

CHARLES AVERY HOLMES.



SERMONS.

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L. A. Holmes

SERMONS

BY

✓
Rev. Charles Avery Holmes, D. D., LL. D.

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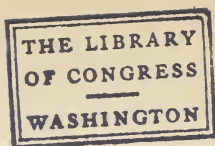
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REV. CHARLES AVERY HOLMES, D. D., LL. D.

Charles Avery Holmes, son of Rev. George S. and Mary Steelman Holmes, was born in Middletown, Washington County, Pennsylvania, on the Second day of June, 1827.

His father was a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and he followed in the same line. He was thoroughly educated, being early trained by his father to diligent habits of study. In the year 1844, being then only seventeen years of age, he graduated from the Western University at Pittsburgh. From that institution he received the degree of LL. D. in 1893—the degree of Doctor of Divinity having been conferred upon him many years previously by Waynesburg College.

Under the ministry of his father, he was converted, when less than twelve years of age, and united with the Church in Steubenville, Ohio. The soundness of his conversion was beyond all doubt or question, and the power of it remained with him all through life. In 1847, when he was twenty years old, he was received into the Pittsburgh Conference, and began his work in the ministry. In that work he continued without a break until the time of his death.

The various charges which he served in his ministry, and the years for which he was appointed to them, were as follows: 1847, Ohio Circuit (as junior preacher, with Rev. J. J. Moffitt as his senior colleague); 1848, Smithfield Circuit, Ohio (as junior preacher, with Rev. Wm. Tipton as his senior colleague); 1849-50, Cadiz Circuit (as junior preacher, with Rev. J. J. Moffitt as his senior colleague); 1851, Coshocton; 1852-53, South Street Church, Steubenville; 1854, Wellsburg, West Virginia; 1855-56,

Washington, Pennsylvania ; 1857-59, Presiding Elder of Washington District ; 1860-61, Christ Church, Pittsburgh ; 1862-63, Presiding Elder of Uniontown District ; 1864-66, Smithfield Street Church, Pittsburgh ; 1867-68, President of Iowa Wesleyan University, and Pastor of Main Street Church, Mount Pleasant, Iowa ; 1869-71, Sewickley, Pennsylvania ; 1872-73, North Avenue Church, Allegheny ; 1874-76, Grace Church, Harrisburg ; 1877 (March), Pine Street Church, Williamsport ; 1877 (October), and 1878, Trinity Church, Louisville, Kentucky ; 1879, Washington, Pennsylvania ; 1880-82, Butler Street Church, Pittsburgh ; 1883, First Church, Oakland, California ; 1884-86, Presiding Elder of Pittsburgh District, Pennsylvania ; 1887-90, Union Church, Allegheny ; 1891-93, Arch Street Church, Allegheny ; 1894-96, Beaver.

He was a delegate to the General Conferences of 1860, 1864, 1868 and 1872. He was a member of the General Book Committee of the Church from 1864 to 1868, and a member of the Board of Education from 1872 to 1876.

On the fourteenth of November, 1850, he was married to Tempe, daughter of William Tingley, of Cadiz, Ohio. Never did man have more perfect wife ; and his home and family were constantly in the heart and the mind of Dr. Holmes. Noted as he was as a man of fame and good works, one of the most distinguishing features of his character was his loving devotion to his wife and children. And when, on the twenty-fifth of August, 1889, he saw the partner of his life precede him to the home beyond, it was with the memory of a life of truest affection upon earth that he looked forward to the reunion of the life which is in Heaven.

Dr. Holmes was a man of unusual strength of character.

He was firmness itself, wherever principle was involved. But he was inexpressibly tender toward all whom he could serve. Generous beyond all measure, liberal and broad-hearted, as he was, he could not tolerate the thought of wrong. He was kind and charitable with the erring ; but meanness in any form he thoroughly despised. None ever heard him make special profession of his own attainment in religious life, nor declare any goodness in himself ; and none who knew him failed to recognize the fact that he was an intensely religious man who "walked with God." Extremely unselfish, his life was devoted to the interests of others and not to his own. Of himself he thought last of all. Constant in his ministry to all who suffered or were in want, and open-handed and open-hearted to all who met him in the wide circles of friendship, he fairly won for himself the reputation of a "man of love."

His was the superiority of a righteous man to fear of any kind. Neither frown nor threat could swerve him from his principles. No force of opposition was ever great enough to make him tremble. In the dark days of our National history, his voice was ever heard in support of the flag of his country ; and his labors in behalf of his country, when his life was imperilled by what he said and did, gave him fame as one who counted deeds of loyalty superior to thoughts of personal safety. In matters of political and religious interest and principle, he was outspoken and positive in support of what he deemed the right. But, while earnest and forcible in his uncompromising support of that in which he believed, he was ever courteous and generous toward all honest opponents. And it was no uncommon thing for those who had honestly differed with him, to become his warm friends and admirers.

Possessed of remarkable intellectual gifts, and a life-long

student, he was essentially a scholar. His acquaintance with the world of literature was a profound intimacy. His reading was wide and universal. What he read, he remembered ; and he had a wonderful faculty for adapting and making use of what he acquired in study. A natural orator, he cultivated all his graces, and was a speaker of unusual eloquence and force. He was a master of the art of enunciation. With a voice powerful, but delightfully controlled and modulated, sweet, persuasive and convincing, he never failed to attract and interest and impress his hearers.

Although always a ready speaker, never failing for thought or its verbal expression on the most sudden emergency or demand for speech, he invariably gave careful preparation to every subject and occasion upon which he knew that he was to speak. He deemed every occasion worthy of the best that he could do. And his habits of study and practiced memory equipped him for those times when he was called upon for public utterance without previous notice.

The sermons contained in this volume are selected from the large number which he wrote in full. They are printed from his manuscripts, word for word as he wrote them, without change of any kind. There has been no work for an editor, and no alterations have been made. The one difficulty encountered, has been in the matter of choosing from the immense wealth of sermonic productions which he left in his desk—each sermon seeming equally worthy of publication with all the others. These which are printed were all delivered in the regular course of his work in the ministry.

The sermon which closes this collection is the last one preached by him. It was on Sunday morning, February twenty-eighth,

1897, that he delivered it. Ill for more than a year, and much of the time suffering extreme weakness and great pain, he had remained at his work. For some time he had seemed to be in some ways improving in health, but was growing weaker. Upon the morning named, he stood in his pulpit at Beaver, Pennsylvania, and preached as usual, with no thought that he was finishing his work. When within a few minutes of the close of the sermon, he suddenly became so weak that he was compelled to stop. In a few moments the sense of faintness had passed from him ; but from that hour on he lost strength, and in two weeks his life had worn out and he had gone to his eternal rest. Monday morning, the fifteenth of March, 1897, at twenty minutes before four o'clock, he quietly passed in sleep from this world to the world in which there is neither pain nor weakness.

A man of continual labor and unswerving fidelity, having spent a long life in the loving and unfaltering proclamation of the Gospel, he did not realize that, in exhorting the members of his congregation to a proper administration of the trust committed to them, he was ending his own ministry in the world with an exposition of words which fittingly characterized his life. But no words could better declare the sincerity of purpose and the earnest zeal of his life, than those which formed his last text : " As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak ; not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts."

I.

“For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

—II. ΤΙΜΟΘΗΥ, 1 : 12.

A long time I have heard of Jesus Christ : the Saviour of sinners; the Son of God ; the Son of Mary ; God over all, blessed for evermore. Indeed, I can not indicate the hour when His name first hailed my ear, or His personality first impressed my mind.

I was born in a country which, with all its shortcomings, is a Christian country. The aroma of Christ's character is in its air. The force of Christ's righteousness is in its life. The hand of Christ's providence has hewn its history. The power of Christ's spirit has inspired its religion. The teaching of Christ's word has shaped its legislation. Verily, exceeding great is the excellence of the country favored with the knowledge of the Lord !

I was born, too, in a home over which hung the star of Bethlehem. Father was a minister of the glorious Gospel of Immanuel. Mother was a confiding, earnest, loving worshipper of the Prince of Peace. Our family altar was fragrant with praise and prayer. Our friends and visitors were men and women who had been at Calvary, and were on their way to Paradise regained. Verily, surpassing is the glory of that home which is covered with the cloud and smoke by day, and with the shining of the flaming fire by night !

Led by parental counsel and example, from my earliest childhood, I breathed in the culture of the class-room ; caught the experiences of the prayer-meeting ; imbibed the inspirations and instructions of the Sabbath-school ; and twice every Sabbath sat listening to sermons telling the tidings of Redemption.

“The music on my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.”

O, I am so grateful that I was not brought up beneath the branches of the Upas-tree of Atheism ; that I was not reared

within the shadows of Paganism ; and that my infant intellect was not left an empty tablet for doubt and sin to make the first impression on its receptive pages ! Oh, I am so thankful that, from a child, I have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus ; and that, from my youth, the Holy Spirit has plied me with reclaiming and restraining influences !

“ Our children thou dost claim,
O, Lord our God, as Thine :
Ten thousand blessings to Thy name
For goodness so Divine.”

Absorbing the conception of Jesus Christ from the very atmosphere about me, I came to believe in Him. I came to believe in Him as God ; believe in Him as God manifest in man, by the oblation of Himself, making possible the reconciliation of God and man, and the restoration of man to the favor and image of God ; believe in Him as proclaiming the conditions of the possible reconciliation and restoration ; and believe in Him as requiring submission to these conditions, and, on this submission, renewing men into the sons of God, with all the felicities and immunities of the precious relation—a relation demanding confiding and loving fealty to Himself ; and insuring to those who enter into it happiness in this life, and immortality in the life to come.

Analyzing my mental process to this belief, I find that it was the same as that by which I came to believe in any person of whom I had previously been ignorant. I heard of him from others—they who knew Him commending Him to my homage, and seeking to impress me with a conviction of His charms and claims.

So, by force of my circumstances, largely at least independently of my own effort or volition, I came to believe in Jesus Christ—conceding His being ; entertaining some Scriptural conception of His character and desert ; and revering Him as the Great Benefactor of humanity, and as of imperative necessity, and of priceless value, to the world.

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow :
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o'erflow."

Believing thus in Jesus Christ, through the influence and teachings of others, at last I met Him directly. Although neither disbelieving nor ignoring nor rejecting Him, I had not embraced Him as my Lord and Saviour, nor given myself into His keeping, nor put on His righteousness, nor surrendered myself to His use. I had not been delivered from condemnation, nor renewed in the spirit of my mind, nor transformed into an heir of the inheritance of the saints in light. I was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But one day a new conviction arrested me, a new light encircled me, a new necessity grasped me, a new possibility mastered me, and a new resolution stirred me. I beheld myself a sinner before God. I felt myself obnoxious to His wrath. I realized my self-inadequacy to self-deliverance and improvement. I sighed for relief and satisfaction. I sobbed out, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Forthwith Another was with me—His bearing that of a Prince; His face of surpassing loveliness; and His lips fragrant with unutterable tenderness. Addressing me, He said, "I am Jesus. I am the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world. I tasted death for every man. I am able to save to the uttermost. I will in no wise cast him out that cometh unto Me." Drawing closer, He said, "Come unto Me, thou heavy-laden child. In keeping of My commandments there is great reward. My grace shall be sufficient for thee. My God will supply all your need, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus. Whom I love, I love to the end."

"Lift up thy streaming eyes to heaven :
The great atonement see ;
And all thy sins shall be forgiven—
Believe, and thou art free."

Believing hitherto *in* Jesus Christ, on the faith of others, I

now believed *Him*. Accepting the testimony of those in whom I confided, I had a favorable estimate of Him. I judged Him to be full of goodness and truth. I regarded Him as the Messiah which was to come, and Whose coming was to be for humanity life from the dead, and Whose law was to be the rule of all human action and will. But, as I now stood before Him, He filled my eyes and fixed my heart as never before. My faith was constrained. I could not doubt Him. I felt He could not be false or insufficient. I felt He must be God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. I gave myself into His captivating hands; realized that He gave Himself to me; and said to those who had told me of Him, "Now I believe, not because of your saying; for I have heard Him myself, and *know* that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

It is better felt than told; but, as far as my language can describe the way by which my faith laid hold of Him, and my soul rested in His peace, I cried: "Surely, Thou art all I have heard of Thee: Thou art the fairest of all the children of men; Thou art Jesus, for Thou shalt save Thy people from their sins. Surely, Thou art mighty to save: Thou art He of Whom it is written, It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Thou hast been delivered for my offenses, and raised for my justification. Surely, Thou art able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto Thee. Thou art able to save me. To Thee I give myself, hungry for Thy salvation, and submitting myself to Thy will—I have no other dower: I give *myself* to thee. Surely, Thou dost save me! I have no condemnation. I am a new creation. Old things have passed away. Thou art my Lord, and my God! Surely, mine eyes behold Thy salvation. Thou hast forgiven my iniquity, and healed my sickness, and led me home from exile, and sent forth Thy Spirit into my heart, crying, Abba, Father! And, 'O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is taken away, and Thou comforted me.'

“O happy day, that fixed my choice,
On Thee, my Saviour, and my God;
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its rapture all abroad.”

Believing Jesus Christ unto my salvation, I have come to *know* Him. And not merely by name; for I thus know many of whom I have no fuller knowledge. And not merely by sight—in form or history or land; for I thus know many who have no knowledge of me. But I know Him in my heart, the hope of glory: my shield, and my exceeding great reward—being to me all I anticipated, and doing for me all He had promised. Not one thing hath failed of all the good things He spake concerning me: they are all come to pass; and they establish my faith that no good thing will he withhold if I cleave to Him with full purpose of heart. He assuring me that, if I would confess and forsake my sins, I would find Him faithful and just to forgive my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness, lo! in Him I have no condemnation. He assuring me that, if I would follow His bidding, He would cast out the old man, and develop the new man, lo! in Him I am a new creature. He assuring me that, if I would give myself up to His disposal, He would impart the estate and immunities of adoption, lo! in Him I am a Son of God—the ring of sonship on my finger, the robe of sonship on my shoulder, and the spirit of sonship in my soul. Assuring me that, if I would renounce the devil, the flesh and the world, He would invest me with heirship to “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,” lo! in Him “I know that if my earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

The more fully I have believed in Him, the more fully I have known Him. Since my first acquaintance with Him, in that day when I committed myself to His keeping, I have come to be more intimately acquainted with Him. Frequently putting Him to additional tests, I have frequently entered into additional experiences of His sufficiency and worthiness. Grieving His goodness ten thousand times, ten thousand times I have seen His goodness.

Many a time sinning against Him, many a time has He pardoned my sin and restored me unto the joy of His salvation. Often sorely tempted, often has He made me to maintain my ground, and opened a way for my escape. Surrounded with enemies, He has lifted up a standard against them, and never left me to fight them alone and single-handed. Shut in with shadows, He has scattered the darkness with a great light. Standing at the grave until it covers from my eyes the most of those forms whose sight has been my earthly ravishment, He has transformed my mourning into song with His word, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

Yes, I know whom I have believed. I know He can be believed. I know He has won the right to be believed.

" Jesus, my God, I know His Name :
His name is all my trust ;
Nor will He put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost."

Knowing whom I have believed, I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. And this deposit is myself : my body, soul and substance ; my character, family and work ; my past, present and future ; all I am, and all I have, and all I hope. And *that day* is the day of the second coming of the Son of God—the day when Divinity shall hold its final inquest on humanity ; the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be "revealed from Heaven, with His mighty angels," to dismiss the impenitent from His presence forever, and to glorify the saintly with the glory given Him of His Father ; the day when all the inequalities of Probation shall be set right by the allotments of Retribution ; the day when Time shall surrender its assets, and "The Eternal" shall be all in all.

And to that august and solemn day I look forward with good hope. I am ignorant, and infirm, and poor, and prone to wander, and surrounded with enemies. In me there is no good thing. But "He that is for me is more than all that can be against me." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

Between that day and this, much may befall me of forbidding

aspect. Friends may come to be unfriendly. Frowning foes may hurl at me their fiercest darts. Loved ones may be hurried from my embrace by the grim monster who one day shatters all mortal houses. My path may lie for long years through rugged regions. And my soul and body will have to part company.

But "my times are in His hand." "He knoweth the way that I take." "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" "If when we were enemies we were reconciled unto God, by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." "The name of the Lord is a strong tower : the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

Here is the anchor which holds. Here is the infrangible logic. There is not a loose or uncertain link in all the chain which fastens the saint to his Saviour. "Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ—neither tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ; for, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Then, blow on, ye blasts ; burn on, ye fires ; gather on, ye clouds ; roll on, ye waves ; shoot on, ye foes ! My deposit is secure. It can be neither captured, lost nor stolen. In "that day" I shall have it back, an hundred-fold enlarged : "for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."

" Firm as His throne His promise stands ;
And He can well secure
What I've committed to His hands,
'Till the decisive hour."

And I am not the only or principal witness to the integrity of Him I have believed, and to the safety of the trust committed to His keeping. Back in the distant centuries lived a man of imperial intellect, large culture, and splendid fortune. Frequent trial had he made of other depositories ; and he finally made up his mind

that none of them was secure enough for such a deposit as himself. Going one day to Damascus, he fell in with Jesus Christ, and felt that he could trust Him, and gave all he had into His keeping. And years passed. Crisis after crisis had come ; panic after panic had dropped its shadow ; and his Banker had never dishonored a draft. He had proven His capacity and fidelity in many a strain ; and he went up and down the earth crying, " I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

And this deposition of the illustrious Paul is the deposition of the universal Church of Jesus Christ. Not one confiding in Him has been left desolate. Shall I ring a bell, whose tones, pealing along the ages behind us, shall bring into court the saints of every clime and generation ? Shall I move my wand over the avenues of the past, and call in all who have ever accepted and loved and trusted the Son of Man ? Behold ! here they are : from the company of the patriarchs and of the prophets ; from the company of the disciples and of the martyrs ; from the company of our fathers and mothers and of those with whom we have often taken counsel together.—

" Today they come transfigured back,
I see them marshalled in a shining row
Of ever-youthful forms, that fairer show
Secure from harm in their high-hearted ways—
Beautiful evermore, and with the rays
On their white shields of expectation."

Beautiful, resplendent throng ! Make room for them ! Stand while they seat themselves !

" Oh, what a glorious company,
As saints and angels join."

Christian courtesy demands that our celestial guests shall have the floor.

Brothers and sisters from the Church of " The First-born " before the throne, we wait your testimony !

Brothers and sisters of the Church of " The First-born " in the wilderness, I introduce Moses declaring : " The Eternal God

is my refuge, and underneath me are the Everlasting Arms.”

And Joshua : “ As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

And Ruth : “ Thy people shall be my people, and Thy God shall be my God.”

And Hannah : “ He will keep the feet of His saints.”

And Nehemiah : “ The God of Heaven, He will prosper us.”

And Elijah : “ The God that answereth by fire, let him be God.”

And Elisha : “ They that be with us are more than they that be with them.”

And Job : “ I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

And David : “ Thou wilt show me the path of life.”

And Solomon : “ Her ways are ways of pleasantness.”

And Isaiah : “ O Lord, I will praise Thee.”

And Jeremiah : “ The Lord is the portion of my soul.”

And Ezekiel : “ The earth shined with His glory.”

And Daniel : “ My God has sent His angel, and shut the lion’s mouth, that he hath not hurt me.”

And Zechariah : “ At evening time it shall be light.”

And Habakkuk : “ I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.”

And Mary : “ My soul doth magnify the Lord.”

And Thomas : “ My Lord, and my God.”

And Peter and John, both speaking at once : “ We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

And Stephen : “ I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.”

And James : “ Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.”

And Polycarp : “ He never said an unkind word to me.”

And Luther : “ Our God is the God from whence cometh salvation.”

And Knox : “ Live in Christ, and the flesh shall not fear death.”

And Calvin : “ I am abundantly satisfied.”

And Wesley : “ The best of all is, God is with us.”

And Bunsen : “ My richest experience is having known Jesus Christ.”

And Bishop Janes : “ I am not disappointed.”

And Faber :—

“ If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word ;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.”

Many others are ready to declare that, through “ fightings without and fears within,” “ they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” But the time is up ; and I must adjourn this love-feast. Before we dismiss, however, let us join our saintly visitors in singing, “ Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Ye who have made no deposit with Christ, make such deposit now. Open an account with Him. Every other depository is insecure ; every other vault can be rifled. There is nothing true but Heaven. There is salvation only in the “ Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world.”

Ye who believe in Christ, and know Whom you have believed, open your lips in His honor. Commend His grace ; show forth His goodness and truth ; tell all you know about Him. We owe this to Him, that He may enlarge the circle of His depositors ; and that His “ Word may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.” We owe it to our fellowmen, that they may find the best securities, and know with Whom they may most safely invest the keeping of themselves. We owe it to ourselves, that we may assure ourselves that we are still dealing with the Banker Who never breaks up or suspends ; that we may draw others to the same celestial counter, and thus enlarge its capital,—and thus increase the dividend due us when interest day arrives,

and the hopes of earth are cashed in the currency of Heaven.

" Jesus, to Thee I now can fly,
On Whom my help is laid :
Oppressed with sin, I lift mine eye,
And see the shadows fade.
Believing on my Lord, I find
A sure and present aid :
On Thee alone my constant mind
Be every moment stayed."

II.

“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM.”—EXODUS, 3 : 14.

A name is a sign of personality : a verbal designation by which one human being is known from and to another. Desiring acquaintance with one with whom I have not had previous acquaintance, I give him my name and request his, and our acquaintance is begun. Introducing two strangers to each other, I pronounce their names ; and at once there is a basis between them for present communion, and for subsequent intercourse. Presenting myself, as the representative of my government to another, the name of mine opens the way for my entrance, and for the prosecution of my mission.

Early in the annals of the human race, the race falls into apostasy, and is overtaken with all the penalties of lapse from its original rectitude. A shepherd is one day superintending his flock on the edge of a desert ; and suddenly a bush, all aflame, hails his eye. As he gazes curiously, the bush burns steadily on, but is unconsumed. Desirous of full knowledge of so peculiar a phenomenon, his advancing footsteps are arrested by a voice from within the glowing shrub, advising him that he is nearing hallowed ground ; commanding him to becoming demeanor ; delegating him to lead his oppressed people out of its servitude and suffering ; promising to be his direction and sufficiency ; and pronouncing the name of the speaker, I AM THAT I AM, as his own guarantee and inspiration, and as the potent wand in whose presence all doubt shall disappear, all opposition give way, and all rebellion subside.

Clearly, I AM THAT I AM is a term of kindred origin and significance with the term *Jehovah*, or *Eh-yeh* ; but it is in this connection said to be a previously unknown designation of the Supreme Being. And He Himself, in the sixth chapter of this same book of Exodus, says, “By My name Jehovah was I not known to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.” Nevertheless, He is called Jehovah before this in the records of this same writer,

Moses. And in the records of this writer, are reports of the patriarchs employing this hallowed address in their suits at the throne of God. In solution of the apparent contradiction, it is suggested that the Ineffable Name is here actually assumed by the Lord of all for the first time in His communications to the children of men ; and that Moses is so deeply and indelibly impressed with the wondrous epiphany, that when afterward referring to the Deity in connection with anterior events, he almost unconsciously employs the teeming name he has learned from out of the burning bush. And it is plausible and possible ; for God says to Noah, “ *I do* set My bow in the cloud,” as if at that moment casting the brilliant arch across the sky: though in fact the bow had been hung in the cloud centuries before Noah was born. Noting the birth of your child in the family record, you enter his name along with the date of his birth, though the name may not have been given him until months after his birth. So, I AM THAT I AM, or *Jehovah*, when it first fell upon his ear, may have so stirred the writer of the Pentateuch that it rushes intuitively to his lips when speaking of the High and Lofty one—even when speaking of Him with reference to prior acts and appearances.

It is a different solution, however, to which I most incline : believing that the august name is not here first spoken in human ear, but that it is here delegated to henceforth carry new conceptions of God to the human mind, and to suggest new experiences and potencies to the human soul. As the bow in the cloud is to be assigned to a new use, the token of a particular covenant of God with man ; and as the child, hitherto known as baby, or darling, or pet, is to be known hereafter by a distinguishing surname ; so God, hitherto called *Elohim*—“The Eternal Powers,”—is to be called I AM THAT I AM—“I am the constant and exhaustless and timely sufficiency of My chosen people.”

Moses, bear in mind, is just Divinely-commissioned to be the leader of a people Divinely-elected to be conformed to the Divine will and to enjoy the Divine favor, and to be the means of the uplifting of entire humanity into the same beatific estate. But he dis-

cerns in front of him clustering difficulties—the distrust and ignorance and murmuring of his own charge, the enmity of other nations, and the tribulations of the way ; and God, for his own animation, and for the encouragement of his charge, in every subsequent trial, says, I AM THAT I AM—I am not a far-away or helpless or indifferent Being : I am all in all, always with you, always concerned for you, always mighty to bring you off more than conqueror. Dismiss your fears ; forward, march !

Now, crossing the intervening centuries, gazing upon the radiant shrub of Horeb, and standing by the side of the Hebrew shepherd, our ears also hear God say, I AM THAT I AM ; and we pause to ponder the significance of the thrilling syllables.

I AM A BEING. I am not a mere concept of the judgment, or impression of the imagination, or reminiscence of the memory. I am not simply a dream born of broken slumber, or an invention hewn from the head of genius, or a myth mysteriously launched upon the flood of years. I am a Being. In Me inhere all the attributes and essentials of being : all its completeness and identity and separateness—all that distinguishes entity from non-entity.

I am as really as thou art. Thine eye discerns this ruddy flame and sparkling shrub. Thine ears hear the voice within them. Thy foot presses the ground which is the scene of the marvellous manifestation of this hour. And thy senses assure thee that each is in distinction from the other, and that thou art other than they. And, though not as palpable to thy senses, I am as fully and verily as they or thou.

I am not such a being as thou : fallen, fallible, finite ; but I am as actual and complete a being as thou art. My fashion of being is not such as thine ; but I am as genuinely and thoroughly as thou art.

“Lord of all being ! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star :
Center and Soul of every sphere,
To every loving heart how dear !”

I AM A PERSONAL BEING. Affirming that the all is God,

Pantheism insists that I am merely a name for the varied forces and laws which animate and control the universe—that I am merely the sum of all that is. And the universe is the creature of My hand, and the subject of My sovereignty. I am its origin and its sustentation. My breath was its birth; my inspiration is its continuance; and my withdrawal would be its destruction. But I am not the universe, and the universe is not Me. The book is not the author, nor the engine its engineer, nor the house its maker. The former, in either instance, is not the latter; and, in either instance, the latter may be without the former. I am equally distinct from my handiwork and processes, and equally distinguishable from them. I and mine are just as capable of severance, in both fact and thought, as thou and thine. In arrest of man's arrogance, I sometimes forbid him to think of Me as one like unto himself; but I now lay no such interdict. In this instance he has full warrant to measure Me by himself. In the matter of personality, I am as he is. I am an individual. I am a single essence. I am One. I am One as actually and comprehensively and exclusively and inclusively and solely as the angel I delegate to keep thee in all thy ways; and as thy brother Aaron whom I have designated to be thy mouth unto the children of Israel; and as thy sister Miriam whom I have elected to lift her timbrel at the head of the ransomed on the farther shore of the Red Sea.

"God is the name my soul adores,
The Almighty Three, the Eternal One:
Nature and grace, with all their powers,
Confess the Infinite Unknown."

I AM THE SUPREME BEING. According to Dualism, two deities parcel out between them the conservation and oversight of the affairs and destinies of all existences. And Polytheism proclaims a herd of divinities, of every caliber and grade and sex, and teaches that in this motley rabble is the beginning and consummation of all things. And, on either conjecture, it is no marvel that confusion runs riot, religion is an object of contempt, and worship is an unmeaning mockery.

But I have neither equal nor like. No partner divides with Me the authorship or management of the universe. No rival can defeat My decrees or gather in My revenues. I am God, and beside Me there is no other. I am the High and Lofty One, Who inhabiteth eternity. My kingdom ruleth over all. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness !

" Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations bow with sacred joy.
Know that the Lord is God alone ;
He can create, and He destroy."

I AM THAT I AM. All other beings are because I have caused them to be, and are affected greatly by their antecedents, or fashioned largely by their circumstances. None of them is entirely either the cause or the condition of himself. But I had no beginning. I owe nothing to antecedents or circumstances. Externals work no impression into My essence. I am both the spring and the stream of Myself. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever I had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting I am God.

All other beings are changeable ; for once they were not, and they are what they were not, and they will be what they are not. But I am immutable : the Father of lights, with Whom can be no variation—the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

All other beings are confronted with impassable barriers. Around them are boundaries which allow no crossing. Although manifold emergencies or opportunities may call them to new lines of action and enjoyment, and suggest new aspirations and attainments, still stern limitations bar their path. But I am no helpless accident of the past, or dream of the present, or possibility of the future. No Alps are in My way. Existing of Myself, and sufficient to Myself, I am full of potencies : My own volition is My only law, and My only measure. I AM WHAT I AM ; and, without alteration in either constitution or quality, will be what I will to be : for with me one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Today I blaze as the burning bush ; tomorrow I will flame as the Shekinah ; then in the wilderness I will

gleam as the Pillar of fire ; and then in later ages I will incarnate Myself in human form, and walk the earth as the Son of Man ; and then, shortly after, I will meet the Christian Church in an upper room in Jerusalem, and shine on its every head as the Tongue of Fire, and set it, collectively and individually, stirring with the Holy Ghost.

All other beings are comprehensible by their fellow-beings. In them are no depths beyond exploration. You can easily fathom and weigh them. You can readily read them through and through. But I am beyond complete analysis and understanding. I am beyond the loftiest finite flight. Glimpses of My nature and ways may be caught by common intelligence. Grander glimpses may flash upon the perception of the pure in heart. Sublimier glimpses will hail the vision of the ransomed when they shall see the King in His beauty in the land which is very far off. Nevertheless, I am a God Who hideth Himself. I dwell in a light which no man can approach unto. There is a *ne plus ultra* in the way of all finite canvass. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?

All other beings have names which adequately and always describe them. One term fully distinguishes them from all their associates. One word sufficiently identifies them in all the places, and through all the periods of their history. But, God over all, as I am, I can make no one name in the language of humanity accurately and unvaryingly do service as my description or exponent. No one name is elastic enough and large enough to set Me forth. The best I can do is to select several of the broadest and deepest words men ever use, in the expression of their conceptions of the character and duration and modes of being, and say I AM THAT I AM.

“ Come, O my soul, in sacred lays,
Attempt thy great Creator's praise ;
But O, what tongue can speak His fame ?
What mortal verse can reach the theme ?
Raised on devotion's loftiest wing,
Do thou, my soul, His glories sing ;
And let His praise employ thy tongue,
Till listening worlds shall join the song.”

I AM ALWAYS THAT WHICH I AM. A new departure is being undertaken by the ancient Church. It is entering into new conditions and experiences; and God, in the assumption of this designation, assures that Church that its new crisis has not caught Him by surprise, or nonplussed His capacity, but that He is in every way equal to the emergency without delay and without uncertainty; and through it assures the Church that in all coming crises, through all the eternities, He is abreast of its emergencies, close at hand, and ready and sufficient for all its desires and oppositions and perplexities—a present help in its every time of trial or of wish. It is an announcement to all the generations of those who stay themselves upon His name, that He lives in all periods and places—past, present and future; and in all periods and places at once, and fully, and potentially. It is His solemn and unqualified averment, I not merely was, or will be, but I AM. I have not outlived Myself; I have not yet to possess Myself of being or force; but I AM. It may be necessary, because of the poverty of human speech, for humanity to speak of Me in connection with yesterday or today or tomorrow; but in truth I have neither yesterday nor today nor tomorrow; but I AM. It is always now with Me. Shut in with essential limitations, My people will ever be liable to fortunes in the presence of which they are helpless; but I, knowing no limitations, am ever their provision and refuge and triumph.

And, therefore, the name by which I now disclose Myself is no arbitrary or heartless or meaningless announcement of cold and distant sovereignty. It is not given to awe thee into alarm, or to send thee into remote retreats, as I royally go passing by. It is a loving expression of my constant and particular interest in My elect—a revelation that, as the father, who is all he ought to be to his children and their mother, is truly said to live for them, I live for those who commit themselves to My keeping in well-doing. My eyes go to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Myself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Me. No good thing will I withhold from them who walk uprightly.

Indeed, the very mystery of the name I assume is one of My most signal mercies to the Church which I elect as a peculiar treasure to Myself. Any other name might insinuate limitations either in My care or in My power or in My will ; for, calling Myself Bread, it would be enough when My children are hungry, but what would they do when in need of clothing ? or Friend, it would be enough when they are forsaken and lonely, but what would they do when in need of a Saviour ? or Home, it would be enough when they are without a place to lay their heads, but what would they do when, about to go the way of all the earth, they are in need of Heaven ?

It is I AM THAT I AM, therefore, which I call Myself—I Am All and in All. Ask what you choose, and I am your answer. I am the Father of lights : call on Me, and I am your desire. I am the Fount of every blessing : draw on Me, and I am your fulness. I am the God of all grace : look to Me, and I am your satisfaction. I am able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think : make out your draft for whatever you need for life or for godliness, and I am both your security and your sufficiency.

If you are a criminal, I am forgiveness ; or foul, I am cleansing ; or worldly, I am sanctification. If you are forsaken, I am your company ; or an orphan, I am your father ; or a widow, I am your husband. If you are helpless, I am your strength ; or in sickness, I am your health ; or in war, I am your shield. If you are dying, I am your life ; or dead, I am your resurrection ; or houseless, I am your house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. There is nothing I am not to those who cast their care upon Me : I carry them on My heart ; I cover them all the day long ; I am their past and present and future ; I am their today and tomorrow and their world without end ; I am their earth and their heaven ; I am theirs for better and for worse ; and they shall be Mine when I make up My jewels.

"This God is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend,
Whose love is as great as His power,
And neither knows measure nor end.
'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home :
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come."

I AM THAT I AM. Excellent Name! It brings the Supreme Being out of the sublime and unapproachable immensity within the horizon of humanity; calls us in to His immediate presence; and proclaims that He is a God close at hand, and not afar off, and that in Him all fulness dwells.

I AM THAT I AM. Fragrant Name! It is the charter of all the blessings of the saints: their refuge and rest amid all their anxieties and toils: their satisfaction and sufficiency throughout all ages and conditions. It is the Name which is above every name; for if it were not, it might some day be less than we need: we might some day have to go elsewhere for supplies, or go unsupplied. This Name, however, is a name of limitless compass and efficiency—broader, deeper, fuller, higher and sweeter than all besides—and secures to us all that we can ask or think, for ever and for ever, here and hereafter.

I AM THAT I AM. Immortal Name! Many other names have been to me comfort and stay: their mention came like music to my ear, and like sunshine to my soul. They, alas, long since are only memories of departed, or prophecies of coming, joys; but His Name is a deathless name, a living name, a potent name. It bows all the ages, fills all the cycles, governs all the empires, rules all the eternities, and sways all the infinities.

I AM THAT I AM. Incomparable Name! He who thus designates Himself is the Lord of all; but He calls to us out of the burning bush, as we wander in the desert, and seeks our acquaintance. He has no need of closer relations with us. He is constrained by no personal necessity for our society. He is impelled by neither lack nor solitude to crave our company. We can add nothing to His essential completeness of character or cir-

cunstance. He is already God over all, blessed for ever more : celestial orders bend about him ; cherubim and seraphim lay their adoration at His feet. He, however, covets communion and dwelling with us for our sake. He gives us His Name that it may be to us an inspiration within and a shield without ; that at its mention bondage may open its doors for our exodus, the sea part for our passage, and the wilderness spring into flowers as we thread its depths ; and that at its sound the burdens of life may drop from our shoulders, death grow bright with angelic ministries, and heavenly portals swing back to let us in.

I AM THAT I AM. Matchless grace ! Wonderful words of light ! Hector is again going forth to the defense of his beloved Troy, and expands his arm to clasp his little son in a fond, last embrace ; but the child shrinks crying back to the bosom of his mother,

" Scared to see
His father helmeted in glittering brass,
And eying with affright the horse-hair
That grimly nodded from the lofty crest."

And the father lays aside his armor, and the child leaps delighted to his breast. Hitherto only dimly disclosed to human intelligence, kept away by human undeserving, but longing for reunion with His prodigal children, God comes out of His distance, descends to their low estate, lays aside His appalling majesty, reveals Himself in a gentler habit and by a sweeter name—I AM THAT I AM, and seeks their love and trust.

“Before Abraham was, I am.”—JOHN, 8 : 58.

Early in the morning, in the Temple at Jerusalem, one day nearly two thousand years ago, a young man about thirty years of age has declared the forgiveness of a sinful woman arraigned before Him for condemnation, and proclaims that in Him, as the Light of the world, all who follow Him shall have forgiveness and walk in the light of life.

For some time He has been assuming such prerogatives and making such promises, and professing the establishment of these prerogatives and promises by various arguments and works. His claims are evidently claims to be more in dominion and nature than man has ever been seen to be—even to be akin in dominion and nature to Him Who sits at the fount of all being and government, God over all, blessed and supreme for ever more. It is blasphemy in the judgment of those who are at the front in the Church of the period—a Church conceded by Himself to be of Divine beginning and history and ritual ; and certain of its magnates join issue with Him against His declarations and pretensions. Maintaining His declarations and pretensions, He affirms, as the end of all controversy, “If a man keep My sayings, he shall never see death.” Matchless audacity, summit of presumption, in Pharisaic estimation ; and the estimation expresses itself in the reply, “Now, we know that Thou hast a devil : Abraham is dead, and the prophets ; and Thou sayest, If a man keep My saying, he shall never taste of death.” The climax is reached as He avers, God is My Father. Your father Abraham had foresight of My day, and hailed its dawn, and by faith walked in its light ; for, though I have been known to you only about thirty years, “Before Abraham was, I am.” It is the language of Christ.

He is evidently man—a man as fully and really as any of us : a man in body, and heart, and intellect, and necessity, and performance ; a man of the highest style of manhood. He is no inferior specimen of our race. None, among all the sons of men,

has ever been beyond Him in character or influence or possibility. He is the ideal man. Imagination has never fashioned the conception of a better. Judgment pronounces Him the perfection of perfection. Love recommends Him to its darlings as the noblest of all models for their imitation.

He is, in evangelical circles, admitted to be God. It is admitted that manhood, even in its unfallen conditions, cannot approximate His height. It is admitted that such a man as He is must be more than man. It is admitted that He is so much more than man that He cannot be less than God—that He *is* God in all the excellence of His being, and in all the fulness of His sovereignty.

He is, notwithstanding the duality of His nature, conceded to be One Person. It is conceded that neither nature is absorbed into the other. It is conceded that the two natures do not merely keep house together, or lie along side of each other. It is conceded that He is One Person of Whom both Divinity and humanity, each in all its entirety, are essential factors—One Person in all the completeness and identity and separateness of personality: “so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, are joined together in One Person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ.”

The incarnation (incarnation denoting the union of the Godhead and Manhood in the One Person we call Christ) is for all the eternity to come. Godhead is not Christ, nor is manhood Christ; but Christ is the Person constituted of both Godhead and manhood: and either the one or the other abstracted, there is no more Christ, just as there is no more whole manhood if either body or soul is wanting. It was neither Godhead nor manhood who achieved our redemption, and wrought out our uplifting into a new creation; but Godhead and manhood joined together in the adorable Personality of Christ. Our faith and gratitude and love, as in this life we lay hold of the great redemption and uplifting, cry out, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift;” and, as we depart out of this life, shout, “Thanks be to God Who

giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ ; ” and, as we range the realms of the life to come, sing, “ Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and His Father : to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. ” Verily, for ever and ever ; for our kingship is ceased, and our priesthood is expired, and our song is stilled, if ever Christ, Deity and humanity in One Person, is no more. Praises measureless as our being to the God of all grace, there is no such disaster ahead of the redeemed from among the sons of men. Their inheritance is an everlasting inheritance. Their Redeemer, the Divine-human Christ, is the Divine-human Christ “ throughout all ages, world without end. ” The hope of earth, He is the joy of Heaven. Somewhere in immortal lands there is a country as real and substantial as the country of Judea ; and there, on a throne as real and substantial as the throne of David, sits Christ, as real and substantial a Person as when He sat at the table of Martha and Mary ; and there, as really and substantially as when James and John and Peter saw Him amid the felicities and splendors of His Transfiguration, shall we see His face and sun ourselves in His smile.

His incarnation (the embodiment of Divinity in matter) being a fact for the eternity to come, it is not impossible or incredible that it was a fact far back in the eternity past. If God could create man six thousand years ago, He could create him twelve thousand years ago. If He could constitute an incarnation of Himself two thousand years ago, He could twenty thousand years ago : He could twenty millions of years ago. Nay, if His incarnation could be a fact in any period of the past, it could be from all eternity.

If it is objected that the conception of the pre-incarnation of God is a humiliating conception of Deity, I answer that Divine embodiment in matter is no more Deity-humiliating if occurring in celestial regions, centuries of centuries since, than if occurring in Bethlehem of Judea twenty centuries since. I answer farther,

that it is not so humiliating to clothe Himself in matter freshly and purposely called into being, as to clothe Himself in matter in the form of man after man has debased it for four thousand years. I answer, yet farther, that there is absolutely no basis for the notion that matter is inherently imperfect or impure. For all I know, or any one else knows, in itself matter is as clean and pure as spirit.

If it is objected that the conception of the incarnation of God constitutes Him a Being of body and parts, I answer that it is an old man-made catechism, and not Holy Scripture, which affirms that He has not body and parts ; for the declaration that He is a " Spirit " is not conclusive, as Spirit primarily signifies capacity for invisibility rather than immateriality. I answer farther, that we have no distinct and influential conception of God, except as we conceive of Him in some way possessed of material belongings; and that even if we hold that He is bodiless, in any discussion of Him, we have to invest Him with form to discuss Him at all ; and that He, in the Book He has inspired for the revelation of Himself to man whom He has made in His own likeness, has to reveal Himself in the likeness of man for man to understand His discourse. I answer farther still, that our affirmation of Divine incarnation is not of all, but of one, of the Three Persons of the Godhead ; and it is not only an article of faith, but also a fact of history, that He does have a body.

If it is objected that the conception of the incarnation of God in eternity past involves the admission of the eternity of matter, I answer, not necessarily, unless it is insisted that the incarnation is from all eternity. I answer farther, though not essential to our argument, that it is only an assumption that matter is not from all eternity ; it is not in evidence that it is not from all eternity from the testimony of either reason or revelation. In itself it is as probable that matter has always been, as that it has not. The everlasting Lord has announced no absolute dictum about it ; and man is not old enough to announce such dictum.

If it is objected that the incarnation of God is merely a neces-

sity of the sin of man, I answer that this cannot be the fact ; for it assumes the modification of the mode of being of the immutable God, not only because of man's need, but also because of His creature's transgression—a modification manifestly inconsistent with the perfection of the Creator and Governor of all being. He may apparently change His bearing toward His creature, as His creature is loyal or rebellious ; but His nature is unchangeable. He may, in different conditions and periods disclose different aspects of Himself ; but the tendency to every aspect He ever discloses is inherent in Him, waiting all the while His decree for its disclosure. He is constitutionally “ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever ;” and it is not conceivable that the lapse of the human race caught him by surprise, disturbed the very foundations of His being, and necessitated a reorganization of Himself to meet an unforeseen crisis in His administration. He is from everlasting to everlasting.

His eternal incarnation is not, however, affirmed of the Second Person of the Godhead, though it is claimed it would be difficult to establish its impossibility ; but it is no new assumption that there is in Divinity an eternal tendency to incarnation. Dörner, in his “ Doctrine of the Person of Christ,” says, “ The only true conception of God is one which, so far from being incompatible with, involves His being determined to an incarnation by His own eternal moral nature.” Raymond Lulli says, “ The incarnation is indeed a work of free love : we cannot say that it was brought about by sin, but that God owed it to himself.” Rupertus says, “ Men and angels were created for the sake of the one Man, Jesus Christ, and He did not need sin in order to become incarnate.” Wessel says, “ The final cause of the incarnation is not to be found in the human race, but in the Son of God Himself ; He became man for His own sake. He would have assumed humanity even if Adam had never sinned.” While thus, as early as the twelfth century, it was held by some that there would have been a Divine incarnation even in the absence of human forfeiture of primeval estate and excellence, they do not

seem to have thought of the possibility of such an incarnation long anterior to the entrance of the human race upon the stage of being. Yet, if there is a constitutional tendency in God to invest Himself with material form, and if he would have invested Himself with material form if man had maintained his original righteousness, why should He have delayed until matter in man, in whose likeness he came, was degraded? Is it not easier to conceive that the Son of God was embodied in matter long before man was created—matter itself being first created or fashioned to make Him a vesture?

His own language, "Before Abraham was, I am," now challenges our consideration. In this declaration is the echo of His declaration, "I Am That I Am," made to Moses from out of the burning bush, hundreds of years before, in the mountain of Horeb. Moses asked Him for His name. Names describe character or nature or office. And the Ineffable One answered, "Moses, the human vocabulary is so meagre that I cannot give you My name in any one word. I am too broad in being, I am too large in nature, I am too measureless in capacity and possibility, to size Myself in a single word. I will do my best to make Myself known to you. I will choose several of the fullest and most potential words of your dialect, and thus endeavor to lift you to some conception of Who I am. I Am That I Am. I Am Eternal, Omniscient, Omnipotent. I Am Goodness, Justice, Truth. I Am the Creator, the Preserver and the Sovereign of the universe. I Am all I ever need to be to accomplish My designs, to carry on My government, and to work out my will. I Am All In All to those who commit themselves to My keeping in well-doing. I am God, inhabiting eternity and infinity when as yet there was none beside Me. I Am the Son of God, when I express Myself in creation. I Am the Holy Spirit, when I make manifestation of Myself to created spirits. I Am the Jehovah of the Patriarchal age, the Lord of the Judaic dispensation, the Christ of the redeemed from among the sons of men. From æon to æon, from century to century, from day to day, I Am the

Satisfaction and the Sufficiency of Myself, and, diverse and peculiar as their conditions and obligations and necessities, evermore the Satisfaction and Sufficiency of My people. In one of My adaptations, I appear as a descendant of your father Abraham. It is a new revelation to you, but no new thought in Me. Before Abraham I was the Son of God, and am now." But, if He was in being before Abraham, He was in being two thousand years before His being in Judea.

It is a common opinion that it was He Who appeared to our father and mother in human form in Eden in its excellence, and walked by their side in close and visible communion. But, if He was in being in Eden, He was in being two thousand years before His being in the Abrahamic period.

It is a common opinion that it was He Who, declaring Himself as Wisdom in the eighth chapter of Proverbs, declared, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When He prepared the Heavens, I was there. I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." But, if He was in being, before the earth was built, before the heavens were fashioned, and before the worlds were hung through the waiting realms of space, He was in being before matter had been called into form or spirit was stained with sin.

It is affirmed by some that the manifestations of Divinity in material garments, in Eden and elsewhere, were merely special material manifestations for special purposes. It is a mere assumption. It has not even a Scripture hint for its foundation. It is a dangerous style of Scripture interpretation. It makes Christ a mere creature of circumstances. It is fettered with greater difficulties than the theory of earlier incarnation, and has none of its probabilities.

It is affirmed by others that, declaring, "Before Abraham was I Am," Christ is merely declaring the Divinity of His Person. But Divinity is not the Christ. Neither the body nor the soul is the man. Neither Divinity nor humanity is the Christ. Christ

is the union of Divinity and humanity in One Person—the absence of either is the death of the Person.

If Christ's own language is to be literally understood, and if His Church has a proper conception of the Divine appearances prior to His incarnation in Bethlehem, He was in being before He was born of Mary ; before His interview with Abram concerning the destruction of Sodom ; before His presence with Adam and Eve amid the bowers of Paradise ; and before the fields of space were sown with worlds.

It is everywhere eternity and infinity. God is alone in being. He is a Triune Being, Father, Son and Holy Spirit—three Persons in one essence. He is absolutely perfect. In Him is neither lack nor need. He is absolutely supreme. To Him there are no impossibilities. To will, is to be and to do as He wills. Nevertheless, all He wills to be and do is not yet an accomplishment. All His designs are not yet effected. All his potencies and tendencies are not yet wrought out. Their working out is to be the work of the everlasting ages. The everlasting ages are to be crowded with unfoldings of Himself.

It is now His appointed epoch for the external expression of Himself. He has not hitherto been idle ; but His action hitherto has been in and on and with Himself. It has been in communion and delight and engagement of one Divine Person with the others.

He now goes without Himself, and expresses Himself in matter. For all that Scripture affirms, matter may have been from all eternity waiting His will ; but on this I do not insist, as it is not essential to our argument.

He fashions of it a vesture for the Second Person of Himself ; and declares, "Thou art My Son : this day have I begotten Thee." He fashions of it for Him a throne ; and declares, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." And He fashions of it, for His court, angels ; and declares, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

He Himself thus embodied, His throne established, and His

court organized, He creates world after world ; dowers them with inhabitants ; furnishes them with laws, and ministries, and supplies ; and gathers constantly enlarging glory. Now, He makes the world. And now He makes man.

Nor is His material vestment, nor the material vestment of angels, either a disparagement or a hinderance. There is no foundation for the notion that matter in itself is less excellent than spirit. For all that is revealed, matter may be essential to some of the operations of spirit. Matter, as is indicated in the movement of Moses and Elijah from Heaven to Hermon, and in the appearance and disappearance of Christ Himself at His pleasure, may be capable of such etherealization as to be no barrier to passage from place to place, or to such passage with a rapidity beyond all our present understanding.

The doctrine of our discourse antagonizes not one single literal averment of Holy Scripture, though it is in antagonism to much current interpretation of Holy Scripture. It is the elucidation of much Holy Scripture which, otherwise, is without a satisfactory exegesis. In its light we see new significance in the declaration, "He is the first born of every creature ;"—the first creation or formation of matter is into a body for the everlasting Son of God. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible. . . . And He is before all things." And in the light of this doctrine, we also see new and full significance in the Divine utterance, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

And the doctrine of our discourse ennoble man. He was built after the style of God. And it magnifies the atonement made by the Son of God. Look at man as he is ; look at him as he was ; measure the intervening distance and difference ; and then measure, if you can, the value of his redemption.

And this doctrine of our discourse also unfolds the reason of the ceaseless human aspiration after something higher. Man is never fully satisfied with aught that the world gives. Give him all he covets, and he is still hungry. Nothing here satisfies him.

Every satisfaction only whets his appetite. He feels that he is capable of a better estate. Created in the very likeness—material, mental and moral—of the Son of God, and once at home with the Son of God, he is ever seeking, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously, but ever seeking to get home again.

IV.

“ Amen.”—REVELATION, 22 : 21.

A single word asks to be the center and inspiration of the meditation and worship of the current hour. It is the last word of the last verse of the last chapter of the last book of the Sacred Volume—the word Amen. It is a word which appears frequently in the Divine Oracles ; enters largely into the reported discourses of the Son of Man during His stay among men in the world ; is often heard in the assemblies of the saints before the throne ; is no foreigner in the congregation of those who joy in the Lord while passing through this vale of sighs ; and is no stranger to our own lips when our hearts are aglow with the peace which passeth understanding.

The word is of Hebrew derivation, and is properly an adjective, signifying, directly, *firm*, and indirectly, *faithful*. Thus, in the sixteenth verse of the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, God is called “ the God of Amen,” though in our English version the rendering is “ the God of truth ;” and in the Revelation by John, Christ is denominated “ the Amen, the faithful and true witness.”

In the adverbial form, it signifies *certainly* or *surely* or *truly* ; and it is employed at the commencement of a sentence as a challenge of attention. In this manner Christ introduced many of His conversations and discourses : for a correct translation of “ Verily, verily, I say unto you,” is “ Amen, Amen, I say unto you.” It is also employed at the conclusion of a sentence as a confirmation or endorsement of what has just been said : as if the speaker added his affidavit to his declaration, “ What I have just said is a fact ;” or, “ It is an obligation I will fulfil ;” or, “ It is a wish I wish with all my heart and life may be granted.”

About this word lingers the savor of great antiquity. It is a very old word.

Amid words of more recent origin, it looms up like some granite boulder which the rush of resistless waters has borne from

its original location, carried down the intervening mountain, and over the intervening plain, and placed far away from the scene of its primeval deposit or growth, in the midst of new and strange circumstances and conditions.

It invests and thrills us with the atmosphere of the region and time of David, and reports that Christianity came of Judaism. It moves us back into the earliest years of the Dispensation of the Gospel ; and into the golden age when the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul ; and into the realization that " there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, Who is above all, and through us all, and in us all."

And this word is of universal use. It is in no manner a sectarian word. Ancient Judaism caught it from ante-Mosaic lips, and made it resound through the courts of the Temple of Solomon. And it sounds back and forth in every Jewish synagogue today.

Roman Catholicism exacts it from the tongue of laymen and priest and prelate and Pope. And in it Protestantism embodies its conviction of the principle and rule of genuine devotion, and employs it in vindication of the prerogative of the congregation to exercise its own conscience and judgment in the service and worship of the Lord of all.

Episcopalianism calls for its utterance largely along its established formulæ, and demands that, in its utterance, the hearer will express his appropriation of the words of the reader. And Presbyterianism confirms in its pronunciation, at appointed periods, its benediction and covenant and invocation and prayer. And Methodism garnishes with it all its ceremonies and exercises, and insists on its frequent and spontaneous deliverance by her daughters and sons, in both their private and public devotions.

And thus it is the inheritance of entire Christendom. Many devout disciples of our common Lord bring no liturgy into their devotions ; and many do not declare their faith in the language of what we call the " Apostle's Creed ;" and many do not deliver their petitions in the use of " the Lord's Prayer ;" but there is no

Christian who does not say "AMEN" either with the spirit or with the tongue.

And this word condenses into itself much of sacred and sublime significance. Giving it utterance, we affirm our *attention*; for its careless and reckless pronunciation is a sin and a shame. I may not employ it as a mere announcement of my presence, nor as a bid for commendation, nor as a proof that I have had my nap and am once more awake, nor in any manner without deliberate consciousness of its employment. I may speak it only when my whole soul is alert and responsive.

And by its utterance we also affirm our *comprehension*. It is profane to pronounce it at a venture. How shall he say "Amen" who has no understanding of what is said? I may pronounce it only when I have clear perception of the averment or prayer to which I respond "Amen."

Its utterance also affirms our *consecration*. Failing in this, its employment is hypocrisy; for, no matter how acute my attention and how clear my comprehension, the hallowed word may not escape my lips unless it is the inspiration of my heart—unless I cognize the sin I confess, crave the forgiveness I implore, desire the bliss besought, have faith in the doctrine preached, lean on the promise presented, and realize the mercy for which the doxology is sung.

And we affirm, by its utterance, our *devotion*. It has no business on the banners of cowardice or indolence or negligence. It has no place in the conduct or vocabulary of the shirk. It sits becomingly only on his lips who consecrates his affections and energies to the advancement of the faith, and the doing of the work, which he thus endorses with his "Amen;" who gives his conduct to make his creed a conquest; and who is faithful in that which is little, as well as in that which is much.

And its utterance affirms our *integrity*. It has in it the import, as already defined, of reliable, true, trustworthy. It implies something on which you can depend, however changeful and shifting and veering is every person and everything else; some-

thing on which you can hang, as a building on its foundation ; something on which you can rest, as a child on its mother's lap.

In Oriental countries there is a belief that there is something in the mouth of an Anglo-Saxon which makes it impossible for him to tell a lie. I sometimes fear that, by diligent effort and long practice, our race is getting over its constitutional difficulty in this direction. But, surely, it ought to be a moral impossibility for a Christian to either act or tell a lie. Surely, he ought to be a constant and living Amen—a backbone which no burden or emergency can break ; a brother born for adversity ; a friend both in shadow and in sunshine ; a needle that never swerves from the pole ; a pillar which no pressure can overbear ; a standby in the front of the storm's wildest revel ; and a

“Tower

Which stands four-square to all the winds that blow”—

an Israelite indeed,

“Through all this tract of years,
Wearing the white flowers of a blameless life
Before a thousand peering littlenesses.”

And by uttering this word Amen, we affirm our *love of the household of faith*. An impressive story tells of two strangers meeting on a vessel on an eastern sea, every day beholding them in each other's company and their hearts lovingly drawn to each other. But there is between them no common language for the expression of their feelings and thoughts. Although they try one language after another, they can find no verbal channel of communion, but can only sit in silence and speak in smiles. Finally, however, they find two words with which they are both familiar, learned from the missionaries in their respective countries, and which make them at home with each other. The one word is “Alleluia,” and the other is “Amen.”

The utterance of the word also affirms our *membership in the brotherhood which is in Jesus*. I am not an isolated and solitary believer in the Son of Man. I am not the only man in possession of His mind and secret ; but I am of a multitude which no man can number. Just as my child hears in the sea-shell, which he

holds to his ear, the sound of many and remote waters, so I, saying "Amen" with all my soul, am of the crowding hosts who have escaped the corruptions which are in the world, and have become partakers of the Divine nature. From the ages of early human history, patriarchs assemble about me. From the altars of the Judaic Tabernacle and Temple, priests and prophets come to my elbow. From the dawn of the Christian Dispensation, disciples and martyrs crowd to my fellowship. And from the paths of my own personal history, acquaintances and associates of former places and times, though now locally far away, gather to my side; and my father is again in his pulpit, preaching "Jesus and the Resurrection;" and my mother is sunning me with her loving smile; and my brothers and sisters are waiting with me at the family-altar; and those of my own family who have gone up to Him of Whom the whole family in earth and in Heaven is named are wafting to me their sympathetic greetings; and

"Then, with the wings of faith I rise
Within the veil and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be,"

as the four and twenty elders, and their companions who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, wake the welkin with their "Alleluia to the Lamb."

We also, by our utterance of this word Amen, affirm our *recognition of Christ as Lord of all*. A Democratic National Convention assembles for the nomination of a candidate for the Presidency. For a time the contest is almost angry. It looks as if the advocates of Bayard and Hancock and Tilden are apart beyond all agreement. But finally Hancock bears off the palm, and hand-in-hand the party marches to the polls in his support, as if none had ever a thought of any other leader. A Republican National Convention gathers for the selection of its nominee for the same high office. Blaine's column is determined; Grant's guards are as immovable as their own chief in front of the hordes of the Rebellion; Sherman supporters are solid in their rally; and

it seems as if a common consent is impossible ; but suddenly the hitherto unmentioned Garfield takes the warring elements by storm, and as one man the battling forces fall together into line. But no such harmony could be reached if the different denominations had to meet today for the choice of the Head of the Christian Church. The adherents of Calvin would cast every ballot for John of Geneva ; the followers of Luther would insist on Martin of Wittenberg ; the sons of Wesley would sit out the longest caucus ever convened before they would see the name of John of Oxford placed second on a ticket to that of any other man ever born. But there is no such contest pending. The choice is made. There is unanimous sentiment among all creeds, however they vary in doctrines and forms, as to Him who is first. They all rally about the Cross of Calvary, and all shout the Name which is above every name. And, taking up their Amen,

“ At the Name of Jesus bowing,
Falling prostrate at His feet,
King of kings, in Heaven we'll crown Him,
When our journey is complete.”

And, by our utterance of this word Amen, we affirm *thorough and unfaltering trust in Him as our individual Saviour and Sufficiency*—accepting Him as the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the God of Amen, the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother, the precious Corner-stone, the sure Foundation, the tried Stone, the Rock of ages ; believing in Him as never breaking a covenant, or failing in an engagement, or forgetting a promise ; and resting in Him as our Amen. Conscious that his atoning blood is our deliverance, that His everlasting arms are about us, and that His Spirit is sealing us unto the day of eternal redemption, we welcome the day and awaken the night with the new song,

“ His oath, His covenant and blood
Support me in the whelming flood :
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ the solid ground I stand—
All other ground is sinking sand.”

Clearly, the word AMEN should be no foreigner in Christian

assemblies, or stranger to Christian lips. It was a common expression in the ancient Jewish Church. A Rabbinical authority declared, "Whosoever says 'Amen,' to him are opened the gates of Paradise." And another said, "Whosoever says 'Amen' is greater than he that blesses." And yet another declared, "Whosoever says 'Amen' indistinctly, that is, with fear or hesitation or little volume, breathes an 'orphan Amen'—an Amen he is ashamed to father." It was a familiar expression in the early Christian Church. A public service was considered incomplete unless every now and then the congregation by its Amens evidenced its appropriation of the discourses and petitions of the minister. The sacramental service was held to be lacking unless, as the communicant received the sacred symbol from the administrator, he affirmed by his Amen the reception of all the rite implies. The Amen wanting, would have been as astonishing a want as that of prayer or sermon or song. It was everybody's share in the service; and it was heard in all the parts of the service—now coming forth as a cheer or a hurrah from individual lips, and now filling the place as a universal shout, and now ringing through the room like a peal of thunder. It was a frequent expression in the early Methodist Church. Even many of you can recall the custom of our fathers in this respect—how they used it in the congregation, and in the social meeting, and in the worship of the family; and how it would awe those who heard it into reverence, or bow them into penitence, or raise them into rapture.

It is insisted that this word ought to be heard more frequently in our meetings for the worship of God. An absolute renewal of the venerable habit of our fathers in its use may not be essential. It may not be necessary that the congregation should shout it *en masse*, or in stentorian tones, or that the prayer should count as a failure or the song go for nothing or the sermon pass as worthless when there is no such response. It certainly should not be spoken only with the lips. But the sense of obligation to its utterance would have a tendency to stir the soul into the requisite readiness to stir the tongue. Bring it back again, then, into our assem-

blies for the benefit of the individual Christian. It will discover to him that the fellowship of the saints, with all its riches of inspiration and instruction and unction, is nothing to him except as he makes these riches his own. It will keep him alive to his precious obligations and privileges, and make him a teacher to himself—enabling him to extract gold from a continent of mud, to educe enriching lessons from the feeblest sermon, and to find inspiration in the poorest-sung song, and to gather strength and uplift out of the shallowest and weakest supplication. To such treasures of grace and knowledge and might does his Amen pioneer an earnest, saintly soul ; and such a soul never knew an hour of devotion which hung heavy on his hands.

Bring it in again for the edification of fellow-Christians present with us. It will come as a soul-lifting hurrah to many a saint burdened with care or doubt or fear, about to fall on the field of battle, and establish him in the ways of the Lord with the assurance that he is not a forsaken, solitary warrior ; that allies are at his elbow ; that reinforcements are hastening to his side ; and that the Name of the Lord is a strong tower into which the righteous runneth and is safe. And thus it will nerve him to run with new faith and patience and zeal the race set before him.

Bring it in again for the incitement of those, in the congregation, who are without the hope of the Gospel, to the pursuit of the things belonging to their eternal peace. It will call back to many a sinner the memory of former convictions, and impress them with new force upon his soul, and stir him to unwonted concern and effort—alarming the indifferent, constraining the irreverent, comforting the penitent, and reclaiming the prodigal.

Bring it in again for the inspiration of those who lead in the worship of the sanctuary. It will be a light to them in many a period of darkness, and a tonic to them in many a season of weakness. It will be to them as good news from a far country, and as cold water to a thirsty soul. It will discover to them that their fellow-worshippers are in sympathy with them ; that thoughtful minds ponder their message ; that “ the truth ” is still the power

of God, though served in vessels of clay ; and that " the Word of the Lord " still speaks, " not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. "

Bring it in again, you who are ready to complain of uninteresting and unprofitable sermons and services : for, largely, the lack of interest and profit lies at your door. It comes of your failure to becomingly meet your personal obligation to be interested and profited. Your indifferent, prayerless mien makes you as insensible and unresponsive as stones. It makes you hindrances to your own spiritual enrichment. It makes you impediments to the life of your companions in the house of God. And it makes you weights on the leaders of the worship, who no more can meet all the conditions of prosperous public worship than Moses could prevail against Amalek without the upholding of his hands by Aaron and Hur ; or than the Son of Man could win success in the midst of His unbelieving countrymen. O, that you icicles would realize how you chill and freeze to their inmost souls those who break to you the bread which cometh down from Heaven ! You would cease claiming to have the mind of Christ, or you would humble yourselves in the dust, and lie mourning there until the heat of the Sun of righteousness would thaw you out.

"Come, Holy Ghost, for Thee we call:
Spirit of burning, come !
Refining fire, go through our hearts ;
Illuminate our souls ;
Scatter Thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole."

O, you godly men and women, who sometimes almost overwhelm us with your generous commendations of our services, we wish you could realize how largely, under God, the credit is your own. Often we come before you burdened, or poorly prepared, or sick, or worn, or worried ; and your Amen, either glancing in your eyes or trembling on your tongues, kindles our fainting souls ; lifts yourselves to Pisgah heights ; and raises the whole assembly into heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Poor or rich, strong or

weak, you are the pillars of the Church. The least of you is equal to a hundred, and the greatest of you is equal to a thousand. The Lord God of our fathers make you many more times as many as you are !

“ Ye men of grace have found
Glory begun below :
Celestial fruit, on earthly ground,
From faith and hope may grow.”

Bring it in again for a tribute due the blessed Redeemer. Each hearty, intelligent Amen to His cause and Name is a new satisfaction to His soul ; and a new sign that His kingdom is increasingly a live kingdom in the world ; and that His people, blooming with the beauty of holiness, and gleaming with the dew of youth, are as ever willing in the day of His power. And, with new gladness that His Word does not return unto Him void, but prospers in the thing whereto He has sent it, He will prosecute His intercession before the throne : henceforth expecting that His enemies will be made His footstool, and that

“ To Him shall endless prayer be made,
And endless praises crown His head :”

henceforth expecting, with the prayer of the upright His delight, that

“ His Name, like sweet perfume, shall rise
With every morning sacrifice,”

until

“ He shall have dominion
O'er river, sea and shore,
Far as the eagle's pinion
Or dove's light wing can soar.”

AMEN was a favorite word with the Son of Man. Hardly any other word was so frequently on his lips. You meet it over seventy times in the Gospel record of His conversations and discourses. As we catch, through the Apocalyptic telephone, the sound of their devotion who throng the temple of the New Jerusalem, it enlivens their worship as a bit of their daintiest manna. As we listen at the door where the saints of early ages and dispensations are assembled for the cultivation of themselves

in the things of God, it is the frequent expression of their spiritual exhilaration. As we recall the halcyon days of our fathers and mothers, as leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and going on unto perfection, it was their song and their shout. As we recollect the times when we were alert and glad with the peace that is as a river and the righteousness that is as the waves of the sea, it, spoken by others, was a challenge forward, and, spoken by ourselves, was a leap of response to their stirring call.

Its strangeness in our assemblies and in our hearts is a pall and a weakness ; for, in its spirit and utterance the flame of devotion is intensified, and the power of prayer is multiplied an hundred-fold. One asking for better things for himself, and the others crying Amen, it is a dozen or a score of prayers instead of one. One asking for the conversion of his family, and the others crying Amen, it is one prayer with an hundred endorsements. One asking for the Church revival experience and revival power, and the others crying Amen, it is a whole church marshalling the violence which taketh the " Kingdom of Heaven " by storm. One asking for new grace for a new emergency, and the others crying Amen, it is the voice of many waters bearing him forward with resistless tide. One asking that his Christian brethren may give him greeting over a richer experience or progress, and the others crying Amen, Oh, what glory crowns the hour as all sing

" Amen, Amen, my soul replies,
Go on, I'm bound to meet you in the skies."

The bugle sounds. Amen, bearer of fragrant memories ! Amen, charter of hallowed prospects ! Amen, word from the vernacular of Heaven ! Amen, channel by which the devotions of the redeemed, for crowding centuries, have been discharging themselves in the ear of their Redeemer ! Amen, language in which the members of the " General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn which are written in Heaven," pay their praises to the " Lion of the tribe of Judah ! " Amen, medium by which my father and mother used to proclaim the love of the Lover of their souls ! Amen, tongue by which my own soul poured out

its song as I bowed in penitential desire, and as I came up from the "fountain filled with blood," and a thousand times since as I found a new peace and won a new victory! Amen, trumpet whose blast has stirred me again and again in cathedral and chapel, in congregation and social meeting, in private and public: which I have heard in city and country, and from the lips of childhood and maturity, and from the lips of the glad and the sorrowing, and from the lips of the living and the dying,—O, be my Amen! Ever and anon may I cry it out of a full, joyous heart. Evermore may I live it: exultant, faithful, trusting. Life amid mortal scenes closing up, earthly shadows fleeing away, the sun of a cloudless morning and of an endless day breaking on my raptured vision, may Amen, the hurrah of my probation, be my password to the recompense to be revealed at the resurrection of the just! Then, as in the last word of the last verse of the last chapter of the last book of God's last written revelation to man, Amen gathers all its previous benedictions and promises into one bright, full expression; so in the last hour of the last day of the last year of my stay in the land of the dying, may I call out a glad Amen to all the way the Lord hath led me, and, bounding into all the bliss of the glorified and immortal, unite with you, and with all who have gone thither out of our homes, and with all who "are without fault before the throne of God," in the jubilant acclaim,

"For ever with the Lord!
Amen, so let it be!"

V.

"And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived."—GENESIS, 45:27.

Far away and long ago there lives an old man whose whole heart is bound up in one darling boy. He is naturally a man of very strong and tender sensibilities: his affections lie very near the surface of his being. Nevertheless, his entire career seems to be a long, unbroken series of assaults upon his soul. Cherishing his home, he is a constant exile from its roof. Delighting in his mother, he is early forced from her embrace, and never lays his head in her lap again. Fond of his wife, his beloved Rachel goes down into a premature grave. Petting his children, his daughters and sons oppress him with concern and distress. Some twenty years ago his favorite son went forth on an errand, and has never returned—it is reported that he was slain by wild beasts. Some two years famine has locked the land in its clutch. Thus far he has obtained bread in a neighboring land, but one of his sons is a hostage in its prison.

Once more bread must be had, and his dearest remaining son has gone to Egypt as the condition of its obtainment. How dreary the days of his absence! How heavy the anxieties which bear down the old pilgrim's soul! How impenetrable the clouds which shadow his skies! How stern the vigils which task his unsleeping eyes! How dead are his hopes! How little care he has to live! How longingly he awaits the advancing grave!

One morning, however, looking along the road over which his absent sons had journeyed in quest of food, a coming caravan meets his gaze. Coming nearer, he discerns the familiar forms which have grown up around his knees. Pausing in his presence, he discovers a new supply of food, recognizes Benjamin, recognizes Simeon, and gratefully sees that no new disaster has fallen on his home. There is more, too, than merely a stay of calamity. The heavens wear a brighter face. The air is vocal with good tidings. The returning children shout with one voice, "Father,

Joseph is not dead. He is alive. He is well. He is prosperous. He is vice-governor of Egypt. He wants us to move there. He says he will take care of us."

Sometimes good news is told too suddenly to be borne. The condemned have died on hearing the message of their pardon. The poor have died on learning of their inheritance of wealth. The doorkeeper of Congress died when listening to the report of the capture of Cornwallis. There moved, some years ago, a woman from England to Chicago. She pined for the mother she had left behind. She concluded finally that she must go back and see the dear old face again. The week before she was to start, her mother, unannounced, entered her room, and the daughter died in her mother's arms. Thus, the announcement of Joseph's life and prosperity stuns Jacob. For a moment, his reason reels. He cannot credit the report.

Thinking it all over, however, he says to himself, "It may be that Joseph is alive. I was never really assured of his death. Eleven witnesses agree in the statement concerning him. They know him well. They have no motive to deceive me. Their story of Joseph's treatment of Benjamin is natural, for they are children of the same mother. The message which they bring from him to me is just like him, for he was always devoted to me. These wagons are circumstantial evidence of the truth of their story; for my sons had no money to spend in wagons, and nobody else would waste money in a fraud on a poor old man." The last doubt gives way. Faith is constrained. And he says, "It is enough. Joseph is alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Almost twenty centuries ago, a new Brother is born into the human family. He is the Brother of every member of our race; for, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He is especially the Brother of those who accept Him in His atonement; for, pointing to His disciples, He says, "Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of

My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.”

He crowds His whole life on earth with good works to the children of men : seeking to better and brighten the condition of all with whom He comes in contact ; and seeking to create conditions which will rain benedictions on all who shall subsequently come into being.

Nevertheless, coming to His own, His own will not receive Him. He is denounced, despised, rejected. Betrayal and perjury follow Him every day. Betrayal and perjury hound Him to death. Crucified between two notorious malefactors, He gives up His life ; and His body is laid away in a tomb. No wonder that the Church goes into mourning, that the earth staggers at the infamy enacted on its bosom, and that the heavens wrap themselves in shadows !

But good news is in the air : good tidings salute our ears. It is reported that He, after all, is not dead ; that He has not been lying all these years in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea ; that, the third day following His burial, He burst the barriers of the tomb ; and that He is alive for evermore, having in His hands the keys of death and hell.

It is reported that He, forty days following His resurrection, ascended from the heights of Olivet to the heights of Heaven, leading captivity captive.

It is reported that He is the King of the Heaven whither He has ascended, His Father having highly exalted Him, and having given Him a name that is above every name.

It is reported that He is the Possessor of infinite perfections, and the Proprietor of infinite resources, being Lord of all.

It is reported that He is the Source of all our mercies and of all our supplies—the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning, from Whom cometh down every good gift and every perfect gift.

It is reported that He wants us to go and live with Him ; to pass eternity in His presence, where there is fullness of joy ; to

spend immortality at His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.

And it is reported that He will find us transportation ; that He will furnish all we need along the way ; and that He will give us compensation for all that we have to abandon for the journey—that He will give us a heart of flesh for the heart of stone, a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, plenty for penury, songs for sighs, triumph for tears, friendships which shall know no rupture, raiment which shall never go out of style, and an everlasting inheritance among them who are without fault before the throne of God.

Good news, indeed ! But it seems too good to be believed. We are descendants of those who saw neither comeliness nor form in our Brother during the days of His incarnation among men. The sin of the fathers is on their children. We held the clothes of those who nailed Him to the cross. We, with our sins, were parties to His crucifixion. We, in the exercise of our own volition, have been guilty of His rejection. We have been disobedient to His summons to the embracement of His salvation. We have been unfaithful in our stewardship. We have grieved Him by a thousand falls. We are in no way essential to Him. He can do without us. In Himself all fulness dwells. The angels chant His glory. The cherubim sing His praise. The seraphim wait His will.

We cannot credit the tidings that He is alive. Leave us alone in our despair. Paint no illusions in our eyes. Speak no mockeries in our ears. We will go down into the grave mourning.

“ How can it be, Thou Heavenly King,
That Thou should'st us to glory bring :
Make slaves the partners of Thy throne,
Decked with a never-fading crown ? ”

Nevertheless, let us reflect before we reject the message sent us. It is brought to us by men who had ample opportunity to ascertain the facts ; who had no motive to fabricate falsehood ; who persisted in their narrative when they had nothing to gain by

its recital, and everything to lose ; who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ; and who went to death still telling their story.

It is impossible, if it is a fabrication, to conceive the circumstances or the source of its invention. It is impossible to imagine the idea or the reason of its invention. It is impossible to imagine that good men would set themselves to tell far and wide a stupendous lie. It is impossible to imagine that wicked men would set themselves to work out a system of belief which sets its face as a flint against all wickedness. The enemies of humanity could not have perpetrated such a monstrous fraud ; and the friends of humanity would not have perpetrated it.

It is just such a message as we might have expected from our Brother. It is just such a message as our knowledge of Him while He was among men would have led us to look for. While He was in the world He went about doing good. His acts were acts of charity. His thoughts were thoughts of mercy. His words were words of pity. His life was a life of love. His death was a death of sacrifice for His lost brothers and sisters ; and, just before His death, He made His will, leaving them His peace, and promising to come again and receive them unto Himself. Verily, His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways ; but as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts !

Then, see the circumstantial evidence that He is alive and caring for us. See the wagons He has sent to bring us supplies for our pilgrimage, and to carry us home to Himself.

Here is the Bible, announcing the existence of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away ; delineating the path to its possession ; and inspiring us to its pursuit.

Here is the Church, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that it may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Here is the Christian home, declaring to impressible childhood, the story of the Great Lover of little children, fashioning it into His image, and training it up to fear the Lord from its youth.

Here is the Sabbath-school, anticipating the instructions of the Church and emphasizing the instructions of the home, and seeking to secure for God the orphans and waifs in whose ears there is neither Church nor home to sing the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

Here is good fortune, endeavoring to captivate us into love and service of the Fount of every blessing, by a consideration of the great things He hath done for us.

Here is misfortune, endeavoring to detach us from love and service of the carnal and dying, and lead us to lay up for ourselves treasure in Heaven.

Here is the Holy Spirit, girdling us with His directions, inspirations and motions, and proposing to seal us unto the day of eternal redemption.

Here are angels, camping about us in all our itinerancy; keeping in our memory the words of our ascended Brother, spoken while He was still with us in the flesh; and ministering in manifold ways to the heirs of salvation.

There is death, looking in the distance like a hearse, but turning out to be the family carriage of our beloved Brother, waiting to carry the whole family, one by one, up into His beatific presence of Whom the whole family in earth and in heaven is named.

There, on the throne, is our Brother, brandishing His cross, ever making intercession for us, filling the wagons, sending them forth with their loads of blessing, and yearning for our consent to dower us with an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Verily, the message is reliable. Our Brother is alive! He loves us with a love passing, beyond comparison, all other loves; He supplies all our need, according to His riches in glory; and He wants us to come and live with Him amid felicities and grandeurs which beggar description and leave fancy halting far behind. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever. And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.

" I know that my Redeemer lives ;
What joy the blest assurance gives !
He lives, He lives, Who once was dead ;
He lives my everlasting Head !"

A multitude no man can number, crowds gathered from all churches and climes and generations, many gathered from all our homes, have already finished their pilgrimage, gone up the steeps of light, and reached the Jerusalem above with everlasting joy upon their heads.

Crowding hosts, among them those who are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, are on the way, and every nightfall

" Pitch their moving tents
A day's march nearer home."

Many of us have made good progress along the heavenly highway. Only a few short miles intervene between us and the land of our faith and hope and toil. Only over yon hill, and our eyes shall catch sight of the city which hath foundations, and our ears drink in its enrapturing melodies, and our hands lock hands with the darlings who have gone on before ! Only this one step separates us from our Brother's presence and our Brother's welcome.

None of us must miss that welcome. None of us must become discouraged because of the way. None of us must faint because one wagon in the train carries affliction. Why, in every campaign the soldier is as careful to have along the wagon which carries the case of instruments and the chest of medicines, as that which carries the ammunition or rations or tents. True, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

No ! Discouragement must have no foothold within our souls. Let us thank God, and take courage. Let us run the whole length of the celestial road. The road is almost over. To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor, and immortality, eternal life.

Listen ! Its raptures charge the air. Look ! Its turrets

flash in the distance. See! Its gates are ajar. Yonder, familiar forms line its battlements. Yonder, waits our Brother.

The Archbishop of Nantz, bending beneath the burden of ninety years, lies on a lounge, listening to his son read the last two chapters of the Revelation of St. John; and he calls for his hat and staff that he may start at once for the city to come. Mrs. Doremus dying, bids her children and husband farewell; and, as if she saw Him waiting her wish, says, "Jesus, bring the chariot." Thus, ever-ready, let us press forward. We shall fear no evil. We shall suffer no want. We shall realize that all things work together for our good, and that our strength is according to our day. We shall finish our pilgrimage with joy; and, stepping into the wagon of death, find it as sumptuous a chariot as ever carried a king to his coronation, or as that in which Enoch ascended from antediluvian plains, or as that in which Elijah mounted from the banks of Jordan.

" Leaning on Jesus' breast,
Shall I resign my breath;
And in His kind embraces lose
The bitterness of death."

VI.

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”
—JOHN, 12 : 24.

A little less than nineteen centuries ago, the feast of the Pass-over is stirring Jerusalem through and through. The inhabitants of the city are arranging for its appropriate celebration. Multitudes of strangers are there to share in the excitements and solemnities of the occasion.

A rumor reports that Jesus of Nazareth is on His way to the city, and immense numbers go forth to meet Him and to welcome Him with their Hosannas. Among them are certain Greeks who, having heard of His fame, and observing these demonstrations in His honor, and seeking fuller knowledge of His character and claims, say to Philip, “ We would see Jesus.” Coming into His presence, they discover little in harmony with their previous conceptions. There is no diadem on His brow. There is no sceptre in His hand. To look upon, He is merely a man. Besides, He is even now within the shadow of the great eclipse. In a few short hours He is to be condemned as a blasphemer and a traitor, executed in company with two notorious malefactors, and laid away in the grave ; and under these circumstances not only the faith of these eager strangers, but also that of His most earnest friends, may falter and give way.

Guarding against such a disastrous issue, He says, “ ‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.’ Do not be deceived by appearances. You have accepted Me as the Messiah. You have confided in Me as the Salvation of humanity. You have looked for Me to gather all nations under My standard, and to reign, the world over, King of kings and Lord of lords. Your belief is correct. Your expectations will be realized. Do not give up your hopes. My glorification involves My sufferings. The way to the morning lies through the

night. The fruitage comes of decay. The harvest grows out of the grave where the seed lies buried. The tomb is the birth-place of life."

It is a masterly presentment of the truth as it is in Himself. His auditors have seen His miracles, and witnessed His recent triumphal march. They are looking every moment for the irresistible and visible establishment of His kingdom. And He assures them that His kingdom will be set up—that even now He is on His way to His throne ; but not in the way of their imagination. His coronation is to come of His deeper humiliation ; and, as they cannot, at once, apprehend how this can be, He illuminates His doctrine by the illustration of our study.

By death to life, is the order of the vegetable world. It is not the growing grain, full of juice and life, that you plant in hope of development and multiplication. Cast such a grain into the ground, and it will never have a resurrection. No rain will ever allure it from its bed. No sunshine will ever break its sleep. No vernal voice will ever stir it into waking. Its sleep is eternal. Therefore, before you bury it in the soil, you want to know that it has come to maturity, that it is fully developed, that it has reached its perfection, that it is *dead* ripe.

Selecting this grain, you deposit it in the ground, and it dies. Every particle of it perishes, except the germ ; and this subsists on the decaying husks worn in its former estate until able to gather sustenance and vitality from the ministries of earth and sky. Thus dying, it comes up in newness of life—the same, and not the same ; the same, but manifold more. It abideth not alone. It bringeth forth thirty, sixty, yea, an hundred fold more. Like Sarah, it is the mother of millions.

By death to life, is also the order of the animal world. A mother comes down to the very gates of death as her child is born. Under the most favorable circumstances, she is never hence the entire woman she was before. Forever hence she has parted with a portion of herself. Forever hence she has less of her own vitality. And, in innumerable instances, he who is born is actu-

ally the death of her who has borne him. Parturition has been too much for maternal strength; and she never rallies from the shock. Opening the portals of life to her son, those portals close upon herself, and her place in the world knows her no more.

Every child of due sensibility, as he realizes how he came to be, will be held to filial love and service with a fondness and a fulness which no force or wile can abate. If his mother is still in the land of the living, he will lavish on her an affection and a care equal to his capacity and opportunity. If she has gone the way of all the earth, he will keep her memory green until memory shall again and for ever be communion.

By death to life, is also the order of the social world. Apparent backsets and defeats have lined the path of every forward movement of humanity. It has made but little progress directly and immediately. The expectations of reformers have rarely been met in the manner and ratio of their expectations.

Ecclesiastical, educational and political economies have been devised and inaugurated, which appeared to be all that could be desired, commanded hearty acceptance, and promised large improvement and prosperity in the circle of their actions. Their advocates and friends fondly pronounced them perfection and success. Finally, however, new inspirations came, or new necessities developed, or new plans suggested themselves; and new parties and propositions marched to the front. Oppositions became engendered. Conservatives and Progressives entered the lists with each other. The advocates of advanced measures were branded as heretics or traitors; were excluded from their old connections and places; and, in many instances, were put to death; and, for a time, their measures lay seemingly as dead as themselves.

Thus it is that doctrines are adopted, and methods are chosen, and policies are made regnant. Progress is born of the defeat of those who first lift its banners and ring its bells. They who call to revolution are scarcely ever in at the triumph. Somebody has to die as seed-corn.

By death to life, is also the order of the religious world. A man is met at the very threshold of the Christian life with the announcement of Him Who is its Giver, "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." And subsequently, his life long, his sentiment is to be, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." And, going up into the inheritance of the climax of the benefactions of the Son of God,—the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,"—he must actually die. Canaan is beyond the Jordan. Heaven is on the other side of the sepulchre. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Then shall we cry, beyond all fear of challenge, "O, death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Every individual advancement in the Divine life, long as we tread the thoroughfares of Probation, is conditioned on a death. The old Adam must die, that the new Adam may be born. The heart of stone must be given up, that the heart of flesh may be our possession. The devil and the flesh and the world must be surrendered, that we may become the dwelling-place of the Father and the Son and the Spirit. The evil propensities of our nature must be eradicated, that the graces of the Divine nature may come up from their graves. The vices of the fall must be uprooted, that the virtues offered in the Redemption may live and thrive. Ye who are born of God, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Likewise, reckon ye yourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the

faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

Longing to be an angel of salvation unto others, I must embark my life in the hallowed ministry. I must lay my life out for my brethren,—and all men are my brethren;—for, “He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” The resurrection of the dead in sin and trespass is so great and heavenly an achievement as to demand and justify the outlay of the life of those who have the mind of Christ, if nothing less will accomplish the sublime resurrection. They who have the burden of souls would die to save them.

The lack of this consecration may be the reason of our failure in Christian work. Fathers and mothers, would you die that your children may be alive unto God? Fellow-members of the Church and of the Sabbath-school, would we die that those under our care, and with whom we come in touch every day, who are out of Christ, may lay hold of eternal life? It is told of the brothers of an old Franciscan convent that, during the prevalence of a plague, they gave themselves up to the care of those smitten—each going out on his mission in the morning, and, if able, returning in the evening to an out-house near the convent, and ringing a bell to indicate that he was still alive. If that bell was not heard ringing at sundown, another brother went out to rescue the first if he was in need, and to succeed him if he had fallen. On the staying of the plague, twenty-four monks had died; but hundreds of lives had been saved. Readily enough, still, men will face death for any cause they have at heart—to defend their country, or to gather riches, or to prosecute studies. Shall those who have the “Gospel in trust” have less concern for those who are “without God and without hope in the world?”

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Do we aspire to be new creatures in Christ Jesus? It is life for life. Do we covet the highest experiences

and rewards possible to the saint? It is life for life. Do we long to see the world delivered from Satanic clutch, and laid a trophy at Immanuel's feet? It is life for life.

"More of Thy life, and more I have,
As the Old Adam dies :
Bury me, Saviour, in Thy grave,
That I with Thee may rise."

By death to life, is also the order of Christ in the redemption of the world. A Divine decree in the economy of the Divine government cannot undo the mischief of the human lapse, and lift lapsed man back into the character and condition of his creation. God, indeed, is Love, looking with pitying eyes upon the fallen creature of His hand, and yearning for his recovery. God, however, is a just, as well as merciful, Sovereign, bound to conserve the majesty of His government, and to maintain His personal rectitude. Law may not be broken, even in the interest of human escape from the punishment of its transgression. Mercy may not trample righteousness in the mire. The penalty of sin is death. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.

Coming, therefore, into the world, proposing its redemption, the Son of God is confronted with the fact that man is under sentence of death, and that He Who would be his Redeemer must die in his stead. Death, however, is humiliating and sorrowful even to an offending mortal; but how infinitely more humiliating and sorrowful to the Lord of all being! Is it any wonder that, in its prospect, He cries, "Father, if it is Thy will, let this cup pass from Me?" Still, He falters not. He assumes the sinner's stead, and takes on Him the iniquities of us all. He dies for the ungodly. He gives His life a ransom for the many. He tastes death for every man. Verily, it "is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

The Divine Corn of Wheat, dropping from the skies into the soil of humanity, proposing to bring forth a harvest of redemption, died.

“ He took the dying traitor’s place,
And suffered in his stead :
For sinful man—O, wondrous grace
For sinful man He bled.”

Glance backward, and see what a harvest has already come of the sowing of this Corn of Wheat ! As it is committed to the ground, its enemies congratulate themselves on the destruction of all its endowments and possibilities of life ; and its friends sorrow over the frustration of their hopes that this was He Who should have redeemed Israel, and wrought out the redemption of the world. But the eye of Omniscience is on the buried seed, and the energies of Omnipotence ply it with vitalizing forces. Immortal Spring winds ~~its~~ mellow horn ; the superincumbent sod gives way ; and, God of goodness, what blooming fruitage fills the enraptured vision !

Divine authority is illustrated and vindicated ; and yet God can be just, and justify the ungodly. Law is magnified, and made honorable ; and yet illimitable and innumerable channels open up for the tides of grace. Lost humanity is within the reach of home and peace ; and yet the highest interests of the universe are conserved and fortified. The Holy Spirit is Divinely sensitive to sin ; and yet, laying hold of sin-stained humanity, eliminates its corruption, fashions it anew, and transforms it into the likeness and temple of God.

Greatly the majority of the children of men die in infancy ; and yet all going down into the grave beneath the dew of childhood go directly into the arms of the Great Lover of little children—through His atonement gifted with the laurel, without running the race of Probation. Just a glimpse of the coming promised Seed of the woman is had by those of the Patriarchal era ; and yet they see something of the day of Christ afar off, and leap to meet Him in more radiant scenes. Largely the Mosaic economy is an economy of burdens and taxes ; and yet its subjects

make their way into the presence of the Great Burden-Bearer, and reap rest for their souls. Paganism is a land of darkness and shadow; and yet they who make the best of their starlight, see a star which leads them to the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

Messiah appears without form or comeliness, a root out of dry ground; and yet all who receive Him in the day of His incarnation receive the power and the right to become the children of God. Since His ascension, generation after generation has gone the way of all the earth; and yet all who have followed Him in the way of the regeneration have realized Him to be the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever. None trusting in Him has ever been left desolate. Today multitudes have never seen incarnate Deity; and yet, though they see Him not, they believe on Him, and love Him, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Surely, this buried Corn of Wheat did not die fruitless. All the glorification of God and redemption of man which we have just reviewed are its outgrowth. Its inherent vitality has been too much for the tomb of Joseph in which it was hidden nineteen centuries since. The atonement is no failure: hell is not so full as we have imagined; and Heaven is fuller than we have reckoned.

Look forward, and see what a harvest is yet to come of the sowing of this Corn of Wheat! For still the harvest is on the way. The grain planted on Calvary is still bearing fruit. Christ is still winning trophies. He is to have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. He is to have all His enemies put under His feet. The God of the whole earth He is to be called.

O, it is an harvest yet beyond compass—a yield beyond computation. Arithmetic breaks down in front of the crowding figures. Faith can not count the swelling numbers. Imagination cannot master the transcendent sum. So large, nineteen hundred years ago, when seen by John from Patmos, was the congregation already assembled from earth in Heaven, that no man could num-

ber it. O, what a multitude it must be now, with the increment of the intervening centuries !

To measure this, however, would not be to measure the total of the yield of the Seed sown when Jesus of Bethlehem gave up the ghost and went down into the tomb. If I would see the whole harvest, in all its amplitude and luxuriance, I must wait—wait

“ Until this earth I walk on seems not earth,
This light that strikes my eyeball is not light,
This air that smites my forehead is not air,
But vision—yea, my very hand and foot—
In moments when I feel I cannot die,
And know myself no vision to myself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again :”

wait until, after millions of years, on some boundless plain of the better country, even the Heavenly, the ransomed of the Lord, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, are all assembled for review—their bodies fashioned after the body of the Son of God, and their souls washed from the slightest stain of sin :—wait until, climbing some lofty summit of the land of pure delight and vision, my eye can range an illimitable circuit, and my intellect can sweep an immeasurable field :—wait until, the immortal having swallowed up the mortal, I can poise myself for an arch-angel’s view, and can take in all that has come of the oblation of Immanuel to the children of men along the paths they have already come, and all that is to come along the paths they are yet to traverse :—wait until

“ The beatific sight
Shall fill the heavenly courts with praise,
And wide diffuse the golden blaze
Of everlasting light.”

“ Have you heard the tale of the Aloe plant,
Away in the sunny clime ?
By humble growth of an hundred years,
It reaches its blooming time ;
And, then, a wondrous bud at its crown
Bursts into a thousand flowers :
This floral green, in its beauty seen,
Is the pride of the tropical bowers ;
But the plant to the flower is a sacrifice,
For it blooms but once, and in blooming dies.

“ Have you further heard of this Aloe plant,
That grows in the sunny clime?
How every one of its thousand flowers,
As they fall in the blooming time,
Is an infant tree that fastens its roots
In the place where they fall to the ground,
And, fast as they drop from the dying stem,
Grow lively and lovely around?
By dying it liveth a thousand fold
In the young that spring from the death of the old.

“ Have you heard the tale of the Pelican,
The Arab's Gimel El Bahr,
That lives in the African solitudes,
Where the birds that live lonely are?
Have you heard how it loves its tender young,
And toils and cares for their good?
It brings them water from fountains afar,
And fishes the sea for their food.
In famine it feeds them—what love can devise!—
The blood of its bosom, and, feeding them, dies.

“ Have you heard the tale they tell of the Swan,
The snow-white bird of the lake?
It noiselessly floats on the silvery wave—
It silently sits on the break;
For it saves, its song till the close of life,
And, then, in the calm still even,
'Mid the golden rays of the setting sun,
It sings as it soars to Heaven:
And the blessed notes fall back from the skies—
'Tis its only song, for in singing it dies.

“ You have heard these tales. Shall I tell you one,
A greater and better than all?
Have you heard of Him Whom the Heavens adore,
And before Whom the hosts of them fall—
How He left His choirs and anthems above,
For earth in its wailings and woes,
To suffer the shame and pain of the cross,
And die for the life of His foes?
O, Prince of the Noble! O, Saviour Divine!
What sorrow or sacrifice equal to Thine!

“ Have you heard of this tale, the best of them all—
The tale of the Holy and True?
He dies, but His life now in untold souls
Springs up in the world anew.
His seed prevails, and is filling the earth,
As the stars fill the sky above.
He taught us to give up the love of life,
For the sake of the life of love.
His death is our life—His life is our gain—
The joy for the tear; the peace for the pain!

“ Now hear these tales, ye weary and worn,
Who for others do give up your all :
Our Saviour has told us the seed that would grow
Into earth's dark bosom must fall,
And pass from the sight, and die away,
And then will the fruit appear ;
The grain that seems lost in the earth below,
Will return in the manifold ear.
By death comes life, by life comes gain—
The joy for the tear ; the peace for the pain !”

VII.

“Selah.”—PSALM 3 : 4.

A text is a selection from Holy Scripture about which is woven a religious discourse—a discourse designed to develop and enforce the mind of God as expressed in that particular selection of Holy Scripture. And the employment of a text as the foundation of such a discourse is not an innovation of modern times, though this is sometimes alleged in disparagement of the practice. Every now and then in the history of the Church, there may have been a period when it was not the common custom ; but it was no strange occurrence in the first years of the Christian Dispensation. Preaching the earnest sermon, at the conclusion of which He scourged with cords the shylocks of the day out of the Temple, Christ had for His text the seventh verse of the fifty-sixth chapter of Isaiah : “ Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.” Preaching the Pentecostal sermon, as a consequence of which three thousand joined the Church, Peter’s text was the twenty-eighth verse of the second chapter of Joel : “ It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh.” Preaching the persuasive sermon in the ears of the infuriated Council, during the delivery of which his face shone as the face of an angel, Stephen’s text was the first verse of the twelfth chapter of Genesis : “ Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee.” Preaching the wonderful sermon, under the inspiration of which the Ethiopian nobleman accepted Jesus as the Messiah which was to come, and went on his way rejoicing, Philip’s text was the fourth verse of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah : “ Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.”

There is a moral obligation on the preacher of the Word of God to expound the text—to display, as far as he can apprehend it, the exact thought which the Holy Spirit has deposited within

it for communication. He may not interpret it aside from its own connection, nor press it into the support of a doctrine which it does not distinctly convey. It is a sin to preach even the truth from a passage which does not embody that truth. It dishonors God, impairs the influence of His word, injures the hearer, and sows the world with erroneous conceptions of the truth. We may have opportunity to develop and enforce only a portion of our Scripture selection sometimes ; and sometimes we may employ our selection as a motto ; but we must in every case give the inherent import of our selection before passing to its use in an accommodated sense.

The precise length of a text can not be definitely declared. It can not be described as the given measure of so many sentences or words. The duty is to take a complete expression of Inspired thought. This requires now a chapter or even more, and now a paragraph, and now a verse, and now a word : for there are instances in which a word stands so completely by itself, and teems with such a wealth of significance, as to justify the occupancy of the whole time of the sermon for the eduction and elucidation of its import.

And SELAH is a word of this character, and entitled to such a style of treatment. It occurs in only two of the books incorporated into the sacred canon—seventy-three times in the Psalms, and three times in the prophecies of Habakkuk. Moreover, it appears in every case as a portion of the discourse, or song, in which it is found ; and its omission in the Vulgate and some other translations is a mutilation of the Inspired text—an unwarranted liberty with the Inspired volume. The authors of the Authorized and Revised Versions of the sacred Scriptures have left it to meet English eyes in the original Hebrew. Of course, English readers consult their more learned friends as to its meaning ; and of course there is a variety in the answers they receive : for the learned are not of one judgment in their rendering.

In all this variety, however, there is agreement that it is a musical term. It is a direction or suggestion of the composer as

to the manner in which the composition shall be rendered so as best to accomplish the end of its composition, and to most serve the purpose of religious edification and worship.

It goes without argument that music is an essential element in the worship of Jehovah. Discourses are to be delivered, prayers are to be offered, and the Scriptures are to be read; but not exclusively. Praise is an equal obligation; and praise pre-eminently takes shape in song. The grateful heart must wreath the tongue with doxologies.

It farther goes without argument in this day that instrumental, as well as vocal music, has its place in the worship of Jehovah. The voice may legitimately employ such accompaniment, and find in the accompaniment large assistance and direction and inspiration. The Lord of all surely does not ban the use of cornet or flute or organ in our Christian sanctuaries: for He listened approvingly to cymbal and timbrel and trumpet in the Jewish sanctuary; and the seer who looked from Patmos into the skies reports that, amid the felicities of the Immortal sanctuary, the New Song is sung with harpers harping with their harps.

Music is a part of the worship of Jehovah in which all the worshippers should unite. It is a part belonging to all the people; for all the people have matter and occasion of praise; and all should magnify the Name of the Lord. The sacred oracles call, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." And the Discipline of Methodism exhorts "every person in the congregation to sing, and not one in ten only."

Music, in the worship of Jehovah, should be worshipfully rendered. Its leaders should be men and women who fear God and keep His commandments. It is a shame and sin for the Church to borrow its choir from the saloon or the theatre. Its hymns and tunes should be in harmony with the occasion and the place and the subject. One who spake by Divine commandment to the entire Church says, "I will sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also." Rules which determine the ways of our denomination of the Church write, "Choose such hymns as

are proper for the occasion : let the tune be suited to the sentiment : let due attention be given to the cultivation of sacred music.”

Music calling forth Divine prescription, that it may be according to the proprieties of worship, surely there is need for observance of all the proprieties of worship. Holiness becometh the house of God ; and there should be no indulgence or toleration of indecorum or irreverence in any of its exercises, or in the place itself at any time. It is always the house of God. It is always for the glory of God, and for the worship of God. And he who goes thither for his own entertainment or exhibition has no more business there than a pig in a parlor. Surely, if there is to be care in the choice of the music, and in the management of the instrument, and in the modulation of the voice, (and all this is implied in the word SELAH,) everything in the house of the Lord should be done decently and in order. If Moses was commanded to lay aside his sandals as he approached the burning bush ; if Nadab and Abihu were driven to death for bringing strange fire into the presence of God ; and if John, amid the glare of Apocalyptic vision, was overpowered with awe ; we should be careful of our manners and of our souls as we enter the place glorious with the feet of the High and Lofty One. “Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God.” “O, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” “The Lord reigneth : let the people tremble.”

“Let every act of worship be
Like our espousal, Lord, to Thee :
Like the blest hour when, from above,
We first received the pledge of love.”

In the very variety of the interpretations of the word SELAH, there are suggestions of prime importance and value. By the adoption of the Greek word *Diapsalma* as the equivalent of *Selah*, the authors of the Septuagint version indicate their conviction that it is a call to the repetition of what has just been expressed in discourse or song or tune. Clearly, then, such repetition is not the irreligious or unmeaning exercise some good people assume.

It frequently adds force and significance to the sentiment expressed, and impels it more deeply and permanently into the soul. It allows opportunity for consideration of the sentiment until there is full feeling and perception of its import; and thus it arrests that thoughtlessness which is so often the bane of our professed worship, and which so often sends us unblest and unimproved from the sanctuary. It emphasizes the truth uttered until it gathers an hundred-fold impressiveness and reaps an hundred-fold harvest. A good announcement can scarcely be made too many times. Making it the twentieth time, it works out a result which it has not previously wrought.

By Gesenius the word SELAH is interpreted as a direction to the singers to cease, while the instruments continue to play; and so interludes are not necessarily an unholy by-play: they are a form of *Amen*, endorsing the words already spoken, and preparing for the words which are to follow. They let the spiritual lips enjoy the precious food which has just been tasted, before new dainties are served; and they often rouse the appetite of sinners for the luxuries they see regaling the saints. Many an unregenerate man, long insensible to argument and exhortation, is irresistibly stirred to longing for the feast of fat things by sight of the heavenly bliss sitting upon the faces of the regenerate as they quietly feed upon the manna from above. O, ye children of God, your very manners may be to the praise of your Father, and constitute the tonic of grace to the dying about you.

By Luther the word is interpreted as a signal for silence—a summons to pause and praise and pray and think. An erroneous notion obtains that the burden of public and social worship is entirely or mainly on its leaders, and that others have merely to be recipients of their inspirations and instructions; but the burden is on every one to cultivate himself in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to lend a hearty hand to the devotion and edification of the assembled company. And, instead of encouraging this notion by eccentricities and novelties in discourse or music, it would be well ever and anon to suspend

all discourse and music by the leaders, and let silence reign until broken by the cries and groans of those who, calling themselves Christians, show no sense of the personal obligations of Christian worship. Brothers and sisters, our individual failure to engage ourselves devotionally in the services of the sanctuary is the reason of our individual leanness, and the reason why those services are not the power of God unto the salvation of others. No service is ever barren to the soul alive unto God. Alive himself unto God, he does not know whether discourse or music is good according to critical standards, or not. Alive himself unto God, he finds God manifesting Himself lovingly and royally unto him, and he is in an heavenly place in Christ Jesus. By such seasons of silence there might be a lengthening of the period of worship occasionally; but no period of worship ought ever to terminate until it has won a revelation of God to the waiting man. Every period of worship—whether public, private or social—ought to last until

“Heaven comes down our souls to greet,
And glory crowns the mercy-seat.”

Every clamor for brevity in the worship of God is a sin—a sin of which he is never guilty whose heart is right with God. One whose heart is right never even thinks of admonishing God to hurry through with blessing, or to time revelation by the clock. It will be well for us if some day our impertinence and irreverence break not out in curses upon our heads: if some day, when we hunger for His tarrying, we do not find Him laughing at our calamity, and mocking at our fear. The period of worship ought to be a period of luxury—a period we are more loath to have over than any banquet or soiree at which we were ever present; a period we ought not to measure by the hour-glass: a period we revel in, even if all vocal expression by others be wanting; a period during which we are glad to be relieved of all sound, and whisper, “Come then, expressive silence, muse His praise.”

By Rabbi Kimchi, SELAH is interpreted as a summons to elevate the voice. And there is a time for expression, as well as for

silence in the worship of the God of all grace. We are to make mention of His loving-kindness, as well as to think upon His holy name. At times, in unspoken meditation upon Him and His revelations and right, we may gather fuel for His adoration until the fire burns within us ; but if this fire duly burns, there are also times when our tongues will be as the pen of a ready writer. Those who are alive unto God cannot be always still. Ever and anon they cannot but speak the things which they have felt and heard and seen.

“If human kindness meets return,
And owns the grateful tie ;
If tender thoughts within us burn
To feel a friend is nigh ;
O, shall not warmer accents tell
The gratitude we owe
To Him Who died our fears to quell,
And save from endless woe?”

It is not comely or dutiful to never bear a part, a lingual part, in the devotions of the saints as they proclaim the praise of their Saviour. It is not comely or dutiful to merely sit by the fire of others, and warm ourselves, without ever throwing a fagot on the hearth. It is as uncomely and undutiful to live spiritually at the expense of our fellow-members, as it is to let them bear all the burden of temporal provision for the house of the Lord. It is as uncomely and undutiful to fail in the payment of the one debt, as it is to fail in the payment of the other. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly: teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” “Let the redeemed of the Lord *say so.*” “O, bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our foot to be moved.”

By Somer the word is interpreted as an individual ejaculation in the midst of the general worship—an Amen or Hallelujah reported by the lips from some glowing soul which must burst or shout. Now it is assent to the decree of the Lord, or confirmation of His truth, or deprecation of His judgment. Now it is acknowledgment of His goodness, or confession of His interposition, or

declaration of His majesty. Now it is expression of faith, or importunity for deliverance, or praise for remembrance. Now it is exultation in His presence, or prophecy of His reign, or reconsecration to His use. In every instance, it is a spontaneous tribute to His Name as the Name which is above every name. That is not a becoming or ideal or sufficient worship which serves merely for the entertainment of self, or the exhibition of one to another, or the glorification of nature, and whose main ends are ends of art or morality or reform. Worship God ! Worship God in the beauty of holiness. Worship God so exclusively and heartily and personally, that every moment and every portion of the service shall declare the glory of the King of kings and Lord of lords, and that every soul shall show forth the praise of the Saviour and Shepherd of our souls.

By Wucher the word is interpreted as the utterance of one saying to himself, "Up my soul !" Even the godliest, without consciousness of delinquency or transgression, occasionally finds himself fettered or heavy or wandering in spirit ; or finds himself giving way to despondency or inaction ; or finds himself slacking up in the pursuit of the eternal and unseen ; and he must not only cry for help from the throne of grace, but must also rally himself. Indeed, our souls so easily cling to the dust that there is none who does not frequently need to chide himself earnestly for his earthly-mindedness, and stir himself to self-resurrection, pleading

"Give me with active warmth to move,
With vigorous soul to rise ;
With hands of faith, and wings of love,
To fly and take the prize."

"It is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing ;" for the Son of God "gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

By Murphy the word is interpreted as signifying, "There's more to follow." Hailing the ear in the announcement of deliverance, it declares : "This is not all. Listen ! There's more to

follow.' Hailing the eye in the discovery of gain, it declares : " This is not all. Look ! There's more to follow." Hailing the heart in the experience of peace, it declares : " This is not all. Trust ! There's more to follow."

By the Targums it is interpreted as signifying, eternally; for ever and ever ; world without end.

Nor does this variety of interpretation obscure the word. It merely indicates that it is a word of many sides and wondrous depths, as the rainbow is a harmonious assemblage of different and even dissimilar colors. It merely lifts it out of the company of common words, the import of which you can fathom in an instant, and places it in the group with those few and select words which are charged with sublime significance, and widen with every effort for their comprehension or description—words which demand both time and eternity for their understanding.

A fathomless and limitless expanse of being and bliss thus opens out to the raptured vision of him who worships God in spirit and in truth. Bowed exultingly in the communion of the saints, there's more to follow. Glad in the fellowship of those who dwell in the house of the Lord, there's more to follow. Happy in the discourses and meditations and offerings and prayers and songs of those who joy in God, there's more to follow. Pressing forward in the peace that passeth understanding, there's more to follow. Rejoicing in the love of God, shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto you, there's more to follow. An immense fortune is deposited with a minister for one of his parishioners who is in very straitened circumstances. Apprehensive, from his knowledge of him, that the beneficiary might waste his means if entrusted entirely and immediately with the whole sum, the minister gives him a little at a time : saying, with each instalment, " This is yours ; employ it wisely; there's more to follow." And thus, follower of Christ and heir of God, is it with the goodness laid up for you. It is an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. There is to it neither end nor measure. It is given you, however, not all at once, nor uncondi-

tionally, but day by day; and yet, regularly and surely, day by day, you have given you enough for the day; and it will be given you, every day, as you have need, through all succeeding days. O, how great is the goodness which God has laid up for those who fear Him, and trust in Him before the sons of men !

Go, live on the portion given you. Fear no failure in the remittance of the more than royal bounty: there's more to follow. Fear no exhaustion of the supply: there's more to follow. Let no apprehension of the withdrawal of the stores of Divine grace chill your heart, or darken your sky, or sit as a spectre at your feast of fat things : there's more to follow. " My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." " The Lord God is a sun and shield ; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." And eternally, for ever and ever, and world without end, there's more to follow !

You who are intellectually convinced of the excellence and truth of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, but who have not experienced it to be the power of God unto your salvation, O, taste and see that the Lord is good : for, still there's more to follow ; and if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. You who are just come into the gladness of forgiven sin and a new nature, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free : for still there's more to follow ; and then shall you know, if you follow on to know the Lord. You who for many years are joying in the God of your salvation, hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown: for still there's more to follow ; and eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart imagined, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. You who, long growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, are about finishing your pilgrimage and going in among immortal beatitudes, be faithful unto death : for still there's more to follow ; and there remaineth a rest to the people of God. You, who lately are gone over the intervening river, and upon whose ravished faces the

bliss of the ransomed has just dawned, give goodly greeting to Him who hath made you meet to be partakers of the saints in light : for still there's more to follow; and they who go in go out no more for ever. You who for myriads of ages are drinking of the river of water of life, and having that dower of joy which ever grows to higher joy, pass on from grace to grace, and from glory to glory : for still there's more to follow ; and as ye pass from joy to joy, sing songs of holy ecstasy which, caught by our ears, shall stir our feet to walk the ways you trod, until, standing by your side, we shall sing with you, "Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask, or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

VIII.

“These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”—I. TIMOTHY, 3: 14-16.

A young man, Timothy, is in Ephesus, charged with the supervision of the few in that city who have embraced the truth as it is in Jesus. As a matter of course, his administration and carriage will largely determine the character and fortune of the church of which he is overseer. The bearing of every individual, however humble, whether layman or officer, has much to do with the credit and efficiency of any society with which he is identified.

The apostle Paul has a deep interest in this company of Christians, and in its youthful pastor: coveting for both signal prosperity, and hoping, in the near future, to bestow and experience the refreshment of personal intercourse. But, lest he shall be disappointed in his expectation of the visit, he writes Timothy this letter—declaring his affection, and directing him as to his conduct in the discharge of his ministry to that little band of believers in Immanuel amid countless crowds of idolaters. In the paragraph of the letter now in consideration, attempting to impress Timothy with the magnitude of his responsibilities, in several suggestive metaphors he incidentally sets forth the character of the Christian Church.

IT IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD. A church is, primarily, an assembly of persons for the consideration of any subject, either sacred or secular. Even when first incorporated into the English language as the designation of a religious assembly, the word describes not only a congregation of Christians, but any congregation of worshippers, no matter of what creed or rite. But it has come to denote, particularly, the whole body of persons who, believing in the God of the Scriptures, are changed into His

image, enjoy His favor, and give themselves to His service and worship.

He is the *Living God*. He is not merely an abstraction, or an attribute, or a force, or a law, or a mode. He is not merely an all-embracing essence, of which all other essence is the expression or outcome. He is not merely, as is taught by Spinoza, an uncreating, unthinking, universal substance, to which belongs everything else, whether perceptible or imperceptible. He is not merely an imagination, like that Diana to which Ephesus has erected its stupendous temple and in whose honor its citizens have shouted themselves hoarse. He is the Living God—the God Who has in Himself unbeginning and unending life; the God Whose life is infinite in its resources of intelligence and happiness and supremacy; the God Whose life is the inspiration and rule and sufficiency of all other life.

The Christian Church is the *Church of the Living God*. He has bought it with His own blood. He walks in the midst of its seven golden candlesticks, with its seven stars in His right hand, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle, His head and His hairs white like wool, as white as snow,—and His eyes as a flame of fire, His feet like unto fine brass, His voice as the sound of many waters, and His countenance as the sun shining in his strength.

“Stand up and bless the Lord,
Ye people of His choice;
Stand up and bless the Lord your God,
With heart and soul and voice.

“Though high above all praise,
Above all blessing high,
Who would not fear His Holy Name,
And laud and magnify?”

IT IS THE HOUSE OF GOD. Another representation of the Church now hails our attention. It is no longer a mere aggregate of individual worshippers, but a magnificent and massive edifice builded out of them that believe.

Heaven is called the House of God. “In My Father’s house are many mansions.” The Tabernacle carried by Israel in the

journey from Egypt to Canaan is called the House of God. Hannah took Samuel "and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh." The Temple in Jerusalem is called the House of God. "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."

And those who hold the faith of the New Testament, under that Testament now constitute the House of God. "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

They are the House of God because He hath builded it. "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." "Ye are a chosen generation; a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

They are the House of God because He has furnished it. "Even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

And they are the House of God because He inhabits it. "For ye are the temple of the Living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

"Zion, shout thy Lord and King,
Israel's Holy One is He!
Give Him thanks, rejoice and sing,
Great is He, and dwells in thee.
O, the grace unsearchable!
While eternal ages roll,
God delights in man to dwell,
Soul of each believing soul."

IT IS THE GROUND OF THE TRUTH. Again there is a shifting of the scenery, and the Church appears as a broad, deep, strong foundation ; and on this foundation is seen resting all that is of supreme importance to the sons and daughters of humanity. For, in no insignificant measure, the Church is the inspiration and occasion of every benediction which enriches and illuminates human life. It is the spring from which largely pours forth all that is beautiful and good and permanent in humanity's lot.

If you remove from the world what has come to it from Christianity, in art, and history, and law, and politics, and science, how trifling is the remainder ! If you take away the contributions of Christianity to the world in charity, and commerce, and education, and morals, and society, what have you left ? If you compare the countries which are pervaded with the spirit of the Gospel with countries which are under Atheistic, or Pagan domination, how patent the contrast ! There are the first all aglow with peace and plenty and progress ; and there are the last all hung with the shadows of ignorance and misery and vice. There are the first all blooming and fragrant and fruitful, as a garden of the Divine planting ; and there are the last all blasted and desolate and sterile, as a wilderness of Satanic misrule.

It is, however, as the deposit of things which bear on man's relations to God, to others, and to himself, that the Church is particularly the ground of the truth. The oracles of the truth are in her hands. Its redemption is on her altars. Its teachings move her lips. To her feet the nations make their pilgrimage as they cry, " Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob ; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths ; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

It is admitted that many a cloud has gathered above, and many a wave has rushed against this foundation. Argument and persecution and wit have each exhausted all its resources, and hurled all its shafts, in the mad antagonism. Earth and hell have joined hands in the unholy and unrelenting crusade. Never-

theless, there stands the foundation still, as fair and whole as when it first was laid—not a crack in its side, nor a dint in its surface. “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.”

“O, where are kings and empires now,
Of old that went and came?
But, Lord, Thy Church is praying yet,
A thousand years the same.
Unshaken as eternal hills,
Immovable she stands,
A mountain that shall fill the earth,
A house not made with hands.”

IT IS THE PILLAR OF THE TRUTH. Again the curtain lifts, after having fallen upon the exhibition of the Church as the foundation of the truth; as the ark and fortress of the revelation given of God for the enlightenment and renewal of humanity; as under imperative obligation to careful custody of the hallowed deposit; and as having, through all the shocks of battle and of storm, kept the faith once delivered to the saints;—and now a stately, towering pillar is on the stage.

A pillar is for perpetuation and publication. In all ages and climes it has been in use for inscriptions deemed particularly worthy of general and lasting observation and transmission.

Always has truth been in existence; for truth is the mind of the everlasting God. It came into the world cotemporaneously with the world's capacity and necessity. It has been lodged in a becoming depository. It has been duly guarded and preserved. Neither force nor fraud has achieved its theft. There it is in all its integrity and purity. Yet, for ages it has been under lock and key. It has been largely a mystery. And truth in bonds and shadows is but of limited value. However safe from assault and robbery, while a mystery it is largely shorn of its worth. The accomplishment of its mission requires its dissemination, as well as its preservation. But the world, severed from the Divine image and love, feels no interest in its dissemination. Fettered with Satanic manacles, it would rather conceal or destroy all knowledge of God and godly things. It is unwilling to let loose

light, because it loves the darkness rather than light.

Finally, however, the fulness of time has come; and the Church rises aloft, amid the surrounding mists and oppositions, the herald of God. The mystery of Godliness is a mystery no longer. The advent of the Messiah is no longer only the dream of burdened ages, or the hope of weary saints, or the hidden kernel of prophecies and types. Yonder, above the summit of the mountain, beyond the clouds, within the range of every willing eye, wrought immovably into the enduring granite underneath, towers the splendid shaft.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time:
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

IT IS A PILLAR HEXAGON IN SHAPE. It has six sides. On these several sides, in luminous lines, is graven an abridgment of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God—an epitome of the mystery of Godliness: a summary of the truth of which the Church is the ground and pillar.

Looking successively at the several sides of this pillar, we see the mystery of Godliness gleaming with radiance, and we come to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

On the first side is written, "*God is manifest in the flesh.*" Deity and humanity are blended into one Personality. Deity and humanity have entered into a union which is never to know dissolution. Jehovah incarnates Himself in man; by the oblation of Himself magnifies His dishonored law; rises from the grave in demonstration of the perfection of the atonement He has made; and, henceforth, for ever wears man's form as the medium of His intercourse with the ransomed of the souls of men, and as a trophy of the triumph He has won in contest with the powers of darkness. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

On the second side is written, "*Is justified in the Spirit*" If

the term Spirit here indicates His own higher nature, in distinction from His inferior nature, then it declares that He carries Himself sublimely. His personal character is blameless. His execution of the Messianic office is beyond reproach. He fulfils all righteousness. There is no fault in Him. If the term indicates the third Person of Divine Being, then it declares that He is justified in all His announcements and claims, by the descent of the Spirit upon Him at the time of His baptism; by the intervention of the Spirit in His resurrection, declaring Him to be the Son of God with power; by the manifestation of the Spirit, in harmony with His previous promise, to His disciples on the day of Pentecost; by the potency of the Spirit in the prosperity of His word in that whereto He sends it; and by the witness of His Spirit with the spirits of those who believe on Him to the salvation of their souls. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

On the third side is written, "*Is seen of angels.*" He is the cynosure of celestial eyes, and the object of celestial interest and study. Supernal attendants announce His advent, greet His birth, keep Him company in the wilderness, minister refreshment to Him in Gethsemane, mount guard at His grave, report His resurrection, throning His upward path from Olivet to Heaven, and watch with earnest gaze all the revealments of His grace in the redemption of lapsed humanity: "things which the angels desire to look into."

On the fourth side is written, "*Is preached unto the Gentiles.*" Judaism assumes a monopoly of the Messiah. Paganism breathes its benedictions on the elite among its devotees. Philosophy calls only to a little, select company with its offers of elevation. Only the mystery of Godliness essays the discovery of its treasures to humanity in all its conditions and grades. Only the truth as it is in Jesus proposes to take in every child of man. "Go ye, therefore, into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

On the fifth side is written, "*Is believed on in the world.*" Coming to challenge the homage of the world, He appears with-

out form or comeliness. He is a Man of sorrows. He has not where to lay His head. No impressive insignia pioneer His way. His teachings are in antagonism to all carnal desires and hopes and inclinations. Those whom He summons are apprized that they risk contempt and death and infamy. Whatever of fame or influence He attracts seems to be unsought and, in some sense, without His wish ; for He is unwilling to be publicly recognized as the Messiah by the excitable and thoughtless populace. Yet, He is today the mightiest force in human history or society. The best and wisest of the race are students of His character and mission. The eye and ear and heart of mankind are largely His. The millions crown Him Lord of all. The tide is turning increasingly to His footstool. "The God of the whole earth shall He be called."

On the sixth side is written, "*Is received up into glory.*" In glory He cleaves the glowing skies, at the close of His personal ministry among men. In glory He takes the highest seat that Heaven affords. In glory he gathers all generations, from the beginning to the end of time, to the bar of irreversible judgment. In glory He binds His foes in chains beyond all breaking. In glory He flings open His own matchless mansions for an inalienable homestead of His friends. And in glory He is throned for all the cycles of immortal being, "so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and Manhood, are joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is One Christ, very God, and very Man." "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth : and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"Hail, Prince of Life, for ever hail!
Redeemer, Brother, Friend!
Though earth and time and life shall fail,
Thy praise shall never end."

An opinion obtains among some authorities that the magnifi-

cent abstract of the Gospel thus standing forth in illuminated colors upon the pillar of our study, is a stanza of an early Christian hymn ; and that, writing of the honor and responsibility of membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, the teeming lines leap to the lips of the rapt Apostle :

“ Manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen of angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory.”

Conning, as a sweet morsel, the glowing words, he recalls an exciting scene of which he was once a witness in Ephesus, to the youthful pastor of the Christian Church in that city, to whom he is addressing his present letter—that momentous crisis in his life when, irritated beyond measure with his denunciation of their idolatry, and his proclamation of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, an angry mob howled, “ Great is Diana of the Ephesians ! ”

Recalling this ever memorable scene, he sings, “ Great is the mystery of Godliness : God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.—O, Timothy, I well recollect the infatuation of the Ephesians, among whom you minister, with a lifeless, soulless deity ; I well recollect how they endeavored to silence my story of Jesus and the Resurrection with their insane shout, ‘ Great is our Diana ! ’ Preach louder than ever, ‘ Without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness which is made known in the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.’ Tell them, if they want something great and worthy in which to boast, and over which to shout, here it is : *the Mystery of Godliness !* Here is something great—great in conception, great in execution, great in import, great in reach, great in result, great in contrast with the worship of Diana as the worship of God in contrast with the worship of a worm. Tell them, Here is the glorious Gospel of the blessed God ; here is God, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.”

Verily, it is no wonder that, in the presence of this illustrious mystery, and in the presence of the conviction that the Christian Church is the pillar and ground of the truth, the educated, logical, polished, sedate, and self-suppressed pupil of Gamaliel, saved with the power of endless life, goes into ecstasy and his lips get to flaming with the Hallelujahs of his soul.

Verily, we have no need to apologize for our connection with the Christian Church. It is the grandest institution in the world today. It is the tabernacle of God among men. It is the Church of the Living God. It is the House of God. It is the Ground of the Truth. It is the Pillar of the Mystery of Godliness. It ought to be our heartiest glory and joy; for a place at its altars is the highest dignity and the supremest wealth within human reach until, sweeping in through the gates of pearl, washed in the blood of the Lamb, we hand in our certificates to the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn which are written in Heaven.

Verily, let our chief concern be that we burden not the Church with any necessity to apologize for allowing our presence at its hallowed altars. Let us walk worthy of the high vocation wherewith we are called. Let each of us be a church of the Living God, a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Let each of us be a house of God, Christ within us the hope of glory. Let each of us be a ground of the Mystery of Godliness, steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Let each of us be a pillar of the Truth, erect and unscathed amid all the antagonisms of earth and all the assaults of hell—a light-house, letting our light so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven: a miniature of Christ, always, like Him, going about doing good, and leaving footprints on the sands of time, stepping into which our successors, through following generations, shall walk even as He walked—

“Footprints which perhaps another,
Sailing o'er Life's solemn main,
A forlorn and ship-wrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.”

IX.

“I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth.”—GENESIS, 9 : 13.

The threatened deluge has come, achieved its mission of destruction, and withdrawn its desolating waters from off the face of the land. Thoroughly assured that the billows of death are stayed, Noah and his family have passed out of the ark within which they have been imprisoned for anxious, weary months. Appropriately, their first acts, after the termination of their captivity, are the erection of an altar and the offering of sacrifice—acts expressing their gratitude, and proclaiming their trust.

These utterances of devotion and praise are graciously accepted by the Infinite Sovereign, and occasion His announcement that humanity shall never suffer another such curse: that henceforth, during the present constitution of things, seed-time and harvest shall never fail. He then reiterates, in the interest of Noah and his sons, the blessing originally pronounced on Adam and Eve; renews the human right to dominion over the inferior animals; allows man the use of flesh, as well as fruits and grains, for food; delegates to society the authority to inflict death as the penalty of murder; and sends the solitary family forth to the repopulation of the wasted world.

Standing amid such surroundings—commissioned, after such experiences, to commence life again, what must have been the feelings and thoughts of the little band so recently rescued from the verge of death! What conviction of the exceeding sinfulness of sin! What a sense of the danger of disobedience to God! What consciousness of their indebtedness to Divine mercy! What sentiments of gratitude to Supreme Goodness! What purposes of consecration to the service of Him Whose kingdom ruleth over all! What fear lest similar judgments should hurtle through the sky! And, notwithstanding the recent Divine assurance, how this last apprehension subdues all other feelings and thoughts, and paralyzes all other convictions and purposes!

To lift the oppressive pall, and to impart the inspiration requisite to the accomplishment of the errand of their preservation, Jehovah enters into a special covenant with the trembling remnant of the race of Adam. A covenant is an agreement between two parties, binding each to the fulfilment of certain obligations, and securing to each certain rights. In the sacrifice offered on emergence from the ark, the rescued family has bound itself to the service of the Lord of all ; and He now binds Himself to its continuance and prosperity. Directly and visibly, this covenant is a guarantee against one form of disaster—a second annihilation of the race by a deluge ; but it clearly includes and reiterates all the benedictions proposed to the race from the commencement of its history.

This covenant is in the interest of the descendants of those with whom it is originally made. It embraces their *seed*. It embraces *us* and *ours*—our inheritance of its provisions being conditioned upon our observance of the terms in consideration of which its immunities were secured to our ancestors. Long as Omniscience discerns our presence before the altar, and our offering of sacrifice, so long will Omnipotence observe the Divine engagement for our well-being.

And this covenant is in the interest of the inferior animals. It affects favorably every living thing. It promises life, sustenance and weal, uninterrupted by universal catastrophe, to men and all subordinate creatures, throughout the whole period ordained for man's continuance amid terrestrial conditions.

This covenant with Noah is not simply an interesting record of days long gone by. It is not simply a relic to be fondled by the antiquarian. It is the charter of our life and happiness. Our very selves plead with us to stand by the solemn contract. The very beasts and fowls urge that we hold to the dower which is worth so much to them as well as to us.

In every eye there gleams Jehovah's security for the fulfilment of His portion of the compact. Perhaps, even during the interview, the clouds gather and the showers drop themselves on

the bosom of the earth. Noah and his sons startle at memories of other days. It was thus that the great waste of waters began which issued in such fearful havoc. They can not banish or conceal their uneasiness. It depicts itself in every feature of the face, and in every movement of the body. And the indulgent God sees their alarm and pities their trepidation. He stations them with their backs to the sun, fixing their gaze in an opposite direction upon the descending rain. He shows them the rainbow, caused by the rays of the sun shining through the falling drops upon the heavier cloud behind, and says, "I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."

The rainbow comes of the reflection of the rays of the sun from the descending drops of rain at a given angle to the eye of the observer. It is a variegated arch of reflected and refracted light. It is a demonstration that the clouds have not entirely driven the sun from the heavens, and that the sun is still shining somewhere.

Of course, the rainbow was not just then created, when Jehovah called the attention of Noah and his sons to it as the token of His covenant. It has appeared ever since the ordination of the present laws of the atmosphere and light, whenever the eye, the cloud and the sun have been in suitable relations to each other. The Hebrew of our text, strictly rendered, is, "My bow have I given in the cloud"—you see it now stretching across the sky. You have often seen it before. Henceforth it is to wear a new significance. After this it is to stand out, not only as a thing of beauty, but as a joy for ever. It shall be a token of a cove-

nant between Me and the land. Ever hence, when it shall move into your vision, remember, in the face of all fears and forebodings, that you have My assurance that the sea will never again dispossess the earth—that each, till time be no more, shall maintain its proper relation to the other, and that no illimitable ruin shall subvert the conditions of human existence.

The ring is not a new creation; but it speaks a new language as the husband places it upon the finger of his wife. Water is not a new creation; but it expresses a new idea as, sprinkled on the brow, it opens the door of the Church. Bread is not a new creation; but it feeds me as never before when I eat it as the symbol of the broken body of my Redeemer. The cross is not a new creation; but there attaches to it a new interest as I see the Son of God dying in its rugged arms as my Saviour. And the rainbow is not a new creation. It is an old phenomenon. But it is richer and sweeter than the freshest and rarest novelty, as I understand that He whose truth endureth for ever has baptized it as the pledge that His mercy shall be co-eternal with His truth.

The beauty of the rainbow is not its only charm or worth. It is an object of attraction and admiration as it spans the sky. Fiction and poetry have ample warrant for all the songs they sing in its honor. The man, as well as the child, must gaze entranced upon the brilliant arch. It is no wonder that the ancient Hebrews thought it the band binding earth and Heaven together.

“ Bridge of enchantment, for a moment hung
Between the tears of earth and smiles of Heaven,
Surely the sheen of jasper, sapphire, gold,
Flashes and burns along thy colors seven,
And to the lifted heart, the beaming eye
Reveals the splendor of the upper sky.

“ Whether as Northmen dream, the hero's soul
Enters its rest across thy brilliant height,
Or as the more melodious Greek hath told,
Iris descends with message of delight,
Or in the silence beautiful is heard
The still, small whisper of the Hebrew word :

“ Welcome for ever to a stormy world !
Dear in each sign and symbol of the past
As of the future ; for our Hope shall climb
Thy lustrous arch to realms unseen and vast.
Peace shall come down to us, and in thy light
God’s finger still the golden promise write !”

It is also of inestimable value as a reminder that God is merciful toward the children of men. First appearances may sometimes indicate severity upon His part ; but He ever thinketh thoughts of mercy toward the needy. The storm is only the shifting of scenery for the advent of the rainbow.

And it is of inestimable value as a reminder that God is mindful of His engagement. Sir William Napier, finding a child crying over a broken bowl, promised her the means to replace it if she would meet him the next day ; and he kept that appointment with a little waif of the streets, though, when its time came, it kept him from a lordly party. Yon rainbow is an enlarged and illuminated and perpetuated representation of God’s averment, as the deluge abated, “ I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth ;” and God is never false, though our impatience sometimes imagines He is.

And it is, further, of inestimable value as a reminder that God is *our* God. The promise is to the children, as well as to the fathers. We are legatees of this ancient will. Love and service entitle us, through Christ, to a large share in the fulness of God. The ark opens to furnish safety. The rainbow glows to furnish a guarantee of bliss without measure or end.

Its value is thus great and inestimable as a reminder that God never forgets those who commit themselves to His keeping in well-doing. Shadows may increase, and storms may gather, but no deluge will overflow us. No weapon will prosper to our destruction. His eye is on our necessity. He bears us on His heart.

Two friends, when separating from each other, fixed upon a certain star and agreed that in time to come, as they should look upon that star, they would think each of the other ; and thence-

forth the star was a sign to each of the thought of the other. A mother and son, parting, engaged to pray for each other at sunset; and thereafter the sunset was to each the sign of the continuing prayer of the other. And so thou, when thou seest God's bow in the cloud, think of God: for He is thinking of thee. A little boy, to whom a gentleman explained the significance of the rainbow, concerning the promise of God to bestow blessings on those who trust in Him, took it in pure faith as the Divine sign to himself. And thereafter, whenever he saw the bow in the cloud, he thought of God as signaling to him the compact made between them, and renewed his promise to the Father in Heaven that he would be a good boy. So should we regard it, not only as a sign to the whole world, but especially as a sign to ourselves individually, and renew our promises of faithfulness to Him who is ever faithful to us.

“Triumphal arch, that fillest the sky
When storms prepare to part,
I ask not proud Philosophy
To teach me what thou art.
Still seem, as to my childhood's sight,
A midway station given
For happy spirits to alight
Betwixt the earth and Heaven.
How glorious is thy girdle, cast
O'er mountain, tower and town,
Or mirrored in the ocean vast,
A thousand fathoms down.
As fresh in yon horizon dark,
As young thy beauties seem,
As when the eagle from the ark
First sported in thy beam:
For, faithful to its sacred page,
Heaven still rebuilds the span,
Nor lets the type grow pale with age
Which first spoke peace to man.”

X.

“I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”—GALATIANS, 6 : 17.

A life of aggressive, consistent, resolute faith in the Son of God is not an easy, quiet life. It has abundant compensations, and is full of inspiring and sustaining motives ; but it knows the cloudy hour and the rugged road.

And Satan is not its only adversary, nor the world its only antagonism. Frequently, its enemies are of its own household—its foes those whom kindred creed and danger and hope should bind together in strongest and sweetest fellowship. Too often the members of the visible body of Christ assault the character, misconstrue the intentions, and spoil the peace, of each other.

And the greatest and noblest of the brotherhood is no exception to the bitter experience. As Paul is contending for the faith, and endeavoring to have the Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, his call to the Apostolic office is called in question, and his right to represent the Founder of the Christian religion is debated and denied.

Declaring, in this letter to the Galatians, his mission and prerogatives, he dismisses the discussion with an earnest, tender solicitation : “From henceforth let no man trouble me : for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”

Marks are scars branded by a master on the body of a slave, as signs of the ownership of the one and of the subjection of the other. Some authorities allege that this same custom has obtained among some peoples for the designation of their soldiers ; and that idolaters sometimes burn on themselves the name of their god, as an evidence of their devotion, and as a means of safety. Paul, you remember, sometimes speaks of himself as a servant of Jesus Christ, sometimes as a soldier, and sometimes as a worshipper. So here he cries, Henceforth let no man dispute or doubt my relationship to Jesus Christ. I belong to Him. Is He Master? I am His servant. Is He God? I am His worshipper. Is He Cap-

tain? I am His soldier. I bear in my body His marks. These wales are the scars of scourges I have received for carrying His colors.

Association with influential personages is always more or less impressive. Ages ago it became a proverb that, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise : but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." Both for good and for ill, we are affected by those with whom we are much in intercourse. Even though not committed or practised in our immediate presence, both great crimes and great virtues impress themselves as indisputably as the flower-garden, while it is yet invisible, reports itself by its fragrance. It is a life-long experience that character attracts and colors character, not only directly and openly, but by methods defying all human analysis and perception.

English history informs us that it was once an English faith that the touch of a king was a cure for scrofula. Even today it is the faith of some that the conjuration of a powwow can effect the healing of disease. But, though this is falsehood or fancy, it is neither falsehood nor fancy that strong natures mould and wield weaker natures. A glance of Napoleon's eye can fire a French boy until he must be a soldier ; and a motion of his hand from the summit of a distant hill can recall his flying legions to the field. Once the stars seem to fight against Ferdinand. His authority and fortune are on the wane. Neither his bounties nor his promises can gather the necessary armies. Gonsalvo espouses his cause ; and men from every class rush to the standard of the gallant and generous captain, until it looks as if Spain is one immense camp. Hardly a cavalier is left at home ; and many expend their all that they may equip themselves in suitable style. Howard, in his philanthropic walks through the English hospitals and prisons, does more than carry comfort and healing to their suffering inmates. He formulates benevolence into a fashion. He kindles charity into a science. He lifts England out of its selfishness, and turns on humanity a stream of kindness which is now washing every shore. Sheridan meets his panic-stricken comrades

running like frightened hares, summons them to follow him back to the enemy, and transforms the defeat of Cedar Creek into one of the brightest triumphs of the war. Henry Clay, in 1848, is the guest of New Orleans. The largest hall in the city is crowded for his reception. Through the long address of welcome by Governor Moulton, one man never sees or hears the Governor. He never moves his eyes from Clay. When the exercises are over, he says to a friend of mine standing beside him, "Stranger, I never saw him before. I have ridden thirty miles today to see him. I would have given my plantation and sold my slaves sooner than not have seen him. I think he is the greatest man that ever lived. O, if he don't go to Heaven, I don't think I want to go."

Every page of biography blazes with the power of personality. All of us are today what we are largely because of the influence of others—an influence of which at the time giver and recipient were unconscious. Sometimes the influence drew down. Sometimes it lifted up. Sometimes it was a blessing. Sometimes it was a curse. Still, whether for weal or woe, it has entered into our present make-up—it is part of ourselves for ever.

Association with Jesus Christ is signally impressive. At this juncture I consider Him only as a man. I claim nothing for Him in the way of Godhead. I intimate nothing as to the cause or the manner of His potency among other men. I only insist that, of all who ever wore the raiment of humanity, He has cut in humanity the largest likeness of Himself. Of all, He has been fullest of that peculiar force which awes and fascinates and holds and thrills and transforms others.

Study Him during His dwelling in the flesh in Judea. Aristocracy bends at His feet. Lowliness hastens into his presence. Culture feels His attraction. Ignorance hears him gladly. Poverty leaps to follow Him. Wealth runs to meet Him. The widest extremes of heart and mind and society are drawn together within the circle of His mighty magnetism; and asceticism in James, caution in Nicodemus, dash in Peter, devotion in John, dulness in Philip, and skepticism in Thomas, all crowd

around Him, imbibe His spirit, take on His marks, tie themselves to His person, and turn to follow Him, without deviation, wherever He leads the way.

Study Him in all the following centuries. More than eighteen hundred years have passed since He went from Olivet to Heaven. Multitudes beyond computation have rallied to His standard and worn His name. They have come from all the ages, lived in all the countries, and spoken all the languages. They have been unlike in birth, in circumstance, in education, in employment, and in preference. They have, however, become assimilated in aspiration and character and pursuit—calling Jesus their Lord; enthroning Him in their hearts, the hope of glory; gathering themselves into companies for the manifestation of His praise; living on promises fragrant with His breath; and showing their loyalty by a cheerful sacrifice of all that the world holds dearest.

Study Him today. Go into city or country, into lane or street, into near or remote neighborhoods. Go into cottage or mansion, into hospital or prison, into shop or store. Go into kitchen or parlor, into school or senate. Mingle with high or low, with rich or poor, with sick or well. Visit with the happy or sad, with the strong or weak, with the young or old. Wherever you look, you find the marks of Jesus. While differing in class and color and condition, they are one in adoration and love and service of the Man of Bethlehem.

Surely, no such virtue has ever gone forth from any other man. To behold Him with eye or faith, is to fall in love with Him. To hear Him, is to follow Him. To know Him, is to be His.

“O, the joy of knowing Jesus!
It is shining on my soul:
I am having His salvation,
And the power that makes me whole.”

There is an immortal fragrance about His person. The power of His presence is not a mere legend or memory or tradition of the past. He is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

What He has been He is and will always be. What has come of intimacy with Him will always come of intimacy with Him. Give Him the chance, and He will attract humanity. Lift Him up, and He will draw all men unto Him. Make way for Him, and the hardest nature will blossom into some of His sweetness, and the ugliest will take on some of His beauty, and the weakest will wear some of His strength.

Association with Jesus Christ leads us into the conviction of His Divinity. Discussing the matchless influence of the Son of Mary, I have not, so far, discussed the cause or the manner of His influence. I have considered Him merely as I might have considered any human being of notable power among his fellow-beings—merely as I have studied Bonaparte, and Gonsalvo, and Howard, and Sheridan, and Clay, and as I might have studied hundreds of others.

It is not an exhaustive and satisfying study. It is not conceivable that such marvellous and peculiar force as has come from contact with Him, during and since His dwelling incarnate in Judea, is merely human.

I have conceded and maintain the capacity of man to affect and impress man. History teems with the testimony. Humanity can enduringly and mightily move humanity. The influence of the influential goes beyond his personal presence, and outlasts his stay on earth. Being dead, he still speaketh—speaketh in the books he has bequeathed, in the feelings he has inspired, in the thoughts he has kindled, in the words he has left ringing in the ears of his generation, and in the works which still tell of his genius and industry. Abel is still speaking in his faith, and David in his songs, and Paul in his writings. Shufu is still speaking in the Egyptian pyramids, and Michael Angelo in the temple of St. Peter, and Guttenberg in the printing-press, and Washington in the construction and Lincoln in the reconstruction of American nationality.

Insisting, however, on man's might with man, and insisting on the possibility of that might holding sway through crowding

centuries, and through lands he never saw, have we adequately apprehended and measured the influence of Jesus Christ?

Let human influence extend and perpetuate itself as it may, it is ever less operative and perceptible as time hastens on its course. That of Jesus Christ encounters neither blight nor diminution. Ages can not dim it. Familiarity can not impair it. Novelty can not supplant it. Its kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

Let human influence extend and perpetuate itself as it may, it flows along narrow channels. Heroism only acts on heroes. Love only moves lovers. Scholarship only stirs scholars. That of Jesus Christ has freedom of no one course. It has hold not merely on the active or the contemplative, or on the cultured or the ignorant, or on the rich or the poor ; but its streams the whole creation reach.

Let human influence extend and perpetuate itself as it may, it is of limited efficiency within the sphere of the heart. It can fashion habits, or mould manners, or start styles ; but how little it can do with the soul. That of Jesus Christ has here its peculiar place and potency. It can quicken dead souls. It can transform the earthly into the heavenly. It can turn the old man into the new man. Medea is fabled to have brought Æson back out of the decrepitude of age into the puissance of youth, by drawing the blood from his veins and pouring in the juices of invigorating herbs. But it is no fable that Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come by Him to God. It is no fable that, if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature, old things having passed away, and all things having become new. It is no fable, it is a necessary conclusion, that such a man as Jesus Christ must be more than man ; and that, being more than man, He must be all He claims, God over all, blessed for ever more.

Association with Jesus Christ accomplishes not only an inward experience, but also an outward expression. It can be observed by others, as well as realized by ourselves.

A bliss the world knows nothing of is theirs who have come

into intimacy with the Son of God. It is a fact beyond doubt. It is a joy, better than gold, brighter than rubies, sweeter than honey or the honey-comb. It is Heaven begun below—crowding and pervading and thrilling the soul, until the soul can ask no greater good, but Heaven.

“ O that I now the rest might know,
Believe, and enter in :
Now, Saviour, now the power bestow,
And let me cease from sin.”

But there is also an external disclosure of the brothers and sisters of Immanuel—a revelation to the children of the world of the children of God. Their conversation is in Heaven. They have the mind of Christ. They walk even as He walked.

Discovering, in their carriage and fortune, that they are disciples of Christ, they also show their discipleship in the contempt or indifference or opposition which they provoke from the enemies of Christ. This contempt or indifference or opposition is a mark of their discipleship.

Some have borne His marks in the endurance of chain and fire and sword, because of their confession and service of their crucified Master and Redeemer. Some have borne His marks in the loss of business and home and society, because of their love and worship of their Saviour and Sovereign. Giovanni Berso is a young Italian. He accepts the Gospel, and, shortly afterward, visits his dying mother, who has learned of his renunciation of Romanism. Taking his hand, she says, “ You love your mother, do you not ? ” He replies, “ More than I can express.” She says, “ I am dying. Promise me that you will do what I ask ; and before you answer me, think of it as the last request of your dying mother.” He replies, “ What is it ? I will do all that it is in my power to do for you.” She says, “ No ! I do not want a conditional promise. Assure me that you will do what I ask.” He replies, “ I can only repeat that I will do all in my power.” She says, “ Very well. Tomorrow morning I will tell you what I expect.” The next morning she says, “ The priest is coming

in an hour, to give me the communion. I ask, as my last request, that you will recite the prayers with me." He is cut to the heart, and replies, "O mother, you know I can not do that." She says, "Then go away, and do not appear here again," and turns her face to the wall. He replies, "O my mother, ask for all I have: ask for my blood, and you shall have it; but do not ask me to deny my Saviour in offering to creatures the worship which belongs only to Him." She says, "Go; you are no longer my son." He wanders about all day, and returns at evening, entering his mother's room with great grief. She holds out her hand, and says, "Be my son: I will respect your convictions, and you will respect mine. Stay with me, and close my eyes."

In our land and time, we may not be called upon to demonstrate our discipleship by the endurance of such denial and pain as have befallen the saints of other lands and times. We may not be called upon to prove our loyalty to the Lord by marks of suffering in our body or in our condition. We will, however, carry such marks of our high and holy and honorable relation as can be known by all men. We will wear the Name which is above every name where it can be seen by all who see us.

Association with Jesus Christ works resemblance among all who are His associates. All who are His bearing His impression, all must bear the same impression. Looking like Him, they must look like each other. As far as we have knowledge of them, there could not be greater difference between two men than there is between John and Peter. But, as they appear before the Sanhedrim, its members discern in them one spirit, and discern in that spirit the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, there are marked differences in the entire company of disciples; but still you can not help observing their likeness to Jesus Christ, and their moral likeness to each other.

Look at the Christian Church in all ages and countries and denominations, made up of converts of all classes and conditions and opportunities; and how manifest it is that its members are members one of another, and all members of the body of Jesus

Christ. Bishop Hamline is presiding at a session of the Ohio Conference, and is present at its Sabbath morning Love-feast. Gladness feasts all souls. A little colored boy rises to speak. Down go all heads at his presumption in occupying the floor when so many eminent saints are waiting for opportunity. To make matters worse, he becomes confused, and can only shout, "Sugar, sugar, sugar," until he is sung to his seat. It looks as if he has killed a good meeting. But Bishop Hamline says, "I am thinking of the uniformity there is among the people of God in their experience of Divine grace, and in their relation of their experience. David is a gifted man. He has had the best education of his times ; has the endowment of poetry ; and has the inspiration of the Divine Spirit ; but when he endeavors to tell the riches of religion, he can only say, "It is sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb." Here is a little colored boy, who was born a slave. He has neither education, nor gift, nor poetry ; but he has the religion that David had, and he tells his experience in about David's style."

There is diversity ; but it is the diversity which is in unity. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in all. The glory which the Father has given the Son, the Son has given His followers, and they are one, even as the Father and the Son are one : and thus of Him the whole family in Heaven and in earth is named.

Claiming that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, let us be sure that we have His marks within : for, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

Claiming that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, let us have His marks without : for, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Claiming that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, let us not think it strange that we have His marks which come through the enmity of the world : for we have His word, "Because ye are not

of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Claiming that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, let His marks be visible. Let all we meet, whether they approve us or condemn us, take knowledge of us that we have been with Him and learned of Him.

Claiming that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, let us glory in His marks, no matter with what pains they have been won. The graduate exultingly hangs up his diploma for inspection. The mason gladly parades his regalia. The soldier proudly shows his scars. Lafayette, struck with a ball at Germantown, exclaims, "I prize this wound as the most valuable honor." So Paul uncovers the scourges he has received in the service of the Captain of his salvation as badges of his devotion and service, and as heralds of his crown of righteousness. Would that we all were more covetous of the marks of the Lord Jesus, and had more of them to show! They bestow a better diploma than any college. They give a brighter regalia than any lodge. They tell of a grander triumph than any won in any worldly warfare. They proclaim us now princes among the sons of men; and, walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, they uplift us, beyond the flash of ducal coronet, and beyond the gleam of royal diamond, into the company of nobles who, through tribulation, have gone up to be without fault before the throne of God.

XI.

“ And she said unto him, Give me a blessing : for thou hast given me a south land ; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.”—JUDGES, 1:15.

About seven miles south of Hebron, in among the mountains, is Debir, a royal city of the Canaanites, which was captured by Joshua in his first campaign for the subjugation of the land promised to Israel. Before this capture, and by the Canaanites, it was called Kirjath-sepher, meaning “Book-town;” and from this fact some authorities have inferred the existence of letters and manuscripts in that region prior to the Israelitish conquest. As is well known, the Phoenicians are credited with the formation and use, at a very early period, of those alphabetical characters which have inspired and shaped the written language of all other peoples. By no means is it improbable that these Phoenicians, who were largely itinerant merchants, had brought some of their literature into this region, and left a library of palm-leaves or skins in this town, thus giving it the name of “Book-town.”

By some it has been assumed that the Israelites had no written language until long after the Exodus; and that therefore Moses could not have inscribed the Law on tables of stone, as is claimed in the Pentateuch. But it is known that the Phoenicians had their trading stations close to Goshen, the settlement of the Israelites, at least as early as that settlement; and, says Watson, in his “Exposition of Judges,” “What is more likely than that the Hebrews, who spoke a language akin to the Phoenicians, should have shared the discovery of letters almost from the first, and practiced the art of writing in the days of their favor with the monarchs of the Nile Valley?”

Conceding that, during the dark, hard, long night of their servitude, the Israelites could have no heart or time for the cultivation of literature, Moses, full of his Divine mission, would continue its study and recognize its worth in prosecution; and, even if he did not, God was all the while preparing him for the

mighty work to which he was ordained. For God works all things into His sovereign plans, employing both sacred and secular agencies in the accomplishment of His purposes, and making both the friendship and the wrath of man to praise Him. Quoting Watson again, "Egyptians and Phoenicians have their share in originating that culture which mingles its stream with sacred revelation and religion. As, long afterwards, there came the printing-press, a product of human skill and science, filling Europe with the doctrine and spirit of the Reformation, so human genius and invention are levied on for the publication of the Law given through Moses."

God is God over all. His providence includes and uses all human actions and gifts ; and they are no friends of God who denounce or discard any thing which can be subservient to the advancement of His kingdom and the glorification of His name in the world. The devil has no rights which God is bound to respect ; and it is our duty, as co-workers together with God, to lay hold of every art and science and treasure which is accessible, and make it give Him tribute. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;" and differences between genuine Christianity and genuine Science are never real and vital—they are only misconstructions of both by those who do not know enough of either to discuss them. What God hath joined together let not ignorance put assunder ; and He enjoins both culture and grace, and requires of each that it sanctify the Lord God in its heart, and give its answer to every question of its claim with meekness and fear.

Addressing ourselves again to the immediate history, we are in the midst of the sights and the sounds of war. Apparently, Debir, or Kirjath-sepher, is once more in the possession of the Canaanites, its former possessors ; and its capture is not only a discredit, but also a constant and serious menace to Israel. For the honor and safety of Israel, it must be reconquered.

Caleb is in command of the proposed campaign ; and, to arouse the young men of the nation to action and courage, he offers his daughter Achsah as a prize to whoever will take the

stronghold. It certainly seems to us a strange bounty with which to invite enlistment and enterprise ; but the maiden is not reported to have put in any demurrer. By the custom of the times, a husband was a matter of necessity—a woman without one being not only in a kind of disgrace, but also faring particularly hard, when the lot of all women was much harder than it is since the Gospel has worked its wonderful social revolution. A husband was also a matter of patriotism—women as well as men exulting in the covenant which guaranteed to the seed of Abraham so splendid a future, and longing to lend a hand to the promised triumph when Canaan should sit as queen among all the peoples of the world. And a husband was a matter of religion—the women being all anxious to be the mother of the Messiah Who, according to their hopes, might be born any day, of any daughter of the sacred commonwealth.

Excuse, however, or palliate, as we may, it seems to us a great humiliation and wrong for a maiden to be offered for marriage in the market, or to wait until some man, who might be brave enough and yet lack every element of a good husband, should win her hand by some lucky stroke. Nevertheless, many a Jewish maiden drew a first-class prize in the matrimonial lottery, made a noble mother, and even won renown in public places. We must not forget, however, that no true woman can justify herself for the neglect of those duties which, in the domestic economy, are peculiarly hers, by any renown she may gain in other scenes or works of life. No law should be in the way of her being or doing all which it is in her to be and do ; but no law can warrant her in ceasing to be a woman or to do a woman's work. She may be all she can ; but she must, with all she may be, be what she must. " We," says Watson again, " perhaps are in sight of an age when the injustice done to women may be replaced by an injustice they do to themselves. Liberty is their right, but the old duties remain as great as ever. Without a very keen sense of Christian honor and obligation among women, their enfranchisement will be the loss of what has held society together, and made

nations strong." Women who are trying to not be women, are the worst foes women have to encounter on their way to the recognition they ought to have. A man has no right to liberty who will not be a man ; and a woman has no right to liberty who is unwilling to be a woman.

Once more : with all our deprecation of Achsah's fortune in being auctioneered to the highest bidder, was it any more degrading than the marriages which women make for themselves who choose gold rather than goodness, and sell out for jewels rather than for worth ? Is it not every way better and holier to wait unmarried until called home to the bridal of the skies, than to cast herself at the head of every passing dunce or lout or rascal, and be known as the wife of a creature who is only a man in form ? O, it is better and holier every way than to be of those told of by the poet who,

" Furbelowed and flounced around,
With feet too delicate to touch the ground,
Stretch the neck, and roll the eager eye,
And sigh for every fool that flutters by."

Caleb's daughter, Achsah, is won by a young man named Othniel. By what particular exploit he distinguished himself, we are not informed ; but he so carried himself as to be adjudged the prize, and Achsah becomes his wife. Evidently she has had previous acquaintance with him, for he is her cousin ; and it may be that she hoped for just such an outcome, by giving him her blessing as he went forth on the march, and all the while praying for his safety and victory. It is manifest, at all events ; that she fully accepted the outcome, and gave herself diligently to meet all its responsibilities. Caleb, her father, seems to have given her a farm as a marriage portion. No doubt it is in many respects desirable ; but it is not well watered ; and she asks him to amend this defect by adding a field with suitable springs of water : thus showing her good judgment in farms, and her wish to be a good helpmeet to her husband.

Every good wife desires to be a good helpmeet to her husband. Achsah, becoming the wife of Othniel, does not begin

married life by assuming the air and dress and style of a millionaire ; or by demanding a fine house ; or by looking for servants ; or by prattling about society ; or by setting up for a doll, or gadder, or loungeur : but she goes to work to help her husband to make a home and a living. Born well, and raised well, she has not been reared in ignorance and idleness ; and she has evidently improved her opportunities, and is ready to advise Othniel at the outset, and willing to carry her share of all necessary burdens. Being Caleb's daughter, I have no doubt that she has had all the advantages of her father's means and standing, and has all the accomplishments of the most fortunate young women of the land. But she has also been trained to work—and not only to work, but to work wisely. Where the husband is all that he should be, and the wife is all that she should be, before either has any right to get married, and both lay themselves out to do their utmost, marriage is never a failure. But, that a wife may be indeed a helpmeet to her husband, she must as a maiden have due instruction and preparation by her parents ; and, as a wife, she must have due deference and encouragement from her husband. Only by due acquaintance with his business can she have due interest in it ; and only by due interest in it can she have due part in its success either by economy, or by plan, or by toil.

Happy home, where husband and wife begin its establishment on the same mental and moral plane, and grow on together with equal pace, as the years go by—neither lagging behind the other !

Hapless home, where one gains, and the other loses ; where one has different interests and tastes from the other ; and where one has any secrets from the other !

Home is meant to be the best place on earth. It is meant to be the type of the heavenly home. And husband and wife must both work together to make home what it is meant to be, neither disparaging nor ignoring the other.

Home ! Let it have the upper room in the care and love and toil of its every member. Let each make it so full of brightness and sweetness that none will get away from within its magic ring ;

for, if any one does not like to stay at home, it is generally because it is not much of a home for which to stay.

Home ! Soon enough there will be empty seats at its fire-side and table. Soon enough its best and dearest will have been carried out of its doors, never to enter them again. Therefore, while we are still together, let us each so carry ourself to the others that, when any are gone, we who are left may have no regrets for any lack or unkindness we have done them. And when at last the old home is entirely dismantled on earth, may it be re-established in Heaven—not one absent from its immortal blessedness.

“ Good-night, good-night, to every one :
Be each heart freed from care :
May every one now seek his home,
And find contentment there.”

XII.

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into Heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.”—LUKE, 2:15.

A perusal of the Sacred Volume calls our attention to two places within the boundaries of the “Holy Land” bearing the name of Bethlehem—one belonging to the tribe of Judah, and the other belonging to the tribe of Zebulun. About the former gathers the interest of the Christian world. It is the Bethlehem which sits in the highest seat of the affections and thoughts of the men and women who delight in bowing at the name of Jesus. A competent authority says “It is five miles south of Jerusalem, and a little to the right of the road to Hebron : and occupies part of the sides and summit of a narrow ridge, shooting out eastward from the central chain of Judean mountains, and breaking down into deep valleys on the east, north and south. Beneath the village, the steep slopes are carefully terraced, and these terraces sweep in graceful curves around the ridge from top to bottom. In the valleys below, and on a little plain to the eastward, are some cornfields, whose fertility, doubtless, gave the place its name, *Beth-lehem*, ‘house of bread;’ while the dense foliage of the olives and fig-trees ranged in stately rows along the hill sides, and the glistening leaves of the vines that hang in festoons over the terrace banks, serve to remind us, amid the desolations of the whole land, and especially in contrast with the painful barrenness of the neighboring desert, that this little district is still *Ephrath*, ‘the fruitful.’ Immediately beyond these fields and terraced gardens is ‘the wilderness of Judea.’ It is in full view from the heights of Bethlehem. White limestone hills thrown confusedly together, with deep ravines winding in and out among them, constitute its chief features. Not a solitary tree, or shrub, or tuft of green grass, is anywhere to be seen. The village contains about

five hundred houses. The streets are narrow and crooked ; but, being here and there arched over, and having the rude balconies of the quaint houses projecting irregularly along their sides, they have a picturesque mediæval look about them."

About foretelling the moral pre-eminence of Bethlehem among the villages of earth, and His coming, Whose birth is to make it illustrious in all eternity as well as all time, Micah describes it as insignificant and unimportant among the thousands of Judah. And it was not particularly noteworthy among the towns of that country for character or occurrences or scenery. And now, following the authority already cited, "there is nothing in the village itself, or the surrounding scenery, to attract attention, if we except the shrines which superstition has erected over the sites of apocryphal holy places."

But a careful examination of the chronicles of the village discloses, around and within its precincts, the existence of some interesting features, and the occurrence of some memorable events.

A mile to the north, on the direct road from Jerusalem to Bethel, is a little building which to this day indicates the burial place of Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, and the prospect of whose obtainment made fourteen years of servitude seem only a few days.

In one of those cornfields below the village, Ruth, whose generous devotion to her mother-in-law has made her name a synonym of obedience and virtue, gleaned for herself and the stricken Naomi. It may have been on one of those threshing-floors which are still visible that she spent that night at the feet of Boaz. And it is certain that in this locality occurred the train of circumstances which eventuated in her marriage to Boaz—the marriage which blended Gentile and Jew into one blood, and gave to humanity the God-man, Jesus of Bethlehem, in whose honor and memory we keep our Christmas.

In this neighborhood, too, David was born, and kept his father's sheep, and slew bear and lion in their defense. Amid the wild mountaineers of this region he was trained to handle the sling

so effectively; and in the awfulness and grandeur of these gorges breaking toward the Dead Sea, and in the loneliness of yon desert, he gathered materials for those lyrics with which he has enriched the world—going forth under the Divine direction, from these humble and solitary scenes, to reach that sublime summit in the annals of earth “where shine the few immortal names which are not born to die.”

In the light, however, of the history we are now considering, all the occurrences and places just mentioned pale into insignificance. Beyond them the stream of Time has steadily passed; and long sweeps of years have rolled by since the burial of Rachel, and the marriage of Ruth, and the marvels of David.

In the valley adjoining the town on the northeast—the valley where babbled the brook for whose refreshing waters David longed so earnestly when “in the holds of Adullam,” and for which three of his mighty men hazarded their lives—some shepherds are watching their flocks by night, when suddenly strange sounds startle their ears. Looking upward, they see strange sights: “And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into Heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.”

And what strange thing has come to pass? What has occurred, so momentous as to call for the birth of an additional star in the expanse above, and for the crowding of the galleries of

the atmosphere with bands of angels, and for the delegation of celestial messengers to carry the tidings?

What has occurred? Jesus is born into the human family. The Seed of woman, Who is to bruise the serpent's head, is come. The Seed of Abraham, in Whom all are to be blessed, is come. The Shiloh, unto Whom the gathering of the people is to be, is come. The long hoped-for Child, the long promised Son, Whose Name is to be Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, on Whose shoulders is to rest the government of the universe, and of Whose kingdom there is to be no end, is come—the Desire of all nations, the Redeemer of His people from their sins.

Who disputes the wonderfulness of the occurrence, or doubts that it was worthy of the journey and search of those shepherds on that morning of immortal memory? It is worthy of perpetual quest and study. It is not our fortune to be of those shepherds, wending their way from the sheep-cote to the manger. It is not possible, during this service, for us to make a bodily pilgrimage to the spot whither they turned their adoring steps. Centuries are between them and us. Hundreds of leagues part us from the sacred spot. Nevertheless, we can all go in mind. In the vehicle of thought we can make the pilgrimage while we tarry here a little longer. There is a sense in which even now we can say to each other, in all seriousness, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

Thus attempting the excursion, and reaching its terminus, we see a wonderful Person. A babe—a Divine babe—is lying in that manger. In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He is the everlasting Jehovah, the Author of all created being, the Conservator of all existence, the Governor of all worlds. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords: God over all, blessed for ever more. Inalienably attaching to Him are all Divine attributes; and belonging to Him are all Divine designations; and owning His summons are all Divine prerogatives.

But He is a veritable babe. That little one is a veritable human being in infancy. He has a human body. He has a human soul. He has human possibilities of enjoyment and suffering. He eats, drinks, grows. He is very man. He is one like unto us. He is our kinsman.

Divine and human nature are mysteriously, but really, united in that infant of a day. Godhead and manhood are both together in that organism. I can not explain the manner of their junction, any more than I can explain that of my own body and soul; but in some manner God and man enter into the makeup of that single personality—the Creator, and the creature: the Sovereign, and the subject: the Eternal, and the temporal: the Infinite, and the finite: the Impassible, and the suffering. Verily, great is the mystery of Godliness!

We see a wonderful exhibition of benignity. Men are not likely to carry themselves kindly beneath a burden of unprovoked injury and insult; and, especially, to endure without resentment long, successive years of provocation; and, more especially, to rush in on an offender, in the midst of his onsets, with offers of forgiveness and friendship—with overtures of reconciliation.

Neither has God heretofore in His administration, so far as we have access to its records, appeared to have much toleration for offenders against His Government. The disloyal angels were ejected from the skies. The disobedient progenitors of the human race were excluded from Edenic bliss. The evil-minded mockers of the antediluvian age were hurled from the chances of probation by the deluge which they had mocked. The Egyptian oppressors of Israel were engulfed in the depths of the Red Sea. And the murmuring descendants of Abraham were entombed in the fastnesses of the wilderness. Thus History, whatever may have been the forecasts of Prophecy, kindled no expectations that He,—the Lord of all,—so holy in all His ways, and so righteous in all His works, would mercifully interpose in behalf of disloyal mankind.

Nevertheless, His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His

ways as our ways. For centuries He has been arranging for human redemption ; and His preparations are now complete. The due time has come ; and Bethlehem is all astir, because " God hath sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. . . . We see Jesus made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."

And we see a wonderful fulfilment of Prophecy. It has been foretold that " the Seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head ;" and here He lies in His manger. It has been foretold that in Abraham shall " all the families of the earth be blessed ;" and here is his long-hoped for Son, Whose day the patriarch saw afar off. It has been foretold that " the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until the Shiloh shall come ;" and here, just before the overthrow of Judah's supremacy, is the Shiloh unto Whom " the gathering of the people " is to be. It has been foretold that the Messiah shall issue from the loins of David ; and, though the crown has long since fallen from his brow, and the insignia of royalty have long since passed from his family, pointing to this babe, from between the parted skies, cherubic voices are chanting, " Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." It has been foretold that a virgin shall be His mother ; and, informed of her Divinely-assigned office, the chosen Mary sings, " My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour." It has been foretold that Bethlehem shall be the scene of the matchless birth ; and, while different places vie with each other for the honor of the nativity of different human celebrities, this little town is renowned through earth and Heaven as the birthplace of Him Who " is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Verily, " the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy."

We see a beginning of a wonderful outcome. Although the

birth of a babe is a common, and to many an insignificant, occurrence, momentous concomitants and consequences connect themselves with the advent of this child into the human family. Because of His coming, the outraged authority of the Supreme Being is acknowledged and adored and declared, His government is honored, and His law is satisfied. Amnesty is extended to our fallen and offending race ; forgiveness and restoration are possible to every individual sinner ; and salvation and all its benedictions are within easy reach of all the wretched children of want. Appropriating this salvation, the disobedient are forgiven ; and the forgiven are created into newness of life ; and the newborn are given sonship to God. Given sonship to God, they are assured direction in perplexity, and help in impotence, and peace in tribulation, and support in the swellings of the river of death, and resurrection to "glory and honor and immortality."

Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown this Babe of Bethlehem the Lord of all. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us," that, by the oblation of His only-begotten Son, we, too, are come to be "the sons of God ;" and wonder not that the record of the amazing bestowment should be called "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God : " for, if its announcements are not "glad tidings," no ear has ever greeted glad tidings ; and if its news are not "good news," no messenger has ever told good news.

As soon as the shepherds, in whose company we have been making this hour's journey to the city of David, heard that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, they went in search of Him—making business and convenience and pleasure all subservient to the great pursuit. And so should all the children of men, because it was for all the children of men that "the Word was made flesh." First informed of His advent, first told of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," we ought to hasten into His presence. We ought to proffer Him our heart's richest adoration. We ought to render Him our life's uttermost devotion. We ought to forsake all else and follow Him.

But it is not needful that we should go in the body to Bethlehem. It is no easier now to find Him there than elsewhere. It is now Bethlehem the world over. From every place of human life we now have access to the Lord's Anointed. Whenever and wherever we cease from evil, and do good, and lay ourselves on His altar, and make mention of His righteousness, and show forth His praise, then and there we find Him; and then and there He manifests Himself unto us as He does not unto the world; and then and there we know "the joy of knowing Jesus."

Even by us, far away from the scene of its occurrence, His birthday is worthy of grateful commemoration; for to us has the word of His salvation come. Gratefully let us celebrate it every time it recurs. Let us celebrate it as long as we live, hallowing it with gifts—with gifts to our friends, with gifts to the poor, and especially with gifts of ourselves to Him who gave Himself to us.

From our childhood we have all heard of the "yule-log." It was a large block of wood, brought into the house with great ceremony on Christmas Eve, laid in the fire-place, and lighted with a brand of the last Christmas Eve's log which, at the close of the festivities, had been carefully put away: the ceremony being meant to indicate that the Christmas fire never burns out. Often as the day comes and passes, let us not dismiss with its passage the actions and sentiments which it develops; but each Christmas let us cultivate feelings and thoughts which we shall cherish and show through all intervening days, and employ them as kindling for the flames of charity and gratitude when the next hallowed anniversary shall arrive, and so make our Christmas last all the year. And when at last it comes to us no more amid mortal scenes, may we have gone to keep it in the home of the glorified, where, with all with whom we have kept it here,

"At the name of Jesus bowing,
Falling prostrate at His feet,
King of kings, in Heaven, we'll crown Him,
When our journey is complete."

XIII.

“Then took he Him up in his arms.”—LUKE, 2: 28.

“And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, [when Jesus was born,] whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.” As, according to his habit, he was one day worshipping in the Temple, Jesus, being about six weeks old, was brought in by His parents, that He might be duly set apart as the Lord’s. Simeon took the Babe in his arms, thus declaring his gladness at the coming of Him Who was to save His people from their sins, and also hailing the little Child to all the privileges of the Church. The carriage of this venerable saint toward this Babe of few days and humble parentage is not without important suggestions to us.

Attendance upon the House of God is an obligation which can not be innocently or safely forgotten. Calling us to presence at its altars, its Divine Builder declares, “I will glorify the House of My glory—I will distinguish it with a signal distinction.” Encouraging us to the employment of all its ordinances, He declares, “In all places where I record My Name, I will come unto thee, and bless thee—I will bless thee, meeting Me in My House, no matter how common its appointments, nor how humble its attendants, nor how plain its services.” Furnishing us an example, while incarnate among men, He failed not in going to synagogue and Temple as He had opportunity: though He had no need to do so for His own edification, and though synagogue and Temple were in the charge of unworthy priests.

Inspired to represent the Divine mind to the early Christians, Paul admonishes them, both in practice and in precept, not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. And the same admonition applies to us, though dangers should alarm, or fatigue should plead for our absence, or visitors should tax our time.

None is so aged, or so learned, or so spiritually minded, as to be exempt from the obligation ; for Simeon was advanced in life, and devout, and the Holy Ghost was upon him. The Divine counsel decreed the appearance of Jesus in the Temple on that particular occasion ; and had Simeon been absent, no matter with what justification, he would have missed that particular sight of the Consolation of Israel for which he had so long been waiting. The grace which you need for comfort or deliverance or preparation in some nearing emergency, may be ordained for communication at the very service from which you absent yourself. “ How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house : they will be still praising Thee ”—they will always be seeing new beauties, and singing new songs of thanksgiving.

Children, even from their infancy, ought to be carried to the House of God, that they may become accustomed to attendance there ; that they may be ready for even the first spiritual impressions and leadings which it may please the Lord to pour upon their hearts ; and that the parents may not be hindered in their own growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Children, while infants, ought to be baptized. They are thus commended to the favor and keeping of the God of all grace. They are thus devoted to the service and use of Him in Whose hands their breath is, and Whose are all their ways. And they thus, as their reason dawns, recognize that they belong to God, through the covenant of their parents ; and their parents recognize their obligations to inform them of the covenant made in their behalf, and to train them—not merely to teach them, but to *train* them, into the fulfilment of all the obligations of that covenant.

Children, while young, ought to be brought into the Church. Age has no rightful monopoly of membership in the Church of Christ. The promise is to the children as well as to their parents. And I believe that if the Church and the parents would do their part, gathering the children into the fold of the Great Shepherd,

and giving them proper cultivation, the average of Church character would in a generation be highly advanced, and the millennium hurried up hundreds or thousands of years. And I farther believe that the millennium will come, not by angling in spots for a few old sinners once a year, but by capturing the children for Christ as soon as they are born, and holding them for Christ so steadily and tightly that they shall fear the Lord from the beginning, and never know a subsequent hour in which they are away from their Lord and Lover.

Being grafted into Christ—being cut out of a fallen nature and inserted in Christ, as a shoot is cut out of one tree and inserted in another, is becoming a Christian; for, “if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature.” A certain season is better than other seasons for grafting a scion into a foreign stock. It may, with great labor and pains, be done at other seasons; but, outside of the proper season it will ordinarily be a failure. In the right season, it will, in the majority of instances, be a success. Childhood is pre-eminently the season for fixing humanity in Christ; for it has pre-eminently that capacity and readiness of clinging to another which, touched by the Holy Spirit, is faith in Christ.

Helping childhood into Christ, be as careful and watchful in holding it there, until it is fully incorporated into Him, as the Tree of Life, as you are that the little shoot which you graft from a poor stock into a rich stock shall take in the sap and taste and vigor of the richer stock; and as surely shall childhood maintain its relation to Christ, and ripen and sweeten into immortal fruitage. If the Church would do the best possible for itself, it would gather in the little children, and keep them, and train them, no matter at what cost or pains. Nurtured in the Church from infancy, they are worth more to it than those who in maturer years take their first lessons in Church doctrines and manners, and turn into the first paths of Church experience and life.

Coming into the Church, children ought to have cordial and helpful welcome. Alas, and shame, that they do not always have

such a welcome ! It is far from always that they are taken up into the arms of their seniors. Frequently they are discouraged from entrance, and are exhorted to tarry without until they are older and wiser. Frequently, having passed the portals, they are ignored and neglected. Frequently they are disparaged as being only children ; as if their salvation were a matter of minor importance. Frequently cruel and devilish predictions are made that they will soon drift away. Frequently they are left alone, without counsel or sympathy, in their ignorance and risk, that it may be seen whether they will hold out.

How many of us would be alive today if, when we were born into the world, and the nurse proposed to clothe and nourish us, our father had said, " No ; never mind. It is a poor, puny, weak thing. It does not look as though it would live. Let it alone. If it lives and looks as if it would come to anything, we will get it some clothes and nourishment " ? From what our parents say of us at our birth, some of us who are now hale and hearty men and women were, to begin with, about as insignificant and unpromising specimens as ever wailed their way into the human family. If we are anything today, it is not because of our own accomplishments or attainment, either entirely or mainly, but because of what other ministries have wrought in our behalf. Few indeed are there who are self-made, either spiritually or temporally, self-complacently as we sometimes claim to be self-made. Self-made men are not very often fully made. Take away what has come to us from others, directly or indirectly, and we are still in our swaddling clothes. Properly estimating our own indebtedness to the Church, and to the foster fathers and mothers who gave us counsel and sympathy in our spiritual infancy, let us show adequate interest in the babes in Christ. And if it was our lot to be born into the kingdom of the Son of God in the midst of a congregation more like an ice-house than a Christian church, let us see to it that our congregation is of warmer atmosphere. Let us see to it that children coming in among us have kindlier treatment.

The obligation is, of course, on the parents who are members of the Church ; and, if the parents are themselves Christians, I can not conceive how they can be careless. I can not conceive how they can be at ease a moment if their children are not constantly developing and maturing in the way of Life. For, if parents commence with their children in time, and themselves walk worthy of their vocation, they can hold them for Christ. O, fathers and mothers, keep yourselves free from the blood of the fruit of your parentage.

The obligation is also on the ministers and officers of the Church. "Feed My lambs," is the summons of the Chief Shepherd to us. His under-shepherds, O, brothers and sisters, my comrades in the pastorate of this Church, let us not let one little lamb be lost from the flock which God hath purchased with His own blood, and over which He hath made us overseers.

And the obligation is also on all the members of the Church. In the home where all is as it ought to be, everybody takes care of the baby. It ought to be thus in the family of God. The obligations of members of benevolent orders to help their fellow-members, are light as air in comparison with the obligations of Christians to watch over one another in love. When members of these orders who are also members of the Church, and who I know never lend a hand to build up other Christians and help them in their spiritual needs, tell me about sitting up with the sick of the lodge to which they belong, I say to myself, "This ye ought to have done, but ye ought not to have left the other undone."

A long step in the right direction will be taken, if every member of the Church will be ready and willing to adopt a probationer, immediately upon the enrolment of his name. Adoption is taking somebody else's child as our own, and watching it with a father's and a mother's solicitude. Now, as one applies for admission, let some brother or sister ask to have the applicant assigned to his or her care—agreeing for a year to care for and instruct and lead him. The applicant need not be informed of

the special assignment ; but the supervision ought to be close and loving. They who claim to want to work for the Lord would here have ample opportunity, and would bless themselves as well as save others. A body of members would thus be developed in this congregation, surpassing in Christian character and force any body of members the congregation has ever known. A very few years would suffice to show the value of the experiment so clearly that it would be no longer an experiment. For year after year you have had ingatherings, and multitudes have had their names written on the registers ; and yet how much stronger are you in spiritual number or power than twenty years ago? Hosts can be found who began their religious life at these altars, who prove to have been still-born. Left neglected where they were born, they have perished. Now, for one year, let us look after all new births, meaning, with the help of God, that they shall live ; and let us see if we can not, at once, largely lessen the rate of spiritual mortality. O that we may be a Church full of nursing fathers and mothers !

A family is a hell where every one is only for himself—where the larger ones have no concern for the smaller ones ; where the father is always howling at the little child, “ Don’t bother me ” ; and the mother is always screaming “ Get out of my way ” ; and the older children are always yelling their impatience. And an earthly home is a heaven begun below where each looks on the things of the other—where the father is considerate, and the mother is loving, and the children are to each other as lovers. Such a home ought a Christian congregation to be—building each other up into all godliness, helping each other in all necessity, and sympathizing with each other in all sorrow : the stronger bearing the burdens of the weaker, and the weaker doing their best to bear their own burdens.

The angels in Heaven have glad charge of the little ones—little both in age and in experience—who are the children of our Father in Heaven. Christ cries, “ Suffer little children to come unto Me ; ” declares, “ Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven ; ”

and proclaims, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

It is all well enough to earnestly and frequently sing :

"More love to Thee, O Christ,
More love to Thee!
Hear Thou the prayer I make
On bended knee:
This is my earnest plea,
More love, O Christ, to Thee,
More love to Thee!"

But Christ responds, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." It is all well enough to welcome big people, learned people, rich people, to the communion of the saints, if they mean to be saints; and if they do not, they had better not be welcomed in. But Christ calls a little child, and sets him in our midst, and says, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me."

Now and then a little child asks to come in among us, and some are on our roll. Let us, like Simeon, take them up in our arms, and teach them the fear of the Lord, and train them in the way they should go; and so turn ourselves into a fuller likeness of Him Who enjoins on Peter, as the first proof of his conversion, "Feed My lambs."

XIV.

“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.”—DEUTERONOMY, 33 : 25.

At last the time for Moses to die has come. In the allotment of Providence, he is not to lead the Israelites through the waters of Jordan and settle amid the delights of Canaan. His care and responsibility are to be laid aside before the people, who have so long taken the law of Jehovah from his mouth, have escaped the marches and struggles of their pilgrimage and forgotten the difficulties of pursuit in the successes of possession. Indeed, he has already received the summons to disrobe himself of his charge, and take himself to the heights of Nebo. In obedience to the summons, he assembles the people whom he has so assiduously and tenderly carried in his bosom for nearly half a century, and whose good fortune he has so steadily preferred to his own; and he declares to them his farewell advice, and gives them his farewell benediction.

In the first place, he calls to their memory the bountiful goodness of the Lord through all their history—in their exodus, their provision, and their protection—; and then pronounces upon each tribe a special blessing: the blessing being not alone expressive of his concern and interest, but also, in an eminent sense, prophetic of the tribe's character and outcome in future years.

In the sentence under review, he declares the portion of Asher—predicting that it will not easily fail in excellence; that it will grow stronger and stronger; and that beneath the snows of old age it will retain the glee and vigor of youth.

Scripture, however, is written for all men and all times: for, whatever was the conception of its writers, in the enunciation of the promises which gladdened and sustained the saints of their own era, those promises were meant by their Divine Giver for all who should be in similar circumstances in all periods. It may have been that the vision of Moses reached not beyond the tribes thronging his immediate presence; and that, in addressing to

Asher the words, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be," he thought only of Asher ; but He Who inspired Moses looked in the face of all following generations, and meant the precious syllables for the cheer and stay of all who would in coming ages commit themselves to His keeping in well-doing. He meant them for you and me, as well as for Asher. He meant that they should mean more to you and me than they meant to Asher.

They assure us that we, following on to know the Lord, shall have all the strength we need. Beyond all question, humanity is insufficient for itself. By ourselves we can achieve what is best neither for the life that is nor for the life that is to come. If we enjoy well-being here or hereafter, it is all of the grace and work of God. It is all through the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. But our well-being is not in default of our own diligent concurrence. It is not in spite of ourselves. Neither is it by mere acceptance of what is Divinely given. We are to be laborers together with God. While He works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure, we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling in His sight. Whatever we can do in our own interest, we must do. What we can not do for ourselves, will be done for us. Where our own concern and resources fail us, Heaven is pledged to our support.

It is pledged to assist us in the discernment of our obligation—being to us eyes, while we are threading the wilderness ; disclosing the path that we should take, while we are halting at cross-roads ; and showing us the way, when shadows enfold both in front and in the rear, both to the left and to the right.

It is pledged to assist us in the discharge of our duty. Whatever demand may address us, whether of God or of others or of ourselves, we shall be adequate to its observance. Whatever station may call us to its occupancy, we shall be equal to the summons. With Omnipotence at our right hand, we will be able to go up and possess the land, and we will always be ready to run our race.

It is pledged to assist us in the endurance of tribulation.

Christianity, indeed, confers no exemption from the ills incident to probationary scenes. It rather intensifies and multiplies them. Nevertheless, it leaves us not to fight them alone and single-handed. It thrusts us not unaccompanied and uncovered into the storm. If we are cast into a den of lions, we will find the monsters changed into our friends, and their manes formed into pillows for our aching heads. If we are consigned to the furnace, we will find One like unto the Son of Man keeping us company, and we will go out without the smell of fire upon our garments. If we are thrown into raging rivers, with nothing but a boat of bulrushes between us and death, kind winds will drift us ashore, and furnish us with friends and supplies. In every temptation a way will open for our escape. With every trial there will be grace to bear it, and grace to turn the trial into triumph.

The words of the text imply, however, that we will have no more strength than we need—that we will have none to spare. It is an announcement of Inspiration that the righteous are scarcely saved—no more than saved. It is the averment of the Son of God Himself that, when we have done all that we are commanded, we are unprofitable servants—entitled to neither compensation nor thanks, and without claim on our Master for remuneration, except by His own gracious engagement to those who enter His service and lay themselves out for the glorification of His Name. Moreover, these declarations apply to all. It is arrogant and impious to talk or think of works of supererogation—to even dream of doing more than our duty, and so depositing in the vaults of the future a fund on which we may draw in behalf of those who are less righteous, or in favor of ourselves in subsequent failure. Nor is it only a deluded Romanist who leans on this notion of works of supererogation. Every one who attempts less than what, in the light of the Divine Oracles and Providence and Spirit, he sees to be his duty, practically fondles the same heresy. His remissness may come of his covetousness, or of his cowardice, or of his indolence, or of his pride, or of his wrath. His plea in self-justification may be his former contributions and

services, or the pressure of other claims, or the withholding by other people of their dues. Still, by doing less than he can do, he virtually asserts that his capacity is not the measure of his obligation, concedes the possibility of his rendering larger service, and denies the right of the Lord of all to every service he can pay.

The Lord of all confers no more endowments than He means to be cultivated, no more strength than He means to be improved, no more talents than He means to be laid out. He confers no more grace than He means to be used, nor than He regards necessary to help us make our calling and election sure.

We have none to waste in dreams or speculations about things which are too high for us—in baseless conjectures about the past, or in fruitless efforts concerning the present, or in idle studies of the future.

We have none to waste in loiterings by the way—in absence from the means of grace, or in forgetfulness of the claims of God and humanity, or in rest in the shade.

We have none to waste in quarrels with our brethren—in relation to conduct or creed, or faith or form, or method or motive.

And we have none to waste in rashness—in going on forbidden ground, or risking temptation, or trying how near we can venture to hell without falling in.

Verily, we have no strength to waste, but only what our necessities require. Every one of us is burdened with demands equal to all our capital, and impressing every hour of our lives; and these obligations call for the enlistment of all our affections, the expenditure of all our energies, and the outlay of all our resources. Over the delinquent crash appalling denunciations. "Curse ye Meroz." "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." And over the diligent gleam exceeding great and precious promises. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him."

And the words of this declaration promise that, being faithful in that which is little as well as in that which is much, we shall have strength as we need it. As has already appeared in this discussion, not merely is there no possibility of exceeding our duty, so as to have merit to spare for others, but there is also no possibility of gathering by our present diligence a supply on which we may fall back in delinquencies of later times. Each current hour brings its own demands. Each new sunrise reveals new obligations and necessities. We can not today do the work of tomorrow.

It is equally impossible for us to possess ourselves of strength anterior to its need. Certainly, we have ample reason to expect from Him Whom we serve whatever supplies are requisite for such service as He requires ; but we have no reason to expect such supplies before we need them. He thinks it best to have us realize our daily dependence—to have us remember that in Him we “live, and move, and have our being” ; and, therefore, He makes each moment the purveyor of its own supplies. It is a manner of the Divine administration that we see illustrated in the way in which ancient Israel received its manna, which had to be gathered every day. We also see it illustrated in the Lord’s prayer, as, taught by Him, we say, “Give us this day our daily bread”—not bread for yesterday : its necessities are gone ; not bread for tomorrow : its necessities do not yet task us, and we may not live to see it. Today we only need today’s bread. And we may look for strength only *as* we need it.

It is neither righteous nor wise to borrow trouble—to begloom ourselves with apprehensions, or to faint at imaginary woes, or to make ourselves wretched by fears of an unknown future. But how common is such carriage. Endeavoring to look ahead, recalling the constancy of the martyrs in the opening years of the Christian Church, the devotion of the saints in the fires of Papal persecution, the fidelity of the people of God in the grasp of terrible ordeals, and the steadfastness of the righteous in the midst of staggering storms of temptation, we write bitter things against

ourselves. We fear that we could not stand the stress, and that beneath such pressure we would be found wanting. There is no justification for these imaginations. Along with the day will come its furnishment. With the need will come the supply.

Occasionally we ponder the possibility of losing our estate or friends or health or life or reputation ; and we shudder at the outlook, concluding that we can not endure the furnace, and, therefore, doubting our Christianity. But the fact is, we have no business with either such fancies or such reflections. Our current business is to enjoy and use what possessions we have. If we do our duty today, we will not be found lacking tomorrow. If we are faithful in the employment of the grace we have, more will be forthcoming when more is wanted. With every occasion will develop its sufficiency. If our estate depart, we will take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, knowing that in Heaven we have a better and enduring substance. If our friends die, we will chant the patriarchal refrain, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord ;" and we will exult in the hope of a reunion where parting is unknown. If our health fail, we will feel that "Jehovah is the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever" ; and we will glorify Jehovah in the furnace. If our reputation goes, we will lean on the Arm Everlasting, and cry, "Thou knowest I am not-wicked." If sorrows smite us, we will fix our eyes on the invisible, and shout, "All things work together for good to them that love God." If the summons to the tomb strikes its knell, we will reply, "I am ready to be offered" ; "I have fought a good fight" ; "Thou wilt show me the path of life."

Assuring and sustaining as is the announcement of our consideration, it is not the only announcement which calls to us out of the firmament of Revelation. From out of the same glowing sky come, ravishing as the song of the morning stars, the averments, "God is love" ; "He careth for you" ; "I am with thee" ; "I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" ;

“My grace is sufficient for thee”; “Nothing in the universe shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good.”

Besides, the annals of the Church are crowded with the narratives of instances in which these Divine averments have been proven true. Enoch walked with God; he had the testimony that he pleased God; and then, without dying, he was charioted into the opening skies. Moses feared to essay the leadership of Israel, and looked on every hand for escape; but he gave himself to his mission, had the help of Omnipotence, and won such pre-eminence that the world was without his peer until the Son of God came down to be his successor. Peter, when really in no danger, was so afraid of dying that the idle gabble of a servant girl scared him almost to death; but when he was really called to die, he was so wonderfully sustained that he fairly leaped to his cross.

From the storehouse of our own individual experience we can bring numerous illustrations of the doctrine of our discussion. Halting in the face of duty, we have found our backs adequate to the burden. Shrinking in front of obstacles, we have found a path around or a way over. Trembling in the presence of trial, we have found deliverance or sufficiency or triumph; and, recalling our affliction, we now shout, “Thanks be to God Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It shall be in the future as it was in the past. Cleaving to the Lord with full purpose of heart, doing His commandments, hoping for His appearing, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be”—the arms of thy hands shall be made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. The grace of Omnipotence shall be thy unfailing refuge and sufficiency. Across every cloud shall be hung the bow of promise. Around every darkness shall be bound an edging of light. In every furnace the Son of Man shall be found walking by thy side. On every storm-swept water thy Saviour shall be seen, treading the billows into peace, and turning them into a smiling highway upon which thy unsinking feet shall carry thee safely ashore.

Lo, Asher's God is our God, and God's covenant with him.

whispers in our ear all its fulness of comfort and inspiration. A wilderness is our way to the land of promise ; enemies look for us from behind every tree ; and stones and thorns strew all the way. But, as we enter, God cries, " My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest ;" as often as our torn and weary feet fear to try farther travel, He cries, " Thy shoes shall be iron and brass ;" and as often as our anxious hearts halt lest our load be heavier than we can carry, He cries, " As thy days, so shall thy strength be." While, from the bending eternities, holding us in full survey, the hosts who have gone over the way before us cry, " Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord our God hath spoken : " " The word of the Lord endureth for ever."

" Nor will our days of toil be long :
Our pilgrimage will soon be trod ;
And we shall join the ceaseless song—
The endless Sabbath of our God."

XV.

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin."—MATTHEW, 6:28.

A full, impressive, suggestive discourse is that famous deliverance on the mount, in the neighborhood of Capernaum—a Galilean hill the pulpit, He who spake as man never spake the orator, and the kingdom which is to absorb and outlast and out-rank every other kingdom the topic.

Admonishing His hearers against excessive care for this life, and enjoining supreme concern for the life to come, and illuminating His argument with illustrations gathered from the fields of Grace and Law and Providence, the Divine Speaker now gleans from the fields of Nature. Early Spring, in that climate a brief but enchanting season, enrobes the land of the Covenant. Everywhere anemone and crocus and lily, as far as the eye can carry, are in full bloom; and everywhere there hails the eye a scene of surpassing loveliness. His eye drinks in the fragrant beauty, and His soul revels in the lessons of the glowing landscape. For, within His all-comprehending gaze open not only the faces of the abounding flowers, but also their very hearts. To Him they have not only a natural, but also a religious side. To Him they speak not only of the excellence of the Creator in all His creations, but also of the interest of the Creator in all His creations. To Him they talk not only of their own brilliant charms, but also of His charms whose fiat invested them with all their attractions, and the far-away sight of Whose own transcendent glory stirred the entranced prophet into the cry, "How great is His beauty!" To Him they talk not only of their own gay garb, but also of His goodness

"Who, not content
With every food of life to nourish man,
By kind illusions of the wondering sense,
Dost make all nature beauty to his eye,
Or music to his ear."

Pausing in the presence of this sea of bloom, swelling all

around, and wishing to lift His hearers through the seen up into the unseen, He exclaims, Consider these lilies—their color and form and structure ; see how they grow—how free from all anxiety about their appearance and impression and sustenance ; see how confidently they content themselves with their appointed lot, drink in the generous ministries of land and sky, fill their own humble circle of being, keep the laws of their own organism, and let God take care of them ; see how fully and how royally He does take care of them. Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Never a costumer or modiste sent out such a combination or fit or style as adorns yon lily.

Then, appearance *is* something. It does have something to do with one's success. It does help or hinder in the race of life. It is to be considered in the consideration of ourselves. It is happier and holier and wiser to go decently than to go frowsy. The appearance, however, is not the chief end of man ; and supreme concern for appearance misses its own end, as well as the chief end of man. The way to appear well is to seek, before and beyond all else, to be and to do well. Be yourself ; do not give yourself to the imitation of others ; study your own personality in body, mind and soul ; and dress accordingly. Take the measure of yourself as you have been fashioned and located, and take pains to observe the conditions of your fashion and location, and your seeming will take care of itself.

The lilies of the day of the Great Teacher among the children of men are no longer in bloom ; but, being dead, they have immortality in the lessons drawn from their beauty and unconcern in the Sermon on the Mount. It is, however, our own season of flowers ; and everywhere they feast our sense and read their lessons to our souls.

By the appointment of the Fount of all being, flowers have their being. Easily enough we admit that angels, bending about the throne of Infinite Lordship, and busy on celestial errands through all the provinces of the universe, are of exalted origin ; and that men who, even amid the limitations of the great primal

lapse, are only a little beneath the angels in endowment and majesty, are the children of Him Who is from everlasting to everlasting ; and that the worlds which crowd the realms of space,

" For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is Divine,"

are sprung from the same superhuman Source ; and that all are of Divine arrangement ; and that the work is worthy of the Workman.

Flowers, however,—what mission or use have they? It is true they dress prettily, and smell sweetly ; but you can not make out of them clothing or food or shelter. You can not make out of them dwellings or factories or railroads. It is true that children adore them, and lovers fancy them, and women love them ; but of what worth are they to us men? Of what worth are they to us lords of creation for whom the earth and the heavens were made, and without reference to whom nothing was made that is made? So, practically, if not theoretically, we count flowers and everything else which we can not eat or drink or employ in speculation—which we are too clumsy or lazy or stupid to utilize—out of the handiwork of Him in Whom we live and move and have our being. For all this, He Who called the angels into existence, and fashioned man, and sowed the sky with stars, made the flowers. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that is made. Closing up His creation of earth and heaven, He pronounced it good—the counterpart of His design, the expression of His ideal, the realization of His will. Nothing is unworthy of its Maker—

" There is in Nature nothing mean, or base,
Only as our baseness makes it so—
Making that common by the sight, or touch,
Which, if as distant as the stars, would
Seem as sacred and as marvellous as they."

By the Fount of their being, the flowers are enrobed with their beauty. Among many there is no exalted estimate of beauty. They consider it at best as only an advertisement or ornament, and as entirely wanting in character and value. They

consider that the size of things is their importance and preciousness—that the doing or having of a thing is all there is of it, and that the manner of the achievement or exercise is of no moment. Indeed, they rather pride themselves on their own blunt and graceless methods of action, snarling, "There's no style about us," as if style were an unmanliness, or vice, or weakness, not to be condoned.

But the Former of all things has made every thing beautiful in its time. He could have fashioned the earth without flowers, and the firmament without stars. He could have formed the blossoms and leaves all alike in color, and the branches all of one stiff pattern, and all as fit as now for food and fuel and manufacture. He, however, cares for the beauty, as well as for the utility of things. He feasts the eye, as well as fills the hand, of the pensioner upon His bounty. He discloses Himself, both in Nature and in Revelation, as the God of all grace—grace being not merely benevolence or mercy or pity, but also His gentle, royal, winning way of being benevolent or merciful or pitiful.

It is, then, neither unmanliness nor vice nor weakness in us to admire the beautiful, and to seek to be beautiful ourselves in person and in way. His manner, indeed, in the accomplishment of His designs, and in the dispensation of His gifts, calls for our grateful appreciation, and summons us to resemblance in all we do or say or think. Many a church would be better filled, if more attractively fitted up, and more regardful in its members of the Christian courtesy due to each other and to the strangers within their gates. Many a family would be more happy and honored, if more careful of the arrangements of the home, however humble, and more cultured in the decencies of conduct. Many a laborer would enjoy larger custom and income, if his deportment were more genteel. Many a toiler for Christ would have more sheaves to show for his mission among the children of men, if he carried more heart in his hand, more sunshine in his eye, and more sweetness in his voice.

It must not be forgotten that beauty appertains not only to

persons, but also to things, and to the manners of persons and things; and that it is a large part of both the godliness and power of things. Bishop McKendree, after a long day's ride in the mud and rain, late in the evening, soaked and soiled, reaches the house of a member of the Church rather noted for his uncleanly and uncouth habits. On the next morning—the morning of the Sabbath—the Bishop, his boots and clothing being too wet for blacking and brushing on the previous evening, is arranging himself for decent appearance in the house of the Lord. The host rebukes his guest for doing such work on the Sabbath. The guest replies, "I always endeavor to do all I can on Saturday to prepare myself for the Sabbath; but I do not believe that it is as sinful to clean up on Sabbath as it is to go to church dirty." There is a Divine injunction, "Let all things be done decently, and in order"; and another, "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem"; and another, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

"All are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time—
Some with massive deeds, and great,
Some with ornaments and rhyme.
Nothing useless is, or low,
Each thing in its place is best:
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest."

By the laws of their being, the beauty of the flowers is of their own working out. Evolution has its sphere in the economy of the universe: but as an agent of the Supreme Being, and not as His rival or substitute. Evolution is merely His minion, and must work at His bidding, and in harmony with His laws, and under His supervision. He fashions the first seed, and gives it the origination of other seed in its own image and likeness. His providence drops the seed amid congenial conditions, and girdles it with propitious influences. In order, however, to the flower, the seed must appropriate its conditions and influences; avail itself of the corresponding elements of earth and sea and sky; duly fit them into its own organism; form them, this into color,

this into style, this into substance ; and thus evolve all into flower. See the lilies of the field, how they grow—not by consuming care, or grinding labor, or toilsome spinning ; but by abiding in their estate, improving their opportunities, and leaving the issue in the keeping of the Ruler of all.

It is thus that man comes to manhood. Creative appointment brings him into being, and endows him with supplies ; but man must improve his supplies, and so make himself a man. If any will not work, neither shall he eat. Divine grace creates man anew ; forms Christ within him the hope of glory ; and gives him the Divine ordinances and Scriptures and Spirit ; but man must grow into redeemed manhood in diligent, humble, prayerful exercise unto all godliness. Gracious, supernatural influences only accomplish his perfection as he goes on unto perfection. Real Christian character and life are no investment from without, but are a growth from within : as the dress and fragrance and fruit of the flowers have come not from external touching up by heat and light and moisture, but from the incorporation of heat and light and moisture into their own substance. The infallible oracles cry, “ Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is : for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out his roots by the river ; and he shall not fear when heat cometh ; but his leaf shall be green ; and he shall not be careful in the year of drought ; neither shall he cease from yielding fruit.”

“ Thus the men

Whom Nature's works can charm, with God Himself
Hold converse : grow familiar, day by day,
With His conceptions ; act upon His plan ;
And form to His the relish of their souls.”

Flowers, evanescent and fragile as they are, have a mission in the world. Every creation or ordination or permission of Infinite Supremacy proposes the accomplishment of an appointed end ; and that end is not merely its own perfection and satisfaction, but also the perfection and satisfaction of the entire system of which it is a part. Nothing in all the amplitude of the universe is fashioned

only for itself. Selfishness is an intrusion in the universe. Whether of the animal or mineral or vegetable kingdom, each element or fraction or unit is a part of one stupendous whole. Flowers bloom not only for their own enjoyment or honor or profit, nor waste their fragrance on the desert air. They are for the praise of their Maker, and for the weal of man. They are the agents of their Maker in the cleansing of the atmosphere, in the development of the means of subsistence, and in the preservation of life ; and they thus magnify His name. They minister to both human sense and human soul, supplying both food and gladness to man ; and thus they are to him both a beauty and a joy for ever.

For each individual flower there is an appointed mission. Each is individually conditioned and individually delegated ; and, failing in its task, its birth is a miscarriage, its business is a mismanagement, and its life is a waste. He, among men, misses, then, the excellence of the flower, as well as his own errand and possibility, who cultivates only his own appearance and interest. Even more grandly conditioned and dowered than the lily of the field, his is a sublimer and wider circle of being. Fetching his lineage in body and heart and mind from God, like God in reason and taste and will, master of the laws and resources and springs of Nature, potent to rally reinforcements from the armies of Omnipotence, and with eternal æons and infinite spaces for the elaboration and working out of his plans, how broad his chance : how high his destiny, and how solemn his responsibility ! Made and qualified to be the agent and fellow of God, to fashion himself into a child and heir of God, and to form his family into a household of God ; made and qualified to elevate his community into the Church of Christ, to gather his nation into the fold of Christ, and to lift his world into the kingdom of Christ ; made and qualified to help make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might

be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus : how terrible his undoing whose only tribute to his Lord and Redeemer is in the song,

“ Nothing, either great or small,
Remains for me to do ! ”

To every human being there is a work, *his* work ; and, leaving it undone, Christ is delayed on His march to the inheritance of the heathen, earth is held back from its second Eden, hell robs Heaven of its rightful possession, and the miserable idler rushes to a ruin whose depths can be measured only by the heights he might have won. None of us liveth to himself : for whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. Woe to him who can be at ease, who can fold his hands, or who can think only of his own fortune, while from far and near, and from within and without, earnest voices cry,

“ Work, for the night is coming,
Work through the morning hours ;
Work while the dew is sparkling,
Work 'mid springing flowers :
Work when the day grows brighter ;
Work in the glowing sun :
Work, for the night is coming,
When man's work is done.”

God, Maker and Monarch of all being, takes care of the flowers. Appointing their being, assigning their lot, and decreeing their mission, His eye is ever on their need and His hand is ever over them with supplies. Nothing bars them from His consideration. The brevity of their life, and the insignificance of their work in comparison with the work of other creatures of His creation, shut them not out from His notice and provision. They share His concern as fully as the planets which go wheeling through the skies.

Even a single lily is His ward. His admiration and interest are not reserved for a field of lilies : “ Solomon in all his glory

was not arrayed like *one* of these"—how deep, loving and particular the tenderness implied in the phrase "like *one* of these!" Look! each is a distinct entity, has a distinct form, and lives to a distinct end; for each the atmosphere is composed, the dew is distilled, and the sunshine fitted; for each the earth is balanced, and the heaven tempered; for each the entire system of Nature is adjusted and ordered, that each may find its own fashion and fragrance and tint, live its own life, and reach its own end.

Humanity is of more value than that whole field of lilies, for one of which all Nature spins and toils. The loss of a lily is merely the loss of a life brief at the longest, and the overthrow of matter which would soon be rebuilt in other forms. The loss of a man would be the loss of a life dowered with the breath of God, fashioned in the image of God, healed of sin in the blood of God, inhabited by the Spirit of God, and on its way to the throne of God, to sit by the side of God, "throughout all ages, world without end." If in one man is all the fulness of God—declaring certain features of the character and government of God more clearly, enjoying communion with God more fully, and showing forth the praise of God more impressively, than is within the reach of any other earthly organism,—how closely he must lie to the heart of God! And if God covers with so helpful and tender a solicitude a lily of the field, of so brief a being, and of so humble a lot, how lovingly and minutely He must enfold with His gentlest and richest ministries the man who is begotten again in His own likeness, whose life is hidden with Christ in God, and upon whose outcome such momentous issues are staked! "God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that He is God of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him,

though He be not far from every one of us ; for in Him we live and move and have our being.''

" Which of the monarchs of the earth
Can boast a guard like ours—
Encircled from our second birth
With all the Heavenly powers ?

" Angels, where'er we go, attend
Our steps, whate'er betide :
With watchful care their charge defend,
And evil turn aside.

" And when our spirits we resign,
On outstretched wings they bear,
And lodge us in the arms Divine,
And leave us ever there."

Each, then, bear in mind his own individuality, and consequent individual burden, and consequent individual responsibility—each being himself: each counting one in every business or company or struggle to which he gives his name, and ever scorning to be a cipher, as he would scorn to be rated a fool or a knave.

Each bear in mind that every unit is part of a whole; and that each unit is in intimate relations with his community, and with the fortunes of the entire community, and with the outcome of the universe. If ever we feel despair or lethargy stealing over us, let us each stir himself with the recollection that failure of the part imperils the success of the whole system—that whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Each carry himself for the best within his reach. Anything worth doing at all is worth doing well. To do his best is due to himself, that in the exercise he may grow toward the best, and that he may not be ashamed to look his works in the face, and that he may receive a full reward: for every genuine man covets perfection.

Each cultivate appearances. If they accomplish nothing more, they give access and win a chance. Look your best; and others will expect your best; and you, discerning their expectations in their eyes, will do your best. Then, the appearance of

things is a part of things—the manner of the work is part of the work. The coat is not only to cover, but also to fit.

Each give flowers to those you touch in the intercourse of life. They help beautify and sweeten life. Do not fear that pleasant recognition of others will spoil them. They who do well have a right to due recognition ; and the lavishing of flowers at their funeral does not pay for their previous withholdment. In a western city a man died who had been well at the front in business and society ; but, because of a change of fortune, he had for some time been coldly treated by many who had been intimate with him while he had favors to bestow. On the occasion of his funeral, in atonement of their neglect, they were profuse in their gifts of flowers ; and his wife, approaching to take her leave of the beloved form, while the house was thronged with those in attendance, sobbed out, “ O, why could you not have given him some of these flowers while he was alive ? ” The way of life would be smoother and sunnier, if we brought fewer flowers for the dead, and gave more to the living. This service would not be lost if it sent us out to carry ourselves more kindly to those with whom we come in contact from time to time. The Christ from Whom we take our name, Christian, went about doing good ; and never are we so like Him as when we are scattering kindness.

Each leave the keeping of himself, in well-doing, in the keeping of God. Consider the lilies, how He cares for them, and what he makes out of them ; and see how He must care for you, and what He wills to make out of your more royal nature.

Each harken to His voice, “ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world ” ; give to the winds your fears ; and go on your way rejoicing—being to others what He is to you.

“ Always with us, always with us :—
Words of cheer and words of love ;
Thus the risen Saviour whispers,
From His dwelling-place above.
With us when we toil in sadness,
Sowing much, and reaping none ;
Telling us that in the future
Golden harvests shall be won.

“ With us when the storm is sweeping
O'er our pathway dark and drear ;
Waking hope within our bosoms,
Stilling every anxious fear.
With us in the lonely valley,
When we cross the chilling stream
Lighting up the steps to glory
With salvation's radiant beam.”

XVI.

“When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s Supper.”—I CORINTHIANS, 11 : 20.

A form may continue long after the design of its establishment has ceased to be its animation and direction : yea, long after its observance has degenerated into alien and sinful practices.

And so, among the Corinthians, within half a century after the ascension of the Son of Man, the Feast which He instituted to fasten the Church which He had purchased with His own blood to a grateful and loving memory of Himself and of His oblation for undone humanity, and to hold it to the eager hope of His second coming, without sin unto salvation, and to keep in brotherly oneness with each other all who are one in Him, has degenerated into a very degenerate sort of picnic. All still assemble professedly for its celebration ; but divisions and heresies declare themselves ; each person brings his own provision ; little clans club what they bring together, and go off by themselves to eat and drink ; and some give way to gluttony and intoxication, while some are left unsatisfied.

And, rebuking this hilarious and unbrotherly and un-Christly prostitution of the hallowed Feast, Paul writes, “When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s Supper.” Calling it the Lord’s Supper, and gathering together at the regular place and time of its celebration, and going through with the prescribed ritual, you do not make it such. Along with all due forms and nomenclature and rites, there must be the spirit of its establishment. You must bear its Founder in affectionate and confiding and obedient remembrance, look for His return, and love each other even as He loves you. And the same rule obtains with all the ordinances of religion. Forms are an absolute necessity and requirement : and none has any claim for Christian character who fails in Christian forms ; but they are meritorious and rewardable only as they are the impulse of Christian aspiration and belief and will.

Again we are assembled for our quarterly Communion. And it is most becomingly and forcibly thus denominated: for communion is fellowship one with another—the cordial concurrence of two or more in engagement and feeling and thought. And, participating in the privilege of this hour, we enjoy fellowship with Christ; for we cultivate His mind, and keep His ordinance, and propose His glory; and, so occupying ourselves, we have the testimony that we please Him: for, at one with Him, we have His obligation to manifest Himself unto us as He does not unto the world. And we have fellowship with each other: we are glad in each other's knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; we each look kindly on the concerns of the other; and we rejoice together in hope of the glory of God.

And this Communion-season is Scripturally represented as a Supper. A supper, as originally and properly understood, is the last meal of the day; and that was the time of the institution of this Feast, and of its first observance: for the record is, "Now when even was come, He was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples. . . . And, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

And I can not but believe that evening is the appropriate time for the celebration of the sacred Supper; and that the contrary custom is a departure, not only from the very idea of the Supper, but from the thought of the Founder in its establishment; and that it is utterly without warrant from Holy Scripture. I farther believe that kneeling at the table is not a becoming posture for its observance; but that it is an innovation of Romanism in the interest of its dogma that "Not only is Christ as both God and man in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and in every part of it, but the substances of bread and wine cease to exist after 'consecration;'" and this innovation and perversion have been

entailed on Methodism, without due consideration by our fathers, through the Church of England, the daughter of Romanism and the mother of Methodism. Sitting at the table is our convenient and habitual custom ; and it was so when the Lord appointed the Holy Communion, except that each leaned somewhat toward his neighbor—indicating fellowship with each other, as well as individual repast.

The evening meal is pre-eminently the meal of fellowship. Breakfast is essential and nourishing, after hours of abstinence, and in front of impending labor. But we come to it called from inviting slumber, conning the demands of the day, hurriedly, in comparative dishabille, and oppressed with needful separation for hours from each other. Dinner, the mid-day meal, is necessary and supporting. But we come to it, a mere luncheon at a restaurant or in solitude, fatigued, soiled, with a half-day's toil ahead of us, and with part of the family away from us. Supper hails us at the close of the day : labor's period expired ; our tools laid by ; and all the family is about the table, all cleanly dressed, and all full of incident ; and love sits enthroned ; and rest is coming. Yes, supper is the meal of fellowship and peace.

And this Holy Communion is the Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ. He appoints it amid the shadows of His crucifixion, on the very eve of the oblation of Himself as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, and with the weight of all the sins of all time pressing His soul.

He arranges it in memory of Himself, and of the sacrifice of Himself for ruined manhood ; and in pledge of His return ; and in token of His present, as well as of His past and future, interest in all the interests of all who accept His mediation, and follow Him in the way of regeneration.

He commands that all His disciples shall partake of this Feast ; for He gave it to *them*, and not to some of them, and said, " Drink ye *all* of it." And He commands that this shall be done *to the end of time* : for thus they show forth His death until He come again. It is an explicit commandment, and well nigh

the only test of membership in the visible Church of His declaration ; and its non-observance is perilous in the extreme.

He clearly indicates that its observance shall be social : not by one's self, nor merely in one's own mind, but together. It is instituted by our Lord at a meeting of all the disciples ; and the symbols are dispensed to all ; and all partake ; and the Saviour promises to join *with them* in its hallowed engagement by and by in the kingdom of His Father. Nor can I doubt that, in the choice of supper—pre-eminently the social meal of the day,—our Lord had its social characteristics in mind, and meant the transfer of these characteristics to His Supper.

And now the Supper is ready, and the summons is served ; and we, with the work of another quarter done, are gathering to the table—cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, glad in our opportunity, and waiting for the Lord Jesus to seat Himself at the head of the table.

And, bearing Him in mind, in His advent and life, and in His design in the institution of this Supper, and in His interest in all our interests, let us come to our places and bless His name.

And, coming, let us come with each other, heart to heart, joying in our fellowship in Him, longing for the induction into this fellowship of every member of our race, and seeking thus the universal brotherhood of man.

And, the breaking of bread together being everywhere a mark and pledge of amity with those with whom the bread is broken, let us see to it that we are never hence at outs with the Founder of the Feast, or with our fellow-guests.

And, not knowing from one day to another when the bells shall ring us in to the eternal banquet-hall of our Prince and Saviour, let us seek to be ever ready, with no raiment to look up and with no work undone, for the hail of our Redeemer to the table of our Heavenly home.

XVII.

"Alleluia."—REVELATION, 19 : 3.

A word is not the little thing we sometimes think. It is more than merely an atmospherical vibration born of the action of the human voice. It is more than the small coin of conversation between man and man. Now it is concentrated history, embalming the achievements of one age for the ages to come ; and now it is concentrated poetry, fossilizing the events and imaginations of one generation for the generations that follow after ; and now it is concentrated testimony, rehearsing the experiences and teachings of one period for the inspiration and reliance of the periods that subsequently occupy the stage of time.

ALLELUIA, the word now claiming our devout study, is one of these full, rich words. It is a word common to both the Church militant and the Church triumphant. It condenses into itself the import and inspiration and wealth of many words. It is the Greek expression of a Hebrew term ; and its significance will be most readily apprehended by an analysis of the original expression. Following it thus back to the fountain, and taking the compound to pieces, we find that the older form, Hallelujah, is made up of the two words, Hallel and Jah :—Hallel meaning, break forth into song, or give praise, or offer thanksgiving ; and Jah being the name by which the Lord of all was declared unto His ancient Church, and being esteemed by that Church as too sacred for utterance by mortal lips, meaning independent, perpetual and un-originated existence. Combined into one word, Hallel and Jah are Hallelujah, and mean, *Adore ye Jehovah*—ascribe ye all excellence to Him Who is for ever and ever, and Whose kingdom ruleth over all—give ye glory to the Lord most high !

Taking these hallowed syllables appreciatively and worthily upon our lips, we affirm our belief in the being and perfections and rights of Jehovah. A moment endeavor to imagine yourselves adoring chance, or doing homage to evolution, or glorify-

ing fate, or singing hymns to a myth, or shouting hosannas to protoplasm. It is impossible to you, even as an imagination. Intelligent devotion can only bend in honor to intelligent and meritorious supremacy. Mind can only render reverence to mind. Therefore, crying ALLELUIA, we affirm our belief in the existence and nature and rulership of God as revealed in His holy word ; we affirm our belief in Him as existing as actively and really as ourselves ; we affirm our belief in Him affirmatively, in antagonism to Atheism, and exclusively, in antagonism to Polytheism ; and we affirm our belief that He is, in all the past and all the present and all the future, Divinely distinct from all other essences, the Source and Support of all other essences, and the sum of all possible goodness and power and wisdom.

We announce our conviction of His indefeasible and universal lordship. Creatures are sometimes called lords by their fellow-men—the term designating a certain condition or estate or office ; but every such lordship is always of limited character and duration, and is at best partial and superficial. Crying ALLELUIA, we acknowledge God as King of kings and Lord of lords. We admit that there is no atom of matter which He does not control, and no class of spirit which He does not direct, and no day of time which He does not fix, and no evolution of eternity which He does not ordain, and no realm of space which He does not pervade.

Creation gives Him glory ; for He spake, and it was done. By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers : all things were created by Him and for Him ; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.

Preservation lays its homage at His feet. He upholdeth all things by the word of His power. In Him we live and move and have our being. Our breath is in His hands, and His are all our ways.

Redemption pays Him tribute. He remembered us in our low estate. He pitied us in the clutch of sin. He sympathized

with us in our infirmity. He sent us rescue in "One mighty to save." He welcomes us to loyalty, and to all its immunities and rewards. Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.

We declare our faith that, without exception, He doeth all things well. All His dispensations and movements we may not comprehend. Indeed, He may ordain or permit much for which we can discover no adequate cause. Many of the processes by which He effects His designs, and reaches His ends, may lie far beyond our ken ; and many of His methods and requirements may cross our desires and oppose our will ; and now and then they may stagger our faith and tear our hearts. The Lord of all, He often moves in a mysterious way : clouds and darkness are around about Him : His footsteps are in the deep waters, below our reach, and beyond our sight. But He has won the right to be trusted. A thousand experiences of His loving-kindness and sufficiency have proven to us that He is too good to be unkind, too strong to be overcome, and too wise to err. We know Whom we have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed to Him against that day. Crying ALLELUIA, therefore, we endorse the love and purity and wisdom of the administration of Jehovah—conceding that He doeth all things well.

We concede that He doeth all things intelligently : for He is a God of knowledge. He that formed the eye, shall He not see ? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear ? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall He not know ? O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God : how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out !

We concede that He doeth all things justly : for justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne. He dwells in the high and holy place. His name is Holy. His ways are equal : there is no iniquity in Him. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?

And we concede that He doeth all things lovingly : for His

mercies are over all His works. He is no hard Master. He commissions none on bootless errands, and subjects none to needless hardships. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Poor and needy, still the Lord thinketh upon us.

We express our sense of His right to praise, and of our obligation to show forth His praise. Acknowledging that He is God, and that His kingdom ruleth over all, and that all His dispensations and movements glow with intelligence and justice and love, and that all His operations propose our well-being—whether we study His works of creation or grace or providence: surely, beyond either discussion or doubt, He deserves our praise, and we owe Him its tribute. Admitting, with Juvenal, that ingratitude is the essence and sum of all crimes, and that human-kindness earns becoming return, and that our fellows who befriend us should sit in the high places of our hearts and wake our lips to song: surely the Fount of every blessing has claims paramount to all other claims; and worthy words ought to leap to carry the freight of grateful souls; and worthy works ought to show what our souls would say if their capacity were equal to their sense of delight and obligation. Crying ALLELUIA, therefore, we are all aflame with grateful impulse to Jehovah. We confess His desert of every service we can pay; feel that

“ Had we ten thousand thousand tongues,
Not one should silent be:
Had we ten thousand thousand hearts,
We'd give them all to Thee ”;

and so we lie entranced with the far-off acclaim of the Church of the Upper Temple, as we catch its blessed hosanna from over the intervening sea: “ Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto God, for ever and ever. Amen.”

We proclaim our hearty wish for a part with those who make melody unto the Lord. Conceding the character and right and sovereignty of God, and feeling our relations to Him, and hearing

the waves of worship which surge about His throne, we can not hold our peace. All else doing Him honor, we can not keep silence. All else proclaiming His praise, we can not remain dumb. As

" Before Jehovah's awful throne
All nations bow with sacred joy ",

and the entire universe, animate and inanimate, is vocal with doxologies, our hearts burn within us and our lips fly open to let forth the hallowed flame. Constraint—the constraint of appreciating, grateful love is on us; and, noting how His benedictions cover our heads and crowd our paths, and how His mercies brighten our days and cheer our nights, and how His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Him strong in our behalf, we can not help the expression of thanksgiving; and we shout to all who would restrain us, " How can we keep from singing? " Crying ALLELUIA, therefore, we ask admission to the choir of Creation; we declare our desire to laud and magnify the name of Jehovah; and we summons the multitude of singers to open their ranks and let us swell their song.

We find ourselves amid goodly company, and impelled by high authority and illustrious example.

We are impelled by the call of Divine oracles. Let the people praise Thee, O God: let all the people praise Thee. Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands. Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice.

We are impelled by the cry of our own hearts; for praise is an instinct of every soul of genuine nobility. Favors compel it to grateful response. It can not receive without thankful recognition. It can not help giving its emotion utterance. Taking from man, it must say, Thank you. Taking from God, it must say, Bless the Lord, O my soul; and it must shout ALLELUIA! Silence would kill it.

We are impelled by the custom of the saints. Coming safely from the passage of the Red Sea, Moses sings, " Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders! " Coming triumph-

antly from her heroic campaign against the Canaanites, Deborah sings, "So let all Thine enemies perish, O Lord ; but let them that love Thee be as the sun, when he goeth forth in his might !" Exulting in his fore-glimpse of the Messianic reign, David sings, "Blessed be His glorious name for ever ; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory !" Fondling the Babe of Bethlehem in his arms, Simeon sings, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace ; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation !" Hailing the defeat of death, and the transformation of the grave into a waiting-room for the celestial bridal, Paul sings, "Thanks be unto God, Who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ !" Jubilant with the outcome of the Atonement, Peter sings, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ : Who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away !" Overwhelmed with his vision of the goodness laid up for those who trust in God before the sons of men, Jude sings, "To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty and dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen !"

We are impelled by the example of the Son of Man. Closing the Feast of the Passover, the Jewish Church always sang the one hundredth and thirteenth and the one hundred and eighteenth Psalms, inclusively, and styled these Psalms "The Hallel." So, having partaken of the Paschal Supper, Jesus and His disciples, in the use of these sacred songs, sang, "Blessed be the Name of the Lord from this time forth, and for evermore. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake. O, give thanks unto the Lord ; for He is good : for His mercy endureth for ever." And thus, through all His life among the children of men, He sets His Father before Him : in boyhood always being about His Father's business ; in the wilderness chasing the tempter with His challenge to worship God ; in Gethsemane drinking the cup of unutterable bitterness, saying, "Father, Thy will be done" ; in His intercessory prayer,

imploing, "Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may also glorify Thee"; and in the misery of the cross crying, "Father, into Thine hands I commit My spirit."

And we are impelled by the fashion of the skies. As the earthly temple takes on the similitude of the heavenly, Isaiah sees the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and His train fills the sanctuary; and winged seraphim, with veiled faces and covered feet, hover about Him in willing waiting; and the door-posts tremble with the volume of their chant, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." Caring for their flocks on the heights of Bethlehem, early one morning, some shepherds find themselves begirt with the glory of God, hail the birthday of the Prince of Peace, and hear an angelic assemblage carol, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Engaged one Sabbath in the worship of Him for love of Whom he is an exile and prisoner, the banished John beholds desolate Patmos fragrant and luminous with celestial ministries, and overhears the refrain of the ransomed before the throne: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

* "The glorious armies of the sky
To Thee, Almighty King,
Triumphant anthems consecrate,
And Hallelujahs sing."

We note that men even in the presence of worldly joys shout their glee; and if they for earthly pleasures, shall not we for heavenly? After forty days of confinement on the vessel bearing them thither, a companion of Bishop Gilbert Haven discerns the shore of Africa in the distance, and breaks forth into hearty Hallelujahs. At last the long contest of the Republican Convention for the nomination of a candidate for the Presidency in Eighteen hundred and sixty, ends in the choice of Abraham Lincoln; and lusty ejaculations of "Glory to God!" and "Hallelujah!"

shake the immense wigwam. By telegraph, one dark, stormy night, Pittsburgh and vicinity heard of Lee's surrender; and bells pealed out their loudest notes; men, women and children thronged the streets; "Bless the Lord's," "Glory to God's," and "Hallelujah's," enough to overstock a thousand camp-meetings, were heard everywhere; and finally the multitudes under the lead of Dr. Howard waked the welkin with the Doxology. Fire, a few years ago, ravaged a rural settlement of the Northwest, and particularly endangered a little hamlet where two mills furnished labor and sustenance to the community. All toiled to the utmost to arrest the burning torrent, but in vain, and they gave up the struggle in despair and exhaustion. Briefly afterward, apparently from a cloudless sky, the rain fell heavily, the winds veered the other way, and the flames were stayed. Immediately one of the owners of the mills and settlement, no professor of religion, cast himself on the ground on his knees, his face in the dust; and after a short silence, leaped to his feet shouting, "*Men, hurrah for God! He did it. Hurrah for God!*" Many of you remember the "Black Friday" which swooped down upon the nation some years since. With many its very memory is a nightmare today. A friend who was present told me that the Chicago Merchants' Exchange was filled with men mad with fear and mourning, while in front of the building surged a hopeless multitude. A telegram came from New York, draping the darkness with a darker hue; and strong men groaned and wept in the full conviction that their fortunes were fled, and their families breadless and homeless. Soon another telegram was read, saying, "Confidence is returning; the worst is over;" and Hallelujahs shook that temple of Mammon. And the President of the Exchange rushed to the door, read the telegram to the crowd, and said, "It's God Who has saved us: no one else could do it;" and then he led the thronging masses in singing the Doxology, lifted up his hands, and pronounced the benediction.

O, ye careless, godless men and women, it is not for you to rebuke or ridicule the glad and loud acclaim of the men and

women whose feet feel beneath them the "Rock of Ages." Even over the paltriest gains and honors of earth, you are rocked with excitement and utter most extravagant exclamations; and often emergencies constrain you, in spite of your assumed self-poise, to lay your adoration on the altar of the God you ordinarily disregard and ignore.

O, ye men and women, who are the children of the King, and heirs of immortal riches; be not frozen into ungrateful quiet by the fear or frown of men and women who are by no means your equals in intellectual culture and excellence, and who are so signally your inferiors in moral worth and in the riches and style of the "Kingdom of Heaven." "Let the redeemed of the Lord *say so.*"

"Come, ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known:
Join in a song of sweet accord,
While ye surround His throne.
Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;
But servants of the Heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad."

ALLELUIA! Ejaculation charged with such fragrant and hallowed import! How pitiful and shameful and sinful that its language is such an alien to our lips, and its sentiment such a foreigner to our souls. O, that nevermore it may be such a stranger to either our lips or our souls.

ALLELUIA! Even from this hour forward, may it be our constant experience and frequent expression, in the private place, and in the public walk—felt and spoken to the comfort and edification of ourselves, and to the ecstasy and growth of our fellow-saints, and to the impression and renewal of those about us who are without the adoption and heirship of sons, and to the praise of the grace of God over all, blessed for evermore: our shield and our exceeding great reward.

ALLELUIA! Let it be spoken when the night is the blackness of darkness, and when the stars lend their lamps, and when the sun is in the sky—along all the path of our pilgrimage, amid the

shadows which attend its close, as death conducts us into the house appointed for all the living, and as seraphic wardens fling open the everlasting gates, and the radiance of the celestial city hails us home to our "Father's House."

ALLELUIA ! Let it be spoken as angels bear us to our appointed mansions, and Christ greets us with His congratulation, and friends, lost awhile, rush into our arms to be ours for ever.

ALLELUIA ! Let it be spoken long as we are members of the Church of Probation, in the presence of every fresh bliss, and of every fresh deliverance, and of every fresh gain, and of every fresh growth, and of every fresh victory ; and when we give in our certificates to the Church of Recompense, in the presence of every new beauty, and of every new development, and of every new rapture, while eternal years go gliding by ; and for ever and ever, and for ever and ever, and for ever and ever.

"O, join ye the anthems of triumph that rise
From the throng of the blest, from the hosts of the skies :
Alleluia ! they sing in rapturous strains ;
Alleluia ! the Lord God Omnipotent reigns."

XVIII.

“And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house.”—
ISAIAH, 22 : 24.

Hezekiah is on the throne of Judah, and Shebna is the superior officer of his court. Shebna is evidently not above suspicion as to his integrity. He is not so much like Aristides as to be in danger of ostracism because everybody is commending his rectitude. The truth is, he is an unprincipled politician, occupying his place for the advantage of himself rather than for the advantage of his country. Isaiah declares his disposition and disgrace, though he has come to regard himself as a nail fastened in a sure place—a boss beyond dislocation—and declares the elevation of Eliakim in his stead.

The prophet also foretells the fortune of Eliakim. He shall be fastened “as a nail in a sure place.” Among us nails, or pegs, serve as supports for clothes, ornaments, pictures and various utensils. They are often more serviceable than sightly. The same custom obtained in ancient days. And it was likewise the custom to line the walls of temples with such projections, and on them to suspend, for display and preservation, trophies won in victorious warfare. What Shebna, without warrant, imagined himself to be, Eliakim shall be in fact : a nail fastened in a sure place—a place from which he will not be easily pulled out, but a place where he will hold.

He shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house. He shall carry no base or common burden. He shall fill his office illustriously. The dignity and peace and wealth of the country will be safe in his hands. His administration will sun in its patronage neither jobs nor scandals nor stealings.

And on him shall hang all the glory of his father’s house. No eclipse will enwrap its honor because of his prominence. It may have been a lowly house ; but it shall gather distinction from his distinction. It shall be glorified in his glory. It shall shine in his radiance.

There is here a fore-shadowing of the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Christian Church. "Ye are God's building." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" "Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God : and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone ; in Whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord : in Whom also ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Yes, bear in mind that Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone of this building. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "For through Him we all have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

And on Him hangs all the glory of this building, His Father's house. It once had no existence : "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God." Many a flood has surged around it, and many a storm has beaten upon it ; but "the Lord of hosts is with us : the God of Jacob is our refuge." It has outlived the tempest which has strewn the waters of time with the wrecks of so many navies. It has maintained its erectness amid the downfall of so many imposing establishments. Beneath its ministries multiplied millions have been lifted from the mire and the clay, and have been stationed upon the Rock of Ages ; and from its towers multitudes which no man can number have plumed themselves for their passage to beatific scenes. But on the Lord Jesus Christ hangs all the glory of His Father's house. "Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name : that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

And there is here an illustration of man's relationship to

man. "None of us liveth to himself." We do not stand alone. We stand in rows. Consciously or unconsciously, for weal or for woe, we all affect each other.

We affect each other as to our character: that is, we, to some extent, determine what each other is; and what a man is, *is* his character.

We affect each other as to our reputation: that is, we, to some extent, determine the common estimate of each other; and the common estimate of a man is his reputation.

We affect each other in the ratio of our personal force and position. If we dwell on the mountain of our relationship, we are apparent and influential in proportion to our elevation. If our home is in the valley, of course we will not be felt or seen so far. But whether our sphere is large or small, on us, in some measure, hangs its glory. Our ascent is its ascent. Our praise is its praise. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

A good creed is admirable. It may be a marvellous combination of logic and rhetoric and truth. There may be in it a potency to redeem a nation or to save a world. But it drops no benedictions, and wins no victories, until it is announced and lived and pushed. Ideas are forceless unless they are illustrated. Sentiments are powerless until they are put into conduct. Faith without works is dead. The men who bear the glory of their father's house are men who believe, and therefore *speak*. That is why the name of Paul is a bugle-note today. That is why you can hardly hear the name of Luther without wanting to fight some hoary old sin. That is why, though his "body lies mouldering in the grave," John Brown's "soul is marching on." You need some one in every community, who knows the right, to stand up for it in deed and in utterance; to stand up for it, though he stand alone; to stand up for it until he shall stand amid thronging garlands of success; to stand up for it until a regenerated community shall hang upon him all the glory of its regeneration. You

need men who dare to be conservative when the masses are rushing foolishly forward, and progressive when the masses are as foolishly pulling backward ; men who now act as breakwaters against raging floods, and now as pioneers through pathless forests ; men who now go out in front with sling and stones to smite giant errors in the forehead, and now infuse courage and might into the listless and timid who are waiting to see if any of the rulers have believed ; men who now lead on to new and sublime accomplishments, and now maintain the victories already won.

You want them in business—men who abhor dishonesty in all forms, despise the gain of oppression, and scorn all tricks of trade ; men who, in selling, will not ask more than the worth of the article on sale, and who, in buying, will not seek for less ; men who, entering into a contract, will observe it to the letter ; men who, covenanting to their own hurt, will change not, even though adherence to their covenant hurt them ever so much.

You want them in politics—men who will not barter their manhood for the obtainment of office ; men who, obtaining office, will capably, honestly and punctually fulfill its obligations ; men who will shake their hands from the holding of bribes ; men who would not steal from the commonwealth any sooner than from their neighbor ; men who would rather be right than be President ; men who, being clean and pure themselves, will administer and legislate in the interest of the clean and pure, no matter which way their party may go, and no matter how gamblers and rascals may vote.

You want them in society—men and women of enlightened and regnant conscience, of high principle, and of rugged virtue ; who will ban the adulterer as well as the adulteress ; who are neither drunkards nor drunkard-makers ; who will insist that, to be fashionable, people must be moral and sensible ; in whose eyes a vile person is contemned ; who are brave enough to be singular, no matter how Mrs. Grundy may laugh or look or swear.

You want them in the Church—men and women who, with all they have of beauty and character and intelligence and piety

and station and wealth, will walk before God in all His ordinances, blameless ; who will avoid all appearance of evil ; who will contend for the faith once delivered to the saints in all the power and purity and simplicity of its announcement, and in all the beauty and force and righteousness of its practice ; who will be in daily experience of the peace which passeth all understanding ; who will every hour grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who will neither abandon nor lightly esteem the ordinances ; who will neither break nor crack the Sabbath by needless journeys or visits or works ; who will never, by example any more than by teaching, cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of ; who will always be in the field, and never in the hospital ; who will be an inspiration and a help to those of inferior age and advancement and opportunity ; who will be a constant and mighty protest against the indifference and negligence and unfaithfulness of those who have a name to live but are really dead in trespass and in sin ; who will, with clear voice, firm hand and steady foot, awe the cowardly and indolent and treacherous, and pour tonic into the souls of the despairing and weak ; who will be a fortress of retreat when the armies of aliens are in apparent supremacy, and a tower of strength when the legions of the Lord are driving the enemies to the wall ; who will be men and women of God, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost ; wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil ; humble, but mighty ; lowly, but prominent ; children, but giants ; fond of peace, but willing for war ; each only one, but one who can chase a thousand.

You want them in the family—fathers, mothers and children, on each of whom shall hang the glory of the house ; who shall touch and thrill each other into loftiest styles of living ; who, by the generous nobility and unselfish refinement of their conduct, in all their ways, shall be dissuasives from all that is boorish and profane and vulgar, and impulses to all that is gentle and pure and sweet ; who, by the informing and uplifting tone of their conversation, shall lift the household above gossip and scandal and twad-

dle, and imbue it with a knowledge of God and men and nature and things; who, by their correct convictions and habits, shall develop in one another proper opinions and practices as to amusements and morals and religion; who will be so builded into one another in all which is good and loving and rich and sublime and wise, that none, when dying, will have doubtfully to ask, "Will they miss me at home?"

In some connection, and in some measure, glory is possible to every individual who dares to do a generous and holy deed in the face of general apathy and cowardice and indolence. It is a glory which comes of bravery, conscience, goodness, intelligence and truth. It is the glory which was won by Enoch in his company with God in the midst of his godless generation. It is the glory which was won by David in his self-denial, when refusing the waters of the well of Bethlehem, lest the satisfaction of his thirst should increase the thirst of his stricken soldiers. It is the glory which was won by Wilbur Fisk. He was chaplain of a military company, and was present at one of its suppers. According to the usual custom, a bottle of brandy was at each plate; but not a cork was drawn during the meal. When the company rose from the table, Fisk said to the commanding officer, "Captain, your guns are well loaded, but not a shot has been fired." And the captain replied, "Yes; and it is all out of respect to you. It is a pleasure, upon such occasions, to defer to your sentiments." O that our Christianity were so Christian that our very presence would send sin skulking into a corner!

Nor is this glory a mere appurtenance of the individual. Its rays stream out and bathe in their lustre the family of the individual. The glory of Samuel encircled Hannah. The glory of Garfield enveloped her whose maternal care trained him into his brilliant manhood. The glory of Christ was reflected on His virgin mother.

What a motive this is to honorable and upright life! Who does not feel its power? Surely, he who has an iota of sensibility will not bring discredit to his family. Surely, even though con-

senting to infamy for himself, he will halt and turn as he realizes that the infamy will be not merely his personal inheritance, but also the inheritance of the mother who bore him, and of the wife who has forsaken all others in order to follow his fortune, and of the child who wears his name without any election of his own. Surely, he who is, at fearful odds, fighting for the right, will fight more earnestly than ever as he remembers that his triumph is the triumph of those who are dearer to him than he is to himself.

Let no one carry off all the honor of the connection. Let no one lightly consent to merely sun himself in the radiance of the family. Let no one be a curse or shadow or weight on the home to which he belongs, because of his unworthy or worthless deportment in any of the relations of life.

Let every one be ambitious to be and do his best in every circle in which he revolves, whether in business, or in politics, or in society, or in the Church. Let every one of you be thus ambitious for your own sake, and for the sake of those who are bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. Their only hope of distinction may be in you. On you may hang all the glory of the house. Boys and girls, remember the old folks at home. Husbands and wives, remember that you are one. Parents, remember your children. And may the remembrance be an anchor in every storm, and a shield in every temptation !

O, the power and scope of personality ! Travellers report in South America a species of palm which attracts the atmospheric moisture, condenses it into dew, and drops it refreshingly upon the thirsty earth. It looms up in the midst of a burning desert, and forthwith the desert blooms into luxuriant vegetation. The clouds may be empty, the fountains cease to flow, and the rivers almost vanish from their beds ; but all the busier is the benevolent tree in compelling the atmosphere to give forth moisture, and in planting an oasis where the parched and toil-worn pilgrim can pause for drink and food and shade. So can one humble human being go out into the wilderness of life, and be a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night ; go out and be a shadow of a

great rock in a weary land ; go out and be a tree planted by rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, and whose fruit shall be for the healing of the nations.

And O, how the glory of the person is the glory of his house ! Assembling his army beneath the Pyramids, and proposing its stimulation to unwonted valor, Napoleon shouted, “ Forty centuries are looking down upon you ! ” O, my hearers, your ancestry has you in its eye ; your posterity is looking toward you ; your darlings at home are watching you. “ Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith ; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” O, men, women, and children, if on us hangs all the glory of our father’s house, let it hang on a nail fastened in a sure place—let it hang where it will never fall !

XIX.

“If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him.”—JOHN, 11:48.

Jesus of Bethlehem is busily prosecuting His mission of mercy among the children of men. Words such as man never spake are falling from His lips. Works such as man never wrought are wrought at His mandate—even death letting go its clutch, and the grave surrendering its tenantry, at His summons.

Just now, His recent resurrection of Lazarus from the slumber of the tomb has lifted Him into still greater prominence in the eyes of the people. In large masses they are falling into line, and rapidly growing into readiness to follow wherever His standard shall lead the way.

The Pharisees and priests give evidence of increasing alarm at these popular demonstrations in His favor, hasten into consultation, recognize the gravity of the situation, and resolve on earnest and immediate measures to arrest His triumphal march—saying, “If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him.”

And He does attractively and forcibly and inherently commend Himself to humanity wherever it has knowledge of Him. This is the admission of the arrant antagonism which assailed Him in the days of His incarnation. The truth filters through unfriendly lips. Even His enemies become unconscious and unwilling confessors of His Divine character; concede that he doeth many miracles; and proclaim that, with a fair chance, He will win universal faith.

This is the confession of the bitterest prejudice. A ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus, comes stealthily into His company, and declares, “We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him.” An honorable counsellor, Joseph of Arimathea, “which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.” And Saul of Tarsus, a most devoted adherent of the Mosaic economy, and a most malignant hater of the Messianic economy, kneels at the feet of

the despised Galilean, and shouts, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

This is the expression of the most capable criticism. Dr. Channing says, "The character of Jesus is wholly inexplicable on human principles." Carlyle says, "Jesus of Nazareth, our Divinest symbol! Higher has the human thought not yet reached." Herder says, "Jesus Christ is, in the noblest and most perfect sense, the realized ideal of humanity." Napoleon says, "Jesus Christ was more than man: He founded His empire on love, and to this very day millions would die for Him." Rousseau says, "The facts about Socrates, which no one doubts, are not so well attested as those about Jesus Christ. If the death of Socrates be that of a sage, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God." Spinoza says, "He is the symbol of Divine wisdom." Kant says, "He is the symbol of ideal perfection." Hegel says, "He is the symbol of the Divine and human." Goethe says, "The sublimity proceeding from His person is of so Divine a kind as only the Divine could ever have manifested upon earth." Richter says, "He, being the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy, lifted with His pierced hand empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages."

This is the testimony of the most enlightened experience. Bunsen says, "My highest honor, and my largest joy, is in having known Jesus Christ." De Wette says, "This only I know, that there is salvation in no other name than in the name of Jesus Christ, the crucified, and that nothing loftier offers itself to humanity than the God-manhood realized in Him, and the kingdom which He founded." Bishop Gilbert Haven says, "He is a whole Christ, a full Saviour: Glory be to God for such a salvation!" Sir James McIntosh says, "Jesus: Love; Jesus: Love—the same thing!" Polycarp says, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me wrong; and how can I now blaspheme my King Who has saved me?"

This is the voice of Jesus Himself. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."

Any limited acceptance of Him among the children of men is because of inadequate knowledge of Him, through opposing forces and influences. Among these forces and influences may be named the world, the flesh, the devil, the misinterpretation of science, the teachings of skepticism, and the want of Christlike Christianity in the Church.

And the deliverance of humanity from these alien dominations, and the fixing of its eye directly upon the Son of Man as He is set forth in His Gospel, will soon lead it everywhere to proclaim, "Now, we believe : for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

Drop a curtain about the allurements of the world, and hush its syren voice ; and what crowding columns will close in around Immanuel and crown Him Lord of all !

Fetter the flesh, and force it down into its due and subordinate place as the simple handmaid of the soul ; and what immense hosts of the most abject of all slaves will escape their bonds, and find the freedom of those whom the truth makes free !

Force the devil back into the dungeon digged for his imprisonment in those remote ages when he fell like lightning from the skies ; and what large masses will ground their arms, hurry into the camp of the Captain of our salvation, and gladly take the oath of allegiance !

Remand science to her own legitimate domain, seating her at the feet of the Maker and Monarch of all things, and setting her to the interpretation of His works ; and what matchless multitudes, clothed, and in their right mind, will see through nature up to nature's God !

Shear skepticism of its vanity and vice, (for it is mainly

vanity and vice,) and show it in its real character—a bundle of negations and pretences ; and what mighty myriads, rescued from their shadow and shame, will press their exultant way into the sunlight and triumph of Faith !

Transform the Church into a copy of the Church portrayed in the Gospel of its Founder, every member a miniature of Christ, and every society of members a household of Christ ; and what trooping throngs, cleansed from all uncleanness, and walking worthy of Him Who hath called them into His glory and kingdom, will return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads !

You must in some way becloud and hamper the Son of Man ; or His inherent, manifest excellence will irresistibly stream forth, and win the homage of every other man. You can not leave Him and another man alone, without that other man growing into one with the Son of Man. Compel antagonisms and obscurities to hide their hideous heads, drive counterfeits and misinterpretations into the dust, and hold up Christ as He stands in the Scriptures of His own inspiration ; and all men will believe on Him.

Believed on by all men, what evil will be done ? Who will have damage by the universal faith ? Even the world will be none the worse ; for it will gleam in its old beauty, and laugh in its old bliss. Nor the flesh ; for it will once more have access to the Tree of Life. Nor the devil ; for he will only hurry to his chosen dominion. Nor science ; for she will inherit the baptism of a clearer eye and a sublimer outlook. Nor skepticism ; for it will mount from the bogs and swamps of doubt, and scale the summits of certainty and peace. Nor the Church ; for she will obtain deliverance from the defilements and disabilities which soil her face and tie her limbs, and put on her most beautiful garments, and wend her way out of the wilderness, leaning upon the arm of her Beloved.

Family life will be overhung with a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night ; and offspring and par-

ents will lie in the bosom of Him of Whom the family in earth and in Heaven is named.

Individual life will be hid with Christ in God, and man everywhere will walk the way set before him, transparent, like some holy thing.

National life will beam with the benediction which begets men into fellow-citizens with saints—its flag the flag of Calvary, its King the King of kings, and its policy the inspiration of the skies.

Social life will glisten with the dew and shine with the glow of brotherly-kindness—all men's good each man's rule, and all men looking with kindly eyes upon the things of others.

Universal life will doff the rags of its lapse, don the raiment of Paradise, and march for a better heritage than Paradise ever knew—occupying a new earth, overarched with new heavens, and the one not a child's short step from the other.

Verily, it will be no dark day in the calendar of Time when all men shall believe on the Son of God. It will be a day of surpassing brilliance and transcendent felicity—the very creature delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God ; humanity wearing the image of God ; and immortality ringing all its bells and sweeping all its harps to the praise of God, and singing with all its voices, “ As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God. O how great is the goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought out for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men.”

I charge you then, ye armies of the aliens, in the name of the Lord of hosts, that ye let Jesus of Bethlehem alone.

Behold Him closely—analyzing His being and character and life and offer and work ; for He craves such inspection : “ Search the Scriptures : they are they which testify of Me.” Believe on Him fully ; for the things written about Him “ are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name.” Follow Him

steadily and studiously ; for, if a man keep His sayings, he shall never see death.

But how, then, is He to be let alone? In His doctrine, about God and Himself and man. Accept it without dilution and without dissent ; for the words which He speaks are spirit, and they are life. In His government : “ God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father ; ” and none hath hardened himself against Him and prospered. In His ways—His ways of conversion and faith and holiness and love and obedience : His ways for the life of the Church and the community and the individual. “ Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day . . . For it is not a vain thing for you ; because it is your life.” “ Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it.” Ye must not, even in the fancy that you can carry it more handsomely or safely, touch with rude hands the ark of the Lord. Ye must let the Lord have His own way. Ye must not forget His own reminder, “ Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven ; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven.”

Carrying, then, either the banner of antagonism, or the flag of indifference, or the standard of self-sufficiency, call off your hordes ! Whether you are avowed enemies, or inconsistent friends, sound the bugle of retreat !

Certainly, I would hail your submission to His sovereign sceptre. He hath bought you with His own blood. He covets your perfect felicity. He plans and pleads for your sympathy for yourselves. He will welcome your partnership with Him in great and noble enterprises, that you may be sharers with Him in all the dignities and riches of the outcome.

Do, however, as you may, I have no fear of the outcome. The decree has gone forth, “ He shall be called God of the whole

earth!" The Almighty Father has ordained His coronation. His own right hand will cleave His way to the possession of the uttermost parts of the earth. His own supreme and transparent excellence will gather all principalities and powers in rapture and in reverence to His footstool.

Enmity may add to the years that shall intervene before the millennial glory shall flame along the expanding skies. Inconsistency may increase the burden He has to carry, and lengthen the path He has to travel to reach the enthronement when all His enemies shall be put under His feet. Nevertheless, victory is sure. Neutrality and opposition shall be ground to powder beneath the stone cut out of the mountains without hands, as it sweeps its onward way. Resistlessly, steadily, stupendously, our God is marching on.

In the interest of humanity, fallen from its original orbit, and shorn of its original possession and prospect, and in the interest of yourselves, waging a hopeless and unrighteous warfare, ye foes of the Anointed, whether open or secret, lay down your arms. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little."

Only let Him alone, willing in the day of His power; and all men will believe on Him. As I need not reiterate, I have not a word to say in arrest or disparagement of all possible diligence for the cultivation of self in Divine things, or for the capture of the world for Christ. As earnestly and habitually as ever, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." As earnestly and habitually as ever, on with your exhortations and missions and prayers and songs and toils. Yea, multiply them a thousand fold. But Christ is no pensioner on unregeneracy. He is no penniless prince, begging His way back to a lost domain. He is not running hither and thither, soliciting alms. He must not be regarded as needing either men or means. He can raise up agencies out of the stones. In Him all fulness dwells. He can do without all who can do without Him.

He has an inalienable right to all the endowments and opportunities and possibilities of all the children of men. They are all the benefactions of His hand. He calls them all into His service that, baptized with His benediction, they who follow Him in the way of the regeneration, suffering with Him here, may reign with Him hereafter.

He is on His way to an everlasting and universal kingdom, and He would like to have all beliefs and conditions and powers rally at once to His side. He would like to have culture, that it may ascend to a dower of greener garlands and a richer heritage ; but He can do without it. He would like to have influence, that it may bear itself more grandly and impressively ; but He can do without it. He would like to have politics, that it may carry itself with cleaner hands and higher impulses ; but He can do without it. He would like to have wealth, that it may invest in better securities and obtain larger dividends ; but He can do without it.

He can do without any or all of these, essential as they may seem in human eyes to the accomplishment of great results.

He *will* do without these sooner than abdicate His supremacy at their behest or to buy their favor. And to those, whether in the episcopacy or ministry or membership, who are for bending doctrine or holy-living or methods to carnal bidding—to catch the patronage of culture or influence or politics, He cries imperatively, “ Let Me alone : I need no patronage. I will not lower My standard to win recruits. I say to all unrenewed hearts, whether cultured or influential or political or wealthy, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven—Ye must be born again.”

All men are addressed by the Gospel of the grace of God with its calls to faith and renewal, and with its promises of forgiveness and immortality. It knows no distinction of class or condition or means among men, but regards all men as on the same level of impotence and necessity ; and it would uplift all men to the same plane of manhood in Christ Jesus. It has, however, its own manner of renewal and uplifting ; and that manner

is their creation anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, on their confession of sin and suit for mercy at the throne of grace ; and it will not allow one sinner any easier or shorter way to its immunities than another. Naaman must take his healing as any other leper, or stay a leper to the day of his death ; and a millionaire must take his renewal into the image of God along-side of the pauper, or stay an unforgiven sinner, weltering in the wrath of God.

But, to its impotence and shame, the Church of Christ has not enough of the Spirit of Christ. Instead of calling to all sinners, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," it lets down the bars before sinners of particular social grades, and says, "Here is a key to a private entrance. You can get in without contact with the mob at the main entrance, and take a box ; and nobody will know that you are other than you were." It happens, thus, that unconverted men and women are smuggled into the sanctuary of the saints, and are seated in its high places, and shape its policy ; and the poor, simple Church finds that, instead of lifting them into Christian character and spirit, by her deference, she has sunken to their level, and the household of Christ is won by the minions of the world. O, it seems to me that, louder than a volume of thunder, Christ's voice is crying to the Church, "Let Me alone. Let Me have My own way. Let My word be your only rule of faith and practice. Quit your attempts to improve on My methods. Quit fettering Me with carnal conceits and plans. Take away the stones you have piled in My front. Tell the world to take Me on My own terms, or tell it that it can not take Me at all. Ye can not serve God and Mammon!"

By such courageous and faithful procedure, a great apparent falling off, in fashion and fortune and profession, will come ; and the faint-hearted will tremble for the Ark of the Lord. But angels will clap their hands ; and Christ will gird His sword upon His thigh ; and His Spirit will have free course ; and His votaries will rally ; and His Church—redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled,—will "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

It is not, moreover, genuine culture in the Church which demurs to genuine godliness and strict conformity to its requirements. Genuine culture always, when assuming Christian vows, is devoted and loyal to those vows and silent as the grave in the way of their criticism : for it is always devoted and loyal to all the vows it assumes, having assumed them intelligently, and as silent as the grave in the way of criticism of that to which it has committed itself. Genuine culture leads to Christ, and seats itself at His feet. Pretence to culture leads from Christ, and waits for the word of Mrs. Grundy. The sooner the Church drives the pretence to the wall, the sooner will the real crowd her altars and tell her praise. The sooner the Church discards all worldly influences and methods, and puts on the spirit of power—the sooner she lets Christ alone to manage His own campaign, the sooner will she hail Him to His throne.

It is not with avowed opposition that I plead to let Christ alone. It can do Him no harm. He has all power in earth and in Heaven ; and when His chosen hour has come, it will be only as the straw in the whirl of the torrent.

It is with the Church I plead to let Christ alone—to cease fighting His battles with un-Christly weapons : to cease seeking to help Him in un-Christly ways : to cease seeking to win Him the world by uncrowning Him at its beck. Let Him have His own way in the evangelization of the world ; and the very things you now go begging for in vain, will hasten to Him with their gold and frankincense and myrrh. Commerce will carry His flag, and do business in His name, and help run His errands. Legislation will declare His mind, embody His Spirit and proclaim His rule. Science will own His Divinity, read His works, and, in illuminated letters, write His renown. Sin will pull down its colors, rush to His mercy-seat, and shout, “ My Lord, and my God ! ” The Church will put on cleaner garb, range holier planes, and rise from summit to summit, until one with the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven—prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband.

O, send the summons down the line, "Let Him alone!" Blow away the clouds which impertinent help and questionable methods have hung about Him; and the Sun of Righteousness will sweep the horizon with healing in His wings. Cast down the barriers builded in His road by the hands of indifference and thoughtlessness; gather up the stones which foolish, though well-meaning, zeal has piled in His way; and the Prince Imperial will come marching to His throne, glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save. Give Him a chance; lift Him up from the earth, free from earthly helps as well as opposition; and He will draw all men unto Him. The world can not withstand its ancient Conqueror. Infancy will bound into His arms, and bask in His smile. Manhood will confess His majesty and carry His image. Womanhood will feel His grace, as she touches the hem of His garment, and go forth a jewel of immortality. Old age will forget its infirmity, totter into His presence, and turn to follow Him with the glee and vigor of unfading youth. Poverty will have His blessing, laugh in His bounty, and rejoice in a title to mansions in the skies. And sorrow will take heart in His smile, and wipe away its tears to weep no more. The world over, all men will believe in Him—every ear bend to catch His footfall; every eye brighten at His coming; every hand extend to grasp His palm; every heart leap to hail Him to its upper seat; and every voice join in the chant, "Lo, this is our God: we have waited for Him: we will be glad, and rejoice in His salvation."

XX.

“And I said, Should such a man as I flee?”—NEHEMIAH, 6:11.

A familiar old adage, “Out of sight, out of mind,” is not always true; for the manly and noble-hearted never forget the friendships once formed, nor the interests once taken to heart. Once loving, they love to the end.

As we recall the history of the times, Jerusalem has bitten the dust. Her legions are defeated, her Temple is dishonored, her treasury is emptied, and her walls are laid low. Her people are enslaved, or slaughtered, or sitting in tears amid their wasted homes.

But one notable one, Nehemiah, is a captive in a distant city, environed with circumstances as comfortable and prosperous as are possible to a stranger in a strange land. He is in high esteem at court—is in honorable office, and is near the throne. His heart, however, is not amid these felicities and glories; and he has no ear for their songs, no eye for their splendors, and no taste for their dainties. His studies are about his far-off land and Temple. His thoughts are among the tombs of his fathers; and, unable to conceal his emotions from the monarch, and standing high in that monarch's favor, he obtains permission to go to his country and do his best to repair her wasted fortunes and reseate her on the pinnacle of her olden excellence.

Full of consternation and hate, great are the animosity and apprehension of the enemies of Judah at the indication that her darkness may lift, and her sun once more mount the sky; and they rally all their spleen and wit for the defeat of the patriotic and pious undertaking. Now they employ insult and irony, asking, “What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? . . . Even . . . if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall;” but through all the storm of sarcasm, the enterprise bravely holds on its way. Now they join hands to hinder the movement by force; but the valiant cohorts of restoration stand steadily by their colors, with a tool in one hand and a

weapon in the other, through the day and the night ; and the enterprise knows no arrest. Now they invite Nehemiah to a conference in a neighboring village ; but he penetrates their treacherous solicitation, and replies, " I am doing a great work, so that I can not come down : why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you ? " and the enterprise moves onward. Now they seek to alarm him with accusations of rebellion ; but he responds, " There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart ; " and the enterprise pushes on toward completion. Now they suborn Shemaiah, whom Nehemiah supposes to be his friend, to play on his regard for his own safety, and who urges, " Enemies will assault you in the night time ; let us conceal ourselves in the Temple, and secure ourselves from danger. "

Our text is the answer of the eminent saint and stalwart soldier to the dastardly suggestion. " Should such a man as I flee ? "—I, the governor, who ought to be an example of courage and fidelity ? I, on whose counsel and presence and valor so much depends ? I, who have affirmed such devotion to my country, and such faith in my God ? I, who have had such marvellous experiences of Divine grace and strength ? I flee ?—Betray my nation ? Disgrace myself ? Dishonor my religion ? Provoke the Lord of all ? I flee ? O Lord, forbid the thought !

All, even the most genuine saints, encounter temptations. There are things and times which try the souls of even the most cultured and earnest friends of God.

Conceding our obligation to advancement in the Divine life, and endeavoring to meet that obligation, we sometimes seem to gain so little ground. We can not assure ourselves that we are becoming more like Christ, or gathering meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, or laying up treasure in Heaven. And such apparent lack of increase and progress is exceeding bitterness to those who earnestly aspire to be Israelites indeed, coveting the best gifts, and craving to be filled with all the fulness of God.

Conceding our obligation to build up the Church, and help her to be a "glorious Church," without spot or wrinkle, we see her failing in character or steadfastness or zeal—her banners dragging in the dust, her fortifications falling down, her guns silent, her ordinances powerless, her people losing their identity among the unregenerate, and turning their backs to her enemies—Zion's good name a by-word and scoffing; and such declension is an exceeding heart-ache to those who cry for the peace of Jerusalem, and long that her righteousness may go forth as brightness, and her salvation like unto a lamp that burneth.

Conceding our obligation to help win the world to a knowledge of the Truth as it is in Jesus, we see it still lying in the arms of the wicked one. Iniquity abounds. Our own neighborhood discloses no evidences of awakening. Other neighborhoods seem to be stirred by no better impulses. Remoter regions send in no word of quickening. Far and wide Satanic flags flout the sky, and Satanic heels press the necks of the most of the millions of our race. And such Satanic domination is a stunning woe to those who pant for the universal reign of the Prince of Peace, and thirst for the time when the God of the whole earth shall He be called.

All these are specimens of the occasions which try the souls of the saints. But they are only specimens. They by no means exhaust the catalogue. From Egypt to Canaan trials throng the entire route of the ransomed. It is wilderness from the Red Sea to the Jordan—from conversion to coronation. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" is as Divine an announcement as is the announcement, "In Me ye shall have peace." Tribulation is as really and thoroughly a legacy of Christ to His disciples as is peace. It may be a blessing in disguise, but it is a blessing. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."

And beneath their trials, saints have sometimes temporarily broken down. Abraham equivocated. Job cursed his day. Moses spoke impatiently. Elijah fretted himself into the fancy that he

was the last of the faithful, and looked about for a chance to die. Jonah grew so angry that he imagined he could improve on the Divine administration. Peter denied all knowledge of Christ; and all the disciples forsook the Master in His special stress.

Ah, in the history of the Church how many successors these have had in their infirmities! How many who have betrayed the Lord Who bought them with His own blood! How many who have crucified the Son of God afresh, dishonored the grace of God, and done themselves momentous harm, if not wrought out their own irretrievable undoing!

But, "All hail the power of Jesus' Name!" there is recovery from lapse in the Divine life. There is a path back home for the prodigal. Yet, all lapse is lost time; and any lapse may be one from which there is no return. "Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God."

For there is no necessity that saints should fail in the time of trial. I know that no feebler or fewer enemies assail us than assailed the saints of earlier dispensations. Our foes are as many and strong and wily as ever. Toward the soldier of the cross the flesh is no friendlier, and Satan is no kindlier, and the world is no lovelier, than when the banner of Calvary was first flung to the breeze. I know that in ourselves we have no sufficiency for the dread engagement to which we are called. Either by force or strategy, going to war at our own expense, we will lose the field, and die, later or sooner, at the hands of the haters of the Crucified One. Nevertheless, there is no need of failure. It is possible to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. It is possible to go from strength to strength, holding on our way, until every one appeareth in Zion before God.

See our instructions, clearly defining the path of duty: so clearly mapping out the entire celestial route, that none need mistake either our obligation or our privilege. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." "The entrance of

Thy word giveth light : it giveth understanding to the simple."

See our opportunities. Convenient occasions come crowding into our hands, and convenient occurrences come leaping down our paths, and convenient seasons come marching into our front ; and, in their improvement, we gather fresh laurels for ourselves, and hang fresh laurels about the brow of the Captain of our salvation. The arms of our hands are made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob ; and every conflict is a new avenue to glory, and every toil is a new growth in grace, and every trial is a new meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. Yonder gleams the proclamation of Him we follow, "I know thy works : behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

See our responsibilities. In our keeping are our own individual fortunes : for, "every one of us shall give account of himself to God ;" and the life of our families : for, "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it ;" and the prosperity of the Church : for, "let us consider one another, to provoke unto good works ;" and the weal of the world : for, "how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard ;" and the honor of God : for, "herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Tremblingly inquiring, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Holy Scripture responds, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you ; that ye having always all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good thing."

See our recompense—*here*, a conscience void of offence toward God and man, a peace that passeth understanding, signs multiplied on signs that our labor is not in vain in the Lord, strength according to our day, and victory upon victory until the very air is resonant with victory; and *hereafter*, Heaven, with its clustering beauties and companions and crowns and hosannas and welcomes : all fragrant and luminous with the presence and smile of Him Who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, and whose voice so often, amid the hail and smoke of conflict here, rouses us to new valor with its clarion call, "To

him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

See our resources. In our interest gather the prayers of our fellow-saints: and "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;" and the ministry of angels: for, "are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" and the forces of the Holy Spirit: for "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;" and the intercession of the Son of God: for "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Verily, there is no need of failure. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved;" and our instructions and opportunities and responsibilities and recompense and resources all call and encourage us to endurance. Syria is at war with Israel. Every plan of Syria is discovered to Israel as soon as it is formed. The Syrian king suspects treachery in his camp; but his officers resent the accusation, and tell him that Elisha somehow gets their secrets and reports them: whereupon the king sends a host of chariots and horses to Dothan to arrest the prophet of the Lord. The servant of the prophet, looking out in the morning, and seeing the hostile array, grows wild with alarm and informs his master. The prophet calmly replies, "Fear not: they that be with us are more than they that be with them;" and prays, "Lord, open his eyes, that he may see;" and, lo, the mountain is full of chariots and horses of fire—the cohorts of God mustered for the safety of His servant. And so, still, "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, is the Lord round about His people from henceforth, even for ever."

Then, up guards, and at them! Should such men as we flee? And I do not disguise the cost and struggle. I advise these young recruits, as well as remind these old veterans, that it is a campaign of fears within and fightings without. You will encounter enemies in ambush, enemies in the field, and enemies in

the fort. Crosses will confront you, and fires will kindle about you.

And will you, therefore, join the armies of aliens? will you pull down your flag, throw away your arms, skulk into hiding-places, show the white feather, and sell out Christ and the Church and your own immortality?

A thousand times, No! Each show yourself a man. Shout in the face of every foe, "Should such a man as I flee? I, who know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day? I, who have tasted of the heavenly gift, am made a partaker of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come?"

"I, for whose sake all nature stands,
And stars their courses move?
I, for whose guard the angel bands
Come flying from above?
I, for whom God the Son came down,
And labored for my good—
How careless to secure that crown
He purchased with His blood!"

Each has accepted his commission, received his bounty, and taken the oath of allegiance. Each has been called to the field, furnished with arms, and trusted with supplies. Each is under an obligation from which there is no escape. And with each is sufficiency for all to which he may be appointed in either action or endurance.

Even childhood is no discharge. A great portion of Holland is lower than the sea, which is fended from the land by immense embankments. A lad going home from school one evening, along a sequestered path, and looking with unusual interest at the large dike he is passing, sees a small stream breaking through and carrying away tiny particles of the bank. It is a little beginning of a vast catastrophe; and the lad is too little to do all that is demanded in the emergency. But, if he does nothing, the ruin will soon be beyond remedy; and he clambers to the spot, puts his hand in the hole, and stops the stream for the time. Evening

darkens into night, and night flushes into morning ; and then his friends find him, and mend the breach ; but the task was beyond his natural strength, and a long and serious illness follows. Finally recovering, he is asked if he was not afraid through his fearful strain and watch ; and he answers, " No, I knew God would take care of me for taking care of other people." In the times of the martyrs, a child was cruelly scourged, and was urged by the minions of cruelty to save himself by the denial of Jesus ; but he persistently refused. His mother and friends were looking on in helpless, prayerful sympathy ; and when at last the scourging was over, he was delivered to his mother who, as she bathed and soothed his wounds, inquired, " Darling, how could you bear it?" and he replied, " All the while an angel stood by me, and pointed upward, and I kept looking upward, and was helped." See, children, how you too can have strength according to your day !

Even age is no disability. An old Christian woman desired the use of a school-house for a Sabbath-school ; and a director, who was an avowed unbeliever, stood steadily in her way. Finally he said to her, " Aunt Polly, I will not consent. You need not persist in your request." She replied, " Well, I believe I will get it." He said, " I'd like to know how." The old woman said, " The Lord will unlock it." The director answered, " He'll not get the key from me." And the old woman responded, " I'll pray over it, and I've found that when I pray something gives way." And at the next interview he gave his consent, and stood by the enterprise against all opposition. See, old saints, what you can do, counselling with God, even when your natural force has abated ; and no longer reckon yourselves as having served your time !

Infirmity is no insufficiency. A good woman had a drunken husband, a crippled daughter, and an idiot son, and was herself bent nearly double with pain and toil, never knowing rest except in communion with God. One day a visitor asked her, " Are you not weary?" and she replied, " Yes ; but the Lord means me

to work here. I've all eternity to rest in.' And, with a cracked voice, according to human ears, but with a voice sweet as the cadence of an angel's song in the ears Divine, she sang :

"When I've been there ten thousand years,
Bright, shining as the sun,
I've no less days to sing God's praise,
Than when I first begun."

See, ye stricken ones, what flowers of devotion can bloom even in the hardest and lowliest lots ; and smile away your tears !

Insignificance is no release. A great Danish army many years ago invaded Scotland. Arranging a night assault, it crept stealthily onward ; and the Scots that night, dreaming of no danger, lay asleep with no sentinels out. The better to conceal their advance, the Danes came on in their bare feet , and, just as they were nearing the slumbering Scots, one unlucky Dane, with broad, uncovered foot, stepped on a bristling thistle. Forthwith he gave a roar of pain which rang out like the blast of a trumpet. Immediately the sleepers were alert, with their weapons in their hands. The enemies were routed ; and ever since then the thistle has been the National emblem of Scotland. During our war with England, there was close to the harbor of New London an old rope-walk, with its row of square windows fronting the water. In one of his cruises after our stores, a British admiral came near, and had an excellent opportunity for destroying the town, which was unguarded. Subsequently asked why he did not do it, he said, " I would have done it, if it had not been for that ugly old fort, whose guns entirely commanded the harbor." What scared him off was no fort, but an old rope-walk.

There are place and use in the cause of Christ for every one of us—even the poorest and weakest : even the oldest and youngest ; and on each of us is His uniform. It behooves us to wear it worthily ; and, even if we can be and do nothing more, let us see that we are as efficient sentinels as that Scotch thistle, and wake the sleepers at their post ; or, even if we are superannuated old rope-walks, let us look like forts, and scare off the

assailants of the Truth as it is in Jesus by our godly carriage and conversation. Let us ever bear in mind that what we can do is the measure of what we must do, in order to the conservation of our own Christian character, and that less is disloyalty.

“ Arise, ye saints, arise !
The Lord our Leader is.
The foe before His banner flies,
And victory is His.”

“Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.”—HEBREWS, 13 : 13.

A camp is correctly defined as a collection of huts or tents for the shelter of an army in warfare. All due caution is exercised, in its arrangement and supervision, against disease or onset or surprise. Its regulations are proverbially imperative and strict, and their violation is visited with immediate and impartial penalty. Ancient Israel, in its pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan, lived in camp, under laws minutely directing both as to collective and individual conduct. One of these laws, doubtless for sanitary reasons, provided that the bodies of the animals slain in sacrifice should be burned without the camp.

According to Grotius, “Whatever was not lawful to be done in the camp, afterwards was not lawful to be done in the city.” Therefore, that there might be conformity between His oblation of Himself and its prefiguring sacrifices, Christ was crucified without the gate of the city—thus being classed with criminals, who were not allowed to be executed within the walls of Jerusalem.

By Biblical authority, Christians being described as soldiers, the Christian Church is properly rated as a camp ; and its earnest engagement in the work of Christ is rated as reproach, inasmuch as Christ was an object of hate and scorn because of His mission to destroy the works of the devil. “The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.” “Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world: therefore the world hateth you.”

Christ is a Man of war. He has all power among the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth. None ever hardened himself against Him and prospered. Giving ourselves to Him, in the acceptance of His atonement, and in the observance of its conditions, He becomes our Salvation, and is henceforth our Director in dilemma, our Helper in impotence, and our Supporter in every stress. He is, moreover, the Commander and

Leader of His people. His sword is on His thigh. His arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies. His army following wherever His flag flutters, He shall go forth conquering and to conquer, until all His enemies are put under His feet—until from His camp shall be heard the law of universal life, and all people, taught of His mouth, shall walk in His ways.

A camp, as already defined, is an assemblage of conveniences and facilities for the temporary home of an army. It is fixed with an eye to its adaptation to the design of the campaign, to its easiness of defense, and to its ready obtainment of supplies. It is laid out in an orderly manner—each corps and division and regiment having its own regular quarters. It is properly guarded—due precautions being taken against advances of foes, development of insubordination, and inroads of sickness. It provides adequate instruction—all the discipline and drill essential to the knowledge and practice of soldierly tactics; necessary rations—all that is requisite in the way of drink and food, and medicine and raiment and shelter; and suitable rest—all needed opportunity for recuperation from the tear and wear of fatigue.

It is not apparent, thus far in its description, that there is much shadow to camp-life—much to alarm or repel. It is rather an attraction. It must be borne in mind, however, that a camp is not an end. It is not merely appointed as a citadel in which a recruit may safely accomplish the period of his enlistment, or an inn in which he may find refreshment, or a school in which he may prosecute his studies. It is a means to an end. There is an enemy abroad; and the camp only proposes to its occupants its conveniences and facilities until they have driven the enemy from the field. To drive the enemy from the field is the design of the camp, and the obligation of its soldiers.

A Christian congregation is a camp—a camp of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is fixed with an eye to its adaptation to the design of the campaign; for He that is for us is more than all that can be against us; and when the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifteth up a standard against him. It is fixed with an eye to

its easiness of defense: for as the mountains are around about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people, from henceforth, even for ever. And it is fixed with an eye to its ready obtaining of supplies: for my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

It is laid out in an orderly manner. Here floats the Division flag of Methodism, and here that of Presbyterianism, and here that, each in its own place, of every organization of the followers of Christ. There is the site of the Pulpit, and there that of the Social Meeting, and there that of the Sabbath-school. This is the tabernacle of Exhortation, and this is that of Song, and this is that of Supplication. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

It is properly guarded. The fortifications are deep and strong and wide. The angels are on picket. The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge.

It provides adequate instruction; for God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And it provides necessary rations; for bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure. And it provides suitable rest; for Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.

It is thus apparent that the Camp of the Lord Jesus Christ is no desolate and storm-torn bivouac. The Church of the Redeemer is no dreary, poverty-ridden enclosure—no lonely, want-stricken tenement. No good thing is withheld from it. It has all that it needs for godliness and for life. How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the Church is not the end of Christian life. Entering within the hallowed portals, we have not entered into rest. It is not the whole of godliness to

be in connection with the Church. Putting on its vows, we may not innocently sit down in ease and unconcern, satisfied with our immunities, or supinely waiting for our translation to the worship of those who sing before the eternal throne the song of Moses and the Lamb. The Church is a means to an end. A conspiracy is on foot in the universe for the dethronement of its God, and the overthrow of goodness. Back, in centuries long past, Satan inaugurated the foul revolt in a distant principality of the Divine empire. Early in the history of the human race, he set up his standard amid the bowers of Eden, and sought, alas, with too large success, to seduce the children of men into the unholy enterprise ; and he is still busy on his nefarious mission, and immense hordes of the progeny of Adam are among his most earnest and willing troops. It is not all his way, however. The Son of God is marshalling the forces of law and truth in the interest of His Father's throne ; and every captive He takes, He brings into the camp, His Church, and trains him as a soldier in the war for the integrity of His Father's government and the redemption of the world. And it is the business of the Church which He has purchased with His own blood, not in cowardice or indolence to hug the camp, but to follow, without the camp, wherever its Captain leads the way.

It is true that its Captain is in the Church—the Fount of all its blessings, the Giver of all its good, the Inspiration of all its hopes, the Perfection of all its strength, and the Source of all its supplies. Christ is all and in all. But He is not only in the Church. He will have all men to be saved. He is not willing that any should perish. He tasted death for every man ; and, thrilled with the same sublime purpose which carried Him to the cross, He cries, “ Other sheep I have which are not of this fold : them also I must bring ; and they shall hear My voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” It is His great ambition. Even now He has gone without the camp to bring them in. He is away after them, over the mountain and through the valley. He is following them through the shadow and through the sun-

shine. He is pursuing them in our congregations and in our families. He is pursuing them through all the haunts and homes of men. Yearning that all who have tasted of His grace shall so work together with Him that they shall not receive His grace in vain, as we sit here in ease, I behold in our very eyes His banner calling "Who will this day consecrate his service to the Lord?" and hear His bugle shouting "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him stand forth." Shall the cry fall on unheeding ears? Will we leave our Captain alone in the fray—His bounty in our hands, and His oath of loyalty on our lips?

Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp. Attentive to all the laws of the camp, observant of all the means and ordinances of the Church, let us endeavor, through their use, to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, and walk worthy of God, Who hath called us unto His kingdom and glory. But let us look also upon the things of others, not exhausting our concern either on the perfection of the camp, or on the perfection of ourselves. Let us not merely array ourselves in soldierly attire. Let us not content ourselves with merely an occasional dress-parade. Let us do more than merely don our uniform and play war. Let us put on the whole armor of God; that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood: but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Let us go forth on guard. Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Let us go forth on reconnoissance—feeling for the weak places of the enemy, and looking for opportunities to advance the lines of the Army of Redemption. As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men. Let us let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

Let us go forth on skirmish. Finding anywhere a detachment of the foes of Immanuel, let us seek their capture in the Name that is above every name. As ye go, preach, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"—warning every man, teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Let us go forth on forlorn hope—not deterred by even uncommon exposure and peril: counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord; and not counting our lives dear, so that we may finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.

Let us go forth on relief duty—aiding those who are hard pressed, caring for the wounded, and helping the faint. Bear ye one another's burdens. Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. Love the brotherhood.

Let us go forth as an army of defense—beating back every assault, holding the ground in the face of every onset, and ready for every surprise. Contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Let us go forth as an army of conquest. It is a disgrace for a camp to have nothing to boast of but its beauty and comfort and order. It is a disgrace for a church to gather no strength and win no victory. It is a backslidden church which is no more in force and valor today than twenty years ago. It only is a living church which is ever going on unto perfection, ever making converts to the Truth, and ever shaking down some stronghold of Satan in its front. Go, preach the Gospel to every creature. Go, and for Zion's sake, hold not your peace, and for Jerusalem's sake, take no rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

But, do you answer, there is danger in the soldier's life? Do you plead, there is reproach outside of the camp? Do you say there is risk of bitter denial, of close fighting, of hard work, of

narrow rations, of painful days, of sleepless nights, and of unnatural death?

But we bargained for all this in the beginning of our Christian career. It was for this we enlisted.—covenanting to deny ourselves and take up our cross, giving ourselves living sacrifices unto God, and thoroughly understanding that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Christ, after Whom we are called Christians, bore reproach in our behalf, suffering without the gate : for, being in the form of God, and not thinking it robbery to be equal with God, He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Look ! beyond the camp, in the midst of His enemies, where the fire and hail of battle are falling thickest, is the white horse ; and He that sits on him has a bow in His hand and a crown on His head, and He goes forth conquering and to conquer. Hallowed form and radiant armor, we know Him well ! It is Jesus, the Son of God, Prince of the house of David, Saviour of the children of men—the Leader of the hosts of the Restoration. Let us consider Him Who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we be wearied, and faint in our minds.

Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, let us not crawl among the trees, or fall behind the wagons, or get into the ambulances, or hide in the hospitals, or jump our bounty. Let us keep our oath. Let us live up to the obligations of our enlistment. Let us play the men. O, Thou, our glorious Leader, beat Thy reveille, and we will leap from our beds of indolence ! Lift Thy standard, and we will rush from the camp to stand by Thy side ! With Thee is honor, and safety, and victory. With Thee, to live is conquest, and to die is glory.

"Thy saints in all this glorious war,
Shall conquer, though they die :
They see the triumph from afar—
By faith they bring it nigh,
When that illustrious day shall rise,
And all Thy armies shine
In robes of victory through the skies,
The glory shall be Thine."

XXII.

“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!”—NUMBERS, 23: 10.

At one broad bound this sentence, brief as it is, bridges the intervening centuries and leagues, carries us back three thousand years in the history of our race, and stations us in the far away plains of Moab, in the neighborhood of Jericho.

At last the curse is lifting which doomed Israel to wander in the wilderness until those who had left Egypt in their maturity have atoned for their rebellion with their death; and the nation is rolling forward, directly and steadily, to the land of promise.

Countries on the line of its march are extremely anxious concerning its movements; and Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites, are rash enough to breast the ongoing mass in the attempt to arrest its progress; but the rushing torrent laughs at the attempt, puts the opposition on the run, and unhindered sweeps along.

Darting along, it now approaches the dominion of Balak, king of Moab. Conscious of his own inability to cope with so formidable a force, yet determined to arrest it, and if possible to drive it to utter rout, he sends for Balaam, a soothsayer of the times, to assist him with his enchantments—beseeching him, “Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.” Blasphemous and foolish ascription to the creature, whose breath is in his nostrils, of the exclusive prerogative of the Lord of all!

Even though hindered by diverse Divine dissuasives and interpositions, the avarice of the enchanter fights its way through them all; and his love of lucre lures him to the disregard of the declared design of God, and to station himself, preparatory to the consummation of his bargain, on the high-places of Baal, where he may

see the utmost part of the people whose ruin Balak wishes him to work.

How sublime and terrifying a sight hails his carnal, eager gaze! "A rich, champaign country," says Hunter, in his Sacred Biography, "skirted by the silver Jordan, meeting the distant horizon; the tents of Israel spread out like trees in the forest, and covering an innumerable multitude; a whole nation beloved of God, and destined to conquest; the spacious tabernacle, the habitation of the Most High, expanded in its midst; and the cloud of glory, unequivocal proof of the Divine presence, resting upon it. How many objects to delight the eye, to swell the imagination, and to elevate the soul. No wonder the tongue of envy is charmed from its purpose!" As Balaam drinks in the enrapturing vision, descries the indubitable indications of the Divine blessing and presence in the midst of the matchless host, discerns in the glory of today the richer glory of tomorrow, and reads in obedience the sure prophecy of a transcendent recompense; it is no wonder that, beneath the dazzling hand of such an outlook, the desire for the favor which descends from God overcomes, for the moment, the lust for gold and the momentum of unrighteousness, and constrains the cry, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Neither is it any wonder that, looking forth upon the peculiar people, covered with the Divine care, and exulting in the Divine covenant, Balaam forgets his mission of malediction, and proclaims, "Surely, there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel. . . . How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! . . . There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Even so, God makes the wrath of men to praise Himself, and over-rules unfriendly schemes against those who give themselves into His keeping, to work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy." "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye." "None that trust in

Him shall be desolate." "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him: and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders." "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

An attractive and desirable issue of mortal life is the death of the righteous. A righteous man is he who, discovering the emptiness and insufficiency of carnal and temporal things, and feeling his own disability and unrighteousness, acknowledges the claims and desert of God; admits the efficacy and necessity of the mediation of the Son of God; lays hold of the hope set before him, in the help of the Spirit of God; loves God with all his heart; and, in all things, makes the law of God the rule of his life.

As is well understood, a man of such belief and conduct arrays against himself a fearful antagonism. He exposes himself to all the fires and storms of earth and hell. Henceforth, in a larger or smaller measure, his lot is to suffer; for, "Ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." The Saviour, while Himself enduring the cross, affirms that the same experience awaits His disciples. The Apostles, while themselves enduring hardness as good soldiers, assure their fellow-Christians that they can hope for no easier or smoother path to the harp and the palm. The fortunes of the saints today, while seeking for glory and honor and immortality, show that the flesh is still alive, that Satan still goes about seeking whom he may devour, and that the world still holds its hostility to religion. The expression of this hostility differs with different circumstances and persons; but the hap of the Lord is still the hap of the servant.

Nevertheless, beaten, despised, ignored, mocked, wounded, as the righteous is, as he holds on his way, there is one period of his life universally coveted by his foes:—it is his end. Completing his pilgrimage, going the way of all the earth, joying in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, leaning on the arm of his Beloved, smiling in the face of the king of terrors, he so confidently and serenely passes down into the valley of the shadow of death that his most malignant persecutors fall in love with the manner of his

departure, and pray, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

But where is his monopoly? Is not death alike to all? Behold, laying them side by side, the bodies of the departed saint and the departed sinner; and what is the difference? As far as you are able to discern, is there any less paleness or silence or stillness in the one than in the other? Come near, and scan each face: the coldness of marble is on the brow of each; the eyes of each are closed in slumber which no sound can break; the lips of each are locked beyond the call of business or the touch of love to open. Take the hand of either, and both will ignore your grasp.

In the fact of the death of the righteous there is nothing peculiar. Though Enoch and Elijah were borne up the heavenly highway without the dishonor or pain of dying, and put on becoming raiment for the bridal of the skies without waiting in the wardrobe of the grave, no other, however conformed unto the image of the Lord, shall thus pass in among the immortals, without tasting death, until *they* so scale the steeps of Paradise who are found alive upon the earth at the second coming of the Lord.

In his death there is no diminution for the good man of what ever naturally belongs to death. He experiences what others do as the tabernacle of mortality is taken down—the agonies of dissolution, the distress of departure from familiar faces and occupations and scenes, and the pain of removal from the darlings whose fortune has been his care, and whose love has been so largely the food and joy of his heart.

Neither has the good man any charm against premature or unnatural death. He may die absent from home, or among strangers, or suddenly. He may die in the desert, or on the ocean, without leaving a grave where affection can drop a tear or leave a flower. He may die a martyr; for his devotion to the Truth may hurry him to the stake, when denial of the Truth might have lengthened out his years. He may die in the bloom of youth, or in the prime of manhood; for the axiom may have

an exception, and the righteous not live out half his days, and his sun go down at noon.

Yet, even in the estimation of the unrighteous, there is something desirable in the death of the new man in Christ Jesus—something to be sought in the last end of the pilgrim who has walked all his days arm in arm with the Prince of Peace. Even the sensual Moore sings :

“ Go, wing thy flight from star to star,
From world to luminous world, as far
As the universe spreads its flaming wall ;
Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,
And multiply each through endless years,
One minute of heaven is worth them all.”

Can we so analyze this desirableness in the death of the righteous as to carry away some fair conception of its excellence? How is it that the Christian's dying hour is arrayed in such attractiveness as to arouse the covetousness of those who are without God and without hope in the world, and stir them to longing for such an end of mortal being? In what is his adieu to sense and time so precious? What is it which so nerves and sustains and transports him when heart and flesh fail, and the future for ever withdraws him from the present?

Is all delusion, or ignorance, or unconsciousness? Is it that reason has kindly abandoned the throne, and consigned him to the dominion of enthusiasm or insensibility in order that, beneath the spell, death may do its work unfelt and unperceived? Nay, he has good reason for his carriage, so cheerful and elastic. His comfort will bear examination. His joy will endure the most searching scrutiny.

It is the heaven in him, the guarantee of the heaven to come, which arranges that

“ The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walks
Of life : quite on the verge of heaven.”

Faith in Jesus Christ, as the incarnation of God, brought him into newness of life ; and, ever since, his life has been “ hid

with Christ in God." He has lived by faith. He has stood by faith. He has walked by faith. He has made the Divine promises his daily food and refreshment, delighting in them in every gladness ; leaning on them in every stress ; and realizing in them an arm that never breaks, a heart that never fails, and a sun that never sets. And now it is seen that his is

" A faith that keeps the narrow way
Till life's last hour is fled,
And with a pure and heavenly ray
Illumes a dying bed."

Faith bringing him into acceptance with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, he was simultaneously saved by hope ; and, ever since, hope has been the anchor of his soul, holding him "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," in the midst of all the clouds and storms which have overhung his head or swept his path ; and now it is in lively exercise, breaking rifts through the darkness ; hushing the tempest ; lending him helps and solaces the world knows nothing of ; lifting him up to meet its descending fruition ; and showing sympathizing watchers by his bed that

" A beam from heaven is sent to cheer
The pilgrim on his road ;
And angels are attending near,
To bear him to their bright abode."

Faith holding him to the bosom of the Lover of his soul, hope hiding him in the Rock of Ages, peace came in as his guest ; and, ever since, all has been calm within as summer evenings be : and now it is a peace which, in a higher sense than ever before, passeth all understanding. Certainly, I have conceded, earlier in the discourse, his liability to all that others experience in the striking of their mortal tents—the anguish of the break between body and soul, the sadness of the farewell to persons and things endeared by the association of years, and the sorrow and uneasiness of the parting with those for whom he has loved and toiled ; but peace fills his ascending soul. Many have been his deviations and omissions and sins, and often has he had to bewail his follies

and lament his transgressions ; but his life has been aimed at perfection ; ever as he has lapsed he has confessed his error, made mention of the great Divine Propitiation, and diligently sought to err no more : and now, in nature's extremity, covered with the blood of the Lamb of God, sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, his peace is as a river—for he feels

“ It is not death to die,—
To leave this weary road,
And, 'mid the brotherhood on high,
To be at home with God.”

Faith carrying him to the cross, hope keeping him close to the heart of the Crucified, and peace resting gently as the dew of morning, and as refreshingly, upon all the hills and vales of his being,—joyfully, triumphantly, he moves out upon his voyage. Friends who have come with him to the beach must part company with him now ; but he is not alone. Angels crowd around him ; Christ, long since enthroned in his heart, the hope of glory, folds him closer than ever to His great tender bosom ; friends, who have made the eternal haven before him, hail him from the other shore ; light-houses, hung out from the heavenly hills, luminous with exceeding great and precious promises, fling their assuring messages in his front :—the first proclaiming, “ I am with thee always, even unto the end of the world ” ; and the second, “ I am the Resurrection and the Life ” ; and the third, “ I give unto you eternal life, and you shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of My hand ” ; and then another and another, the whole way over : and the land of the redeemed welcomes him home for all the years of God.

“ When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the earth so poor and vast,
All our life-joy over-cast ?
Hush, be every murmur dumb ;
It is only—'Till He come.’ ”

It is ever thus with the departing saint. Fanned with the breezes, and ravished with the glimpses of his nearing immortality, he shouts with Stephen, “ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ” ; or,

with Paul, "Thanks be to God, Who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ"; or, with Flavel, "I know that it will be well with me"; or, with Payson, "The victory is won—the victory is won for ever"; or, with Abbot, "I see Heaven sweetly opened before me"; or, with Bradford, "We shall have a merry supper with the Lord tonight."

"Who would not wish to die like those
Whom God's own Spirit deigns to bless?
To sink into that soft repose,
Then wake to perfect happiness?"

In this desire of the unrighteous for the death of the righteous, there is assent to certain all-important Christian doctrines, ordinarily denied or ignored by unrighteousness. Death makes honest men out of us. At its approach, however previously concealed or suppressed, our genuine beliefs or fears or hopes will declare themselves.

Whatever he may have declaimed or professed in the past, he who, anticipating his decease, cries, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," reveals his persuasion that death is not annihilation. If he believes it is,—that there is no being or consciousness beyond the grave,—why covet the exit of the Christian when it has no exemption from the natural incidents of the unchristian exit? Why arrange for spring, when the frosts of winter are never to break, and its sceptre of ice is never to fall from its hand? Why fit up for to-morrow, when the shadows of tonight are never to be withdrawn? Why grow nerveless in view of the tomb, when the tomb shuts out for ever all chance of fear or harm or woe? Why make inquiry about the country beyond the valley of this life's termination, about its inhabitants and peculiarities and terms of obtainment, when there is no such country, and the valley is endless, and they who go in nevermore go out? Why, except that he feels he shall live for ever: and every cry of the dying for mercy, every messenger for the minister, is his breaking away from his infidelity; his loosing from his worldliness; his subscription to his faith in his immortality?

He reveals his persuasion that he is accountable ; that after death there is the judgment ; that the same Being Who is the God of the life that is, is the God of the life to come ; that this state of being is a realm of probation ; that the future state of being is a realm of punishment and reward ; and that, as he has done good or ill here, he will have reward or punishment there. If these are not his beliefs, why this alarm about his crimes and delinquencies, as they come flying in upon his memory ? Why this concern for their forgiveness ? Why this hunger for the righteousness of the Lamb told of in that Book he has constantly ignored ? Why this yearning for garments washed in the blood of that Lamb ? Why, except that he feels that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad ?

He reveals his persuasion that he has no opportunity after death for preparation for the dread assize. If there is in the subsequent scene of existence the mercy of which some dream so fondly, the opportunities of the second probation which some imagine, or the restoration of the Universalist, why this anxiety to prepare now to meet the Judge of all the earth ? Why this hurry to make provision now for the rest that remaineth for the people of God ? Why not behave calmly, and die quietly ? Why, except that he feels that it is *now or never*, and that now is the accepted time : now is the day of salvation ?

He reveals his persuasion that his course of life has been out of harmony with the will of God into Whose presence he is hastening, and out of harmony with the life they live who, before the eternal throne, sing, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." If not, why this giving up of the companions and pleasures and sins which all his days have been his all in all ? Why this utter withdrawal of reliance from the charities and forms and moralities in which he has prided himself ? Why this search

for repose on the merits of the Christ he has so steadily renounced? Why, except that he feels there is salvation in none other?

He reveals his persuasion that righteousness is the only sure reward, and that they only are wise who hide their lives with Christ in God. If not, why does he bewail his folly in waiting to be wise, his forgetfulness of the ordinances of Christianity, and his neglect of the admonitions and instructions and invitations of the Gospel? Why does he beg the attendance of the friends of Jesus, crave their prayers, and implore their help to carry him to the cross and dress him for the Supper of the Lamb? Why, except that he feels that only they who do His commandments shall have a right to the Tree of Life, and pass in to the welcome of the ransomed?

And he thus reveals his persuasion that they who serve God do not serve Him for naught; that there is some profit in godliness; that there is some value in the path, with all its denials and hardships and wars, which ends so grandly; and that there is some wisdom in the religion which casts such lustre about the closing hour of mortal existence, gilds with such supernal radiance the dying scene of him who has made his peace with God, and turns his very dying into his everlasting enthronement.

We draw no fancy picture. Biography is full of the realities we sketch. Altamont shrieks, "My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife! and is there yet another hell? Oh, Thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent Lord! hell is a refuge if it hides me from Thy frown." Chesterfield shrieks, "When I reflect on what I have seen and heard and done, I can hardly persuade myself that all the frivolous hurry, bustle, pleasure of the world has any real existence; but all seem to have been dreams of restless nights." Newport shrieks, "Oh, that I could lie and broil on that fire a hundred thousand years to purchase the favor of God!" Queen Elizabeth shrieks, "All my possessions for a moment of time!" Byron shrieks,

" My days are in the sere and yellow leaf,
The flower, the bud, the fruit of life are gone.
The worm, the canker, and the grief,
Are mine alone."

Yes, fools men may live ; but fools they do not die. They may in life and prosperity denounce and spurn the doctrines and proposals of the Gospel ; but this is only the bravado which covers cowardice, or the ignorance which laughs where wisdom trembles. The clutch of adversity, like the hunger of the prodigal, brings them to their reason. Turn your eye upon the worldling as blight begins to creep over his frame, as life begins to ebb, and the shaft of death is seen hunting for his vitals ; and how eagerly he glances about for some pass or provision for his journey. Watch him as the waters of the black, cold river beat in his ear, break about his feet, gather about his knees, hurry about his loins, and reach for his heart ; and how wildly, coveting the oil of the wiser virgins, he wails, " Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his ! "

The petition, the wish, is of no avail for the unrighteous, continuing in his unrighteousness. Balaam's cry is the last cry of his dying conscience—the expression of the anxious, ineradicable concern of humanity about the future ; the involuntary expression of the apprehension of humanity that death does not end all. It is an apprehension, act or talk as he may, no one is ever able to smother. It is the tribute to righteousness which wickedness has always, later or sooner, to pay. It is the witness of the fact that, bluster or declaim or live as they may, men have only one desire, one prayer, when they come to quit the world. Then, forgetting all else, turning from all else, the universal wish is, " Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his ! "

In the wish there is nothing with which to find fault. It must be the wish of all who have not parted with the last fragment of their higher manhood. It is, however, not necessarily the aspiration of righteousness. It may be merely the constraint of fear, or only the expression of self-love. It may be without

any regard for God, and without any respect for goodness :—the effort to get out of an existence, which must be left, in the best possible fashion : the endeavor to catch the comforts of the Gospel after all other comforts have fled, or the sinner has passed beyond their reach. Like Balaam, one may entertain for the moment the goodly longing, then give way to temptation, and perish in his sinfulness. Like the amiable young man who came to Christ, inquiring so eagerly for eternal life, he may decline or neglect its offer for the paltry pelf of this life, and rush the more rapidly to eternal death.

It is a covetousness, a prayer, to be commended to every child of man ; but it is not enough. It carries not its own gratification and response. It must be so all-absorbing, so all-controlling, so all-inspiring, so all-moving, so all-shaping, as to make us anxious to do any act, endure any denial, go any length, make any sacrifice, venture any struggle :—make us willing to ascend to Heaven, to descend to hell, to take the wings of the morning and wind our way to the uttermost parts of the sea, in order to reach the goal. It must declare and emphasize its sincerity and thoroughness in the living of the life of the righteous ; for ends and means are so linked together that not even the hand of Omnipotence can break them in twain. It must be shown in the daily, devout, trusting walk in all the ways of Him Whose favor is life, and Whose loving-kindness is better than life.

Let us go and be righteous : forsaking all unrighteousness, holding on to all virtue, and turning our faces from all that is earthly or foolish or wicked. Let us cease to do evil, and learn to do well : cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart, cultivating the mind of Christ, and setting our affections on things above.

Life, as well as lip, will breathe our desire, " Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," and prove that the desire is genuine. Each day will glide brightly, sweetly, over our heads, made up of innocence and love. Each night will peacefully see us to bed, and send us to our bed " a day's march nearer home." Going down to our graves, a voice, sweet as the

music of angels, will whisper, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Holden up by Divine ministries, we will descend the black valley, to find it luminous with celestial sheen, and dip our feet in the chilling Jordan, to find it pleasant as a bath of perfumes; and, while friends are calling after us their sorrowing good-byes, and ministering spirits are waiting upon us with balm after balm of grace, we will pass up the everlasting slopes, attended with angels, greeted by friends and lovers who have passed up before us, and hailed by our Father to His own bosom, to companionship with the nobles of all ages and worlds, to the embrace of the fondly cherished of our hearts and homes in the world below, to the Golden City, to the feast of the redeemed, and to the Tree of Life from which no serpent shall ever charm us away, and from which no flaming sword shall restrain our feet.

XXIII.

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”—II. CORINTHIANS, 8 : 9.

Bringing ourselves to the study of the theme of this passage, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we bring ourselves to the study of a theme of all others the broadest and deepest ; and yet of all others, to those who are in its experience, the dearest and richest. For, while on the one hand to measure its amplitude is beyond the capacity of angels, seeking to look into its mysteries and sublimities ; on the other hand it is the source of all that brightens the sky, or cheers the path, or stays or stirs the souls of men.

For different reasons, two classes of mind may be indisposed to its selection for pulpit discussion: the one affrighted by its immensity, the other dissuaded or repulsed by its familiarity as a topic. Certainly, we here are of neither class. It is a great and mind-taxing topic ; but men, and especially Christian men, follow on to know all that may be known, and are invited rather than repelled by the difficulties which confront them ; and an inspired teacher could not have assumed it to be an object of human knowledge, unless in some measure it may be the subject of human thought. It is a common subject of ministerial presentment ; but it is not, therefore, a worn-out one. It is not : nor will it be until some other lever than the grace of the Son of God is found to redeem and uplift the fallen—until, without the Cross and its attractions and potencies, the children of men can atone for their guilt, cut out their sinfulness, escape their temptations, give death, their last enemy, his own death, and make their own way to realms of fadeless being and blessedness. Withhold the pulpit from talking to the pew of the grace which is in Jesus Christ—confining it to lectures on Art, or History, or Literature, or Morals, or Nature, or Politics, or Science,—and there is no need for either pew or pulpit ; and the pew is a fool for taxing itself in the interest of the pulpit.

“Grace taught my roving feet
To tread the heavenly road ;
And new supplies each hour I meet,
While pressing on to God.”

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

Magnifying this grace, and meaning to emphasize to the utmost its magnitude and preciousness, meaning to make those to whom he writes realize to the utmost its value and wonderfulness, our author attempts no array of arguments or definitions. He essays the illustration of fact by scenery ; and, flashing the glowing pictures in our eyes, he shouts in our ears, as if sure of the response of our hearts, “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

A canvas stretching back from Bethlehem, twenty centuries ago, through all the eternity behind, attracts first our gaze ; and there is the picture of our Lord Jesus Christ as He was. *As He was.* Bethlehem, then, is not His birthplace. He is not just born as angels chant and shepherds hail His appearance among men in that night of hallowed memory—angels crying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men,” and shepherds saying, “Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.” He has been before this glowing hour from which the history of mankind is to take a new shape.

But when has He been? From this very hour of His discovery to human eyes continuously and indefinitely back into the past : for, far back as their knowledge extends who throng His cradle, there are no data by which to fix His beginning to be. Moreover, this is the Apostolic affirmation in the words of our study, or it is beyond our comprehension—it is incapable of intelligent and satisfactory exegesis. Nor is it true that He was ever rich, unless it was prior to this hour. Proceed with the witnesses to the contrary, if there are any. At what period of His incarna-

tion was it true? At what period of His incarnation did it cease to be true? What signs of wealth adorned His infancy—beasts lending it their manger, and lowing for its lullaby? Or, what signs of wealth brightened His life—dependent on the charities of others, hidden the most of its length in obscurity, and, where it was not hidden, a scene of toil and trial? Or, what signs of wealth softened His death—all His effects, His raiment, in the hands of His executioners, His disciples dismissed with merely His peace as a legacy, and His mother given over to a friend as poor as Himself for comfort and keeping? He has been before His advent into our brotherhood as the Babe of Mary—before His revelation to our flesh and blood as the expected Messiah.

But where has He been? Earth is not the only dwelling-place of being, or humanity its only form. Ere, long ere, earth began its circuit through the skies, the skies were aglow with other worlds, and other immortal and intelligent natures were at home in those worlds. Free of all these worlds, now in one, now in another, His particular residence in that one where Deity has its special manifestation, has He been previously to this uncovering of Himself in Judea.

But while has He been? According to His own biography, "Before Abraham was I Am," He was alive two thousand years earlier than His sonship to Mary; and once ascertaining His being earlier than His incarnation of Abrahamic loins, earlier than Abraham's time, we have no cause for discarding any allegation concerning Him of Scripture—Scripture declaring that it is written to testify of Him. Having this inspired footing, we have no difficulty in accepting Job's averment, "I know that my Redeemer liveth:" and none in identifying Him as the Angel of the Covenant traversing patriarchal times in human vestments, as if trying them on in preparation for their use in times still far ahead: and none in recognizing His voice as Wisdom cries, "Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared

the heavens, I was there ; when He set a compass upon the face of the depth : when He established the clouds above : when He strengthened the fountains of the deep : when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment : when He appointed the foundations of the earth : then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him : and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him : ” and none in turning to Him in homage as the Word we mean when saying in the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “ Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear : ” and none in uniting with John as he utters his creed, “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ”

He has been rich. As we look upon Him there in His humiliation, apparently a root out of dry ground, the daily target of insult and persecution, without one who can enter into His mind, without form or comeliness, without a place to lay His head, it does not seem so ; but He was rich as that picture represents.

By rich we generally understand one who has abundance of this world’s goods—an abundance beyond the supply of all his wants. In this connection, it is employed as the only possible term in the meagre vocabulary of earth with which even to suggest an idea of the original wealth of this homeless Pilgrim. To get its import, the word must be lifted high above its ordinary significance.

He was rich in His being. He was not always this seeming creature of a day, with only a few short years on which to reckon in the land of the living. From before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the worlds were formed, through all the ages of the everlasting God Who is without beginning of days, He has been living.

He was rich in His constitution. Babe, helpless Babe, as you have seen Him, Man of sorrows as you have seen Him, miserable and self-impotent sufferer as you have seen Him, it was not ever

thus. He was not only in the beginning, with God, but He was God—God in all His attributes and prerogatives : God in all His belongings and qualities : God in all His honors and possessions : God over all, being all God is, doing all God does, having all God has, owning all God owns, and receiving all God receives.

He was rich in His dominion. Buffeted as He was by cruel hands, hurried as He was into the court of a despot by fiendish police, nailed as He was to the cross by miserable hirelings, there was a period when He hurled the master of these slaves over the battlements of Heaven, and when all the mightiest of the mightiest of the universe quailed at the sight of His eye. By manufacture there is wrought out the clearest and most inalienable title to ownership or possession : it is a patent-right which holds against all claim. By the establishment of the fact by any individual that a particular piece of handiwork was made by him in his own time, out of his own materials, it is his beyond dispossession. By this most indefeasible right Jesus Christ is Lord of all : of the earth, for He fashioned it, and hung it on the sun ; of the moon, for He fastened it in its orbit ; of the stars, for He sprinkled them through the skies ; and of the sun, for He hath set a tabernacle for it from which it lights up the path of earth and moon and stars through the heavens. The other worlds, lying outside of our system of worlds, moving through spaces so far away that not even a ray or sound has told their fortunes to our eyes or ears : of these, too, He is Artificer and Disposer. The furniture of matter and spirit of all these crowding hosts of worlds : of this, too, He is Author and Director. The world, the metropolis of all worlds, the seat of government of the universe, the throne-room of those intelligences who have never fallen and of the ransomed from among the fallen children of men, the home of our hopes, with all its crowns and dominions and harps : of this, and of these, too, He is Maker and Monarch. The world which was not in His original design, the necessity of which disfigured His plan of creation—the prison prepared for the devil and his colleagues in the great rebellion, and turned into a prison for those of the

human family who will not come to the fountain filled with blood that they may wash their sins away : of this, and of these, too, He is Maker and Master. His kingdom ruleth over all.

He was rich in praise. Despised and rejected in His incarnation, derided by His enemies, denied and doubted by His friends, dressed in mock robes of royalty by the managers of His death, scorned as unable to help Himself on the cross by His persecutors, He once lived among hosannas. Animation and inanimation clapped their hands in His presence. His praise was exhaled from flowers and plants, floated on the breeze, gleamed in the sunshine, poured forth from all the lips of nature, and rung its bells from all the towers of Providence. To pay Him tribute was the one business of Cherubim and Seraphim—the one concern of all the hosts of Heaven. The one anthem of the celestial choirs, the one song of the celestial mansions, was, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts : glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders !”

He was rich. His being independent, self-sufficient, and unoriginated, where could it have boundary or lack ? His constitution the perfection of Godhead, where could it have limit or need ? His dominion girdling eternity and infinity, where was there tribute He could not gather ? His praise sweeping up from the tongues of all ages and spaces, where could He want for halleluiahs ?

The study of this first picture has carried me away and beyond my depth. I am in the midst of scenes too high and wide for me. Spellbound, I have undertaken to discourse of things of which it is not possible to tell. And so, oppressed with the consciousness of my inability, and praying pardon for my venture, I turn from the daring study of the riches pouring their treasures into the lap of Him Whose name is above every name, to see that scene when, catching the wail of the stricken earth, “Who shall deliver me from this body of death,” He discarded His being, dismissed His constitution, disrobed Himself of His dominion, hushed His praise, and,

“ With pitying eyes the Prince of grace
Beheld our helpless grief :
He saw, and, O amazing love !
He ran to our relief.”

A canvas stretching forward from Bethlehem, on the first Christmas day of the universe, through thirty-three or four following years, now unrolls ; and there is the picture of our Lord Jesus Christ as He is in the Apostolic study. And what a picture it is upon which we gaze ! What different feelings and thoughts it awakens ! Shade after shade has dropped its curtains ; and He Whom we have seen as God in all the excellence and supremacy of Godhead, and to Whose draft all the treasures of the universe have held their doors wide open, now comes into our vision acquainted with grief, a Man of sorrows. That rich Lord is this poor Man. He became poor—in this connection, what a teeming word !

As affirmed of Him, we have defined rich to mean more than it can mean of the richest man ; and, affirmed of Him, poverty means more than it can mean of the veriest pauper upon whom we have lavished our gifts and sympathies. It is the catalogue of all the circumstances of His descent and humiliation and want—the list of all the calumnies and indignities and sorrows which He endured as the suffering Son of God.

It is His abandonment of all the riches of which He was possessed. Existing from all eternity, He begins to be. Not deeming it robbery to count Himself equal with God, He divests Himself of the fashion of Divinity. The Lord of all, He empties Himself of His priority. The object of universal adoration, He foregoes the incense fragrant with blessing, lays aside the wreath of praises homage has hung around His head, and turns from the glory which He has shared with His Father and the Holy Spirit.

It is His assumption of human nature. Does he impoverish himself who descends from loftier to lowlier condition among men ? Does Charles the Fifth in his descent from the crown to the convent ? Does Napoleon in his descent from the empire to

exile? Does the Russian nobleman in his descent from the palace to the Siberian mines? Then, measure if you can His impoverishment Who exchanges Divinity for humanity, and gives up Godhead for manhood.

It is His assumption of humanity in its humblest rank. He enters the narrows of poverty. He takes the form of a servant. He lives from day to day in the fields, or on the hills, or on the shore, or on the hospitality of neighbors, or on the kindness of strangers; for He has no income of His own, and His family, though of royal lineage, has fallen into decay. He dies at the expense of His enemies, and finds His burial in the vault of a generous rich man.

It is His exposure to all the possibilities of sinless human nature. He was without blemish and without spot. In Him there was no fault. And this was true of the angels who kept not their first estate, as they were created. And it was true of man as he came from the hand of God. In every moral agent there is the abstract possibility of disloyalty to goodness, or neither angels nor men could ever have lapsed. It is an abstract possibility that the second Adam, as well as the first Adam, might have lapsed. It is a fact that after humanity had lapsed, it became liable to infirmities and pains to which it had not previously been liable; and that to these infirmities and pains those who are found in its likeness are liable, even though they have committed no personal transgression of the laws of righteousness. It is, therefore, a fact that He, clothing Himself with humanity, though not personally doing any violence to the law of righteousness, encountered its fortunes of disability and sorrow, and felt some of their pangs; for He was the subject of hunger and thirst, of pain and weariness, and of reproach and temptation.

It is His suffering of the desert of sinful human nature. He was made to be sin for us, Who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. It was for the suffering of this desert that He put on human nature; and how completely and severely it emptied on Him all its vials! What eye can com-

pass the indignities and woes which crowded the years of His pilgrimage through mortal scenes? What line can fathom the depth of that fearful sea through which He struggled from His departure from His throne to His tomb? What tongue can tell that poverty which cast its pall upon the loftiest Heaven, and clutched the Son of God—a poverty so black that its gloom could becloud the brightness of Divinity, so keen that its barb could pierce a faultless heart, so measureless that its cloak could cover an infinity of crime, so potent that its might could batter down the gates of death and hell, and so precious that its price could pay for the release from the everlasting punishment due them of a world of sinners?

It is His visitation with the eclipse of His Father's face. A dogmatic exposition of this eclipse may not be asserted by any mortal mind or speech. It can not be declared that the Father absolutely drew a cloud between Himself and the Son Who through all the æons behind had never before met with such a fortune; or that the Son for a period had such a sense of the enormity of human sinfulness, and of the woe of its sequel, as in its darkness to lose sight of His Father's face; or that for a season He actually staggered under the equivalent of all the weight of the eternal curse of all the sins of all the sinners through all the years of time. But, for three fearful hours, as He hung upon the cross, a horror of great darkness wrapped the whole land; and, amid its terrible shadows, He cried with a loud voice, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

O, was He not poor Who for earthly tabernacle had come down from heavenly throne? Who from all the delights and honors and prerogatives of Godhead had descended into the endurance of all the inferiority and shame and sin and woe of manhood? Whose greeting from the manhood in whose interest He came was a bitter life, a cruel death, and a felon's grave? Whose days were draped in grief? Whose nights were wet with tears? Whose place of secret devotion was a scene of agony to sweat and blood? Whose season of intensest misery was made an hundred-

fold more miserable by the desertion of His chosen friends? Whose death-bed was a cross, with a dying malefactor on either side? And Who suffered eternities and infinities of deaths in the hiding of His Father's face?

"O Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever *shame* like Thine?"

Amazed, oppressed, sick, I inquire the reason of this stupendous humiliation. I inquire, What enemy, or imprudence, or wickedness, has achieved this great misfortune—wrought this great reverse? What enemy has carried off, what imprudence has squandered, what wickedness has wasted, all the vast possessions of the Son of God? Inquiring, I learn that, though justly predicable of the overthrow of human fortunes, such questions find no solution of the present mystery.

Pressing my inquiry, I learn that all this abasement, and expatriation, and sacrifice, has been of the illustrious Sufferer's own accord and action, and in the interest of other parties. I am increasingly perplexed. Was it for faithful allies who had borne arms for Him in some assault upon His dominions, and to whose assistance He was bound in any conflict which should assail them? Was it for some loyal province which had maintained its integrity when treason was striking for His throne, and to the defence of which, in every strain, He was pledged by solemn covenant? Was it for some neutral realm, always fully and generously respecting His rights, but now unrighteously seized by marauders? No: though in either instance it would have been conspicuous goodness for such a Personage to have cast Himself, at such a venture, into the breach.

Pressing my inquiry farther, I learn that His interposition, with all its dreadful outcome, was in the interest of rebels—rebels against Himself: rebels whom He had brought into being, whom He had cared for with more than royal munificence, and upon whom He had never levied more than nominal taxes.

Pressing my inquiry still, I learn that it is men who are the objects of His merciful intervention. Behold their poverty—

created in His image and after His likeness, through His own design and work : having in their possession every blessedness of which they are capable, and of which they can rationally conceive as possible ; made to hold this heritage for ever, and to exult for ever in its increase as in its use they shall ascend to larger capacity for its increase ; they have lost it all by their own voluntary surrender. Duly forewarned that its continuance is conditioned on their continued loyalty, and that unfaithfulness will provoke disinheritance, they are reaping as they have sown. Lost it all, and worse ! Conscience is flaying them alive. Memory is a nightmare. Numerous needs distress, and numerous woes sting them to the quick. No outlook kindles hope. The future is as black as is the present. The wrath of God abideth on them for ever.

Pressing my inquiry still, He Whom, in that first picture, we saw so rich in all the wealth of God, stoops into all the straits of that abject poverty, gazing upon which in that second picture, overwhelmed with the spectacle, we have held our breath : and stoops that men may again have wealth, and have it more abundantly. By the changeless constitution of the government against which they have rebelled, their poverty is poverty to the death that never dies. It exacts a satisfaction which requires eternal poverty for infinite transgression, as in all transgression against eternal and infinite Majesty and Righteousness. To meet this requirement, the Lord Jesus Christ, with heart most wonderfully kind, dispossesses Himself of His riches, folds Divinity and humanity into one nature, hastens into the rebels' stead, lays Himself out to receive the rebels' stroke, and, His Divinity making Him a competent sacrifice, and His humanity making Him a proper sacrifice, makes, in a brief period, an eternal and infinite satisfaction.

Pressing my inquiry one more step, and both the reason and the result of His stupendous humiliation blaze upon my ravished vision, in light far exceeding the light of any morning which ever marshalled its sunbeams on earthly sea or shore. Barrier after barrier is broken down, debt after debt is paid, disability after dis-

ability is removed, and man's entail of poverty is taken away. Chance after chance is assigned, help after help is given, loan after loan is made, and man may be rich again. Coming, in belief and penitence and plea, to the throne of grace, making mention of the poverty and righteousness and worth of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and presenting His endorsement, man is rich again. "Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

Thus, here is the key which lets us in to the understanding of those two pictures, and of their relation to each other, and of their relation to the recovery of man's lost heritage, and to his uplifting to felicities and glories for which he had never hoped. "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Amazing grace! Love surpassing love of mother for the son of her womb!

"Grace first contrived a way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps that grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan."

Amazing grace! Ever and anon, as its Author and Finisher looks through our hearts and lives, and sees how we prize it more than all we prize beside, may He whisper to our increasing bliss, "Ye know the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

Amazing grace! Beneath its cover may we live every day our lives long, and in its riches every day rejoice. Borne on its breast, fed on its fulness, and happy in its prospects, may we

finish our pilgrimage ! And, cheered with its gladness, and lighted with its lamps, and strengthened with its ministries, may we pass in to the glory which is its immortal fruitage !

XXIV.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.”—AMOS, 8 : 11.

A false notion has had wide currency in the world concerning the character of God, belittling His justice in the honor of His mercy, and exalting the one perfection at the expense of the other. Doubting his ability to endure unscathed the flame of justice, man seeks for consolation and escape in the fancy that mercy will so bias the mind, or blind the vision, of the Judge of all the earth, as to secure the immunity of the sinner at His bar.

But it is all a fancy, thin as air. Beyond dispute, man can not, in himself, fulfil the law, or furnish satisfaction for his disobedience, or put out the fires which encircle its dishonored tribunal, disclosing the malignity of transgression, and scorching with quenchless vigor the conscience-smitten, helpless transgressor. Justice does not abate any of its demands or dues : its dignity must have reparation for every insult and neglect. There must be the death of some becoming victim. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

It is an error to imagine that, as the sinner is undergoing the inquest, mercy hovers near, looking at the scales, and ready, Brennus-like, to hit the beam, and reap by fraud what an honest weight will not return. Its pleadings could never have availed to human rescue, had not the Son of God, in human likeness, ascended the altar and bared His bosom to the curse ; nor does even His gracious interposition let mercy have its way, except as there is individual appropriation of His interposition, and individual doing of His will.

It may be a beautiful and harmless form of speech, setting off a sterile prayer, to style mercy the “darling attribute” of God ; but it is not true. And it is doubtful if it would be clothed with such lustre as it does wear, if justice had not demanded so costly a sacrifice as the Lamb of God. The one can not be dearer than

the other, if the other rates so high in the estimation of the Father as to command the sacrifice of His Son for its pacification.

It is true that God delights in mercy, that He is not willing that any should perish ; but at the bidding of justice, He can laugh at the calamity of those who ignore His government or grace, and mock when their fear cometh. God is a consuming fire, as well as love.

It must be insisted : one attribute of the Godhead can not conflict with another. It is the harmony of His perfections which is the excellence of Deity. Prove the absolute monarchy of any one of His perfections, and you shear Him of His perfectness—you raise a war among His perfections, making that one lord, and slaves of all the rest. Through the mediation of the Messiah, mercy is meant to have free course in the redemption of man ; but man may turn the ascendancy over to justice, and justice blight with death what mercy wished to brighten with life.

Many a long year Israel has been the favorite child of God, the peculiar object of His concern and delight. But its people have waxed fat and kicked. Calamity has led them to reformation ; but reformation has been short-lived : and after long endurance of their constantly recurring rebelliousness, the patience of Jehovah turns to wrath. He resolves to leave them alone to work out their destruction ; to interfere no more, with correction, or invitation, or prophet, with their waywardness ; and to withdraw those revelations which have been their life and truth and way, but which they have so persistently disregarded. “ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.”

It seems to be the severest judgment with which Divinity can visit humanity during the period of its probation. It is the last with which offending Israel is smitten, after many previous strokes have fallen in vain. Its history has long been a history of forgetfulness, ingratitude, and presumption. Many a manifestation of His displeasure has it called from the hand of God. Many a pun-

ishment has He sent to arrest its evil courses, and bring it back to loyalty. But each, at best, has wrought only a temporary arrest and return. Out of each return Israel has gone off into a new revolt. And He Who is so slow to wrath, casts about Him for some new and untried bolt with which to strike.

Let us draw aside the curtain, gaze in on the council-chamber of the Trinity, and listen as Jehovah recites His former administration toward the nation of rebels, and sketches His future line of treatment :—“ I have employed every easier method of disaster. I have marshalled every other misery. I have sent famine, and pestilence, and sword : but without result. They have abused My goodness, laughed at My reproofs, and transformed their peculiar standing in My sight into a justification of their disobedience, pleading their sonship in vindication of their right of sinfulness. I will abandon them to themselves. I will banish them from My favor. I will dissolve our connection. I will hide My face from them. I will silence My oracles. I will send a famine among them such as they have never experienced : not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.”

Let the imagination have free play ; and can you conceive of a father inflicting a heavier doom ? Former visitations, darkness, dearth, pain, may be all in love : may be love’s search after some way to reform the child, that he need not be turned out from under the paternal roof, a prodigal and a vagabond : may be the nauseating draught to purge away death-bringing impurities : may be the surgeon’s knife, cutting off the limb to save the life ; but this is no fatherly rod, nor remedial strain, or there might still be hope. It is the father’s announcement, “ I can do nothing else ; leave my house : you are no longer my son.” It is the physician’s cry, “ I am at the end of my skill ; mortification has seized the citadel : there is only death remains.” It is the decree of God, “ Ephraim is joined to his idols ; let him alone : call him, invite him, try him, no more ! ”

Let the imagination take its widest circuit ; and can you think of a darker day than the day when a famine of the Word of the

Lord begins?—The day after which all communication is cut off between earth and heaven : and the Gospel folds up its parchment, and gives no message : and the Holy Spirit talks no more of the things of Christ?—The day after which no angel comes in ministry of healing, and no church holds forth the lamp of life, and no Son of Man walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks? There is no day fuller of woe this side of that day, the beginning of all woes, when the eternally unforgiven plunges that shoreless ocean whose billows are fire, and whose sands are the home of the undying worm which fattens on the spoils of wrecked immortality.

O, carelessly as we allow our Bible to lie unopened, or hurriedly as we scan its hallowed leaves, indolently as we hear or neglect the preaching of the Gospel, lightly as we miss or spurn the ordinances of the Sanctuary, the famine of the Word of the Lord is the sorest of all the possible ills of the house of our pilgrimage. David can be a fugitive, and be happy ; Jeremiah can be a prisoner, and be happy ; and Paul can be on the way to execution, and be happy ; but, shut out from converse with God, what life is worth living? Examine every other resource :—dominion is a dungeon ; honor is a Tarpean rock, from which the descent is merely more fatal than from ordinary levels ; pleasure is the handmaid of pain ; and wealth is the pioneer of a poverty which is want indeed. Hunger must bring death ; and how can he but die who is without access to the Bread which cometh down from Heaven? Thirst is the pleading of the system for refreshment ; and how can He rally who can not find the Fountain digged on the brow of Calvary? The word of the Lord is life ; and, without it, we are dead in sin and trespass, with no chance of resurrection. The Word of the Lord is truth ; and, without it, we are in chains and stocks : for only they are free whom the truth makes free. The Word of the Lord is the way ; and, without it, we are Cains and wanderers : for the way of man is not in himself.

It is a judgment, severe as it is, with which both communities and individuals have been overtaken. Appealing to the records

of antiquity, behold the doom of Israel, the signally beloved of the Lord. It is His chosen child and minister—called apart from all other peoples into the radiance of His earliest and sweetest smiles. In all human history, never has any other nationality been folded so fondly to Jehovah's bosom—never has there been any other whose fortunes seemed to be so irreversible, whose mountain seemed to stand so strong, whose present seemed to be so prophetic of undying duration. Nevertheless, how changed the scene today: how the golden candlestick is departed, the glory faded, and the mighty fallen! The Canaan for whose possession Abraham, Isaac and Jacob hoped so eagerly; on which, from the outlook of Pisgah, the eye of Moses, as he was poising himself for passage to the Canaan above, looked so earnestly; which flowed with honey and milk; which held the Temple with all its hallowed furniture and mysteries; which was the home of such eminent chieftains and poets and scholars and statesmen and saints; which was the scene of the labors and studies of the prophets as they bare the burden of the Most High, revelled in the glowing landscapes of the future, and served as mouth-pieces of the Holy Spirit, testifying of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow; which was the site where Immanuel manifested Himself in the flesh, and set up His kingdom in the world, and threw open to every inhabitant of earth an highway to Heaven:—this Canaan is now laid low, over-run with debasing superstitions, and trodden in the dust by the heel of the oppressor.

If we inquire for the churches established in the dawn of the Christian Dispensation, to our inquiry Echo answers, "Where?" "Where," asks Melville, "are those Christian societies to which St. Paul and St. John inscribed their epistles? Where is the Corinthian Church, so affectionately addressed, though so boldly reprov'd, by the great Apostle to the Gentiles? Where is the Philippian Church, where the Colossian, where the Thessalonian, the letters to which prove how cordially Christianity had been received, and how vigorously it flourished? Where are the Seven Churches of Asia, respecting which we are assured that they were

once strenuous in piety, and gave promise of permanence in Christian profession and privilege? Alas, how true it is that the candlesticks have been removed! Countries in which the Gospel was first planted, cities where it took earliest root, in these have all traces of Christianity long ago disappeared, and in these has the cross been supplanted by the crescent. The traveller through lands where apostles won their noblest victories, where martyrs witnessed a good confession, and thousands sprang eagerly forward to be baptized for the dead, and to fill up every breach which persecution made in the Christian ranks, can scarce find a monument to assure him that he stands where once congregated the followers of Jesus. Everywhere he is surrounded by superstitions little better than heathenism, so that the unchurched of these lands has been the giving them up to an Egyptian darkness. And these facts prove, with a clearness and awfulness of demonstration, which leave ignorance inexcusable, and indifference self-condemned, that the blessings of Christianity are deposited with a nation to be valued and improved; and that to despise or misuse them is to provoke their withdrawal. If we could trace the histories of the several churches to which we have referred, we should find they all 'left their first love,' grew lukewarm in religion, or were daunted by danger into apostasy. There was no lack of warning, none of exhortation; for it is never suddenly, never without a protracted struggle, that God proceeds to extremes, whether with a church or an individual. But warning and exhortation were in vain. False teachers grew into favor; false doctrines superseded the true; with erroneous tenets came their general accompaniment, dissolute practice; till at length, if the candlestick remained, the light was extinct; and then God gave the sentence, that the candlestick should be removed out of its place."

It has been with the individual as with the society. Adam, fresh from the hand of his Creator, was His bosom friend, the companion of His walks, as every evening He came down for a stroll with His creature among the bowers of Paradise. Every

delight and privilege lay waiting his call. Now, he is an alien, driven from the garden, expelled from God, and prevented from return, with two-edged swords flashing in the hands of gleaming cherubim. A son of the illustrious David, the gifted and princely Solomon, was earth's kingliest, wisest citizen : his fame high as the skies and wide as the world, the favorite and pride of Jehovah among the sons of men. Now, he is earth's greatest fool, a blight on his bloom, an eclipse on his glory, the outcast of God, the scorn of men, the wreck of all he was. The sun which rose in such unwonted brilliance sinks in unwonted darkness ; and Scripture narrative leaves in stunning uncertainty the end of him whose morning flung out such splendid promise of a cloudless day and a radiant night. Judas was chosen as an attendant of the Lord of life, favored with the fullest opportunities and teachings of his time, and meant to be one of the stones of the foundation of the Messianic empire. But earth's meagre pottage bribes him from his fidelity, the fiend chokes the man, and the wretch who has enjoyed particular access to the presence of his Master and Saviour avails himself of his freedom of approach to betray that Master and Saviour, covers his infamy with the salutation of affection, crowns his treachery with the kiss of friendship, and steals the raiment of love to hide the doing of a deed so dark and hellish that darkness has never contrived a darker, or hell joyed in one more hellish. There, gibbeted on the highest reach of sin and shame, standing in the pillory of all ages and eternities, the wretch, who once had so grand an eminence and outlook as the disciple of Christ, but fell from his lofty estate, rushing with his own hand out of the life he had cursed and stained with his contact, and sinking into a tomb by the side of which common murderers and traitors would loathe to lie, warns all who have put on Christ to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and to watch that they lose not His Word out of their hearts.

Like causes produce like effects : and the judgment which has fallen may fall again. As already observed, neither with the community nor with the person, is the descent from the approval

of God into His disapproval with one, sudden, voluntary spring. Apparently it may be so, but in fact it is gradual. In the lapse of Jewish faith and favor, Jewish history discovers to us the advancing steps, the dreadful degeneracy, the increasing progress of the fatal poison, the widening prevalence of the virulent corruption. In the lapse of the churches established by the labors of the apostles, evidently, there was first the falling away, and then the falling down. In the lapse of the individuals mentioned, there was the same sloping apostasy—disbelief of His Word, disregard of His claims, forgetfulness of His goodness, indifference to His ordinances, rebellion against His supremacy, and the struggle of self-will for the throne.

Centuries, in their onward flow, have not changed the fallen human heart. It is still an evil heart of pride and unbelief. It still would dethrone the Lord of all, and have its own way. It still would save itself, or stay unsaved. Centuries have not, moreover, changed the character or government of God, or His plan for human reconciliation to Himself. He is God over all, holy in all His ways, and righteous in all His works; and only he can come again into His favor who comes completely under His rule: for Christianity builds itself on the death of all godless feeling in him who would ascend into its beatitudes, and demands the grave of self for the working out of its proposals in his behalf. Nor have centuries changed the possibility of the new man in Christ falling back into the old man of the flesh he was. The Word of God is the bread and meat with which the new life is maintained; and if, because of his neglect of this Word, God visits him with its removal, famine of the staff of everlasting life clutches him in its grasp, and he must starve to death.

It is possible that what has been may be again: what has happened others may happen us. The heavens may once more grow black, their windows shut, and wide-spread drought lock all the land in barrenness of the oracles of God; or spiritual famine lay waste the individual soul, and leave the soul, now blooming with fragrant flowers and rich with goodly fruits, sterile as a stone.

It requires no prophetic eye to foresee the conditions which may again and against us constrain the decree spoken through the lips of Amos, and written in the words which we are now studying together. It is even now aiming its curses at the congregation which is a mere mass of formalism, or profession, or worldliness—content with its appointments and name and standing, gathering no increase of the mind of Christ, and winning none to the knowledge of the truth. It is even now hurling its shafts at the individual who is cold or indifferent or indolent in the pursuit of eternal interests—careless of his covenant as he assumed the vows of God, “Here, Lord, I give myself to Thee;” forgetful of his oft-repeated averment, “Though all men should deny Thee, yet will not I;” hanging like a dead weight on the church unfortunate enough to have its register burdened with his worthless name; making the way of truth to be evil spoken of, because he is one of its nominal travellers; and treasuring up to himself wrath against the day of wrath by his inaction or unbelief. It is even now striking at the land whose business acknowledges no Decalogue, whose education brings in no claim or knowledge of Christ, whose law gives no heed to the higher law, whose politics pays no tribute to the rule of God, and whose religion takes the other way from the Sermon on the Mount.

It is a possibility the remotest shadow of which should chill us to the very core of our being, and drive us to the constant, tireless care of every bud of grace left within our souls—catching for it every drop of dew, giving it due exposure to the sun, and hedging it tenderly from every frost.

It is not too arduous a toil, or vigilance, to escape a famine of the Truth; for there is no famine so much to be dreaded—none which can work a disaster so appalling and far-reaching. Better far that barrenness should benumb the soil, and desolation breathe its blast upon city and village far and wide. Better far that the fountain should never babble, and the rain never fall, and the sun never shine. Better far that the grain should never grow, and the orchard never hand down its fruit, and the pasture never pay its

tax. Better, far better, all this, than that God should hide His face, and hush His voice, and withdraw His Gospel. Better, far better, a famine of bread, and a thirst for water, than that there should be a famine of the Word of the Lord, and an eclipse of the Sun of Righteousness ; for, if earthly dearth should cut us off from life here, it would merely be letting us in to the heavenly fruit of the life hereafter ; and “ what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? ”

It must not be imagined, either, that a famine of the Word of the Lord might happen, and there happen nothing but the silence of the communications of God to man, and the suspension of the forces and institutions of the Gospel. It means infinitely more. It means a famine of the most precious of our possessions in other directions. It means that business decays, because confidence is gone of man in man ; and that charity dies, because Christianity is no longer its inspiration ; and that education fails, because the Gospel is no more its patron ; and that government is impossible, because religion is absent with its sanctions ; and that home is a mere memory of the past, because the Holy Scriptures light not up its altars and purify not its loves ; and that society is an uproar, because the Word of the Lord has taken away its repressive and uplifting hand. “ It means,” says Melville, “ that God must frown on the land from which He hath been provoked to withdraw His Gospel ; and that, if the frown of the Almighty rests on a country, the sun of that country’s greatness goes rapidly down, and the dreariness of a moral midnight fast gathers above and around it. Has it not been thus with countries, and with cities, to which we have already referred, and from which, on account of their iniquities and impieties, the candlestick has been removed ? The Seven Churches of Asia, where are the cities whence they drew their names : cities that teemed with inhabitants, that were renowned for arts, and which served as centers of civilization to far-spreading districts ? Did the unchurched of these cities leave them their majesty and prosperity ? Did the removal of the candlestick leave undimmed their political lustre ? Ask the

traveller over prostrate columns, and beneath crumbling arches, having no index but ruins to tell him that a kingdom's dust is under his feet ; and endeavoring to assure himself, from the very magnitude of the desolation, that he has found the site of a once splendid metropolis. The cities, with scarce an exception, wasted from the day when the candlestick was removed, and grew into monuments—monuments whose marble is decay, and whose inscriptions are devastations—telling out to all succeeding ages, that the readiest mode in which a nation can destroy itself, is to despise the Gospel with which it has been intrusted ; and that the most fearful vial which God can empty on a land, is that which extinguishes the shinings of Christianity.”

It is reason for which we should laud and magnify the name of Him Whose mercy endureth for ever, that the blight has not entirely fallen, and the decree has not yet gone forth which irrevocably seals our ruin. The flash of concern which kindles at our hearts on the mere mention of such a calamity as possible, discloses some heed for the continuance of the Gospel and its ordinances—some idea that its loss would be the most hurtful of all losses : some persuasion that we had better abandon all other commerce than stop off our commerce with the skies. There is no cry of Amos in our ears, declaring that the day of grace is over, “ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the Word of the Lord : ” but the cry of the Son of God, “ To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saying he that receiveth it.” There is not yet at our door the grasp of need, but the horn of plenty—plenty of the meat which endureth to everlasting life. Let us eat that which is good, and let our souls delight in fatness. Let us bring all the tithes of service and worship into the storehouse, and prove the Lord of hosts, if He will not open the windows of Heaven even wider, and pour us out blessings, that there shall not be room enough to receive them.

It will be the end of danger of famine of the Word of the Lord, unless we shall again provoke Him. Giving Him the homage meet, dearth will be forgotten in fulness; fields now too bare will gleam with harvests; and garners, our churches and hearts, now too empty will be filled with richly-laden sheaves, from floor to roof. Prosperity will gladden every soul, growing for us out of the earth, and raining on us out of the sky. And we, with God for our Host, and seraphs for our waiters, will throng the mountain where is spread the promised feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined; and tune our voices to the song, set to music for the occasion, by Isaiah, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father."—JOHN, 14 : 12.

A horror of great darkness is enfolding the little band of disciples who, from the very beginning of His ministry, have forsaken all else to follow the Son of Man. All doubt is gone that He and they are soon to part company—He to die a death of pain and shame, and they to linger out lives of toil and trial. It is no marvel that their hearts are sad and sore as they realize His approaching departure, and think of their own approaching desolation—children without a father, pilgrims without a guide, and soldiers without a leader.

Christ is already standing within the shadow of His cross, and tasting all the bitterness of His cup of sorrow. His care, however, is not for Himself, but for them—wringing their hands in all the agonies and fears of orphanage.

Longing to ease their load, and soothe their spirits, He cries, "Let not your heart be troubled;" and, with this counsel as His text, He assures them that faith in Him is faith in God; declares that He is leaving them to prepare for them mansions in His Father's house; and promises that, having made the requisite preparation, He will come and move them home.

As they listen, and seek to accept their condition, they recollect how completely He has been their all in all. Hitherto, since espousing His cause, they have neither done nor planned for themselves; and yet they have lacked nothing. In Him, as fully as ever babe had in its mother all its desire and all its need, have they lived, and moved, and had their being.

In Him they have been born into a better being: called into citizenship in the kingdom of Heaven, and lifted into partnership with God in the recovery of humanity to primeval allegiance and blessedness.

In assault He has been their defense, in darkness their light

and in want their sufficiency. In every extremity, whether of body or soul, whether of person or work, He has been their shield and sun and supply.

In many instances He has borne loads for them which, in the employment of their natural powers, they might have borne for themselves if they had not come to count so generally and largely on Him, and if they had not found Him so uniformly gracious and strong.

In many instances, however, they have been overtaken with emergencies where finite arms were not long enough, and where only Infinite arms could avail; and where miracles have been needful, miracles have never been wanting. When hungry, He has brought them bread, without having to bake, or beg, or buy it. When needing money to pay their taxes, He has drawn on the mouth of a newly-caught fish, and found His draft immediately honored. And when threatened with shipwreck, He has spoken the troubled waters into quietness. Verily, verily, in Him as has been their day has been their strength; and nothing they could ask has ever been denied them.

As they thus recollect the past, they anxiously strain their eyes into the future. Assuringly indeed He has bidden them to be of good cheer; and declared that His impending departure is in their interest; and promised that He will return, and take them to Himself for ever. But how shall they do in the mean time? Accustomed to His company and counsel and provision, how shall they bear His absence? Even though able, after a fashion, to earn their bread, and follow their calling, and hold fast their integrity, will life be worth living when He has ascended up on high?

Even with Him by their side, ever and anon they have encountered emergencies when, without the exercise of His Omnipotence, they would have been crushed by the onset; and how shall they keep their feet, in similar subsequent emergencies, when He has gone back into the glory which He had with His Father before the world was?

Having His commission to preach the Gospel of His Kingdom, to proclaim Him as the Lord and Saviour of all men everywhere, and to summons all the ends of the earth, under penalty of eternal death, to His acceptance and service and worship, how shall they meet the opposition their message will provoke when He has passed into the heavens?

How shall they breast the storms of scorn and wrath with which earth and hell shall pelt their defenceless heads for their audacity in lifting His banner as universal Redeemer and Sovereign, when, crucified as a blasphemer and traitor, He has withdrawn the light of His countenance, and the wonders of His hand? Ignorant, poor, and weak,—with neither arms nor influence nor skill,—with what of heart or hope can they prosecute a mission in itself so heartless and hopeless? Is it strange that, with such an outlook, they cry, “All these things are against us;” or declare, “We are of all men the most miserable;” or wail, “We had trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel?”

As they peer thus dolefully into the future, He, reading their hearts, says, “He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also”—Belief in Me has, so far in your career, been your safety and success and sufficiency. A Babe of humble birth, a Man of sorrows, without place to lay My head, your faith apprehended Me as the Consolation of Israel and Redemption of the race. Hated by the Church, and scorned by the world, your faith beheld Me as your individual Lord and Saviour. Led as a Lamb to the slaughter, your faith saw in Me “the Resurrection and the Life.” Never has your faith been disappointed: according to your faith it has always been done unto you; for either by natural or by supernatural means I have always wrought out your expectations.

Continuing to believe in Me, your future shall be as your past. Faith in Me, not sense of My bodily presence, is the condition of your security and triumph, whether you see Me or not. You can not have forgotten how once, when you were with Me

in My own country, I could not do many mighty works because of the unbelief of My countrymen. You can not have forgotten how, once when I was with you in a ship, letting go your faith, you began sinking in the storm-swept sea ; and how, recovering your faith, you walked the sea as if it were solid ground. You can not have forgotten how the Syro-Phœnician woman, who forced her way through the cold and forbidding and scornful exterior I assumed, grasped My real self with her faith, and held on until she gained her suit, and won the healing of her daughter.

" Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone :
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done."

I neither find fault, nor wonder, that, depending on Me these many months we have companied together, to clear away all your impediments, and to drive from the field all your oppositions, and to procure all your provisions, you are disconsolate at thought of my departure. But, " if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove ; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Keep good heart : My departure is not in fact, but merely in form : My departure is not in My Divinity, but only in My humanity.

My Divinity I leave in your hands, as near and ready and strong for your use as when you have seen Me lay it out through My humanity for your deliverance and supply. Only believe on Me, and, as far as you need their repetition, " the works that I do shall ye do also." Though you see Me not, yet believe on Me ; and you shall be as safe, and my kingdom, in your hands, shall be as strong as ever.

Through your faith in Me, wielding all the prerogatives you have seen Me wield, you shall see wrought over all the works you have seen Me work. These signs shall follow you, believing on Me : — in My name shall you cast out devils ; you shall speak with new tongues ; you shall take up serpents ; if you drink any

deadly thing, it shall not hurt you ; you shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover ; and, marching on from conquest to conquest, you shall shout, " The Lord of hosts is with us : the God of Jacob is our refuge. "

As an additional encouragement, He adds, " And greater works than these shall ye do ; because I go unto My Father. " At first reading, this saying is difficult of belief, or at least of comprehension. He is Divine, while they are human ; He has been accomplishing marvels, while they have been mere pensioners on His bounty, or taxes on His resources ; and it seems incredible that He shall decrease, while they increase ; or that He shall fall in impotence or insignificance, while they mount His sphere and soar into sublimer scenes and works.

But He does not covenant that they shall be able to do greater works than He is able to do, but greater works than *these* which He has done ; for He has all power in earth and in Heaven.

Neither does He covenant that they shall do works intrinsically greater than the works He has done : for He has wrought miracles ; and no works they can do can be more than miracles.

Neither does He covenant that they shall go beyond Him in the number of their works ; for the record does not reveal this : and, moreover, the record does not show all He did. " There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. "

Neither does He covenant that they shall outdo Him in the variety of their works ; for air and land and sea have felt and kissed His sceptre. Body and mind and soul have hailed His benignity, and owned His dominance. Celestial beings have gone hither and thither at His command ; fallen spirits have given up their captives at His mandate ; and men and women and children, at His summons, have leaped back into health and life, from the very verge of the tomb.

Neither does He covenant, or hint, that their works shall be

done independently of Him, or without full tribute to His supremacy and supervision and virtue.

Upon the contrary, He covenants that their greater works shall be greater *because* of His going to His Father, and because His going to His Father shall open before them broader opportunities, and secure for them richer resources.

As we ponder this final clause of this teeming averment, the meaning of the entire averment grows clear. All the Godhead is concerned in the re-establishment of the Kingdom of God among men, and in the recovery of the world from its rebellion and ruin. All Scripture, delineating the introduction of this Kingdom into the world, and its march to the inheritance of the uttermost parts of the earth, proclaims not only the interest of the Father, and the oblation of the Son, but also the outpouring of the Holy Spirit: and portrays the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the period when the mightiest wonders of the "Economy of Grace" shall have their manifestation.

But, according to Christ's own announcement, the Holy Spirit shall not come into the world in His special ministry until Christ's visible ministry is finished. "It is expedient for you that I go away: for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

Declaring, "Greater works than I have done shall ye do; because I go unto My Father," He declares that the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the Divinely decreed dispensation of the fulness of the Gospel, is waiting on His session at the right hand of His Father, where He shall breathe His intercession, dispense supplies, receive the glory due unto His holy Name, watch the fortunes of His Church as it goes forth conquering and to conquer, and welcome home eternally to His Father's house His followers, as one by one they pass from struggle to triumph.

Doing—as I understand Him to say—My part by My doctrine and life and oblation, I have cleared the way for the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the world; designated its methods and requirements; and selected its heralds. I have laid the foun-

ation, and in so doing I have done many great works ; but the time for the greater works which are to be done in the furtherance of My Kingdom in the world, and which are to lift My Kingdom above all opposing kingdoms, has not yet come. This time, in the ordination of Divinity, can not come while I am with you as I have hitherto been ; for the Divine Personality Whose office it is to dwell henceforth in the Church, and guide it into all truth, and invest it with its full powers, and lead it into its predestined victories, can not assume His office until I have gone back unto My Father.

I, in order to His coming, under the charter of My Kingdom, have to return to the glory which I had with My Father before the world was ; for, under that charter, I have to carry on My work there, while the Holy Spirit represents and succeeds Me here.

I, passing up to My throne, will send the Holy Spirit. He also is Divine, being one with My Father and Myself, very God of very God ; and you will therefore be in the hands of no inferior Agent or Counsellor. He will be to you and with you all I have been. Though you shall not see Him as you have seen Me, you shall be as sensible of His presence and sufficiency as you have been of Mine.

I on the throne, caring for you, and He within you, keeping you, you shall enter into the broader opportunities the future shall develop, and work those greater works which shall be possible through those greater opportunities, and through which My banners shall be borne from conquest to conquest until the end come—until all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God : until on the foundation I have laid, the whole stupendous edifice shall be crowned with its capstone, and “ ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in Whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord : in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

The inspiring announcement made by the departing Saviour in the ears of His stricken disciples, is no friendly fraud to reconcile them to their loss until He has escaped their grief ; but it is the declaration of the great law of His Kingdom, that men are the agents in its advancement and consummation, while He all the while is their direction and encouragement and potency ; and the expression of the great truth that men, availing themselves of His Holy Spirit, as His Kingdom moves forward to universal supremacy, shall see still greater marvels than the marvels amid which it was set up in the world—greater, because born of better conditions ; greater, because growing into fuller fruitage ; greater, because moving mightier multitudes ; greater, because reaching wider realms ; and greater, because witnessing with enlarging emphasis, as time hastens into eternity, that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

Christ's forecast nearly twenty centuries ago is history now. Ascending incarnate into the heavens, and investing Himself with the government of His Church from His own eternal throne, He has not forgotten His covenant with His disciples. As they wait in prayer, after their return from the Mount of His Ascension, suddenly there comes from Heaven a sound as of a rushing ; mighty wind, filling all the house of their assembly ; and cloven tongues like as of fire flame upon their heads ; and their hearts glow with the Holy Spirit ; and their tongues speak languages they had never learned ; and they, Divinely and instantaneously taught, tell the story of their crucified and risen Lord to the multitudes of foreigners thronging Jerusalem in their own vernacular—doing a greater work than Christ, Whose ministry had mainly been confined to His own countrymen.

As they lay themselves out in labor and prayer and study, they exhibit larger conceptions of the Kingdom of God, and larger experiences of its preciousness, and larger views of its potency, than Christ had affected within them ; for to His very death they were blind and dumb and slow to comprehend His mission.

As they grow in grace and knowledge, they reveal mightier belief and courage and love and patience and zeal than Christ had wrought within them ; for hitherto they had shown little of those graces and virtues.

As they pursue their ministry, they bring thousands to Christ, where He had gathered only a few scattered followers ; and while His ministry was mainly in Judea, they, beginning in Jerusalem, go with the story of Jesus and the Resurrection to the uttermost parts of the known earth—working over His works, and working greater works in their farther journeys and richer opportunities and resources.

Neither does the Apostolic age exhaust the fruitfulness of the covenant of which it had the first inheritance. As they who first proved the covenant true to its smallest iota finish their ministry, crowding successors catch their falling mantles, and imbibe a double portion of their spirit, and sweep even a larger circuit ; for what are the few material marvels wrought in the dawn of the Christian Dispensation, in comparison with the spiritual marvels wrought later in its day ?

Bidding His disciples good-bye on Olivet, and leaving Olivet for the skies, Christ had not a follower outside of Judea : but before His disciples followed Him up the celestial highway, He had a following in Antioch and Athens and Corinth and Ephesus and Galatia and Rome.

Ceasing their labors, and going up to their recompense, His disciples could not exult over one country where Christ had supremacy in its institutions or laws or worship : but today there is not a country of any consideration among all the countries of the world, in which Christ's Name is not above every name.

“ He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do,” is the covenant of Christ, God over all, blessed for ever more, the Head of the Christian Church : and the history of the Church is ablaze with demonstrations that, as she has believed on Him, emphasizing belief with corresponding exercise of Divine endowment, she has

worked moral wonders. Moreover, here and there, along her path, from its humble beginning at the birth of Christ, with her handful of members, without church or college or infirmary or patronage, to this hour when her churches dot every continent, and her colleges light every land, and her infirmaries open everywhere to the helpless, and her patronage summons to success, there have been periods when her power was overwhelming—periods when entire communities were aflame with revival, and multitudes, breaking away from materialism and sin and unbelief, sought the redemption which hallows her altars: periods which show there is no moral wonder she may not work when full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

Alas, that she so often fails of her heritage, and hides her light! Alas, that she so often wastes her strength and time in fixing up her camps, when she ought to be putting in her strength and time in forcing her columns forward to the conquest of the world! Alas, that with Almightyness in her hands, she leans so largely on carnal methods, and lingers so cravenly for carnal supports! Alas, that having developed all there is of modern civilization—all there is of its art and charity and commerce and eloquence and law and music and science—, she seeks so largely to win in their name, rather than in the faithfulness and prayer with which she has won all she has ever won.

Brethren, we have a right to capture all we can for Christ, whether in art or charity or commerce or eloquence or law or music or science; and we have a right to turn all the arms and stores we capture against the enemies from whom we take them: but is it loyal or manly or wise to hoist their banners, or shoot their guns, or use their tactics, instead of those with which we have driven them from the field?

“He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do,” is the announcement of the Captain of our salvation. “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.” “The Spirit helpeth our infirmities.” “We can do all things, through Christ Which

strengtheneth us : ” “ strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. ” “ Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. ”

I insist that Christ means His announcement to be taken literally, and that the announcement is for all the ages of the Christian Dispensation. I insist that He worked all the works possible to Him in His life here in the flesh—He being limited by the “ Economy of Grace ” to the laying of the foundation of the Kingdom of God in the world ; and that in the “ Economy of Grace ” it was not possible to Him to carry visibly the enterprise to its consummation ; and that in the “ Economy of Grace ” the Church He organized is to work those greater works which are to win Him universal faith and universal fealty. I insist that the essential endowment of power is not the exhausted heritage of the earlier days of the Church, and that the Spirit of power is not a mere legacy or memory of the past. I insist that Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, as well as the Lord and Redeemer of the saints of former times, is waiting on our disenthralment from our indifference and worldliness and unbelief, and on our outlay of our possible power, to work the Divinely decreed greater works which are to usher in the end, when the jubilant and victorious hosts of Redemption—laying down their arms, and waving their banners,—shall sing the song of the elders before the throne of God, “ We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, Which art, and wast, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. ”

To him that believeth, all things are possible. To us, as well as to the original disciples, is given the assurance that, believing on the Son of God, and employing our sublimer chances, we shall work greater works than those with which He inaugurated His Kingdom among men. To us, as well as to those before us in Christian faith and life, He calls, “ He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto my Father ” —to open before you broader doors, and to send you the Holy Spirit as rein-

forcement. With His direction and help, you shall outdo all I have done. I accomplished the beginning ; but you shall bring in the consummation. I began the campaign ; but you shall carry the standard to the conquest. I did marvels which ended in their doing ; but you shall do marvels which shall multiply themselves into countless other marvels. I effected cures which kept death at bay for a little season ; but you shall effect cures after which there shall be no more death. I fed thousands with the bread which perisheth ; but you shall feed thousands of thousands with the bread which endureth unto everlasting life. I gathered a few out of their graves who had to go back into their graves again and wait the general resurrection ; but you shall gather myriads out of deeper graves, to go back into their graves never more. I healed bodies ; but you shall heal souls. I had the first-fruits ; but you shall reap the harvest. I lighted up a little corner of humanity ; but you shall light up its entire breadth and depth and length. I lifted the dawn upon the world-wide night ; but you shall sun the night into the morning which

“ high and higher shines,
To pure and perfect day.”

I touched earth with a halo of Heaven ; but you shall turn earth into Heaven, and wake both into the glad acclaim, “The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.”

“ I'll make your great commission known ;
And ye shall prove My Gospel true,
By all the works that I have done,
By all the wonders ye shall do.”

XXVI.

[A National Centennial Sermon, Preached in Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, Harrisburg, Pa., Sabbath morning, July 2, 1876.]

“And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us.”—DEUTERONOMY, 1:25.

I do not address Infidelity in any of its modes or forms during the exercises of the present hour. I take no account of the man who, ignoring Divine connection with material existences, asserts that the world sprung up spontaneously, or was the product of Chance, or the result of a fortuitous combination of atoms; or who, admitting that Jehovah fashioned it, maintains that He has nothing farther to do with it, exercising over it no supervision, and that all follows unerringly and imperatively some original impulse.

I talk to Christian citizens, who receive the Bible as a Revelation from Heaven; who believe in a Special Providence; and who confess the existence of a Deity above, whose moral government comprises the Universe within the circle of its influence.

This Divine Being is the Author and Conservator of all life. Individual existences are in obedience to His Word. Nations rise and flourish in the ordination, and by the permission, of His Providence.

But all things are *to* Him, as well as *of* Him and *through* Him. It is the chief end of the individual to glorify Him in body and spirit. And a nation is organized to accomplish His purposes, and to make known his glorious Name throughout the earth.

Amid the surroundings of adversity, to Him are owed confession and deprecation. When the path of an individual is overhung with calamities, and his heart is stricken with misfortunes, the individual ought to humble himself before the Almighty and bewail his transgressions and shortcomings. And when a nation is overtaken with judgments, and the waves of ruin are threatening its speedy engulfment, the nation ought to go into mourning

and, amid sackcloth and ashes, look humbly up to Him Who ruleth over all: beseeching the removal of His wrath, and the shining forth of His face again.

Amid the surroundings of prosperity, to Him is due a grateful acknowledgment. If the individual is happy, he ought to take the cup of thanksgiving in his hand, and pay his vows unto the Lord in the presence of all the people, saying, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" And if the nation is gifted with a goodly heritage, the nation's voice ought to be heard sounding forth in tones of unmistakable emphasis the tribute of praise, crying, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake!"

In recognition of these truths are held the exercises of this Sabbath. The United States are just closing the first century of their independent existence. Throughout the length and the breadth of the land is heard the sound of the Jubilee. The air is bright with banners and vocal with song. Christianity wants a share in the general rejoicing. Purely secular feelings must not rule the hour. Patriotism may swing its hat, but Piety must have its shout.

The briefest examination of our National history indicates our possession of a goodly heritage. The scene of our National existence is admirably adapted to assist its occupants to greatness and prosperity. Looking at the lands constituting our inheritance, who will presume to dispute that the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places? The climate is healthy; the soil is capable of varied productions; the forests and mines contain abundant material for the creation of mechanical and mineral wealth; the waters furnish means of irrigation and conveyance; and, in addition to the internal streams which serve as channels of communication and commerce, old Ocean rolls its billows all around our shores as a rampart against foreign aggression, and spreads its waves to carry our merchandise.

The elements entering into our Nationality, distinguishing us from all other peoples, are peculiarly conducive to the formation

of as perfect a race as is possible to depraved humanity amid its present surroundings. The American people is not the growth, or remainder, or result, of any one stock ; but all the leading races of the world have contributed their excellence to produce an appropriate ownership for this magnificent heritage. What is valuable in the English, Irish, Scotch, German and French, has been mixed into the American, and bestows on him his transparent matchlessness of head and heart and limb.

The circumstances lining our National path have combined to facilitate our development and progress. Health has been our general portion ; plenty has characterized our seasons ; immunity from foreign invasion has been signally our lot ; exemption from internal dissension, to an unusual degree, has been our privilege ; minerals have been discovered when and where they were needed ; new grains and vegetables and flowers and fruits have been suggested as we have been ready to cultivate them ; inventions have come to light in equal pace with our necessities ; literary opportunities have reached themselves out as they have been demanded for intellectual improvement ; political institutions have been ordained and extended as we were raised to their appreciation, and were prepared for their enjoyment ; and religion has constantly proffered her gentle and supporting and elevating and enriching and ennobling ministries to guide, and help, and comfort, and save, all who—turning from improper courses, and subordinating the earthly to the heavenly,—would lean on her arm and nestle in her bosom.

We have received this goodly heritage from God. He is the Donor of all the blessings and immunities with which, as a Nation, we are so signally enriched and distinguished. To this proposition there is not universal assent—at least not universal *practical* assent. Some are so base or blind that they will positively and directly deny it. Others will lose sight of the Divine authorship of their mercies, in the secondary causes which are merely the vehicles of their transportation. Still, to Jehovah,

the God of the whole earth, is the Nation indebted for all it has that is precious or excellent.

His hand fitted up this western world for the scene of our existence—spreading its plains, lifting its hills, locating its waters, arranging its climate, fertilizing its soil, planting its forests, and embedding its minerals. His hand folded around it the mantle of darkness which for so many centuries withheld it from the vision and grasp of other portions of the world, and so preserved it in its virgin loveliness for our occupancy. And His hand finally raised the cloud, discovered its existence, put it into the temporary ownership of powers most competent to be our forerunners, and then led us over to its possession and lordship.

He formed the people whose intelligence and energy have made such skilful use of the resources placed in its hands. He ordered its constituency—bringing here the English, with their force ; and the Irish, with their generosity ; and the Scotch, with their will ; and the German, with their perseverance ; and the French, with their vivacity ; and blending them into the race qualified to accomplish the wonderful destiny which is evidently intended to be wrought out in these latter days upon this magnificent theatre.

His Providence environed us with the propitious circumstances which have attended and illumined our progress. Through its interposition has health been breathed on our persons, plenty dropped on our fields, and prosperity conveyed to our communities. It has been our shield from foreign injuries, and our preservation from internal distractions. Its finger has developed our minerals, indicated new varieties for cultivation, and led the way to the inventions that are, every day, leaving the Past so far in the rear of the Present. Its wand, waved with more than magical influence, has called *up* the educational, called *out* the political, and called *down* the religious, advantages that, properly improved, have such marvellous potency to effect the redemption and perfection of humanity.

Verily, the Lord hath not dealt so with any other people.

He hath exalted us to Heaven in the way of endowment and privilege. An hundred years ago, a handful of corn was dropped on the earth upon the top of a mountain. So insignificant was the commencement of the American Nation—a mere handful of corn. Its circumstances were as unfavorable to development, and as uncongenial, as is the summit of a mountain to the growth of corn in comparison with the milder and more fertile plain at its base. But, as the hundred years terminate, what results salute our vision and thrill our hearts! Its fruits shake like Lebanon. Its ears are so numerous and lofty and crowded with grain that, when shaken by the wind, they sound like the cedars of Lebanon when breathed on by the passing blast.

How manifest is the right of our beloved Methodism to a share in this National Centennial celebration! Our Church has always been loyal. In the Revolutionary war, Wesley took sides with the Colonies, addressing Lord North and the Earl of Dartmouth in their behalf. At her organization, in 1784, the Church inserted in her Articles of Religion a recognition of the new government, and was the first religious body in the land to make patriotism a test of membership with communicants. In 1804, her General Conference, alarmed at the disposition to rate State above Federal authority—as indicated in the Kentucky Resolutions of “98,” and the Virginia Resolutions of “99”—solemnly declared the United States to be “a sovereign and independent Nation.” On the election of Washington to the Presidency, she aroused some ill-feeling in some other denominations because she first sent her highest officers to congratulate the illustrious patriot, and to promise him her support. From her earliest period she has steadily asked what could be done for the extirpation of Slavery; and during the recent contest between Slavery and Freedom, according to Mr. Lincoln, she outranked any other in behalf of Freedom, in the soldiers she sent to the field, the nurses she sent to the hospitals, and the prayers she sent to Heaven. All her periodicals were openly, steadily on the side of the Govern-

ment; and few indeed were the pulpits under her control that did not preach loyalty as essential to piety.

And now our Centenary Year has come. We stand on the threshold. The voice of rejoicing fills the land. The great results we celebrate this morning were wrought by human instrumentality. Let the instruments have their meed of praise. Bright be the memory of the statesmen and captains, of the soldiers and sailors, of the husbandmen and mechanics, of the divines and scholars, of the lawyers and doctors, of the men and women and children, who have done their part in public and in private.

But human instrumentality has been made efficient by Divine blessing. Except the Lord build the city, they labor in vain who build.

Let us render appropriate thanksgiving to the Most High. While we shout hurrahs, and shoot guns, and fling banners to the breeze, let us not forget to compass the altars of the Lord of hosts, and to utter grateful tribute in His ears.

Let us properly estimate the responsibilities that connect ourselves with the triumph and heritage upon which, at this auspicious hour, we congratulate each other. Supplicating the guidance and help of Him through Whom all our previous progress has been made, and all our previous conquests have been won, let us go forth to meet all obligations to ourselves, to our fellow-citizens, to our Nation, and to the world. We need not blush to hold up our heads. We belong to no scrubby race. The nobles of the world are our fathers.

"Our vows, our prayers, we now present
Before Thy throne of grace :
God of our fathers, be the God
Of their succeeding race."

Good-bye, first century of my country's life ! Many treasures hast thou carried into our lap. Untold honors hast thou bound about our brow. Unnumbered benedictions hast thou laid upon our heart. Never shalt thou fade from our memory. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If

I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

Hail, thou new century! Under God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we give our Nation to thy bosom. Bear her to deeper peace, richer prosperity, grander renown, and loftier righteousness. Make her increasingly the praise of earth and the joy of Heaven.

And thou, dear old flag, still ride the land, and span the seas, and fill the air! Still stay the pride of the free, and the hope of the struggling. Link thy folds with the folds of the flag of the Cross. Float for God as well as man. Give thyself anew to the breeze. And, ere the entering century shall depart, take the world for Liberty and Christ!

XXVII.

“Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?”—JOB, 14 : 10.

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”—II. CORINTHIANS, 5 : 8.

I often think of many, who have long been out of my sight, to whom I used to sustain very intimate relations:—boys with whom I played in the days of my childhood; companions at school; associates in the ministry; members of congregations to which I have preached; people whose hospitality I have enjoyed; the parents who guarded my infancy, and trained me into manhood; the brother and sister who shared the gladness of my youth; the little one who first called me “Papa,” and who was, in his infancy, taken from the home on earth to the home above; the wife of my heart and life who, after sharing all my experiences on earth for well-nigh forty years, followed that first of our children into that last glad home; and the daughter who, having grown to womanhood, quickly followed her mother, to make one more in that part of my own family which has moved beyond the stars.

But they never enter my presence now. No path ever leads me into their company. No sunshine ever reveals their forms. No breeze ever bears their voices into my ears. They have dropped from among the living. Earth is no longer their home, only as its bosom hides their dust and my heart holds their memory.

And their doom is the doom of the entire race. There hastens toward every one of us the period when we shall have fallen from the paths with which we are so familiar, and shall have vacated the circles in which we have so long revolved. The living must go down among the dead, and be overtaken with all the mysterious descent implies. Every human being shall give up the ghost—surrender the vital principle which animates his frame and constitutes him a distinct moral personality.

Under these circumstances,—bemoaning our departed darlings,

and standing ourselves in the shadow of death,—how naturally we inquire, Where are they? Where is man, when he has given up the ghost?

WHERE IS HIS BODY? This is not the man; but it is that through which he is perceptible and tangible. Coming from the earth, it has gone back to the earth. The immaterial principle withdrawn, it speedily resolves into the dust from whence it arose into its finer, fairer form. There is, however, no destruction of its particles. After its dissolution, there is as much matter in the universe as before. But it is constantly passing into other shapes of being, until finally no trace remains of the configuration deposited in the grave. Friendship may care for the grave ever so fondly: enclose it with the strongest of masonry, shade it with the fairest of trees, adorn it with the sweetest of flowers, and watch it with the kindest of eyes; but there is no arrest of the decomposition going on within. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," is its destiny. Laid down by the soul, the discarded body, as has been well said by another, "flows away in atoms, first the lighter, then the grosser, along that swift, changeful, interweaving current of matter which girdles the whole world, and is put to all manner of unexpected uses, and submits to millions of unforeseen appropriations."

"Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound:
My ears attend the cry:
Ye living men, come, view the ground,
Where you must shortly lie."

WHERE IS HIS SPIRIT? This is really the man. The body is only his tenement, his temporary residence, the window through which he looks out, the organ on which he plays, the agent of his will. The spirit is no material organism. It shares not in the overthrow of its habitation. It moves safely and sublimely forth, a deathless essence. Nor, as some suggest, in the great crisis, does it lose its individuality in the Divine Being. It is not simply blended with the Source from which it originally emerged. It maintains its identity. It retains all its primal completeness and

separateness. Neither, as some insist, does it pass into a condition of unconsciousness, awaiting the summons to revivification. There is no suspension of its faculties and forces. It survives, undestroyed and unimpaired, the shock which brings the body to the ground. Through all the surrounding ruin, it is as replete with life, and all its endowments, as ever in all its previous history. "We certainly," says Drew, "have less reason to believe that death will terminate our existence, than we have to conclude that it will only change the manner of our being. Around and within us there are intimations in this direction which, in their combined effects, amount to the highest degree of moral certainty, if not to a positive demonstration of the fact. And, to admit the human soul to be immortal, is to grant a state of consciousness beyond the grave."

Such was the assumption of philosophical Paganism. Phædon inquires, "How shall we bury you, Socrates?" And Socrates replies, "Just as you please, if you can catch me;" and then, with a smile, he adds, "I can not convince Phædon that the mind conversing with him is myself: but he thinks me to be the corpse he will soon see laid out, and asks how he will bury me." Cicero declares the arguments of Socrates in favor of the immortality of the soul are conclusive to him: and affirms, "The nearer I approach to death, I seem to be getting sight of land, and, after a long voyage, to be just coming into harbor." Cyrus, on his death-bed, says, "Never imagine, O dearest sons, that I have ceased to be, when I have departed from you. Believe that I still exist, though you will see nothing of me." Such was the faith of the early advocates of the Christian religion. Clement, first Bishop of Rome, says, "All generations, from Adam to this day, are past and gone, and possess the region of the godly." Polycarp says, "The righteous dead are in the place due to them: they are with the Lord." Irenæus says, "The souls of departed saints go away to the place appointed for them of God." Justin Martyr says, "The souls of the pious remain somewhere in a better state, awaiting the time of judgment." Origen says, "The soul when

it departs from the world, shall be disposed of according to its merits, enjoying the inheritance of eternal life." Cyprian says, "The dead are not gone away, but gone forward. Even before the day of judgment, the just and the unjust are separated from each other—the chaff and wheat are already divided." Athanasius says, "That is not death which befalleth the righteous, but a translation." Marcarius says, "When the righteous depart from the body, the choirs of angels receive their souls to their own places, to the pure world, and so bring them to God." Augustine says, "When we die we do not fall into nothing, into a profound sleep, or into a state of insensibility, until the resurrection ; but we only change our place." Ambrose says, "Death is but the separation of soul and body, not the annihilation of soul and body. No sooner are soul and body divorced, until the soul is come on the wings of angels to the kingdom of God."

Of course, the inspired Volume is our ultimate resort in the consideration of the condition of those who have parted company with the body ; and it sheds no dim, uncertain light as we turn our feet within the circle of its radiance. Standing at Calvary, as the Son of God accomplishes the atonement in behalf of a condemned and dying world, I hear the repentant thief implore His gracious remembrance ; and scarcely has he preferred his request, until from the hallowed lips of the Lord of life and glory falls the assuring response, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Beholding Stephen hurried from the earth, beneath a storm of stones rained out of murderous hands, I see the heavens open, and Jesus, erect at the right hand of God, waiting to answer the prayer of the devoted saint, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Conversing with Paul concerning his prospective exit, he exultingly proclaims, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing." Listening to John, reporting the celestial message intended for the inspiration of the Church at Ephesus, as it struggles amid the billows of tribulation, I catch the announce-

ment, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Verily, Revelation establishes nothing if it does not establish the fact that the spirit outlives the body, and continues to be an intelligent and responsible agent subsequent to its removal from human society.

But, if still in existence, it must have the freedom of some particular scene of existence. Somewhere it must have possession of a congenial residence. Somewhere it must have play and scope for its activities. Precisely where, I can not indicate. I can not locate its home. I can not map out its circumstances. I can not portray the felicities and splendors of which it has the range. It is, however, where the Lord is. For the Lord assures the malefactor by His side, "Thou shalt be with Me;" and promises the stricken disciples, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also;" and proclaims through Paul that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

Now, we know that the Lord is not in the tomb. It proved inadequate to His retention. Its barriers gave way before rising Omnipotence, like withes of sand. He came up a Conqueror from its arena. Enfolding Himself with a raiment of clouds, in the presence of the gazing disciples, and escorted by a retinue of angels, He ascended from Olivet, was received up into Heaven, and is set down on the right hand of God.

And, in the same regions of supreme excellence and glory, are gathered immediately from the gates of death the spirits of all who die in the Lord. Nor are they merely in the same locality with Him. Heaven is a realm of immense amplitude, and its residents might be at an immense distance from each other. But there is no appreciable distance between the saints and their Saviour: for His unambiguous guarantee is, "Where I am, there ye may be also." Nor stand they dazed and unrecognized before Him. They are not awed and silent witnesses of a splendid pageant. They see Him as He is. They follow Him whithersoever He goeth. God Himself is with them, and is their God.

They shake their homestead with the acclaim, Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God!"

Nor have they only communion with Him. They recognize each other. They exult in mutual intercourse. Tottering into the tomb, Jacob calls back, "I am to be gathered unto my people." Bewailing his deceased child, David cries, "I shall go to him." Proposing the encouragement of the Hebrew Christians, Paul affirms, "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect." Commending the marvellous faith of the centurion of Capernaum, Jesus reveals the social life of the immortals, in His portraiture of them, as set down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.

Nor have they been withdrawn from all interest in those who still linger along the paths of Probation. No essential of being has been eliminated in their translation to sublimer conditions. Their eyes follow us in the house of our pilgrimage. Their hearts covet our weal. They come forth in ministries in our behalf. Amid the grandeurs of the Transfiguration, the disciples heard Moses and Elias conversing with their Master concerning His approaching decease. From their celestial seats, Abraham and Lazarus saw that the brothers of Dives were within reach of the means of grace, and in no need of special agencies from the skies. One day, while the door was ajar, a great voice of much people in Heaven fell on the ear of John, as he ranged the isle of Patmos; and lo, it was the voice of martyrs, sounding the praise of the Lord for taking vengeance on their murderers. Importuning the Christians of his day to lay aside every weight, to part company with every besetting sin, and to run with patience their appointed race, Paul reminds them that witnesses, gathered from former dispensations of the Church, from heavenly heights are gazing on their course.

They are in Paradise—the Eden of the universe: the realm of supreme beauty and happiness and holiness and knowledge; the place where, in human form, the Lord of all holds His court; the center where converge all who have washed their robes, and

made them white in the blood of the Lamb ; the house of our Father, and His Father, with mansions enough for all who, by patient continuance in well-doing, shall seek for glory and honor and immortality, and so plume themselves for eternal life.

“There is a world above,
Where parting is unknown ;
A whole eternity of love,
Formed for the good alone :
And faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that happier sphere.”

LOOK ! THERE ARE STARS EVEN ON THE BROW OF DEATH. I profess no preference for the grave as an highway to Elysian fields. The bright beyond does not lure me to admiration of the intervening tunnel. Its preceding pains, its accompanying disabilities, its removal from familiar scenes, its departure from congenial companions, its sundering of love-knit ties, its anxieties about the darlings who are left behind, its dishonor of the body, so long the carrier of the soul—these attendants of the grave I would be glad to escape. I wish sin had never found its way into the world. I wish the radiant Seraphim had never crossed their swords around the Tree of Life, and restrained humanity from access to the invigorating fruit borne by its wide-spreading boughs. Then, beautiful and glad as departure for a visit to cherished friends and inviting scenes, would have been the manner of man's exchange of earth for Heaven.

Nevertheless, much is said of death which is unjust and untruthful. Artists, orators and poets, pretending to give his portrait, paint and pronounce and sing many a falsehood. He is not so much an alarm, as he is the luller of all alarms. He is not so much a foe, as he is the victor of all foes. He is not so much a monster, as he is a messenger. He is not so much a robber, as he is a remedy. He is not so much a woe, as he is a weal. It is not his fault if his coming is not the end of all our ills, and our uplifting to associations and climes where life shall take on new beauty, be robed with new power, and open out into new and un-fading luxury.

Our friends who have fallen asleep in Jesus have not fared badly by their removal from the bodies in which we remember them. Though we miss them so much, and though their bodies lie mouldering in the tomb, or have passed into other combinations, and though their souls have not yet entered into their loftiest possible conditions, still they are in the inheritance of a vastly improved and more excellent estate. To them, death is already gain. Dying, they lingered a moment in sympathy with our bereavement; waved us an affectionate good-bye; said a glad farewell to sin and woe; dropped the weapons of their warfare; donned the goodlier raiment of the immortals; then surrendered themselves to celestial companionships; moved upward along the heavenly highway; swept in through the portals of the skies; bathed in the benediction of Immanuel; exchanged greetings with the darlings who had gone on before; have made the acquaintance of many of the nobles of the Church Triumphant; have seen many of the beauties which gem the world of light; have tasted many of the felicities which throng the garden of God; have learned many of the paths which lead into still richer raptures; and are for ever with the Lord—thrilled with the vision, jubilant with the prospect of ever-enlarging blessedness, and burning with desire for the period when we shall bound into their arms and, once more, and for ever, be a family together,

"Where all the millions of His saints
Shall in one song unite,
And each the bliss of all shall view
With infinite delight."

Immortal thanks to Him—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort—Who deals so generously with our friends who, as the years have come and gone, have passed out of our homes and sight; and Who, for our cheer and inspiration, reveals so much of their condition subsequent to death!

The discussion almost makes me homesick. I am in no hurry to die. Life is pleasant. I have much of love and work

to bind me to earth. The peace of Christ largely counterbalances all I have of toil and trial. I would like, if God allows, to stay still for years, and help roll the world backward to its primeval integrity and weal, and forward to a better heritage than even optimists imagine. But as I talk, death loses much of his dreadfulness. The Beyond grows brighter. Heaven looks sweeter.

“ There happier bowers than Eden's bloom,
Nor sin nor sorrow know :
Blest seats ! through rude and stormy scenes,
I onward press to you ”

XXVIII.

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”—I. CORINTHIANS, 15:26.

Death is not the final condition of the saint who has for ever vacated his place in the Church Militant. It is neither the annihilation of the body, nor the extinction of the soul, nor the perpetual separation of the two.

Dying, his soul is borne by angelic ministry into a scene of enjoyment and rest, where all the adverse influences of Probation are escaped, where wider opportunities unfold their wings, and where the smile of Immanuel and the society of the saved make perennial rapture.

His body, however, is still in the grave, taking on innumerable phases, and undergoing innumerable transmutations. But this is not the last of that human form, any more than it is the last of its former tenant. The removal of the tenant is not its reduction to non-entity or oblivion. The house shall be rebuilt. The old occupant shall move back on the first breath of a coming Spring, and the reunited two subsist eternally as one personality, in higher estate, and amid sublimer scenes, than those of their original connection. If a man die, he shall live again. But *he* does not live again, unless all that entered essentially into his former being is present in his restored being—unless, except as sin had changed and stained him, he is as he was before death had overthrown him.

THEREFORE, THERE SHALL BE A RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. I, of course, do not mean that the body shall come up from the grave exactly as it was laid away in that house appointed for all the living—that, in either fashion, or particles, or weight, the latter shall be a precise reproduction of the first. But I do mean that the grave shall not, through all the ages of duration, restrain from the air and light and potencies of life a single atom essential to the completeness of the personality dismantled by the agency of death. I do mean that, whether it be little or much,

whatever in the old organism is requisite to establish and identify the new as its legitimate outcome, shall come forth amid the glowing glories of the morning of the Resurrection.

The very apprehension of the contrary is a stunning blow to the best instincts of our nature. It clothes our pilgrimage to the tomb with shadows, and enwraps the hour of dissolution with a despair and horror which language has no competence to represent. In the presence of that hour, Hobbs declares that he is stepping out into the dark; Hume discloses his alarm by his bluster; and Ingersoll forgets the classic prose with which he had arranged to commit his sister to the dust.

Verily, our nature hopes for the resurrection of the dead. This hope is its impulse in the honor paid the body in its disposal when the vital spark is fled; its inspiration in the adornment and care of the places of the buried; and its talisman against a broken heart when covering with kisses the lips of the dying.

Even in the darkness of the dawn of the true religion upon the horizon of humanity, there gleamed the conviction that from death there is a road back to life. Therefore, Abraham, offering up Isaac, accounts that God is able to raise him up, even from the dead; Joseph gives commandment concerning his bones; and Job shouts, "In my flesh shall I see God."

With us, however, the dawn has ripened into day. Life and immortality have been brought to light through the preaching of the Gospel. The Son of God has visited the world. His lips have announced, "I am the Resurrection and the Life;" the brother of Mary and Martha, the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain, are monuments of the establishment of His claim; and His own triumphant egress from the vault of Joseph of Arimathea, is the everlasting and indubitable proof that His death was the extinction of neither His being nor His power. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

“These bodies that corrupted fall
Shall incorrupt arise,
And mortal forms shall spring to life
Immortal in the skies.”

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT, UNDER THE ECONOMY OF REDEMPTION, THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IS ESSENTIAL TO THE EXPRESSION OF THE PERFECTION AND SUPREMACY OF THE SON OF GOD. The whole human life was forfeited in the great primal revolt against the Divine authority. Death was the righteously earned due of the transgressor. Neither body nor soul had a right to a moment more of existence. But, lo! the executioner carries, and the Daysman appears, announcing, “I have found a ransom,” and kindling all the skies with the radiance of forgiveness and restoration. The seed of the woman has made propitiation for sin, and, on the acceptance and improvement of the propitiation, the sinner is to have back his life—not an inferior or partial life, but *his life*. “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

How can the Daysman be good, and allow the saint to go eternally shorn of a portion of his being, and of a portion through which there has come to him no insignificant measure of the bliss of being? How can the Daysman be just, and allow a portion of the saint which has borne largely the disabilities and disasters of Probation, to taste none of the sweets of Recompense? How can the Daysman be omnipotent, and stand idly by and allow His friends, who have followed His fortunes through innumerable and oppressive woes, to wander, mere fragments of themselves, through all the cycles of duration? How can the Daysman be truthful—the God of truth, and allow those who, turning to Him with full purpose of heart, have hung their faith and hope and love upon the very letter of His word, to awaken in the disappointment of the expectations beneath whose impulse they have gone marching onward? How can the Daysman wield the sceptre of supremacy, and allow Satan perpetual possession of some of the spoils secured in that raid he made upon the empire of Jehovah in the Garden of Eden? How can the Daysman win

the price of his atonement, and allow a part of the consideration for which he bore the mighty load, folded in an ignominious napkin, to lie for ever in the "potter's field?"

Oh! the very character and empire of the Messiah require the resurrection of the dead. Until that illustrious consummation, His dominion is incomplete, He is out of His own, one of His enemies still holds the fort and flouts the flag of rebellion. Not until the grave shall surrender its tenantry, shall the last enemy be destroyed, and the Son of God sit down victorious upon His throne, His enemies all made His footstool.

" Say, ' Live for ever, wondrous King !
Born to redeem, and strong to save ;'
Then ask the monster, ' Where's thy sting ?'
And, ' Where's thy victory, boasting grave ?' "

IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, THERE WILL BE A CLEAR CONSCIOUSNESS AND MANIFESTATION OF INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY. Certainly, all the atoms ever belonging to the body, prior to its descent into the grave, will not be gathered into the companion with which the soul, at the termination of Time, is to sally forth for the circuit of Eternity. Certainly, it will be fettered and marred with none of the disabilities and deformities which have fettered and marred its continuance in its present scene of existence. Certainly, it will be vastly beautified, improved and invigorated—every way adapted to the sublimer conditions of which it is henceforth to have the range.

Certainly, it will be a material organism. However spiritualized, it will be a body in distinction from the soul—a distinction as pronounced and real as that which now subsists between these two parties to one personality.

Certainly, whatever may be the character and source of its constituents, it will be the legitimate successor of itself. It will be the natural reproduction of itself. It will be so akin and alike to itself as to at once attract its old inmate, and identify the restored man to all who have had acquaintance with his form and history.

Even from the traditions which had floated down the stream of intervening ages, Peter and James and John recognized Moses and Elijah upon the mount of Transfiguration. Mary and Martha knew it was Lazarus who was going home with them from the tomb over which they so recently had poured the tears of bereavement. The disciples were sure it was Jesus Whose "All hail" saluted them by the way, and Whose presence mantled that morning with colors such as morning had never before worn.

Just as certainly, when humanity shall undergo its great clothing upon, will I be sure of myself, and of all I have ever known in the flesh. Passing in and out of the congregation of the skies, I will gaze with no doubtful vision upon those I encounter. I will not have to say, in response to any salutation, "You have the advantage of me;" nor arrest the greeting of some dear old friend by remarking, "There is something familiar about you, but I can not name you;" nor chill the welcome of some darling by observing, "I ought to know you, but I do not." In every case, the identity will be too apparent, and the recognition too intuitive, for delay or discussion.

"Give joy or grief, give ease or pain :
Take life or friends away ;
But let me find them all again
In that eternal day."

THE PROPERTIES OF THE BODIES WHICH WILL BE DEVELOPED IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD NOW INVITE OUR THOUGHT. I have never seen one of these resplendent bodies, and can give, from personal inspection, no representation of their wondrous fashion and endowments. There is on record no detailed portraiture of them by any whose privilege it has been to take in the enrapturing spectacle. Perhaps such vision is necessarily impossible to mortal eyes, and incomprehensible to mortal intellect until it shall have soared beyond its own present limitations. Certain hints found here and there throughout the Volume of Revelation furnish our only data. These hints suggest that

These bodies will be of finer organism. Their grosser belong-

ings will be left behind. All of exclusive relation to the terrestrial estate will be eliminated. All of their essential qualities will be sublimated into meetness for their celestial surroundings and uses. "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial : but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."

They will be exempt from decay. They will be subject to neither wear nor tear. Neither anxiety nor fatigue, neither cold nor fever, neither sun nor shade, will undermine their integrity. They are "sown in corruption ;" but they are "raised in incorruption."

They will be inaccessible to death. The rest that "remaineth for the people of God" is no hunting-ground for the insatiate Archer who so long has had the freedom of all human habitations. Neither accident nor disease, neither contagion nor heredity, neither carelessness nor malice, will blow out the ruddy flame kindled at eternal fires. The mortal will have "put on immortality."

They will be of exceeding excellence. They will no longer be bodies of humiliation, but they will be bodies of transcendent dignity. In carriage, feature, form, they will be of surpassing loveliness and majesty. They shall "shine forth as the sun." They are "sown in dishonor," but they will be "raised in glory."

They will be of marvellous endurance and strength. No more will they be the sport of climes and seasons. No more will they need the night for recuperation in its bosom from the waste of the day. No more will they need the Sabbath to gather up from the labor of the week. No more will they measure toil by hours, or travel by miles. Illimitable fields will invite their activities, and immortal pulses throb for their sufficiency. Achievement will go hand in hand with volition. They will be "sown in weakness ;" but they will be "raised in power."

They will be of spiritual essence. They will be as genuine bodies as those which have brought us to this service. They will

be as material bodies as those through which we come in contact with form and substance here. But they will be so ethereal and refined as never to antagonize or restrain the princely guests they lodge. Here the material is often an incubus on the immaterial. But there the immaterial will be so thoroughly in the ascendant that the material will be its cordial and responsive handmaid—a willing chariot in which it shall, at its pleasure, go “careering gayly over the curling waves” of the beatific realms. They are “sown natural bodies;” but they will be “raised spiritual bodies.”

“Arrayed in glorious grace
Shall these poor bodies shine,
And every shape, and every face,
Be heavenly and divine.”

THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IS NOT WITHOUT ITS MYSTERIES. It is an event of which we have had no experience. We have never been subjects of the wonderful uprising. None of us has ever known what it is to have the vital principle withdrawn, and the material habitation which has been its lodging taken apart, laid away among the clods of the valley, and then called up into more than its original excellence.

And it is also an event of which we have had no observation. Often have we endeavored to convince ourselves that the death of our darlings was a dream. Sometimes we have sought to persuade ourselves that our departed dear would once more bound into our arms as we sauntered through their former scenes of being. But they have never returned. Our eyes have never looked upon one who had gone the way of all the earth.

A thousand difficulties can be rallied against the great awakening. It is a field where human energy and genius have never won a triumph. It is a laboratory where human art and science have never wrought out a proximate accomplishment. Complete and frequent changes are constantly occurring in the deceased body. Its particles are scattered through air and land and sea. One portion of it has become incorporated into another body; and another into a flower; and another into a stone. It

has been partitioned among the animal and mineral and vegetable kingdoms. It is no longer an organism.

Nevertheless, I believe in the resurrection of the dead. To my mind it is no more an impossibility than a myriad of facts and occurrences which I know to be facts and occurrences. Notwithstanding the assaults of the elements through crowding centuries, I know Sinai is the identical mountain upon whose peaks Jehovah published His law. Notwithstanding the change effected by Divine judgment in the surface, I know Sodom and Gomorrah are the same site as when Lot left them for his life. Notwithstanding the inroads of enemies, and the dust carried off on the feet of devoted friends, and the wear and tear of Time, I know Bethlehem and Calvary and Gethsemane and Hermon and Olivet are the same spots on which my Saviour worked out the problem of my salvation. And, notwithstanding all the mutations which await my body between its burial and its bridal, I believe that in *my* flesh I shall see God. It is no more mysterious to me than my birth. I can credit and comprehend the one as easily as the other. I have no more mental strain in believing that, when death and the grave shall deliver up their dead, I shall be myself in body and in soul, than I have in believing I am the same being who hung, an infant of a day, upon my mother's breast, though now, after many years, and after having undergone innumerable sicknesses and wastes, I am a man with children of my own about me as my comfort and company.

How the mighty change and upbuilding will be accomplished, I do not understand. Neither do I understand how I was born and live. But I have the word of God. How He will keep His word is no doubt-kindling query to me. He Who created me, can recreate me. He Who first established me in identity, can re-establish me. Knowing what I do of His achievements, I know He can never want either resources or skill to achieve any effect requisite to the observance of His covenant. He Who can bring the day out of the tomb of night, lead spring out of the lap of winter, and uprear the living harvest from the vault where

corn and wheat were thrown dry and withered, wields all the potencies necessary to rebuild in a diviner form His perished image. He Who ordains that the soulless magnet shall gather responsive particles of steel from the midst of innumerable other substances and attach them to itself as trophies of its power, can find in grave or coral-deep, in land or water, in part or in whole, all that is essential to my physical completeness; attenuate, enlarge, or modify it, according to its chosen pattern; and give it to my beatified and undying soul in a marriage which shall never know divorce. Oh, God is God, and it is not to me an incredible thing that God shall raise the dead.

“God, my Redeemer, lives,
And ever, from the skies,
Looks down, and watches all my dust,
Till He shall bid it rise.”

Then, Death, go on plying thy dismal trade! Go on with thy work of blight and woe! Go on withdrawing men and women and children from the activities and joys of earth! Go on breaking up human homes, and bursting human hearts with the anguish of separation! Go on, thou hateful bailiff, turning the immaterial dweller out of his material tenement! Thy time is short. Make all thou canst out of thy miserable office. Thou thyself art under sentence of death. Thy reprieve is only temporary. A new administration is shortly coming to the front, and thy occupation is over. An immortal Spring is on the way: and, amid its beams and blossoms, we expect to enter upon the possession of a house, not with the leave of a renter, but with the title of an owner—a house from which we can defy all process of ejection; a house with enough in its fashion and furniture brought from the old one to make us feel at home; a house with enough new in its construction and decoration to meet the new demands of its renewed resident; a house which no change of style will ever leave incomplete and outworn; a “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!”

All hail, thou Resurrection Morning! Just now earth is full

of the bodies of the saints. Coming years will make it fuller. We and ours are to enlarge the countless company. But our Saviour has been in the grave before us. He left a lamp in the midst of its gloom, scattered the odor of Paradise through all its chambers, and softened its rock into a bed of down. In His own loving arms we are borne into its bosom, His own hand carries the key, and His angels are watching at the door.

It will not be long till sunrise. The night is hung with stars. The sky is vocal with assurances of awakening. Our redemption draweth nigh. Celestial reapers, waving burnished sickles, are ready for the harvest. In a little while will be heard the shout of the descending Lord. His last enemy will be destroyed. God's acre will stand thick with sheaves waiting for the garner. Those who have been asleep in Jesus will rally to His standard, close in behind Him as He heads the triumphal column for His Father's throne, and kindle seraphic ranks to sublimer rapture as they sing, "Thanks be unto God Who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Fearless we lay us in the tomb,
And sleep the night away:"
Since Christ is "there to break the gloom,
And call us back to day."

XXIX.

“When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”—MATTHEW, 25: 31, 32, 33, 34.

The saint going the way of all the earth, his soul has passed immediately into a condition of unalloyed blessedness—a condition immeasurably beyond all previous experience, and steadily pouring into the possession of its occupant increasing measures of enjoyment and excellence.

His body, in the meanwhile, has been left behind. By various processes and stages it has been disintegrated and scattered until it is no longer an organism. It is so thoroughly dissolved as to preclude the identification of a single particle by even the most affectionate and discerning.

In the case of those who live toward the close of the present order of things, the body will remain thus dishonored and unrecognized for a correspondingly brief period; but, in countless instances death will maintain dominion through countless centuries.

At last, however, the end comes. The sun recrosses the vernal equinox. The living, without subjection to the grave, undergo the everlasting clothing upon. The heavens smile upon the sepulchres of those who sleep in Jesus. Their bodies are re-established. Their souls are once more at home. Each saint is himself again.

“An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave—
Legions of angels can't confine me there.”

Nevertheless, human history is not yet complete. The light of Revelation does not fail us yet. But, “after this, the judgment.”

A DAY OF JUDGMENT AWAITS THE ENTIRE HUMAN FAMILY. Its circumstances are only partially outlined in the Sacred Oracles; and these Oracles are our only authority and guide in the investigation of the solemn theme. Its precise period in the future is not apparent. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man." In the Divine bosom the mighty secret is concealed. Its fact, however, is beyond question. "The Lord shall endure for ever: He hath prepared His throne for judgment. And He shall judge the world in righteousness." "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." "He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness." "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

The announcement of the fact by the voice of Inspiration commands the assent of our conscience; for conscience is a court within us, calling us to its bar, declaring our character, and enforcing its decrees by the reminder of a superior and supreme tribunal from whose awards there is no appeal. And it commands the assent of our reason; for reason infers that God's creation of man implies God's government of him, and government implies law, and law implies an inquest as to its observance. And it commands the assent of our views of right; for those views shut us up to the conclusion that, if the Ruler of men does not look with equal eyes upon righteousness and wickedness, there must be a readjustment of the conditions of the two so that wickedness may not seem to have so largely the ascendant in advantage.

There is no alternative. Unless the Bible is a blind, and Conscience a cheat, and God a delusion, and Government a mockery, and Right a myth, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

“ That awful day will surely come,
The appointed hour makes haste,
When I must stand before my Judge,
And pass the solemn test.”

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT WILL INCLUDE ALL THE CHILDREN OF MEN. Thither shall be gathered all nations. Death and Hades shall have delivered up the dead which were in them. The small and great of all the families of earth shall stand before the great white throne, and be judged, every man according to his works. “ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” No character will release from appearance at the august assize. It is the day for the exhibition and proclamation of all character—the day when all disguise shall be removed, all tinsel torn away, and the real stamped with the signet of immortality. From this on, “ he that is filthy ” shall “ be filthy still, and he that is holy ” shall “ be holy still.” No circumstances will secure escape from the ordeal. Angelic espionage shall peer through every hiding-place. Divine scrutiny shall search through every subterfuge. There shall be no concealment when the detective forces of Omniscience shall go forth upon the chase of Justice.

“ Day of judgment, day of wonders !
Hark ! the trumpet’s awful sound,
Louder than a thousand thunders,
Shakes the vast creation round :
How the summons
Will the sinner’s heart confound !”

ON THE THRONE OF JUDGMENT, CONDUCTING ALL ITS PROCESSES, SITS THE SON OF MAN. “ The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” “ He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained.”

This Man is our old Friend and Saviour, Jesus Christ—the “ Word ” Who “ was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” and Whose glory we have so often seen among the shadows of Probation, “ the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of

grace and truth : ” the Lover of our souls, “ in Whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. ” Full of glory !—no longer the humble and wayworn pilgrim of Galilee, or the jest of the mob, or the prisoner of Pilate ; but compassed with angels, the Arbiter of universal doom, and radiant with all the lustre of unquestioned supremacy. A Man !—an ally, in birth, and experience, and incident, to those who are waiting for His announcement to fix their fate for ever : and therefore able to correctly estimate their capacity and obligation. A Divine Man !—clothed with all the attributes, and possessed of all the authority of Godhead : and therefore competent to analyze every act, feeling, and thought, of every individual in the countless company ; to discern every motive ; to estimate every peculiarity ; and to measure every portion. The Lord from Heaven !—making Himself of no reputation ; taking upon Him the form of a servant ; assuming the likeness of men ; humbling Himself unto death, even the death of the cross ; through His oblation of Himself holding back the day of trial, that degenerate humanity may rally for the crisis ; and giving to as many as receive Him power to become the sons of God.

Oh, Thou Son of Man, Thine exaltation is Thy due ! Laying aside the beatitudes and endowments of the skies that Thou mightest make a mission of recovery to our fallen world, it is meet that Thou shouldest have the dispensation of appropriate penalties to those who abjure Thy gracious overture, and of appropriate recompense to those who accept Thy merciful and saving proffers !

And, Oh, the matchless comfort of His interposition to us who commit the keeping of ourselves to Him in well-doing ! The comfort that our Daysman is our Judge ; that our Advocate is to wear the ermine of decision when we are under review for a deathless award ; that the arm which is now our consolation and sufficiency, is to poise the balance of our destiny ; that the hands which have been extended in the bestowment of so many benedictions as we have gone camping through the wilderness, are to deal out our future fortunes ; that the lips which have pronounced so many

intercessions upon our heads in the house of our pilgrimage, are to pronounce the decree which is to hang around those heads the insignia of unchangeable retribution !

There is a legend, interpreted on canvas by the magic pencil of Titian, that at the death of Charles the Fifth, the accusing angel appeared at the throne of the Lord of all with a long, terrible array of crimes against the monarch—cities burned and pillaged, countries blighted and smitten, children and women orphaned and widowed by the murder of fathers and husbands. There is alleged neither denial nor palliation. Even Mercy puts in no plea. Blood cries for blood. The Emperor kneels before the dread tribunal, confessing his infirmities, neither abject nor bold, but awaiting the issue in absolute faith that the Judge of all the earth will do right. And the Judge speaks, saying that the King was sent into the world at a peculiar time, for a peculiar purpose, and must be allowed the benefit of his peculiar conditions. Verily, the scales of allotment are in clean and honest hands ! Friends of the Son of Man, you may hie your way serenely to His presence.

“ My soul, with cheerful eye,
See where thy Saviour stands,
The glorious Advocate on high,
With incense in His hands.”

THUS WE COME TO THE STUDY OF THE RIGHTEOUS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. Future human condition is unalterably determined, in every individual instance, prior to this general review. It is determined in death : the righteous departing into an estate of blessedness from which they are never to lapse, and the wicked departing into an estate of wretchedness from which they are never to ascend. The former estate is represented in the Scripture of the hour as *the right hand of the King*. Therefore, even at the commencement of the final inquest, the final condition of the ransomed of the Lord is already assured. Their character is already ascertained and fixed. As the great white throne moves into position, they are standing to the right—the elite of

the world, the clearly indicated favorites of Jehovah, the distinctly chosen heirs of a goodly inheritance: a multitude which no man can number, gathered from all climes and dispensations, brimming with delight, and radiant with the expectation of delight still greater.

There is no array of the sins of their unregeneracy. They were all sinners—some of them sinners of long continuance, and of most fearful grade. But none of their sins is now brought into remembrance. They come to the front wearing the raiment of forgiveness and regeneration. Down among the ways of Probation they laid hold of the hope set before them in the Gospel; and upon the back of the appointed Substitute their transgressions were borne into the wilderness, never again to return to plague them. In the day of their justification their misdeeds were *covered: cast into the depths of the sea: separated from them as far as the east is from the west.* Yea, it was one of the beatitudes of that happy day, that the God of all grace covenanted with them to remember their iniquity no more for ever.

Merely the grade of their righteousness is under consideration. The tests to which they are subjected are merely to display before the assembled hosts their degree of goodness, and so justify their assignment to the portions already allotted them in the Divine mind.

The inquiry is as to the fidelity with which they have carried themselves since their acceptance in the Beloved; as to their improvement of their gifts and opportunities; as to the works which they have done in the name of their Lord and Savior; and as to the zeal with which they have run their appointed race. To every one, on His enlistment, the Master had said, "Take this trust, and occupy till I come;" and every one is now interrogated as to his occupancy of that trust. Every pound passes under review. This truth should never be off our consciences. In all the Inspired references to the great day of accounts, there is no hint that the inquest will be on creeds, or on experiences, or on professions. These are all of importance, but only as the

inspiration of works of righteousness. Works alone are canvassed as the basis of award.

Oh, those who have gone down into the grave with no works done for Christ, do not even stand at the right hand of the Judge for judgment. They are not even honored with a place among the saints for examination. None are so much as called among that goodly company for a hearing, who have not done to the utmost of their capacity and chance for Christ. Fearful outlook for those who have no claim to Christianity except its form !

On that day of doom, soon as, in response to the Archangel's trumpet, earth's myriads gather to the dread tribunal, there will be instantaneous, universal recognition of the character of every individual destiny. Those on the left—they have all done evil or nothing ; and the only issue is as to the grade of their penalty ! Those on the right—they have all done good ; and the only issue is as to the grade of their recompense !

" I love to meet Thy people now,
Before Thy feet with them to bow,
Though *feeblest* of them all ;
But, can I bear the piercing thought,
What if my name should be left out
When Thou for them shalt call ?"

HAVING CANVASSED THE CONDUCT OF THE SAINTS, THE JUDGE PRONOUNCES THEIR PORTION. He pronounces their acquittal from all guilt. The absolution spoken in their ears in that far-away hour when they came to the mercy seat crying, " God be merciful to me a sinner," is now affirmed in the ears of all the Universe. He pronounces their vindication from all the aspersions which haunted them along the thoroughfares of Probation. The calumnies and misconstructions of earth brighten into honor and purity amid the radiance of Heaven. He pronounces the good deeds they have done while still dwellers in the world below: and lo, they find themselves credited with much with which they had not credited themselves. He pronounces the good deeds they have done since their sojourn in the flesh was finished—the long train of blessings that followed their example and gifts and in-

structions ; the churches they assisted to erect and support ; the lessons they taught in public and in private ; the missionaries they sent into scenes of spiritual darkness ; the poor to whom they ministered ; the sick they visited ; the orphaned for whom they cared ; and the widowed to whose stricken hearts they carried light for which, in their desolation, they had even ceased to hope.

And then He pronounces, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Come ! Ever since your espousals, you have been near Me—near Me along the whole length of your pilgrimage ; near Me as your heart and flesh failed in the hour of death ; near Me these long sweeps of years in the place of separate spirits ; near Me in the graves where your bodies lay ; but I covet a closer companionship. Come nearer. Come to My heart. Come here to My side. Come, sit down upon My throne. Come, be ever with Me : gems in My crown, monuments of My grace, trophies of My power. Come, and find your works a thousand fold repaid, your largest hopes ten thousand fold fulfilled. "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"O'er the distant mountains breaking,
Comes the reddening dawn of day :
Rise, my soul, from sleep awaking,
Rise, and sing, and watch, and pray.
'Tis thy Saviour,
On His bright, returning way."

I have known one of our Pennsylvania judges for years. We were boys together. We have been intimately associated in riper age. I have been his pastor. I have often been an inmate of his home. He is impartial and upright in the administration of his office. Neither affection nor fear can carry it over his conviction of right. Should I be called into court, conscious of my innocence, how calmly would I bear myself as I saw him on the bench, and a dozen other reliable friends ready with indisputable testimony in my behalf ! My trial would merely be my glory.

I know I am under summons to appear before such a bar as

earth has never seen, and that such interests as bar of earth has never pondered are in the scales. But the angels who have camped about me during my stay in the flesh are under subpoena as the witnesses, and my Saviour is on the bench.

My burden lifts. My fear of the dread tribunal is gone. Long before the throne is set my destiny is fixed. Each passing hour is fixing it. My only care is for the years which are between me and death. Putting in those years in the companionship and love and service of the Son of Man, I can calmly bide my time. There is no occasion for concern beyond. Death is only my journey home, and the day of Judgment is only my day of coronation.

“What will be the bliss and rapture,
None can dream and none can tell,
There to reign among the angels,
In that heavenly home to dwell.”

XXX.

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”—I. THESSALONIANS, 4: 18.

The region of the stars is not the remote and unknown region which it used to be. With the telescope as his assistant, the astronomer has gone careering through the skies, locating and mapping out their worlds, until they are more familiar to us than once the earth was to its inhabitants.

For some time past we have been contemplating, in the radiance of Revelation, certain incidents and scenes in the future life of the children of God:—the soul, on its departure from the body, and during its continuance in the realm of spirits; the Resurrection of the dead, and the re-establishment of the risen man in all his material and immaterial completeness; the day of Judgment, recalling the character and conduct of Time, and dealing out the allotments and rewards of Eternity. And our light has not yet failed us. It illuminates summits still more distant, and carries our vision into periods still farther off. So, once more, we adjust our glass, poise it for a longer flight, and ponder the future home of the redeemed—the Heaven of our hopes.

I ATTEMPT NO ARGUMENT IN BEHALF OF THE EXISTENCE OF HEAVEN. It essentially follows an admission of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. It is the instinctive belief of our childhood, and the deeply rooted faith of our maturer age. It is the fancy of those who have no light but the light of nature, and the hope of those who walk in the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. It is the consummation of the Economy of Redemption. “He became the Author of *eternal salvation* unto all them that obey Him.” “Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” It is the covenant of Jehovah, “Who will

render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, *eternal life.*"

"There is a home for weary souls
By sin and sorrow driven,
When tossed on life's tempestuous shoals,
Where storms arise, and ocean rolls,
And all is drear: 'tis Heaven."

HEAVEN IS A LOCALITY. It is not merely a condition, "an aerial region where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing,"—"an abode of dimness and mystery, so remote from human experience as to be beyond all comprehension." It is an existence in space as definitely bounded as is the Republic of the United States, and as substantial as is the earth beneath our feet.

It is an organization of matter. There is absolutely no warrant for the notion that matter is essentially unheavenly. For all that appears to the contrary, it is as heavenly as spirit. It is as certainly God's creation. It shared His benediction when, having brought order out of preceding chaos, He "saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." His own Son wore it as the tabernacle of His Divinity for thirty-odd years among the sons of men, and then went back into the glory which He had with His Father before the world was, to wear it for ever. As far as we are competent to conclude, the human spirit, in order to its fullest exercise, requires some relation to matter. It is dependent on matter for much of its enjoyment and excellence. This is not an incident of the Fall. It was so anterior to the Fall. Without the aids with which it is dowered by the body, the soul would go shorn of much of its knowledge and holiness and happiness. Created that he might glorify God, and enjoy him for ever, man, largely material, was located amid material surroundings. Had there been no moral lapse, there is no reason to believe that there would ever have occurred any essential change in his organism; and, without essential change in his organism, he would have required material surroundings ever more. Why,

then, after the Atonement of Immanuel shall have restored him, in both body and soul, will not material scenes and surroundings be good enough for the everlasting cycles?

Beyond all question, human constitution and hope and instinct indicate that Heaven is a locality in the Universe, as distinct and real as any other portion in space—that somewhere in the realms of immensity, there is a material basis on which is up-reared the immortal homestead of the saints.

And this is the legitimate inference from the sacred Scriptures. They call it a country, a house, an inheritance, a kingdom, a land, a mansion, a place—all designations of material things. They describe it as a scene of arrivals and departures, and of residence by corporeal beings—as a scene to which such beings go, and in which they dwell, and from which for certain purposes they take their temporary leave. They refer to it in immediate connection with earth and hell, without any hint that one is less material than another. “If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.” “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” They speak of it as Jerusalem, Paradise, Mount Zion. They talk of its crowns, gold, river, stones, temples, and tree. They tell of the translation to its occupancy of Enoch from antediluvian plains, and Elijah from the banks of the Jordan, and Jesus from the summit of Olivet. And they teach the resurrection of the bodies of the saints from the grave, and the uplifting of the saints found alive at the second coming of the Redeemer. Why,

“The stars are but the shining dust
Of my Divine abode,
The pavement of those heavenly Courts
Where I shall reign with God.”

THE EXACT LOCATION OF HEAVEN IS NOT REVEALED. Various conjectures have been indulged in this connection—some

imagining that, amid the worlds which crowd the realms of Space, there is a central world, in the arrangement of which Divine Goodness has been especially liberal with its riches, and that here is the celestial homestead ; some imagining that it is far out upon the verge of Creation, too fair and holy for even vicinity to other portions of the empire of Jehovah ; some imagining that, at the close of the drama of Time, a new world will be fashioned amid the immeasurable regions of Immensity, and that here is Paradise Restored ; and some imagining that the high distinction is reserved for our own earth, after it has gone through its baptism of fire, and so recovered from its share in the ruin wrought by human transgression.

May there not be an element of truth in each of these conjectures? Why may it not embrace all the scenes of existence not assigned as the prison of the lost? Eternity is long enough to allow a residence of almost infinite duration in abodes so many that we have neither arithmetic nor fancy to compute the multitude ; and Immensity is wide enough to allow excursions to which there is no limit. Verily, it is no contracted spot which can soon be explored. There is no doubt some grand center where the ransomed shall congregate. But from that center there may be frequent divergence and travel. From that center colonies may go off to people new regions, and savants go off on scientific expeditions, and saints go off to hold a camp-meeting in some beautiful grove farther up the River of the Water of Life, and friends go off to some secluded bower, and sit down and talk of times they had together in the land of Probation.

“ O, what a mighty change
Shall Jesus' sufferers know,
While o'er the happy plains they range
Incapable of woe !”

HEAVEN IS THE ABODE OF GOD. God is a Spirit. “ The Heaven of heavens can not contain ” Him. He is everywhere present. He fills Immensity. Yet we can not read the Holy Scriptures without the conviction that somewhere in the Universe

there is a place which is His particular habitation—a place where His throne stands, and around which cluster particular insignia of Divinity: “for thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, Whose name is Holy: I DWELL IN THE HIGH AND HOLY PLACE.” “Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for He is raised up OUT OF HIS HOLY HABITATION.”

Nor can we read the Holy Scriptures without the conviction that thither, into the very neighborhood of the Author and Monarch of all being, are to gather for ever all who are found loyal to His sway. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.” He may wear no form. In Himself He may be invisible to finite eyes, “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.” But that very light tells that, within its fences and walls of such marvellous radiance, is God: and, looking toward that radiance, I shall carry myself as gladly and as reverently as Moses when treading around the flaming bush of the desert, and be as sure that I am in communion with Deity, that I am sunning myself in His very presence, as I am that I am now in the presence of your hearts, though your bodies hide your hearts from my eyes. For, after all, your hearts are you.

“There God, our King and Portion,
In fulness of His grace,
Shall we behold for ever,
And worship face to face.”

HEAVEN IS THE ABODE OF JESUS CHRIST INCARNATE. I know not when the Son of God was first seen in the form of Man. Some have a notion that it was far back in the councils of Eternity, when the Godhead was in consultation about calling our race into being: and that the proposition, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,” includes resemblance in material, as well as in moral conditions—in body, as well as in soul. Be this as it may, I think the Son of God had on the form of the Son of Man when appearing as the Angel of the Covenant to the Ancient

Church : for Inspiration affirms, "The Lord went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham" in reference to the impending destruction of Sodom.

Beyond question, He took this form in Judea when making His advent into the world for its redemption—took it, never more to lay it aside. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He "took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin ; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, *never to be divided* ; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man." And this one Christ, Divinity in a vesture of humanity, after having been "crucified, dead, and buried," rose again from the grave, "and took again His body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into Heaven." There He is today, God manifest in the flesh, and there He shall be for ever, an object of feeling, and sight, and touch, by all the redeemed.

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow :
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o'erflow."

HEAVEN IS THE ABODE OF ANGELS. They are the older sons of God, though, for all Revelation intimates to the contrary, new ones may be constantly coming into the company of the celestial host. They are of exceeding excellence of nature—highly endowed with the most illustrious attributes and circumstances of being. They are of different grades, and have the occupancy of different spheres, though all are of exalted grade and sphere. They are the elite of Creation, and are charged with the administration of Divine affairs, under the supervision of the Divine Being—part of their mission having reference to the children of men, and especially to those who are the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. "Are they not all ministering

spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" They are an immense multitude. They are not always in one place. They have errands through the Universe.

"Angels our servants are,
And keep in all our ways,
And in their watchful hands they bear
The sacred sons of grace."

HEAVEN IS THE ABODE OF THE SAINTS. The saints are those members of the human race who have been created anew in Christ Jesus, and have passed the subsequent years of Probation in diligent endeavor to show forth His praise.

They were not always saints. They were born, as other members of the race of Adam, without moral comeliness—beneath all the disabilities and under all the doom of the race of Adam, far away from original righteousness and all its fortunes and possibilities and tendencies.

They, however, as other members of the race of Adam, were born in the light of the Atonement of the Second Adam, the Lord from Heaven,—that amazing provision of the God of all grace, which holds in arrest, during our stay in infancy, the decree of death; and, as they came to the plane of personal responsibility, availed themselves of this Atonement, in the way of its prescription, by a personal appropriation.

Many were their difficulties, toils and trials. Many a time they were almost overwhelmed by the currents of sin and temptation which surged around them. Many a time their feet almost slipped from the way thrown up for the journey of the elect to the delights and dignities of inalienable blessedness. But all the while, "by patient continuance in well doing," they sought for "glory and honor and immortality." All the while God was about them, and within them, with all His matchless reserves and supplements of grace. And thus they fought a good fight, finished their course, and kept the faith.

Therefore, having accomplished their days of waiting, and doffed their garments of work, their sundown came; they thronged

up the steeps of rest; opened their eyes amid the radiance of the clime where there is no need of the sun, for the Lord is its light; and are before the throne, serving God day and night in His temple, hungering no more, thirsting no more, and all tears wiped away from their eyes—all occasion for tears precluded by the perfection of their bliss.

“Let all the saints terrestrial sing,
With those to glory gone:
For all the servants of our King,
In earth and Heaven, are one.”

HEAVEN, HOWEVER, HAS TOO MANY ELEMENTS OF ENJOYMENT TO ALLOW NOW A DISTINCT DISCUSSION OF EACH. Pondering the hints in reference to it which here and there shine out from the firmament of Revelation, I learn that in it there is one chief city. “Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto THE city of the living God.” “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of THE city of My God.”

I learn that in it are other cities. “Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” “Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.”

I learn that in it are rural regions—gardens, groves and streams. “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was a tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month.”

I learn that in it there are concerts. “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song.”

I learn that in it there is worship. "And after these things, I heard a great voice as of much people in Heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God."

I learn that in it there are triumphal marches. "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints."

I learn that in it there is continuance of the hallowed associations of earth. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

I learn that in it there is the complete exclusion of all evil, and the perfect experience of all good. "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

And I learn that in it there is constant and perpetual improvement in condition. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee. . . . They go from strength to strength: every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."

"For ever blessed they,
Whose joyful feet shall stand,
While endless ages pass away,
Amid that glorious land!"

AN IMMENSE MULTITUDE HAS ITS HOME IN HEAVEN. "In

My Father's house are many mansions." "They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

"They see the Saviour face to face;
They sing the triumph of His grace;
And day and night, with ceaseless praise,
To Him their loud hosannas raise."

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation," with the assurance of a better country; Who walks by our side every step of our way through the wilderness, keeping us from breaking down beneath its burdens and perils, and whispering in our ears, Canaan is just over the river!

"For God has marked each sorrowing day,
And numbered every secret tear;
And Heaven's long age of bliss shall pay
For all His children suffer here."

"Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!"

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words." "Comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith ye yourselves are comforted of God." Call to the disconsolate,

"Deem not that they are blest alone
Whose days a peaceful tenor keep;
The Anointed Son of God makes known
A blessing for the eyes that weep."

Nor ever let your own hope of eternal life fade out. Never fear that the celestial continent for which you long ago set sail is a myth. Never think of turning the prow of your vessel the

other way. Steer cheerily straight forward. Hist ! fellow-sailors, these are the land-breezes fanning our faces. These are the birds of Paradise that are careering over our heads. These are the flowers and fruits of the Garden of God that are floating toward us. These are songs of angels that we hear. And, hist ! yon, that we took for clouds, are the hills of Heaven. Yonder are its groves and meadows. Yonder are gleaming forth its spires and turrets. Yonder, yonder, are our darlings. See, see, they know us. They are kissing their hands to us. They are beckoning us onward. And yonder is Jesus ;

“ And Jesus bids us come.”

And here is the Holy Spirit, to be our Pilot in. Land ahead!
Land ahead !

“ O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect !
O sweet and blessed country
That eager hearts expect !”

XXXI.

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak ; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.”
—I. THESSALONIANS, 2 : 4.

As a Divine provision for the redemption and rehabilitation of disinherited and homeless humanity, the Gospel, with all its precious deposit of agencies and truths, in the immensity of Divine grace has come into our possession. With us are all its manifold discoveries and potencies, and, if we have allowed it to have its way with us, all its peace and prospects. And, of course, it is incumbent on us to hail its advent with gratitude, ponder its revelations with serious interest, submit to all its requirements with sincere obedience, turn all its teachings into our daily practice, and use all its offers with hearty welcome and will. But it has not accomplished all its business with us when it has accomplished our personal redemption and rehabilitation—when it has wrought *our* deliverance from perdition and heirship to Paradise.

As its Giver gives it to us for ourselves, He puts it into our hands in trust for our fellow-beings. Full of compassion for all who are in need, the thoughts of mercy which surge through the bosom of the Lord of all are not concentrated on any one individual or section of humanity. The atonement which cost Him the abasement and crucifixion of His only-begotten Son is not in the exclusive interest of any one fragment of mankind. His purpose in the creation of man was the greatest felicity, possible to him, of every man. There having occurred the universal forfeiture of the original inheritance, His pleasure is the universal restoration of that inheritance. Seeing one prodigal returning to the old homestead, He bids him an assuring welcome. He then commissions him as His agent, endorses him with His seal, endows him with His fulness, and summons him to the earnest search of all his fellow-prodigals. Ourselves found out in the cold and the night, lost on the mountain ; and then led back into the cheer and plenty and warmth of our Father's house, and provided with all needful

supplies ; we must immediately and steadily give ourselves to the rescue of the perishing. The reception of the Gospel is the assumption of an obligation for its publication. We, freely receiving, are as freely to give.

As this trust is put into our hands, there come upon us signal honor and mercy. Full of potencies as He is, the God of all grace is not dependent on our co-operation or our interest for the accomplishment of His designs, or the execution of His plans. He is not shut up to partnership with us for the working out of His purposes. He holds in His hands all the forces of matter. All the ranks of spirit forces are poised for His behests. He has myriads of means ever in readiness to run on His errands. He could do without us in the redemption of the world. Out of the stones He could gather children for His arms and toilers for His fields. It is, therefore, unconstrained by any lack of other agencies, that He allows us to be put in trust with the Gospel.

It is to assure us of our acceptance into His favor, and of His faith in our consecration. A government is not apt to intrust its missions to those whose fealty is open to question. And, as God puts us in trust with the Gospel, He honors us with a mark of His confidence.

It is also to declare our character. Men whose own disloyalty has been forgiven, and who have been reinvested with the immunities of grace, have special fitness for the commendation of that grace to those whom they invite to amnesty.

And it is to erect a basis for our remuneration. It is in His heart, on our submission to His sway, to do great things for us. He contemplates the bestowment of all His mercy ; but He chooses to condition it upon our fidelity.

And it is to make us meet for increasing remuneration. It is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich ; and increasing opportunities, duly improved, introduce other opportunities and lead to richer recompense.

And it is to prepare the way of the Lord to universal homage. This is the inspiration of Paul in all his labors and suffer-

ings ; for, burdened with the consciousness of his own insufficiency, and glorying in the grace of Christ, he exclaims : “ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ : to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God ; according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom we have boldness and access by the faith of Him.”

Diligent diffusion and representation of the Gospel we have in trust are expected of us. Becoming possessed of its riches, and at the same time being made stewards of its riches for others, we are not to be stationary finger-boards dumbly indicating the path to its ample and luxurious fields ; nor pictures hung along the galleries of the Church ; nor soldiers in wax, ranged in a museum, whose epaulettes and weapons suggest only some notion of what we are supposed to represent. Finger-boards get no enthusiasm into their directions, and are often by the wind blown into many directions. Pictures put no inspiration into their hints, and often have their most important features sadly marred. Soldiers in wax can not talk, and have to be carefully handled in order to keep them from melting. It is ours to speak—speech being such expression of our thoughts and wishes as will convey them to other minds for their adoption and practice. It is not possible for any amplitude of knowledge, or intensity of feeling, or vehemence of volition, to relieve us of the obligation to expression. Knowledge and feeling and volition must be put into utterance. “ A true witness delivereth souls.” “ A word spoken in season, how good it is.” “ Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.” “ The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life.” “ Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?” “ Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest till He establish,

and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Nor is the speaking which is enjoined a mere utterance, without consideration or emphasis ; but it is to be as we are *allowed of God*: that is, as He directs and opens the way for us to speak.

That we may be duly furnished ; that our speech may be with power ; and that no gainsayer may pertly ask, "How long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?" or tartly say, "Physician heal thyself," or shield his sin with our inconsistency ; let our corresponding action enforce and illustrate our speech. Let us live as we talk.

For the becoming execution of our trust, as stewards of the Gospel, we are under bonds to God. As a matter of course, men are infinitely concerned in our efficiency and fidelity ; for our efficiency and fidelity involve the deathless fortunes of others than ourselves. Many may attain to the resurrection of the just, and make their way in through the portals of the skies, only as we shall animate their pursuit and bear them company. Nor can we afford indifference to their estimate of the manner of our stewardship. It is no light matter to the executors of a trust, when the beneficiaries of that trust charge dishonesty in its administration. Moreover, if those for whom we have the Gospel in trust note indifference or negligence in our observance of its mandates to ourselves, our influence on them for good is gone. Still, our trust is of God—a trust which follows us into our very hearts. He bestows our trust ; directs as to its management ; has an eye on our manners and methods ; lends us all needful opportunity and resources and wisdom ; and will pronounce the award which will ban or bless us, "world without end." "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Verily, it is an awful and solemn thing to be the depositories of God for other men and women. And for other men and women, as well as for ourselves, a trust of eternal and infinite preciousness is in our hands. We have the hearty consent of its Testator, in its administration, to use all of it we can and need for ourselves. But we may not withhold its largesses from the other

legatees. It is theirs as well as ours. Any failure to get it into the hands of our wards in the Gospel is, if in any way avoidable, not merely a failure, but a *breach* of trust—a breach which is aggravated in the ratio of our relationship to the defrauded. It is bad enough to defraud a distant and unknown creditor, or to wrong an utter stranger; but to defraud our own flesh and blood, or to wrong our neighbor, seems to be an infamy of even darker hue. So, it is criminal to withhold the Gospel from those who dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, if we can by any possibility carry it to their doors: and it is criminal to suffer sin upon a stranger within our gates, if we can by any means within our reach work his translation into the kingdom of the Son of God; but how shall his criminality be measured or rated who, by his own delinquency or neglect or unconcern, cheats his own “kith and kin” out of the income and legacy intrusted to him for delivery to them? During the campaign of Israel against Syria, an Israelitish soldier said to his king, “Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle, and a man brought a man unto me, and said unto me, ‘Keep this man, and if by any means he be missing, thy life shall be for his life, or thou shalt pay a talent of silver;’ and as thy servant was busy here and there he was gone.” And the king said, “So shall thy judgment be: thyself hast decided it:”—admitting that another has lost through thy carelessness of a deposit accepted from his hands, thou admittest thy obligation to make good his loss! It is the decision of the King of kings. He will not even accept the plea of attention to our own business as an excuse for the neglect of His business; for He knows that there is no conflict between the two if ours be a lawful business, properly managed.

Earthly courts punish, with especially severe penalties, dishonest and neglectful executors and guardians and trustees; and the severest sentences of the Heavenly Court are in waiting for those who, having the Gospel in trust, fail to righteously administer their trust. If we can not, with all our diligence, find the parties, or if they will not receive their portion, our skirts are

clear ; but, dwelling beneath the same roof with them, or being in the same town with them, or meeting with them in the same church, or mingling with them in the same society, or transacting business with them in the same marts of trade, and wronging them where the wrong is for the eternal years, woe unto us if our Gospel is hidden to them who are lost !

Surely, fellow-trustees of the Gospel, we will not go out of this sanctuary without swearing with uplifted soul, if not with uplifted hand, "As we are allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so will we speak : not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts !" No honest follower of Christ can do less, and neither earth nor heaven can ask us to do more, than assume and keep the solemn oath. This much, with all our hearts, let us say ; and ever henceforth let our lives emphasize and illustrate what we say. Let countless multitudes witness to the saving efficacy of what we speak. Let the all-seeing God every day have to say of each of us, "That man, that woman, has brought home another prodigal." And along all the paths of our pilgrim feet, and as we drop our pilgrim staff, and in the solemn ordeal of final judgment, and through all the ages and realms of our beatific inheritance, may the Gospel which we have in trust for others be our own help and hope and Heaven !



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