are fewer opportunities now-a-days for building castles in the air, giving scope for the formation of vagaries in the imagination, or encouraging day-dreams when business matters ought to have the undivided attention, than there were formerly; and with fewer opportunities has come less inclination for such profitless and emasculating exercises.

It is impossible but that all this movement will tell very decidedly within the church; and it will also tell there in the long run beneficially. People now demand what is intelligible, intelligent, pointed, without wandering or irrelevancies; what has definite and approved aims, and what is calculated to secure these aims. People are not now so apt as they once were to be held at bay by the appearance of the sacred, unless they believe that the actual sacred is there. This spirit shews itself in the interpretation both of Scripture and providence. There is now more rationality, and less superstition than formerly in religious matters.

It would, of course, be exceedingly unlikely that such progress could be made, as things still go in the world, without many evils, abuses, falsehoods, etc., and special and increased dangers, mingling with the true and the good. *Pari passu* with the development of the good, there is always the development of the evil. "Wherever God builds a church Satan builds a chapel." But the excesses of evils and abuses will eventually die out in the case of those who mean well; and in their

case the true and the good are destined to triumph. Yet the greater the light the worse will evil men become until they commit the unpardonable sin. Men as a whole are generally unprepared for great and sudden accessions even of the true and the good in the spiritual domain ; and it is when there are such accessions that evil men are apt to be smitten with the curse for the want of correct apprehension. They see just enough to cause them to hate. (Mal. iv., Matt. iii., 1-12).

The internal corrupt elements in the heart are always stirred up when they come in close contact with the true and the good, as was the case with evil spirits when they came close to our Lord, and as the evil in Paul was stirred up when it came into contact with the divine law. With every spiritual movement Antichrist organises one of his own to parallel, parody, and, if possible, submerge the spiritual one. Antichrist is usually a spurious reflection of the true and the good.

Yet the world will continue to move steadfastly forward. The particular feature, however, in this onward movement which concerns us most at present, is the characteristic of the final goal which is reflected therein. It is reflected with more or less truth in all the people that are really moving forward in heart as well as in appearance ; but the reflection is not so genuine in others. The true movement consists in an increase of the spirit and intelligence, of aptitude and efficiency, for ministries of love. It is in this movement that heaven is really adumbrated on earth. This spirit is being now manifested more abundantly than ever in the church's abounding labours in mission fields. Less importance than formerly is now attached to those articles in the church's creed which are

incapable of being realised in practice ; although in this I believe there is some loss.

Advance in civilization implies advance in the spirit of every sort of intercourse which men hold with one another. So much is this the case that a civilized individual, and an individual that has not learned good manners, are practically regarded as one and the same individual. Even men of the world, as well as church people, are evermore becoming increasingly delicate in their feelings toward one another. These features are to be seen in the etiquette and amenities of social life and intercourse rather than in the business relations of life. But even in our business correspondence also, we address each other as " dear," or as " my dear," so and so ; and we conclude with similarly amicable expressions. Of course, it would be too much to aver that every time one uses these or similar terms he really means all he expresses. Yet the practice is instructive, and it tends to bring about the state of heart indicated in the words. There is some conscience and heart behind the custom, as there is also in the case of the restraints usually imposed on public speakers and writers.

Members of Parliament and of other public bodies, are obliged, when they speak, to address their fellow-men with courtesy. Civilization imposes on one respect for his fellow-men, especially in public action and utterance. The unmannerly and the poor cannot live in truly civilized society. Even in multitudes of comparatively small things, where love, politeness, affability, and courtesy toward our fellows are concerned, the people of civilized nations are coming to be more and more alert and sensitive, and to be constantly shimmering with the virtues, and instinct with the graces,

which refer to proper intercourse with their fellows.

The amenities and courtesies imposed by the public, however, on all who have to do with them, are usually ahead of the state of the doer's heart. Professor W. James of Harvard, has the following words in his Gifford Lecture :—

“ We divert our attention from disease and death as much as we can ; and the slaughter-houses and indecencies without end on which our life is founded are huddled out of sight and never mentioned, so that the world we recognise officially in literature and in society is a poetic fiction, far handsomer and cleaner and better than the world that really is.”*

But the imposed customs exhibit the *ideal* which humanity has as to the treatment each one of us ought to accord his fellow-men ; and the heart always tends to make progress in the wake of public customs.

In proportion as men get civilized, and therefore delicate and tender in their sensibilities towards each other, they experience more and more happiness in drawing closer to each other in heart and in confidences. If one's heart-etiquette be not yet up to his external public etiquette, and if he find good manners to be some burden from which an occasional rest is welcome, yet he will, by constant practice, bring his heart to square with his external conduct, as one learns by faithful practice to bring music out of the musical instrument.

Society advances by strenuous practice in the amenities of life. People find both their hearts and consciences thus satisfied. This is the essence of practical religion as far as our neighbour is concerned. If this spirit were so much

* “ The Varieties of Religious Experience,” p. 90.

appreciated as that the requisite amount of self-denial came to be known and exercised in order to have the heart as it ought to be in regard to it, then Christ would be submitted to in order that He might by His treatment put the heart in the real condition for society. For this is actually the one half of what Christ professes to do. He who loves perfectly is a perfect man, and Christ aims at, and he *succeeds* in, making perfect men. They are, indeed, not perfect here ; physical death, the great event for self-denial, will require to intervene ere the men that He is treating will be perfect. But under His treatment they are going constantly forward in the very same direction as civilization is always moving in. But civilization apart from Him cannot go far enough. Possibly, however, it may some day come to recognise this fact, and Christ as Means, as well as Christ as End, may then come to be more appreciated and more resorted to. Civilization imposes self-denial just as Christ does, and that also for the same ends as far as one's neighbour is concerned. And, as we have already noticed, the New Testament makes so much of proper feelings toward, and right treatment of, our neighbour that one might almost suppose that love to God is imposed for the sake of love to our neighbour.

Men may in some cases feel as if silently coerced by society into the cultivation of good manners, and into proper treatment of their fellows. Also some may cultivate good manners for their own sakes alone, rather than that they have such regard at heart for others as to feel towards them as their manners profess. But everyone feels some measure of responsibility nevertheless for the cultivation of right manners and right conduct toward his

fellowmen, and this feeling is brought out into greater relief in one when he sees the uncultivated, the unmannerly, and the boor.

The influences and feelings which are supposed to reign in well-ordered families are coming to extend themselves more and more into society at large. No doubt this is to a great extent due, both directly and indirectly, to gospel influences. But many perceive and appreciate the benefits for heart and conscience of these things who do not think very particularly of the gospel. A considerable part of the onward movement of the world may be a mere bastard reflex of the gospel. But practice will tend to put what is practised into the heart.

The goal of humanity may, therefore, be read off from the general forward movement of civilized peoples. The further the movement proceeds the more the hearts of the sincere will be purified to see the divinity of this movement, and to descry its destined goal. The natural basis for religion will come thus to be elevated, and by and by nations may come to be born in a day. Jesus Christ is being travelled to in this forward movement; and when this will come to be more realised, then the prayer for his second advent will come to have more significance in it, and will come to be more articulate, united, sincere, and heartfelt. The prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus," is not one which the Spirit has put into the mouth of the Christian church in vain. It is constantly descending from being a mere mouth-prayer to being the heart-prayer of united Christianity, and of a united humanity. Common humanity is becoming common Christianity. After every overt advance there may, indeed, be some reaction; for few men are prepared to continue steadfastly to appreciate

great accesses of spirit-light without some slackness occasionally supervening. But the reaction will be only temporary.

The Spirit and the bride, and the Spirit in the bride, will come more and more unitedly to pray for the coming of Christ ; and when the prayer is united and fervent, the coming will take place ; for the prayer is not intended to be merely formal, or merely a holy nothing. All fervent prayer for things agreeable to the divine will is meant to be answered. The prayer itself is divinely given as well as the answer. This prayer for the second coming has been hitherto to a great extent formal ; or, if accompanied with warmth in some instances, the warmth has been experienced on special occasions only. Thomas Goodwin, the puritan divine, says somewhere that when the Christian is everywhere as he is on his knees in regard to some request which he is continuing to present at a throne of grace, then the answer is near at hand. So when the faithful are always what some of them may be occasionally in the warmth of the prayer for the second coming, this coming is not far off. But if, at the coming, the marriage supper will straightway take place, and if the bride will by that time have prepared herself, and be clothed in fine linen white and clean, it is to be apprehended that the part of the church still in the world will require to make considerable advances from its present state ere the consummation can take place.

But the time will come, however, as we are assured, when " HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD shall be upon the bells of the horses, when the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar, when every pot in Jerusalem shall be holiness unto the Lord, and when the Canaanite shall no more

be in the house of the Lord of Hosts " (Zech. xiv., 20-21). But the time has not yet come when nation shall cease scheming against nation, and when the wild animals, that is, wild men, shall cease their wildness and harmfulness, and when the better way, and the heavenly experiences, shall be commonly realised among professing people. The glory of this time shall probably, like the glory of the first advent, be reflected far ahead, and that also even among heathen peoples themselves. Even some heathen poets, as well as Israel's prophets, were moved in their utterances by some inspiration which betokened the coming of the first golden age. *All* great events of this kind have been heralded in providence for long ere they came to pass, and it is unlikely that the second coming will be an exception.

The prayer for the second advent is not likely to be confined to the portion of the church remaining on earth. The portion passed away will also share in the prayer. The present relation of this latter portion to the Divine Head is unlikely to be of such a kind as to preclude a prayer of this sort from it. St. Paul says that the saints that are passed away are still groaning for the redemption of their bodies. St. John saw certain martyrs praying behind the altar (Rev. vi). So prayer is not superseded by death ; not even groaning and agonising prayer such as the martyrs offered. The portion of the church which has passed away will not yet be ready for the marriage supper, but will probably be getting ready *pari passu* with the progressive preparation of the portion on earth. We are told that the saints that are passed away will rise and join the living saints to meet their Lord. (I. Thes. iv). Possibly this union itself

will cast its shadows before ; and there may yet be communications between the dead and the living ere the great rising and union will take place. Many of our greatest scientists allege that intercommunications of the sort alluded to are even now occurring, and have been occurring for some time.

It was one important part of the preparation for the first advent on the part of ancient Israel that the sacrifices and ceremonial of the Mosaic law came to fall more and more into desuetude. This happened by providential dispensations, such as, for instance, by the captivity and destruction of the temple. When Christ came, the Mosaic ceremonial was superseded by divine appointment although the supersession was gradual, as all divine changes in man's religious customs are.

So also it is most probable that one line of preparation for the second advent will be the gradual supersession of those superseders and hinderers of the moral which we have already dwelt upon. The people will render a pure worship, and will have a pure language restored to them. (Zeph. iii., 9).

Kant says that when there is a transition of the statutory portions of the church's creed, or dogma, into the purely rational and the moral, this will be the coming of the kingdom of God, and the end of the world. But he supposed that the church was yet too weak for this transition. The church, he thought, must still have what he called the statutory portions of her creed imposed on her members, the result, he thought, of priestcraft. This is more likely now, however, to be the result of fossilization around the traditional and the customary. See Schwegler's History of Philosophy

(pp. 238-240) for an epitome of Kant's view of the church.

We have thus seen that the earth-life, properly lived, tends more and more to make people *rational*, and to let them see the immorality of the superseders and hinderers of the moral. It tends to break down fossilization. Even the high pressure of modern life has all the greater tendency in this direction, for we are more apt to see to it that every wheel and pin in our machinery is right when our engine has to work against time. The rich and the lazy are most liable to be behind here, and to have their church full of superseders.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ESSENCE OF TRUE SOUL-RELIGION
UNCHANGABLE.

Christianity arose in the mystic deeps of man's soul . . . as it still shines, and as sun or star will ever shine, through the whole dark destinies of man.—*Carlyle*.

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.—*Hebrews*.

Constant Prophesying of a Change at Hand.

It would seem to be a hobby with certain leaders in religion to be always proclaiming that we are on the eve of some great change in religious matters. There is an upheaval near at hand, we are told, and when it shall have taken place, and the effects thereof subsided into a sufficiently crystallised form to admit of measurement and systematisation, we shall find ourselves with new views in religion, new religious feelings, a new theology, and new religious practices. Some people in every age have been proclaiming the same things, and one should think that it is now time for such prophets to be getting wiser and more sober.

The greatest revolution in religion which took place since the fall of man was the coming of the Son of God in the flesh with His new teaching. Yet what did the upheaval then effected actually amount to? Merely to the breaking up of some of the outer shells in which true religion had been

encrusted, and partially hidden, on account of the people's unpreparedness for further light from heaven. The danger of much light to people unprepared by purity of heart to receive it and respond to it has been set forth in our last chapter.

But the new commandment that our Lord gave was none other than the old commandment of love. On this commandment hang all the previous law and the teaching of the prophets. But in the old dispensation the kernel of this teaching was partially hidden in sacrifices, types, and shadows; and that for the reason already alleged. Nevertheless it never was otherwise than that true love to God and man constituted the essence of true soul-religion, and the highest exercises of the soul. And it never will be otherwise whilst sun and moon endure than that true soul-religion in its doctrines, its great objects of faith, its main external forms of help, and its internal experiences, shall signify anything else than what are intended to bring man forward in that process of soul-evolution and soul-development which has perfect love with all its concomitants for its ultimate goal.

As I endeavour to shew in another volume,* the staple psychology of the day seeks to prove that all religions and gods tend to get outworn, and ought to be changed when they fall behind date. But there is no space here to enter on this discussion.

There are not now so many *media* between the objects of religious faith and love on the one hand, and religious souls on the other, as there once were. As already pointed out, progress in religion from the old dispensation into the new consisted, in the first place, in the old system of

* Vol. i. of the present series, entitled "Soul-Science."

types, sacrifices, shadows, ceremonies, etc., being broken up and left behind; and, in the second place, in more light from heaven being given on the kernel of religion. When Jesus Christ, the Substance, came, the shadows were superseded. The earthly forms and rudiments of teaching and representation of religion were then shaken, to adopt the prophet's language (Hag. ii., 6), reiterated by the apostle (Heb. xii., 26); and to a great extent these were then made to pass away. But there are still some externals pertaining to earth as encrustations on the heavenly things. When these things will be shaken, which will be more a shaking of heaven, as it were, than of earth, then the heavenly things will appear in still greater relief. But this will not take place until people become more spiritual and less worldly. The disciples were for long permitted to expect an earthly kingdom, for their spirituality had not attained for a considerable time that degree which enabled them to draw their animation from it. They still cleaved to the earth until the outpouring of the Spirit came; but after this occurred they rapidly learned the laws of the spiritual kingdom. It is coincident with too much earthliness in people's religion that they suppose that they themselves are the only favoured ones by heaven, as the Jews imagined about themselves, and as the "apostolic succession" people now do. When the Spirit comes in greater measure, however, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes people free from such narrowness, they then come to be more catholic in their feelings and conceptions and more inclined towards union with their brethren.

All this, however, does not say that when certain people are to a great measure rid of what have been

described in previous chapters as superseders and hinderers in respect to the moral in religion, that they are therefore more spiritually-minded than those who cleave to these things ; for the attachment of the former may be through mere fossilization. As we have already seen, people may cleave even to the truth itself through fossilization, or through copying others, as a pupil at school may copy the correct solution of arithmetic problems from his neighbour.

As already noted, there may, providentially, be some *media* still permitted where the people are not spiritual nor pure enough to see heavenly light in a more direct manner. Weak brethren ought not to be *forced* out of their erroneous views.

But the true upheavals in religion will be those that will make people less worldly and more spiritually minded. The old wells are not yet dry ; but they need to be resorted to with greater consecration. If people do not do this, however, but if they come with their worldliness and mammon-loving, no wonder though they should imagine these wells to be dry, and that new ones are needed. Many professing people do not take even as much interest in religion as will cause them to search for the knowledge of the conditions of coming successfully. Evil and adulterous people are always on the outlook for something new and striking, something that will supersede the cutting off of the right hand, the plucking out of the right eye, and the selling of all to possess the Pearl of great Price. But when will people get any new system which will supersede the needful agonising to enter in at the strait gate, the needful purity of heart to see God, the brokenness of heart and the contrition of spirit and the trembling at the word

of God, which are characteristic of hearts mouldable by heavenly influences? When shall people invent a pleasant system that will do away with sin in the soul, or a better system for doing so than we now have?

Outer-World Sciences Incapable of Proving True Religion Changeable.

The natural and physical sciences have as their subject-matters matter and physical force, along with, in the case of the natural sciences, animal life as conditioned by organisation and functions of organs, that is, physiology. But these things constitute neither the soul nor its religion.

The science which would shew, if it could be shewn, that soul-religion is changeable in its essence is the science of the soul itself, including that of soul-religion. But such a science has yet to come. Modern psychology does not take to do, except in amateur or *ex-gratia* fashion, with inner religion; and when it does thus turn its attention thereto, it exhibits the most unscientific of all scientising (to coin a new and convenient term). I endeavour to shew this in the volume mentioned a short way back. The scientising on religion by modern psychologists is generally done by personally inexperienced men, men who have no first-hand, or direct, access to their subject-matter, and who proceed, therefore, only on hearsay, which no competent scientist ever does. The physical and natural sciences are not in the line in which the soul or its religion could relevantly come before them; and the utmost they could do, therefore, in the way of disproving religion is to try to entangle religion in her talk if she should

ever speak of the subject-matter of any of these sciences. Soul-science will require to be undertaken by experienced men who have direct access to their subject-matter ere their scientising can be worth while listening to.

Matter and Force Nearest the Soul Cannot Change the Soul's Essence, nor its Religion.

Materialism is the system which tries to disprove the existence of the soul as a separate and independent entity. Materialism maintains that what is called the soul, or the mind, is merely a product of the organised matter of the body, along with the natural forces in the body, as the flame of the candle is the result of the tallow and the wick organised in a certain way, plus the heat applied to set the thing agoing. And as the flame dies out when the tallow and wick are exhausted, so also, it is maintained, when the matter and force of the body get exhausted, or seriously disorganised, then the soul dies out.

Materialism has been in the world now for over two thousand years, and it is to-day no nearer a proof of its main thesis than when it started. The system has been refuted over and over again ; but its votaries require to be changed in heart ere they can be open to conviction by relevant proof. Matter, whether organised or not, does not itself live. Life may, indeed, be associated with matter in certain states of the latter, but that is a different thing. The natural forces in the body would tend of themselves to disintegrate and destroy life rather than support it. Natural forces, when started, obey the laws of motion, and cannot be again stopped except by other forces. The whole

would work like a steam-engine, or as a pure mechanism, if there were nothing except matter and natural force.

But *life* governs the forces of the body which are nearest it, and which would otherwise encroach on its citadel. Life has a force of its own, which is none of the natural forces. When the natural forces get full play, life ebbs away. They get full play in the grave; but there is no life there. Once a force in the body is started, how is it to stop to think, correct its errors of thought, and then go on again? A mere natural force cannot do this; but mind does this constantly. To speak of a force solving a problem, for instance, is the very acme of absurdity. It is a well-known dictum of science that the assigned cause, or causes, must be adequate to produce the supposed effect. But matter and natural force are insufficient to produce the phenomena of mind.

Were materialists to employ a terminology for themselves, instead of, as they do, employing the terminology of languages, the very warp and woof of which are anti-materialistic, they would soon see the nakedness of their land. They ought not to employ such terms as the personal pronouns, or words signifying the existence of an independent, thinking *ego*, such as the words consciousness, subject, thinking, reasoning, etc. It is easy to invent some theory, and then superimpose it on the facts, and imagine the facts to be the results of things on this theory. This is what materialists and utilitarians constantly do.

*Essential Nature of the Soul and of its Evolution
Unchangeable.*

The essential nature of the soul itself is unchangeable. The *essence* of the soul is not changed in conversion. And the goal of soul-development always will be what it now is, and what it has ever been. If the human hand, or foot, were not each in the very same form always as each is in to-day, still the perfection of each would always have meant, and will always mean, what is meant by it to-day. The perfection of the hand will never mean, and never did mean, that it should be wholly or partially converted into a foot, or that it should be anything else except what can handle. Similarly with the foot ; *its* perfection always meant, and will always mean, what will enable us to walk.

Similarly, the soul in its essence and ideal always meant, and always will mean, what it means to-day. And being a rational-moral agent, the soul must be an active and efficient agent in its own evolution and development ; and this implies that the goal of these processes must be known to the soul itself. The soul may sometimes have required, and it may still occasionally require, to be held providentially in position, as it were, for certain things being done to it, as one needs to be held in position for a surgical operation. But even in these instances what the soul does not discern at the time it is given to know afterwards. It is left to the soul itself to a large extent to devise means for its own development, and this implies on its part a knowledge of its own goal. As we have already seen in our first two chapters, the goal of soul-evolution is clearly described by living souls. St. Paul says, " that I may know him, and the

power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, etc."

The working of Jesus in the soul, and His self-manifestation to it, form the kernel of Christianity as a means and a religion. And if these agencies were once good and powerful they are also so to-day, and ever will be so until the soul meet with Jesus face to face. No other religion has its Founder along with its votaries as the Christian religion has. In the case of faithful souls, film after film is being taken away which separates the soul from Christ.

A great part of soul-development consists in moralising the animal and social parts of human nature, that is, in bringing these parts under the control of the moral law. These parts of our nature are necessary for our present state, necessary even for our observance of the moral itself, and necessary for our living here at all. True religion embraces the regulation and the results of a man's entire correspondence with his present environments. Light from the goal may be experienced as a dynamic in all this correspondence. But these correspondences, the dynamics which sustain them, and the inner results of the correspondences, have ever meant, when pure, what they mean to-day. The conditions of nearness to, and of fellowship with, the great Objects of faith, have always been what they now are. The conditions of beholding the divine glory reflected as in a mirror, and the results of this beholding, have always been what they presently are. Nothing can change the soul into the image of Christ unless there be a beholding by it of Christ's glory.

Bishop Boyd Carpenter, in his Bampton lecture, (1887), says :

“ Man is the same creature of misunderstandings, hopes, fears, of love lost and found, and resolutions made and broken. The tragedy of life and the comedy of life move together through all the ages. The draperies change, the scenery shifts ; but the characters bear a family likeness ; the nature of man is unchanged.”*

The same writer quotes in this connection Longfellow's words : “ Every human heart is human.” The nature of man is, indeed, essentially the same in all ages. The pathology, therapeutics, and hygiene, of the soul, had these sciences always existed, would have ever meant what they mean, or would mean, to-day. The true goal of humanity, which we have already described as love, union, life, light, communion, and happiness, have always meant what they now mean. And if so, then it is impossible that the means to reach this goal could ever have been essentially different from what they now are. The way to do a thing will ever be just to do it. People that aim at love must cultivate loving feelings and do loving deeds.

The traits of character which were injurious to human souls in all past ages, and, on the other hand, the traits which have always been beneficial, have never changed in their respective effects. The vicious and harmful traits and acts are : Hatred to what ought to be loved, and love to what ought to be hated and shunned ; wrath, unholy strife, malice, dishonesties, unfaithfulnesses, lusts, envyings, jealousies, adulteries, thefts, unkindnesses, overreachings, mistrust of God, irreverences, coldnesses, selfishnesses, distance, improper

* The Permanent Elements of Religion, p. 10.

reserve, uncourteous and unmannerly behaviour, and such like. The virtues, on the other hand, are the opposite of these, such as love to God and man, trust where trust ought to be exercised, meekness, gentleness, courtesy, kindness, reverence, honesty, faithfulness, peace, humility, diligence in business, purity, and a good and enlightened conscience.

These were the vices, on the one hand, and these were the virtues on the other, of human beings in all ages. The practice of the virtues named was always effective in bringing souls forward in the development-line, and the vices have ever been equally effective in the devolution of souls. In every past age men experienced the disquieting and dangerous effects of guilt before God, and, on the other hand, they always experienced the blessings of reconciliation and peace with Him. To-day men experience precisely the same things—more acutely now, indeed, as might be expected—but essentially the experiences are the same. We may say that the new dispensation was the intermediate goal for the old-dispensation period, and shone all along in that period. So also the final goal of the faithful portion of humanity shines to-day in the movement of that portion.

Neither Love Nor Spirit-Union Can Ever Change.

In every past age true religion sought to regulate every kind of legitimate love among human beings, and to prohibit illegitimate and inordinate loves. The love of God was in every past age, and in its very nature, incompatible with the love of mammon, and so will it be in every future age. It never was, nor will it ever be, in the nature

or capabilities of a soul to alternately often love and hate the same object. In all ages conjugal love and family love meant the same, when pure, as they mean to-day. On the day that Abraham of old wedded Sarah, and on the day that Rebekah was brought home to Isaac, conjugal love, and the sexual love on which it is founded, meant exactly the same as they now mean. Religion of the true kind took then to do with these loves, and it does the same now. If we conceive of religion as a superstition, or as something entirely unearthly, then we shall the more easily conceive of changes occurring in its essence. But although religion is unworldly it is not unearthly. Religion makes a man a real man, and a woman a true woman, fit to live in the present earth.

The methods according to which marriages were celebrated in the long past, and the ceremonials accompanying these occasions, were in almost every detail different from what they are to-day. But these formalities are not what make a marriage. They have really nothing to do with the making of it. The celebration of a marriage and the making of the marriage itself are quite different things. Mutual love and consent are what always made a marriage between parties suitable for the marriage relation, and it is these very same things that make a marriage to-day. No one is ever found foolish enough to prophesy a change at hand in the essentials which make a marriage, although changes may often occur in the things which accompany the celebration of marriages.

The commencement of true soul-religion is often spoken of in Scripture and other religious literature as a marriage. It is said to be the soul's marriage to the heavenly Bridegroom. Several

things in this connection are usually understood among Christians to be symbolised in the Song of Songs. If the manner, or method, of the soul's salvation be through marriage, or betrothal, to the Son of God, how can it be reasonably supposed that this method can be exchanged for any other plan? The Son of God saves not merely as a Priest to make atonement for guilt, nor merely as a Physician to free from disease, but also as One who proposes, and enters into, marriage with souls. This method of soul-salvation can never be changed in its essentials. No other method could save the soul.

It is unlikely that in this case even the external signalling of the marriage by baptism shall ever be changed; but even though it were, this would be merely a change in the method of marriage-celebration. Many make too much of this external, as though itself had been intended to be part of the marriage. But it makes no part of the actual marriage.

The Bridegroom's heart is unchangeable, and can never come to be satisfied with anything short of marriage to souls. It were strange indeed were some souls brought to the Bridegroom's home by marriage, whilst others of them were to be brought there by some other process. Would not the latter be jealous if they loved the Bridegroom? For what union could there be to Him short of marriage? Heaven and earth may pass away, but the marriage-union between souls and the Son of God shall never be dissolved; nor can any other method than the present one of bringing souls to the home above be ever resorted to.

The manner, signs and methods for expressing

love in one age or nation, may differ very materially from what they may be in another age or nation. But this is very different from the love itself not being the same. The love that seeks union, communion, and devotion to its object, can never change in its desire for these things, however differently these things themselves may be externally expressed. Expression is for the purpose of making known, and for the increase of what it is an expression of. But any usual signs, generally understood, are effective for making love known to its object. If the signs go further than this, and if they are made an end in themselves, as the Pharisees made them, then, instead of shewing love, the signs rather shew the absence thereof, and manifest a hypocritical heart, or a mind ignorant of the end of the signs, or means of expression. So also it is the case whe. there is overmuch symbolism.

If we were witnessing courtships as carried on by people of different nations, we would see what a great variety in manner and methods of these there exists. But would it not be foolish of us to suppose that, owing to this variety of the externals, sexual love must mean a different thing in the one nation from what it does in the other. So some imagine that because one people have different externals in their public worship from the externals employed by other people, that this implies in itself that there are differences in the spiritual love. Of course the lack of love in the heart *may* be exhibited in the nature of the externals, as already explained ; but this is not due to the fact of these externals being different among some people from what they are among others. It is the *nature* of the differences that tells in this

respect, and not the mere fact of there being differences.

But although many of the external ways and methods for expressing love may and do change from age to age, there are other ways which never change even in the *expressing* of love. Human beings throughout the world have a variety of needs among them. Hardly any human being is independent of his fellow-men. Many stand in need even of the very necessaries of life. Many thousands are in sickness, griefs, disappointments, or vexations of one kind or another. Many need light, advice, cheer, guidance, courage, consolation, admonition, or warning, etc. These needs are always present everywhere. The manner of supplying these needs will be always the same, and so also will the methods of preparing one's self for doing this in the best manner be always the same. There will be always required prayer, humility, love, watchfulness, consecration, the keeping near the source of inspiration and dynamic for the purpose of being adequately moved by the needs of our fellow-men, and being prepared in the best manner to do what we can by way of ministering to these needs. This is true religion, and its essentials can never change.

CHAPTER XIV.

HELL EXISTS ON EARTH.

Never will any one, in truth, believe the redemption of Christ, who does not believe in hell,—*Pusey*.
That he might go to his own place.—*Peter*.

Preliminary.

If heaven exists on earth, we might expect that hell would also exist here. There is, however, one notable difference between the manner of the present existence of the one and that of the other. Every soul-experience that will exist in heaven above, we have reason to believe exists on earth also. But this is not true to the same extent of the soul-experiences of the other place. Particularly it is not commonly the case with respect to the consciousness here of that full state of *darkness* which will characterise the final state of the lost. Neither is it true, as a general rule, with regard to the terrible remorse characteristic of the final hell that this remorse is experienced on earth by all those who are presently in the kingdom of darkness.

One of the principal elements of the final hell is the *darkness* just alluded to. This darkness includes not only despair, but also a certain want of knowledge of the full condition. Final hell is a bottomless pit, and this implies on the part of those

in it a continual sinking without finding a basis for definite thought or expectation. This full state of darkness does not, as a rule, exist here in the case of the unregenerate. It is true, the unregenerate are in darkness about their state, but they do not always, nor usually, *know* that they are in this darkness. They, as a rule, imagine that they are in light, and even in clearer light than all others, as was the case with the Jews that crucified the Messiah; *they* imagined that God was their Father; whilst they were told by Jesus that they were of their father the devil, and were doing his works.

Deception, lies, delusion, deceit, and all darkness of this kind, are among the principal means by which the kingdom of hell is advanced on earth. Souls are taken captive and blinded; and thus with greater hopes of success do the principalities and powers of darkness operate on and within souls to instil into them the various elements of hell, and strengthen these elements in them. We read of the "wiles" and "depths" of Satan, the prince of darkness. Darkness in the form of deceit and delusion, is the special characteristic of the operations of this prince, of the principalities and powers under I.M., and of the rulers of the darkness of this world. The god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not lest gospel-light should shine into them. Therefore we do not look for a knowledge of their present state to exist among souls in which the darkness of hell reigns on this earth. But we shall revert to this terrible state.

Another difference which exists between the final hell and hell as it exists here, is that from the final hell there is no deliverance in the case of those who reach it, whereas from hell on earth there is the

possibility of deliverance. We have cause to believe that there are those even on earth who have committed the unpardonable sin, and whom it is impossible to renew to repentance. There are those who have sinned away the day of grace, and cannot, nor do they as a rule desire to, repent. They cannot repent with an evangelical repentance, although final remorse may in some of these instances shew itself at the approach of physical death, and when the conscience then awakens. But who they are that have committed the sin which is unto death, as St. John describes it, is not given us to know. We ought, therefore, never to despair of any soul whilst it remains in the body, nor in anything which it is open to us to do by way of assisting to bring souls into the kingdom of light, should we permit the thought of the possibility of any soul among them having committed the unpardonable sin ever to influence our feelings or actions.

The benefit of being aware, however, that it is possible to commit the unpardonable sin here, is that we may ourselves refrain, and seek to induce others to refrain, from entering on the line which may have such an awful termination, whether it be known or not when the termination is reached on earth. St. John remarks that he does not say that one should pray for the forgiveness of the "sin unto death," that is, presumably when committed by some other one than the suppliant himself; but it would seem that the apostle had likely in view general prayer for the forgiveness of all specific sins, without particular persons who had committed these sins being before the mind of the suppliant; all specific sins might be the object of prayer for forgiveness to the sinners, with the

exception of the specific sin which is unto death. The apostle tells us how to discern other kinds of sins, but he gives no sign whereby the sin unto death might be infallibly discerned. The great matter, however, in this connection, is that this sin may be committed on earth, and that we are told what sort of transgression has the special tendency to terminate in this sin, namely, sin against the light, or what the psalmist calls "*presumptuous sins*." (Ps. xix.) Hearing the gospel invitation and deliberately refusing it, is a sin against the light, although this sin may not culminate in the state that cannot repent, not at least until after a series of refusals, we cannot say how many. In the case of the disciple-evangelists, even one delivery of the message being met by declinature brought a return of the peace, and a shaking of the dust from off the feet of the preachers. But it is very probable that in these cases there had been previous refusals of the measure of heavenly light which had already been possessed.

It is also to be noted that many of the elements of the final hell are even in the holiest saints on earth ; but these elements do not *reign* there. The process of soul-salvation in the case of the saints consists, on its negative side, in deliverance from these internal elements ; and on its positive side this process consists in soul expansion, and having the elements of the final heaven instilled into their souls.

The Manner of New Testament References to the State of the Finally Lost.

It would seem that the apostles, as a general rule, experienced a certain amount of delicacy in referring

to the state of the finally lost, and they exhibit a measure of reserve in any references of this kind which they do make. They refer abundantly to the state of being outside Christ, and its result in this present life ; but they seldom refer to the final result of meeting physical death outside soul-salvation. It is improbable that the divine inspiration under which they were had as its contents very much, or very clear, materials about the future world, especially the world of the lost. The apostles certainly knew about the existence and nature of the latter world, but apparently they did not know very much on this subject by direct inspiration, with the exception of the apostle John who wrote the Apocalypse from special vision. The apostles knew, of course, what our Lord had uttered about the two states in the world to come. This was, however, a different kind of knowledge from that which usually came by inspiration, or vision.

The apostles had to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling just like other Christians. They had to live by faith, and not by sight ; but had they seen the future very clearly they would have lived afterwards by sight, or by knowledge obtained otherwise than as the light of that personal assurance which requires to be won in the manner described by St. Peter in the first chapter of his Second Epistle, and as we have previously seen. Further, it might have interfered with the due balance of the apostles' own minds to have seen the state of the lost, as it would interfere with the state of mind of saints on earth if they saw some of their departed friends in their present condition. St. Paul refers to the judgment seat of Christ, where, as he expresses it, all will receive

according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad; and even this vision itself, or this thought, inspired him with terror, for he immediately says, "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." It did not appear to the apostles what the full condition of either the saved or the lost would be in the future world. But the apostles evidently preferred to dwell on the final state of the *saved* rather than on the final condition of the lost.

Again, there is a certain measure of unhealthy coerciveness in the fear that is begotten of visions, or strong statements, about the condition of the lost, a fear that interferes with the soul's spontaneity of choice. Thus it is that there is so very seldom any true evangelical repentance on a death bed in the case especially of those who have lived a life of sin. The fear of death and of its consequences destroys the soul's spontaneity. It is, therefore, far better for one to decide about eternity when there is the absence of any external cause for slavish fear, and we can thus easily understand why it is that divine evidence, or light, about a future state requires tempering by means of divine wisdom. But many, very foolishly, postpone their decision until the approach of that time when they will run great risks that their inner spontaneity will be interfered with by overmuch of the external being brought to bear on them. These externals will cause the *saint* to mount upwards in soul, whilst they will probably draw others into the fear of perdition, as the waters of the flood lifted up Noah's ark heavenwards, but would have destroyed any other expedients for safety which might have been begun to be framed when the waters appeared to have actually commenced coming. The time

of the beginning of the rains and the winds is not the time for the beginning to build on the rock ; for the great likelihood is that no foundation can be then seen except the shifting and drifting sand.

But although the apostles, with the exception of St. John, appear to have confined themselves mainly, as far as the lost are concerned, to descriptions of their condition in this life, yet our Lord went considerably further, and depicted for us the state of the finally lost. But receiving a description of this kind is different from actually seeing in vision the state described. Our Lord's description would have been believed, or disbelieved, according to belief or disbelief in Himself. Yet our Lord gave descriptions of the finally lost state alongside of descriptions of the finally saved state. It is unlikely that, as a general rule, even *He* saw who those particular souls were that were to be finally lost ; for we must, I think, believe our Lord to have had the power of hiding from His own eyes what it was expedient that He should not look at. He heard and saw only what it was given Him, as a servant, to hear and see. It was not given Him to see the time of the final judgment, as He Himself expressly tells us ; and how much else of the then present, and the then future, were not given Him to see, we are not told.

But if it was not given Him to see, as a general rule, who the particular souls were that were to be finally lost, yet we have general descriptions from Him of the state of souls who reach the awful condition. On one occasion that we are told of, our Lord does seem to have had a vision of the final state of certain souls, and the sight so affected Him that He wept over it ; and He did so notwithstanding

that the souls in question were at that very time His mortal enemies, and were so soon to seal their enmity by their nefarious deed. In the case of Capernaum, our Lord said that this people were exalted to heaven, that is, by having the privilege of such a measure as they had of precious light in their midst ; but they would be brought down to Hades on account of the rejection, and the consequent hardening effects, of this light. I do not think, however, that there is any intimation in all this to the effect that the people of this city would be finally lost, and lost for certain. For the exaltation to heaven was figurative, and so also was the being brought down to Hades. But the latter intimation may have signified that some great trials awaited the people—the pains of Hades taking hold of them—if they were ever to be saved from this terrible hardness which they had permitted the light to bring upon them.

Some would seem to think that our Lord pronounced that even Martha of Bethany was in an unsaved state, when He remarked to her that she was anxious and troubled about many things, and at the same time contrasted her fussy spirit with the spirit of her more contemplative sister. But Christ merely meant to say that Martha was inspired more than was good for her with a spirit which, if indulged continuously, might issue in the thorny state described in the parable of the sower, a state that brought no fruit to perfection.

If there was anyone whose final state we may suppose was clearly before our Lord as being a lost one, one should think it was the state of Judas Iscariot. Yet Jesus does not refer even to this man as being eternally in a state of weeping and wailing. But He does say that it were better for

the betrayer that he had never been born ; and in the light of our Lord's descriptions at other times of the state of the finally lost He left it to be inferred from His remark about Judas what *his* final state was to be. And St. Peter afterwards re-referred to Judas as having gone "to his own place," but said nothing more definite as to what that place was than is connoted by the two words, "his own."

In passing, we may notice that what brought out the innate evil in Judas was proximity to the heavenly light, which shone in and from Jesus. Judas might have seen this light in a certain way at first, and been taken with it. But the temporal kingdom was not coming which Judas probably, like the rest of the disciples, expected. Moreover, the enemies of Jesus were seen to be permitted, as if Jesus could not have helped it, to be surrounding Him with their plots, and seemed likely finally to capture and slay Him. Judas, therefore, did not continue to see the heavenly light through the lowly state of his Master ; and his inability to see came from his love of the world, particularly his love of mammon, which blinded his eyes, and caused him to permit in himself a dishonest and thievish heart whilst in proximity to what was heavenly light. The Baptist seems to have felt the power of a similar temptation to suppose that Jesus might not, after all, be the coming Messiah ; and this temptation he felt through the apparently commonplace and lowly life of Him Whom he had believed to be the Lamb of God, sent to take away the sin of the world. Similar temptations still assail people through the lowliness of Christ's cause on earth. "Blessed is he who is not offended in me."

By what our Lord witnessed from time to time

among men, He was impressed with the fact that power from heaven, and that of a very special kind, was required to make people see heavenly light in a saving manner. Clear explanations, entreaties, reasonings, and even "common grace" itself, were all insufficient. This impressed itself upon our Lord when He saw how Capernaum and certain other cities had treated His light. (Mat. xi.) Also when He came to the knowledge of the Baptist's doubts He was impressed with the Baptist's inability to accept the evidence afforded by the lowly and loving life of Jesus as contrasted with the role which the Baptist himself had apparently laid out for him, a role which would have probably included therein the conquering of all his enemies, and his shewing to the world by unmistakeable signs who He really was. The Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah of the old dispensation, one whose favorite manner of overcoming opposition to the good cause was by such expedients as the sword, and calling down fire from heaven to devour the adversaries. When the Baptist was assailed with doubts, he was in prison, and was nearing his end. And yet even then he could not appreciate the spirit of the new dispensation as our Lord intimated in His remark, that among those born of women a greater than the Baptist had not arisen, yet that he who was but little in the new form of the kingdom of heaven upon earth was greater than he. Was, then, the Baptist, when beheaded, elevated to a state equal to the state of those who departed this life *within* the kingdom of heaven in its new form? I merely ask this question here, but do not intend to discuss it at present; I shall discuss it in a future volume of the present series, a volume entitled, "The Disembodied Soul."

Our Lord's Description of the Finally Lost State.

Our Lord describes the state of the finally lost as a being cast into the lake which burns with unquenchable fire, where the worm does not die. There is also a being bound hand and foot ere the casting into this lake takes place. The fire can hardly be supposed to be literal, or physical fire, but is rather the fire of unavailing remorse, for it is in the soul that the fire is ; and those who believe that the souls of the lost are sent to the final hell immediately upon physical death, cannot consistently believe also that the fire is a physical fire, for the body is then in the dust, and a physical fire cannot burn the soul. But the consuming fire of remorse is not an element that commonly appears in souls that are in the present life in a lost condition ; and, therefore, we need not here dwell upon it. St. John saw the smoke of the torment of the lost ascend, and saw the lost also gnaw their tongues with pain.

It is difficult to say what all the elements may be which are included in being bound hand and foot ; but in any case, there appears to be implied some inability of a special kind. Probably this inability is also intimated in the door being shut, or, at least, there is a measure of this inability thus intimated. Everything pertaining to the final state comes on gradually. It would seem that the final judgment is a gradual process, part of which we see proceeding in the case of Dives (the rich man in the parable) ; for Abraham informed Dives of several things which we are told of, and we know not how many other things which we are not told of. The arguments of Dives were in process of being answered by Abraham ; we are told that the saints

shall judge the world. This process of judgment may proceed up till the second advent, when the great Judge Himself shall appear and give the final deliverance, a deliverance already pronounced in the individual conscience on account of all the previous process of judgment. Christ's word shall judge in the last day—the very word known here on earth. (John xii., 48). This means of judgment shall possibly be ministered by the saints. The wicked shall see in these saints Jesus Himself, and shall see that they had not ministered to Jesus in such saints, whilst the latter were on earth along with them.

It was the coming of the Bridegroom, or the cry that He was coming, and probably also some kind of sight of the Bridegroom, either directly or indirectly, that decided the state of the foolish virgins. Heavenly light, or proximity to the Bridegroom, from Whom this light comes, always seals the state of souls. Even here itself (this is the case to some extent, and it will be the case completely with each soul when Christ shall appear in His glory. The foolish virgins had not made thorough work of their personal surrender to Christ, and to those heavenly principles of which He is the embodiment. They did not stand the proof in this life (Luke xvi., 10-12), and therefore had never the real love of God shed abroad in their hearts. (Rom. v., 4-5). They would not cut off the right hand nor pluck out the right eye, nor sell all, for the possession of the Pearl of great Price. They did not face Zionward: at whatever cost. The vessels in which there was no oil found at last were their whole souls far down to the core. They made superficial work of their salvation, taking the world along with them in whatever they had done

in this way. So it was with the man without the wedding garment, who appeared even at the marriage supper ; and it was the sight of the king in *his* case also that sealed his doom. Did this man come out of the bottomless pit in order to appear in the marriage supper-room ?

The closed door, then, is some sort of inability which is sealed by the sight of the king. At first this sight does not seem to be complete, for the foolish virgins went to buy oil when it was too late ; and it was the final voice of the Bridegroom which revealed the irrevocably closed door. The Bridegroom Himself had not come into direct contact with the foolish virgins till then. But the first measure of binding seems to create an inner remorse, as we see in the case of Dives who was tormented in a flame of remorse even ere the judgment was completed. And we see fear also in the case of the foolish virgins, and in the case of those who call on the rocks to fall on them, and the mountains to cover and hide them. But there would seem to be some forlorn hope among the lost, even up till the final binding which takes place after the judgment of the great day. Dives had hope of the assuagement of the flame which caused the torment, and he did not seem at first to be aware of the existence of the fixed gulf of separation—a gulf which probably consists in the difference of inner state between the righteous and the wicked. Only at the last day will the just be severed from the possibility of communication with the wicked. But further discussion of the future state of each class must be for the present postponed.

There is, however, one particular circumstance noticed by our Lord in connection with the finally lost that we must not fail here to mention, but

will at present only mention it, namely, that the finally lost will be with the devil and his angels. This implies that they will have become entirely like the devil from a moral point of view. They will hate and blaspheme like him. Many of the works of the flesh, lists of which have been given in a previous chapter, are fruits of the devil's character; and we are given to understand that those who are here guilty of any of these works shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven, unless they repent.

In our next chapter we shall have before us in more detail those features of the finally lost state which shew themselves here on earth along with a form of darkness which will not be present in the final hell.

CHAPTER XV.

HELL EXISTS ON EARTH (CONTINUED).

The logic which closes hell, annihilates heaven.—*Parker.*

Man's future doom is what he has chosen; is what he deserved; is what he has fitted himself for.—*Ramsay.*

Hell the Reverse of Heaven.

Hell is really the reverse, or outside, of heaven. All those who are not inside heaven on earth are inside the special form of hell which exists on earth. There are only two possible states, as we shall see more particularly later on.

It is possible for some to be in heaven on earth without their being sure of the fact. But those who are in this state do not make a pillow of their condition. They are either much distressed on account of their doubts, or else they assume more than they experience inwardly. When the latter is the case with any of the saints, they are sooner or later awakened out of this condition, and then they know that all is not right with them. They straightway fall into distress, they set out to look for their Beloved, and give not over until they find Him. But it appears to be one of the devices of hell to make souls that are at their ease imagine that they are Christians, although they are not what they ought to be, are not sure of where they stand, think they may be in a backsliding state,

and are content to abide as they are and take their chance.

The usual state for the living Christian to be in is well-known to the Christian himself, and is set forth already in the New Testament. The living Christian is necessitated to watch and pray lest he enter into temptation, lest he get cold and go astray from the source of his help. He must keep near this source, or else darkness will readily overtake him, and then all the wild animals of the bottomless pit come out on his track. Unless he maintain a good conscience in all things he cannot pray with faith, but is like a wave of the sea when he prays, tossed and driven with the wind; let not that man, says St. James, think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A small sin on the conscience will darken the throne of grace on him, which the Christian must at all hazards keep clear and open. He must cut off whatever is experienced to hinder prayer, for he finds that merely *saying* his prayers will not do; he must often wrestle like Jacob at a throne of grace. But even a little evil leaven will leaven the whole lump. A lustful imagination will be felt to defile and weaken, unless thrust out with decision. As a small pebble under a ship's keel will prevent the great vessel slipping out from the dock into the water, so a small inner sin, wilfully cherished, will have similar effects on the Christian's state.

The living Christian must maintain his first love, or else he hears his Lord speak to *him* also that terrible message sent to the ancient Ephesian church, or the one sent to Laodicea, if he gets lukewarm. He must abide in his Lord's love, united to the Vine, or else he can bear no fruit, nor do any good thing. (John xv.) He will then feel in danger

of being cut off, and cast forth as a branch and withered, and be thus among the branches that men eventually gather and burn. He must maintain in position every piece of the whole armour provided by God, or he knows by experience that he cannot wrestle successfully against the principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this world, who are always on the watch for any weak or loose joint. He is in the war, and always at the front, and knows that he must overcome if he is to be eventually crowned.

The Christian has a new heart, called a *broken* heart, because it is mouldable by heavenly influences in the degree in which these obtain here below. He is contrite in spirit, teachable, meek, open in ear to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. His heart is analgous to the sensitive glass of the photographer after the chemicals are put on it, and it is set up in the camera ready to take the impress of the object. A very little adverse influence will spoil this glass. So will a very little adverse influence from the inner flesh, the outer world, or the prince of darkness, mar the sensitive heart within, and will tell unfavourably on the hearing ear and the seeing eye. Even the wilful neglect of known duty will exert similar adverse effects.

Now these characteristics of the living Christian, who is advancing in the kingdom of heaven on earth, will shew, as by a foil, the state of the soul which has none of these experiences, and who does not find that in the kind of life which it leads, these experiences, watchfulnesses, fears, hopes, or precautions, are necessary. Those who can indulge in, or venture to do, evil knowingly and wilfully, without repentance, are not yet in the kingdom of light, but are in the kingdom of darkness.

Those who are content without any of the experiences described in our second chapter, are not yet in the kingdom of light. Neither, *a fortiori*, are any of the numerous class who live the kind of lives which defile the conscience, for they thus preclude any probability that they may be within the kingdom of light. They bear no signs of being within that kingdom.

There is only one or other of the Two Conditions for a Soul to be in on Earth.

This is put beyond all doubt by the teaching of our Lord and His apostles on the point. There is either the single or the evil eye. The treasure is either in heaven or on earth. Those who have not entered in at the strait gate are on the broad way. There are the wise and foolish builders, the wise and foolish virgins, and the faithful and slothful servants *only*. The tree is either good or evil. The branch is either in the Vine or not in it. He that gathers not with Christ scatters abroad. He that is not with Christ is against Him. There is only one good ground ; all the other kinds of soil are defective. Every plant which God has not planted shall be rooted up. The man who has entered the good fight, professedly, either overcomes or is overcome. There are those who are of the world, and those who are not of the world. There are only the spiritually dead and the spiritually living. Those who believe are saved ; those who believe not are unsaved. To those in Christ Jesus there is now no condemnation ; but all others are under sentence of condemnation. There are those who are born again, and those who are not. Except one eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and

drink His blood, he has no life in him. These are some of the statements of our Lord Himself on the fact that only two classes exist here. He is equally explicit on there being only two classes at last. There will then be *only* the sheep and the goats, the righteous and the wicked, the wheat and the tares, heaven and hell.

The apostles are no less explicit on the existence of only two classes here. There are those who are in the flesh, and those who are in the spirit. If a man have the Spirit of Christ he belongs to Christ; if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. Those who are in the flesh are spiritually dead; those who are in the spirit are spiritually living, and besides these two classes there are none known to the apostles. If any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creation; if a man be not in Christ Jesus, he is under the dominion of the old man. Know ye not, says St. Paul, that Christ Jesus is in you except ye be reprobates? Either, therefore, Jesus dwells in a man, and walks in him as in a temple, or else the man is what the apostle calls reprobate (*adokimos*, or disapproved). St. John writes at length of the two classes, but of the two *only*—those who are of the truth and those who are not; children of the light and children of the darkness; children of God, and children of the devil.

If, therefore, we are to trust to the descriptions of our Lord and His apostles we may conclude most definitely that there are only the two classes among souls here, namely, those who are in heaven on earth, and those who are not in heaven here, but in the other condition. There is no exception visible from this conclusion.

There are various descriptions given in the

New Testament of the conditions of souls that are not in heaven here, but who are on the outside thereof. These are said to be spiritually dead, blind, esteeming spiritual things as foolishness, enmity against them, taken captive by the strong man armed, and held in false peace by him. They are in the kingdom of darkness, requiring the exercise of almighty power to translate them out of this state into the marvellous light of God's kingdom. Further, their position is one under sentence of condemnation, or under the curse of the law, and in this position there are no dealings by God with a view to their salvation, unless those dealings which He may have in His external providence with a view to what He intends ultimately to effect in the case of those whom He is to call into the kingdom of light.

I think we can include all that we shall see in space here in notice as to the conditions of our outside the kingdom of heaven under two main headings, namely, *hatred* and *darkness*. These are the two characteristics of the devil, as mentioned by our Lord, when He says that the devil was a murderer and a liar from the beginning (John viii., 44.)

Hell's Hatred on Earth.

In order to be as inclusive as needful, the term hatred here must be held to include the absence of that love which is due. But this hatred often shews itself in the positive form, and it will always eventually culminate in the positive hatred which characterises the devil himself, unless repentance supervene. Our Lord says that he who does not hate father and mother, etc., for His sake, cannot

be His disciple. This means that one coming to Christ must prefer Christ's commands and principles to those of even the nearest and dearest relations on earth, if these latter should give commands, or indicate preferences, at variance with the commands or principles of Christ. In this broad sense, therefore, must we interpret the term hatred as here applied.

But there is a positive hatred also to that which is good, or to that which we are commanded to love. There is enmity against the good, an enmity which may not be experienced as such as long as we feel at liberty to *reject* the good, or not to close with it. There is often to be met with in the world enmity against one's neighbour. This is a form of that hatred which is characteristic of hell. St. Paul, collecting the Old Testament descriptions of the ungodly state, gives it as one of them that "their throat is an open sepulchre," that is, for the reputation of their fellow-men also "the poison of asps is under their lips." "Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known." St. Paul adds that there is "no difference" in this respect among the unsaved, for all are concluded as being under sin. (Rom. iii.)

But there are many other and more subtle sins which come under this heading. All cheaterly of our neighbour, all dishonesty in trade, commerce, politics, and social relationships; all double-dealing, deception, chicanery, slander, discourtesy, unkindness, roughness, undue reserve, isolation, misrepresentations, lie-telling, lie-making, lie-loving, etc. All these are contrary to that love which the gospel commands and inspires. Even *isolation* itself, if from cold feelings, is wrong. Christians

are united to each other, and even *isolation, indifference, coldness, and formality*, are here all out of place, and pertain to a different kingdom from the kingdom of heaven on earth. We ought to take ourselves to task for coldness, not to speak of dishonesty and cheatery, towards our neighbour, as we should take ourselves to task for coldness towards God Himself. Our Lord says that the second table of the moral law is like unto the first, and we remember how we are to be finally judged as to our love to Christ. We are commanded to love even our enemies, and no man that loves will slander or cheat or hate. He will not follow the multitude in trade, commerce, or politics, to do evil in any of these pursuits.

We also hate our neighbour if we do not strive in a gospel manner to preserve ourselves from all illegitimate loves, contaminating influences, such as lusts of the flesh, strong drink, sloth, pride, love of mammon, love of the world, all of which tend to unfit us for the love of, and ministry to, our neighbour. Every thing that tends to make us ashamed of the Christian armour, ashamed to give advice, or even warning and exhortation, when needed, is a species of hatred of our neighbour. The Mosaic law says that he who does not do these things to his brother suffers sin upon his brother, and gives signs of hating, that is, not loving him. (Lev. xix., 17). St. John says that he who loves not his brother is in the same category with the one who hates him. And he that hates his brother is of the spirit of Cain, who said : " Am I my brother's keeper ? " He is a murderer, says the apostle, and he has no eternal life abiding in him.

Hell's Darkness on Earth.

The term darkness must also be here taken in a comprehensive sense. Especially does this darkness include fatal errors in religious doctrine, in the meaning and value of correct doctrine, fatal errors in judgment in religious matters, and, most dangerous of all, an error as to one's self being wrong in conviction on fundamental doctrines, in habits of life, soul-experiences, or the absence of saving experiences in the soul, and wrong in one's standing before God and in view of eternity. Darkness also includes one's being unconsciously wrong in one's standards of appeal as to his religious state, such as the standard of the opinions, or the want of opinions, or of the religious or irreligious habits of the multitude ; or the standard of tradition, hereditary custom, etc. All these are unsafe standards. This does not say that they are all necessarily wrong, but it simply says that, without strict examination in the light of a true standard, none of these standards ought to be trusted.

The worst possible form of soul-darkness in respect to matters of religion is the darkness which supervenes on a continued back-sliding state after the light has been enjoyed for a season. The Scriptures explicitly declare this to be a fact. Better for people not to have known the way of life than, after having known it, to turn from the holy commandment given them. In Heb. vi., we are told that it is impossible to renew souls again to repentance who had "been once enlightened, and had tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," and who, after this kind of inner experience,

fall away. The sign of this reprobate state is that those under it *do not care* whether they can be renewed or not. There is, in their case, an entire atrophy, or wasting, of the spiritual sensibilities. The sub-soil of the soul is exhausted, and no heavenly plants can be grown any more in that soul. One may not, indeed, be able to read with absolute assurance the sign mentioned; but every *seeming* appearance of this sign is just cause for much alarm.

Every coldness in professing people, and, most especially, every indifference as to the clearly perceived existence of this coldness among this class of people, is a matter for very special concern. This is more particularly so when the coldness is common and commonly unheeded. This condition always makes for the finally impenitent state, because there is a mingling of gospel light with a declinature to be illumined thereby. There is a forsaking, or a never-experiencing, of "first love"; and we are aware what the divine message says about the danger of this state. Unless remedied, there is an explicit intimation that there will be a cutting off, a removal of the candlestick, or church-state; and there is in this intimation an implication that there will be spiritual darkness that may never be illumined. Those that have ears to hear this message are bidden hear. (Rev. ii., 1-5; iii., 14-19). Unless there be an abiding in the love of Christ there can be no fruit borne; and in the case of the fruitless branches that are in a state of severance from the Vine, they are to be all gathered, and finally burned. Now when intimations like these, which are found so plentifully in Scripture, are plainly unheeded; and when, at the same time, there is a distinct knowledge that this state of

union to the Vine, fruitbearing—not out of the Vine, but in union therewith—the state of first love and similar living signs, are uncommon, then there is the greater cause for the apprehension of danger.

It ought to be remembered in this connection that people who have light and who, notwithstanding, decline to come into the soul-state which the light describes, and which it shews to be the only safe state, are in a very different condition from the state of those who have not the light. God bears with this latter state, as He Himself often tells us, in a manner in which He will not bear with the state of those who have the light, but do not walk therein. Or, to express the matter more correctly, the laws which God has created, and made operative in the soul, are laws which of themselves bring darkness and impenitence upon souls that know but decline the light. Such ones will not continue to appreciate the light. They may, indeed, continue to be very sensitive about their own forms and views of religion, just as the Scribes and Pharisees were in our Lord's time about *their* forms and views; but they will be dead, immovable, and hostile, or else entirely indifferent, towards the *true* religion, never more coming to an appreciative understanding, or true heart-acceptance, thereof.

That such is the case with rejectors of the light we have already seen to be the teaching of Scripture, and to be abundantly illustrated from the records given there of people who had the light but declined its dictates. These people were always blinded by the light. Ezekiel was told that had he been appointed to go to the heathen, they would have heard him and accepted his message; but he was appointed to go to Israel, who had had the light, and had become hardened under

it, and they, therefore, would not hear him. We have already seen the great hardening which occurred under the preaching of Noah, Lot, Isaiah, and our Lord. In each of these cases the light from heaven hardened countless multitudes. But the case now is, as it was then, that if this hardening occurs, people imagine that they would become aware of it, or be conscious of it in themselves. It is one dangerous form of darkness so to imagine. The prince and principalities and powers of this darkness are not so simple, nor so new to their business, as to permit of this consciousness. They will, indeed, permit of a little superficial and temporary devoutness occasionally so as to delude people about this hardening.

Another characteristic of the darkness that leads to the outer darkness, is that of inconsistency and irrationality. People will profess to believe the Bible doctrines about salvation, and many of them would be quite alarmed were there to be heresy proclaimed in their pulpits about these doctrines, who yet do not believe these doctrines. There are countless numbers who, if they were to take up the Scripture to study it carefully as to the real signs of living Christianity, such signs, for instance, as can easily be gathered from a study of our second chapter of the present work, could understand these signs; and were they to ask themselves in the light of these signs whether they themselves are living Christians or not, what answer would they be constrained to give, *if they answered honestly?* They would have to acknowledge that they have not any of these essential signs connected with them. Yet they have been making a profession of being living Christians notwithstanding, and in many cases have been doing so for years. Is this not

inconsistency and irrationality? People do not act so in their worldly affairs.

But in addition to inconsistency and irrationality, the darkness which leads to the outer darkness has in it a species of delirium, frenzy, or madness. There is a stirring within against listening to the voice of reason and self-consistency. There is sheer wickedness, stubbornness, false independence, pride, and a spirit of opposition, in respect to the truth, the proclamation of truth, consistency and reason. There may be calmness, or even admiration, when undiscerned error is proclaimed in the name of truth; but when truth and rationality about their own personal inconsistency in making a dead profession are proclaimed, then there is not usually found the meekness, humility, penitence, self-examination, that the occasion calls for. There may be so on the part of those who have the light presented to them for the first time; but not as a rule are these heavenly virtues found in the case of those who make a dead profession. In the latter case there is usually opposition, either silent or active, or else there is the cultivation of a spirit of indifference, or of careless and proud independence. All these things pertain to, and make for, the darkness of the finally lost condition, and for the increase of the form of that darkness which is prevalent in the present world. But we must devote another chapter to the consideration of the religious state of the majority of our professing people, owing to the unspeakable importance of the subject.

CHAPTER XVI.

PROBABLE STATE OF MAJORITY OF
PROFESSING PEOPLE.

Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.—*Jesus*.

There is an age approaching, during which righteousness will be universal.—*Isaac*.

Are the Majority of our Professing People Inside the Kingdom of Heaven or Outside?

This is a most delicate question, but a most important one, to discuss and try to answer. We cannot suppose, however, that the great Head of the church means that such a question should not be answered, nor, therefore, that it is impossible to answer it, nor that there are never any sufficient materials in sight for answering it.

Do the *majority* of professing people in our churches exhibit the signs that they have Christ energising in them as the hope, earnest, substance, and illumination of glory? Have they ever themselves energised to enter in at the strait gate? or have they come, encouraged it may be by church officials, to make a profession when they became of age, or when they had been somewhat touched after hearing some particular sermon, or by some other temporary means? Did they get easily and pleasantly inside the strait gate? Did this gate

open wide for them ? Are they now abiding united to the Vine, bearing fruit through this union, workers in the vineyard, putting their talent to use whilst it is called to-day, maintaining their first love, and sedulously and prayerfully watching against getting lukewarm—neither cold nor hot ? Do they shew a disposition to part with all for the Pearl of great Price ? Do we ever and anon see several among them go a searching for the Beloved when they miss Him, or when, through their worldliness, or some sin or infirmity, they have caused Him to move away ? Have they manifestations of, feasts and supplings with, the Bridegroom of their souls ? Do they often mourn for their sins and bewail the effects of these sins on their prayers, on their shining with Christ's light, or on their seasoning of others with the salt of the gospel ? Do they maintain the way open to the throne of grace by carefully abstaining from what would impart an evil savour to the ointment ? Have they their loins girt about, waiting and watching, having oil in their vessels with their lamps, and, through their possession of the wedding garment, having often suppers in foretaste of the great marriage supper ? Are they in process of being filled with all the fulness of God ? Are they broken-hearted, contrite in spirit, hearing, therefore, the Good Shepherd's voice, with their faces directed Zionward, and not mammon-lovers, not pleasure-hunters, not conformed to the present world, diligently laying up treasure for themselves in heaven, and being evermore transformed by the renewing of their minds, proving what is that good, perfect, and acceptable will of God ? Are they circumcised in heart, rejoicing Christ Jesus, rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, having

no confidence in the flesh, whether the flesh in religious forms, or the flesh in lusts ?

Jesus Christ came from His home in glory to suffer and die to save souls, so great is His love for souls. Are the majority in our churches possessed of this same spirit ? Do they watch and pray, not only for their own personal salvation, but also for the salvation of others ? If any man have not the Spirit nor the disposition of Christ, he is none of His. Do the majority find, from their own personal experience, that they require to feed on the bread, and drink for their strength and refreshment the water, of life ? Must they necessarily come ever and anon to the Word of life to feed on its sincere milk, and go evermore to the throne of grace, that they may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might ?

These are a few of the peritent questions which ought to be answered before it can be definitely decided whether the majority in our churches are inside or outside the kingdom of heaven on earth. These questions indicate the *minimum* of requirements for the inside of the kingdom. Those on the outside can do with less. But the requirements for those on the inside are all strung together like beads on a thread. If one bead slip off, the others follow.

Now everyone knows how much dishonesty, cheatery, insincerity, robbery, unfairness, graft, mammon-loving, rowdyism among the young, Sabbath-breaking, neglect of family worship and of closet prayer and Bible study, are prevalent amongst us, even among those who profess to be living on the bread of life. And everyone also knows how very common all forms of dishonesty in trade and commerce are. The great majority of

country people in the Dominion of Canada have a great deal of buying and selling to do. They buy and sell cattle, farm produce, and horses. Now is it, or is it not, a fact, that when one sets about buying or selling a horse or a cow, he ever trusts what the one he transacts business with says? Does he ever rely on the word of that one, unless he knows otherwise that that word is true? Does one in these circumstances not always assume most completely that every one that deals with him, or that offers to do so, is on the watch to steal some march on him, in order to take as much money off him as possible in the transaction? Is not this a correct description of the spirit prevalent in that buying and selling which almost everyone engages in? And, in all seriousness, I ask is this spirit consistent with the prevalence of living Christianity in our midst? Does not this watchfulness, this assumption of the prevalence of the dishonest spirit, bear clear testimony from those who know best of all what the common spirit is, those, namely, who are experienced in it, have to meet it and are sharpened by contact with it? does not all this, I ask, bear clear and very emphatic testimony to the common absence of the true spirit which is indicated in the series of questions asked in the beginning of this chapter? The facts cannot possibly be gainsaid, nor can the inferences be invalidated by those who know the state of matters, and who know their Bibles also.

There is, indeed, a form of Christianity on the Sunday, but how much in the presence of these things does the Sunday Christianity count for? There was a far more zealous church-religion in Isaiah's time, as we saw in previous chapters, and also among the Jews who crucified the Lord of

glory, than there is prevalent to-day. In Isaiah's time the people who went to church wondered, and asked serious questions, as to why the Lord did not notice them nor appear to hear their prayers. (Is. lviii.) Their defect lay in their earth-life. So it is now. There is too much worldliness, mammon-loving, covetousness, extortion in secret, watchfulness—not for prayer, but to deceive one's neighbour, and to mulct him of as much of his property as possible under the guise of fair dealing. There is far too much selfishness prevalent, every man for himself and his party; far too little regard for humanity, not to speak of Christ's love ruling in the heart. Comparatively few people ask why the Lord does not meet them nor hear their prayers.

Among other signs of numbers being on the outside of the kingdom, there is the general apathy and complete indifference reigning both inside and outside of our churches as to the common state among us of even the professing part of the people. People in general do not seem to care. Is this not a sign of the atrophy of the spiritual sensibilities previously treated of? Is spiritual darkness and spiritual death not prevalent in our midst? When God's hand may be lifted up people do not seem to see nor care. In Noah's time people planted, builded, married, and were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and *knew not*, until the flood came and took them all away. So it would seem to be now; people are worldly, and *will* be worldly, no matter what is said to them, if once their spiritual sensibilities are wasted.

Of course there are many real Christians in our midst, many that mourn for the declensions among

professing people, and God ought to be praised for these people. But I refer to the general run of our professing people. Are they true, living Christians, or not ?

It may be profitable to inquire into some of the *causes* for the present state of affairs. And let me remark here, in the first place, that we ought not to suppose that our national or public institutions are all right and sound ethically just because they exist, and because we have been accustomed to them. The *principle* of them may be so far right, but if this is so, there are great and scandalous abuses notoriously prevalent.

Public Legislatures.

Almost all our people take an interest in our legislative bodies and in their doings. Some take a deep and consuming interest in these things, and hardly think seriously of anything else. But everyone knows the dishonesties, bitternesses, vituperations, slanders, defamation of character, and other similar evils which characterise party spirit in our legislatures. Many members of Parliament, both in and out of the Parliament-house, recklessly traduce the character of a political opponent, without taking all, if any, of the care necessary to sift reports; nor do they take as much care in their enquiries as to reach even a moderate degree itself of assurance that they are right in what they are about to say against an opponent. There are honest men in all our legislatures, as there are everywhere. But can the general run of our parliamentary speeches really be trusted, that they express the honest conviction of the speakers after full and patient enquiry, and more

especially their honest conviction even although they have been severely tempted to speak wilful falsehood. No doubt even a dishonest man may often declare his convictions, and also with great pleasure, when he has actually discovered his opponent halting. Then even the dishonest man may have a chance of making a great and redeeming shew of honesty of character and purpose. But what of that? It should count for nothing unless the character of the speaker is known for absolute probity and honour under every kind of temptation. Let me add in this connection that I know of no valid reason why our members of Parliament should be allowed with impunity to traduce characters when they speak inside Parliament, whilst others are dealt with by the civil law when they do similar things outside Parliament.

When our members of Parliament are known to be men of the pink of honesty and honour, and specially sensitive about even an opponent's reputation, then a certain degree of liberty inside Parliament might be expedient. But in view of the terrible aroma of party spirit, the vituperation, slander, and reckless dealing with an opponent's views and character, and in view also of the notorious and scandalous corruptions at elections, which the candidate could easily make to cease if he chose, it is nothing less than an evil burlesque to permit men to speak as they choose of the doings and character and motives of others if they only speak inside the Parliament-house.

These doings in high quarters bear the most disastrous fruits outside the legislature, and among our people. The common dishonesties in buying and selling, the dishonesties in trade and commerce, the shady and the nefarious deeds in certain

professions, are evils enough for our people to be aware of, although these evils should not be crowned as they so often are by the doings of some of our members of Parliament. Our people are trained by these doings never to trust any utterance made in public unless they themselves know the utterance at first hand to be true. They are trained outside the church to mistrust pulpit utterances inside ; and they discount the statements even of the Bible itself. They are trained to distrust their fellow-men. They make allowances of ninety per cent for professionalism in the pulpit, and often of a hundred per cent. They know how much public bodies, and public officials, cater for their sufferages, and how much, therefore, these want to please the people. They also assume, and sometimes, alas, with good cause, that the pulpit wants to please likewise. The preaching of so many candidates in vacancies, the grandeur and eclat of many of our church services, including the treatment of all who are in church as being good and living Christians, all go to train our people in the direction described.

Pulpits and Church Courts.

It is to be feared that we who occupy pulpits, and are members of church courts, are not entirely immaculate in respect to the state of many of our professing people. We may, indeed, feel too dependent on the people for speaking out our convictions as we ought, and as the gospel demands. We may often fall into that fear that bringeth a snare, and may, in consequence train ourselves to be men-pleasers. We admit that tact is needed ; but we may permit much of our tact to descend

into an unworthy trimming for mere selfish reasons. If we do this, it is certainly far from that love to souls that will constrain us to speak what we believe to be the truth. There is often with us too much satisfaction if only the Sunday service appears to give satisfaction to our people, without very seriously enquiring as to whether we have, with sufficient judgment, knowledge and discretion, sought faithfully to discriminate those outside the kingdom from those inside, and to bring our message to bear on each class.

I fear that our solo-singing, anthems, grand choirs and organs, give a wrong impression to many of our people, and cause them to believe that we are trusting all as if inside the kingdom. People have consciences, and they know well when these are honestly appealed to; and well can they perceive when their lives and inner state are faithfully laid bare and exhibited in true Scripture light. Many of them become deadened to all this by being permitted to sleep spiritually; and, above all, by their dishonest, or mammon-loving, lives; but they can, unless hardened beyond remedy, be awakened by the power of the Spirit in preaching that is but very ordinary as far as knowledge and depth are concerned, if it be truly consecrated and faithful.

It is a question of considerable importance whether or not our church courts do as much good to our people and congregations as their appearance and ponderousness of machinery would seem to indicate. If each one of our ministers, or sessions, were asked the question individually: What good have you received, or advantage derived, for either yourselves or your people, from any of our church courts since you were ordained? what reply would

be likely to be received from the majority of ministers and elders? I would venture to suggest this question for our next schedule on Life and Work.

There is some cause to suspect that our church courts fear the people also; and if they do, they are not the people's true friends. Church courts and leaders in them are sorely tempted to be trimmers. There is cause also to fear that these courts do not stand faithfully by the ministers of the church in any difficulties they may have in their work. Now a church court is morally bound to uphold the hands of all her ministers, and institute a faithful enquiry wherever such seems called for, in order to discover and deal with real delinquents. But this is very seldom done, especially if, as was the case when Pilate sat in judgment, the majority clamour for a certain course. Both Presbyterians and Methodists are really Congregationalists in church government, and ought openly so to say.

The Multitude.

An unethical multitude is perhaps the greatest supporter and abettor of individual irreligion in our midst. In thousands of cases there is no possibility, humanly speaking, of moving the individual out of his irreligious rut, or evil habits, as long as he is supported by the example of an irreligious multitude. Individuals may be moved to agree to, and adopt, courses in relation to religion, that will not imply much if any self-denial on their part. But when brought face to face with decision for a real religious life, if the habit of the community in which one lives shews the main body of the people to be outside the kingdom, or if it exhibit no signs that they are *inside*, then it requires an

individual with considerable backbone and muscle to decide for the right in the face of this condition.

Wrongdoers will listen to any kind of appeal, publicly or privately, if only they feel they are in line with the habit of the community around them in remaining as they are. Some dishonest buyers and sellers in a community that has only at best a Sunday religion will even boast of their dishonest actions, and of how nicely they succeeded in fleecing so and so. They can listen to any sort of appeals from the pulpit, and even enjoy hearing an occasional description of themselves, as long as they know they have the friendship of the community, and know also that it makes no difference to this community in their friendly relations with them how much they cheat and rob. The whole of the cheater and deception of this class of robber is as enjoyable to themselves as a game of cricket or baseball is to the players thereof. And who dare discipline them as long as the community is with them, and as long as they can charge many in the community with similar shady deeds if matters were coming to a serious investigation? Many people do much of their buying and selling with men whom they know are dishonest and must be watched; yet they must not cast out with these men, for they can often, shady though they be, do business with them to profit. It is the mighty dollar that rules, got by fair means if convenient, but by all means the dollar must be got.

It has seldom, if ever, been known that when the multitude were irreligious, and hardened under the light, they were reclaimed short of some great providential trial. God must make bare his arm

for the reclamation of reclaimable ones. Generations may be lost ere this process takes due effect, as was the case with Israel of the captivity.

Yet notwithstanding terrible hardenings, and ruinous reactions from the good, the church of Christ on earth will continue to make progress until He Himself come. Even the reactions from the good will be overruled for the spiritual benefit of the church as a whole, though many may be drowned in these reactionary waves. The gates of hell will claim many souls, but will not finally triumph over the kingdom of heaven on earth. I have not considered the kingdom of darkness as exhibited in literature. This will fall to be considered in the next volume to be published of the present series.

