

The Eternal in Man

By
JAMES I. VANCE, D. D.

*Author of "The Rise of a Soul,"
"Royal Manhood," etc.*

"He hath set eternity in their heart."
The Wise Man.



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By James I. Vance, D.D.

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The Eternal in Man

I

THE ETERNAL IN MAN

“Man is made for the infinite.”

—*Pascal.*

“All men’s souls are immortal, but the souls of the righteous are immortal and divine.”—*Socrates.*

“He who, while here, lives the eternal life
Is through eternity set free from strife.”

—*Jakob Böhme.*

ONE summer night around a camp-fire in the mountains, after two hours of merry jest and song, our old negro cook came out of his tent and standing where the lights and shadows met, begged permission to ask a question. We were a company of preachers holding a Bible conference with the mountaineers. Our cook in his early youth had been a slave in Virginia and was still proud of the traditions of his family. Six feet in height, straight as an arrow, with swarthy chiselled features and the air of a Chesterfield, the old negro made a picture as he stood there in the flickering light of the camp-fire, his big form and dark features silhouetted against the darker night.

We told him to ask on.

As he began to speak in low, tense, earnest tones, another atmosphere fell around the camp. Instead of merriment and laughter, we were face to face with a soul groping for light and seeking for signs of kinship with God.

The old negro had been pondering the opening chapters of Genesis and said that he had noticed a difference between the way God made the world and the way He made man. In making the world God used His power ; in making man God used Himself, His life, His breath ; and the old man's anxiety was to know if he was right in the conclusion that God, in the very act of creation had made him akin to the Deity. He was voicing not only the cry of his own life and of his oppressed and neglected people for some bond that would tie them to an eternal hope ; but the cry of the race for God. Is there within man's soul any sign of kinship with divinity ? Is there any prophet with a tongue of immortality ?

The human heart is an answer to the old negro's question asked that night around the mountain camp-fire. Its reply to the soul's deepest inquiry is a great affirmation. It is a declaration of the eternal in man. It is a proclamation of kinship between the divine and human. It is a record of the tracery infinite love left upon its crowning work. Whatever his clime or complexion man's heart carries him back to the opening chapters of Genesis and to the story of Creation. It calls up the hour when God said : " Let us make man in our image, after

our likeness" ; and having made him God touched him, not with the finger of His power, but with the breath of His life. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. From that hour God and man are of a common life.

Man is himself the high and commanding proof of his own immortality. He is the conspicuous evidence of an endless existence and a permanent world. He has the certificate of eternity in himself.

As the actual man surveys himself these seem wild statements. Eternity is an infinite term and the human heart is a limited condition. How can the finite hold the infinite? How can man's small nature hold eternity? How can his narrow sympathies contain eternal passions? How can his fickle will transmit eternal purposes? The ocean is too big for so tiny a cup ; the vistas too vast for sight so short and dim. How can even Omnipotence manage to pack eternity within the small compass of a human heart? It seems impossible.

If not impossible, it is certainly incongruous. What is eternity? It is the supernatural, it is the world beyond the sky-line, it is life without restrictions, it is the permanent good, it is the realm where virtue is never in decay and experience is always happiness, it is life with an infinite accent, it is holiness, it is God.

What is man's heart, with all its darkness and treachery, with its sophistries and hypocrisies,

with its lusts and blasphemies, with its denials of God and its repudiations of duty, that it should be made the receptacle for the jewel of eternity?

LIFE SEEMS TO DISCREDIT THE HEART'S DECLARATION

Man lives as if the eternal world were doubtful. There is little trace of an eternal accent in common life. He toils as if this life were all, making scant provisions for the future, preoccupied with temporal affairs, and oblivious of existence beyond the sky-line. He is so busy trying to make money that the soul is forgotten.

He neglects the eternal. He keeps it on a starvation diet. He feeds physical appetites and makes provision to satisfy mental and social appetencies, but says to the eternal: "Be still, time enough to attend to you after death." He values business more than he values God. God can wait. Eternity is side-tracked and time is given the right of way.

He abuses the eternal. He drags down divine possibilities into the mud and mire of unclean living. He harnesses godlike powers to selfish and ignoble tasks, and prostitutes to the uses of sin, faculties given for the employments of eternity. He chains the soul to lusts and makes the spirit a slave to the flesh. Sometimes he goes so far as to deny outright the existence of the eternal in man. He becomes sufficiently atheistic to recognize nothing but the animal, and to treat

himself as a clod suffering from freaks of evolution.

Nevertheless in the face of all this the infinite tracery survives. Despite all neglect, abuse and denial, the eternal in man persists. No doubt can kill it and no neglect efface it. It is man's crown, the sign of his destiny, the gospel of his salvation. There is none so sinful, so lost to goodness as wholly to exile himself from the possibilities of a better and a divine life.

Sometimes one comes upon the ruins of a great house. Through the effects of time or because of some catastrophe, what was once imposing has gone to decay. Yet amid the ruins one may find signs of the former splendour and stately measures of the house. A prostrate column, a fallen chapter, a broken frieze or architrave, a piece of standing wall announces what the great house was in its prime. Man is a spiritual ruin, but amid the ruins the signs survive of what God meant man to be when He thought of him first, and what he is yet to be by redeeming grace.

THE SIGNS OF THE ETERNAL IN MAN

There are signs of the eternal in man. Let at least three such surviving traces of the divine image in the human heart be noticed. They are the need, the capacity, and the desire for the eternal.

Man needs more than seventy years to complete himself. He needs eternity. He does not get his growth in time. He is just learning how

to live. He acquires a few formulas and gathers a little dexterity. He finds a few tools and discovers his ignorance. He gets enough experience to see that there are some things to seek and others to shun. But man is more than a century plant. His powers do not come to perfection in time. Just when he is about ready to begin to live, he must die.

There is an incompleteness about everything here. Every act and impulse has an expectant expression. All look forward to something.

We are trying to get our harp in tune, and just when we are ready to play we must lay the instrument aside.

Man needs the eternal accent. The time-emphasis makes very little impression. He must have his duties charged home by a divine imperative. His sense of responsibility must be reënfforced by eternal obligations. If he is to live right, he must come under the spell of the unseen, hear the voice of God, and feel the pressure of the powers of the world to come.

Man has eternal capacities.

The ability to reason is an eternal capacity. Intelligence is a footprint of the Deity in the soul of man. Will-power and personality are signs God leaves behind as He walks through man's nature. Memory, that weird faculty of the mind, by which we bring the past into the present and resurrect that which was dead into a conscious and living experience ; imagination, that marvellous faculty of the mind by which we

bring the future into the present and create it into a conscious and actual experience, are both signs of kinship with the divine.

The moral nature is an eternal capacity. Inferior animals have no sense of guilt and no experience of holiness. The ability to sin, the possibility of salvation, the aspiration for a moral life, remorse, repentance, holiness are all traceries of the infinite.

The very thought of God is the sign of an eternal capacity, even when that thought takes the form of a doubt or a denial. How can man have the thought of God, unless it be possible for man to experience God ?

Worship is the attitude of a being with eternal capacities. It is the craving of a nature whose hunger God alone can appease. Prayer, sacrifice, faith, are all eternal appetites. All churches and altars and creeds and rituals are saying : " Man is eternal."

Aspiration is an eternal voice in man's soul. He is never quite satisfied. The heart whispers, " It is better farther on ; let us push forward." To reach a goal is to look beyond it. It is to see a higher light whose glow and promise will not let us rest. Well for us that it is so. The cheap content sometimes preached is worse than impossible ; it is undesirable. The only contentment for a creature with an eternal appetite is action and progress.

Even the sense of failure, the feeling of humiliation, the tragedy of despair are marks of an

eternal kinship. Why should one be so concerned for failures, when death with its extinction of being becomes the great failure? If there be nothing but the time tribunal for character and conduct, why be apprehensive? The feeling of discouragement is the sigh of a soul before an infinite standard. One's sense of failure is his conviction that he is eternal and that the eternal must not surrender to time.

Over human failures, hope sings. This brief transit across the dial plate of time is not all. The future remains. In the realm beyond the sky-line, we shall adventure life again; and there, under kindlier conditions, disciplined by past struggles and taught by former failures, the eternal in man shall come to its own.

There is an eternal need, an eternal capacity, an eternal desire in every human life. These are some of the proofs, found amid the ruins, of the kinship of the human with the divine.

THE HUMAN HEART IS AN ETERNAL HOUSE

Man may experience eternity in time. It is not necessary to die to become immortal. It is possible here in time to feel the pulses of eternity surging in the blood, the passions of eternity tugging at the heart, and the hopes of eternity charging each deed with high importance.

The soul that dares, may snap its fetters, break away from the restrictions which would tie it down, look beyond the low horizon, claim, assert

and enjoy its eternal prerogatives, and be a citizen of God's great out-of-doors.

Man is like a bird in a cage until he lives for eternity. He is like a prisoner in a cell until he gives the eternal within him expression. Just as the ripples of the meadow-brook reproduce the swell of the ocean tides towards which the brook flows; and just as the music of the rivulet in its eddies echoes the lap of the mighty sea on the beach where some day the rivulet will measure its waters; so the voices within us are the voices of the larger life for which we are destined and towards which we are going.

The gospel is a plea for the recognition of the eternal in man. It is God coming to occupy the place He made for Himself in the soul, when man was created. It is a summons to the temporal to obey the eternal.

Christ came to open blind eyes, not that they might see the sordid sights of sin, but that they might see, amid the sordid sights of sin, the glory of the eternal city. Christ came to unstop deaf ears, not that they might hear the noises of the streets, but that they might hear, amid the noises of the streets, celestial symphonies and melodies and the music of invisible harpers harping on their harps. Christ came to make the lame walk, not in the slow drudgeries of the monotonous tread-mill, but amid the slow drudgeries of the monotonous tread-mill, to move along the heights of glory and across the plains of peace.

Christ came to recover the lost eternal accent

in human life. He said, "I came that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." Christ came to furnish the house according to the original plans. Grace wakes the eternal within us into living power and expression, until we hold eternal convictions, are stirred by eternal motives, and seek eternal aims.

WHEN THE ETERNAL RULES

Man is redeemed when the eternal rules him. Then his career in time becomes but a pulse beat of his everlasting existence. Thus both worlds get right.

Of course the future world gets right. It ceases to be a fear and becomes a hope. One whose heart is already singing an eternal measure has nothing to fear from the night. The morning cometh! Death is a kind angel that comes to release us from burdens which have grown too heavy longer to be borne; and to introduce us, when we are ready, to the activities and opportunities of a larger life. Somewhere the brook and the sea meet and mingle their waters; somewhere the sun and the sunbeam touch. We call it "death." A better name is "home." The eternity whose song is already filling the heart with music cannot cause distress. Death is a home-call.

The present world gets right also. The author

of Ecclesiastes says : " He hath made everything beautiful in His time. He hath set eternity in their heart." ¹ The inference is that God has made the world beautiful for those in whose hearts He has set eternity. The secret of a beautiful without is an eternal within. When eternity rules, this world ceases to be discord, and everything becomes beautiful in its time.

We get the right perspective. The world sometimes seems ugly because seen in the wrong proportions. Time is too short to give a true perspective. One looks into a freak mirror and sees things with features that are recognizable but distorted and misshapen. Time is that kind of a reflector, but eternity is a faultless mirror, and he who looks at the world in the face of eternity gets the true proportions. All things fall into harmony. The incomplete becomes complete; the wrong, right; the false, true; cruelty, love; the defeat of truth, its triumph.

" God's in His heaven —
All's right with the world! "

We get the right interpretation. We discover what is of real value. We are emancipated from slavery to trifles. The accidental and unimportant lose their power to destroy peace and wreck happiness. We shake off the bondage of the hour and emerge from the cares which too greatly absorb us. We stand up from our toys and trinkets and our higher courses trace.

¹ Eccles. 3 : 11.

We also get the right vision. We discover God in this world. He is no longer the foreign resident of a distant realm who sends occasional messengers to this ; but He dwells among us. He ceases to be the supernatural tenant of some far star which we hear about in a vague way ; for our world is His home. Our planet is as celestial as any, and our times as sacred. This is God's world, too. The eternal in our hearts enables us to see the eternal around us.

There is the story of an old Scotchman whom the traveller saw standing one early morning outside his cottage door, with hood in hand and uncovered head, bowed as if in prayer. When the old man looked up, the stranger said : "I saw you were offering your morning prayer and did not want to disturb you." "Not my morning prayer," he replied, "but my morning devotion. It has been my custom every morning for twenty years to come outside my cottage door and uncover my head to the beauty of the world."

The Scotchman was not a pagan. His was a most Christian devotion. What he saw is what every one sees when the eternal in the heart looks out through the eyes. He finds that he does not need to die to go to God ; God has come to him. God is not only in His heaven, He is in the world, too, in the beauty of nature, in the sanctity of opportunity, in the purpose of providence, in the glory of duty, in the divinity of sacrifice, in the deity of life.

All the world has become one vast temple in

which not only everything that hath breath, but everything that hath being not only praises but experiences and expresses and reveals God.

“ A fire-mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian
And caves where the cave-men dwell ;
Then a sense of law and beauty
And a face turned from the clod,
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

“ A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite tender sky,
The ripe, rich fruits of the corn-fields
And the wild geese sailing high ;
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the golden rod,
Some of us call it Autumn,
And others call it God.

“ Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts, high yearnings
Come welling and surging in,
Come from the mystic ocean
Whose rim no foot has trod,
Some of us call it Longing,
And others call it God.

“ A picket frozen on duty,
A mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood ;

And millions who, humble and nameless,
The straight, hard pathway trod,
Some call it Consecration,
And others call it God." ¹

And those who call it God are those who have God within. Sight has been illumined by the mystic, inner light, and all the world has become a beautiful divinity to those who have eternity in their hearts.

¹ Carruth.

II

HUMAN NATURE'S TRAILING CLOUD OF GLORY

“Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.”

THERE is a doctrine of total depravity. Let us be orthodox and admit it. Man is spiritually dead. He is a fallen creature. The story of the accursed Adam and the lost Eden is not a myth. Every man has in himself the proof that the first page of Genesis is true.

There is, however, another side to the story of the fall. If man has wandered, there was something to wander from. If he be a fallen creature, there were heights from which he fell. The story of the perfect man and the pristine paradise is no myth either. Every man, however low down his fall, has in him the proof that this page of Genesis is also true. The traceries of the divine image abide. The evidence that man came forth from God's hand lasts. The fall did not destroy, it only distorted and discoloured the eternal in man. The story of what man fell from is as important as the recital of what he fell to; and it is worth while to think back beyond the flaming swords and the shut gates of the lost Eden to the

hour when God said : " Let us make man in our image."

It is of course possible to glorify human nature overmuch, and by dwelling on the greatness that remains, to minimize the calamity that wrecked the Creator's finest handiwork. There are some who would substitute manology for theology. Instead of the Church of God they would have the Church of man. They like to spell the universe with the letter that has a dot over it, and they calmly and confidently announce that man is the only deity.

It is a grotesque spectacle, that of this midget seated amid world-forces he neither understands nor can control. He is hardly safe so far from home. He deserves the tribute which a modern newspaper poet pays this tendency to deify the human. Placing his hero once more in the nursery he sings a lay of greatness :

" Little Jack Horner
Vibrated in a corner
With a New Thought Christmas pie.
He stuck in his thumb,
And pulled out a plum,
And cried : The universe is mine !
And I am it ! "

While it is not sane to defame human nature, it is idiotic to deify it.

Between the two extremes of undue depreciation and exaggerated exaltation lies a safe middle where the high and lasting dignity of man even in the ruins of the fall appears and becomes at

once the proof of what he was and the call to what he may yet become.

On one occasion Paul took Mars Hill for his pulpit and with an audience of Stoics and Epicureans, proclaimed man's kinship to God. He was preaching to people who were not accustomed to lift their eyes above their heads. The Stoic hobbled his soul to his feet, the Epicurean merged his into his appetites. The creed of the Stoic was dumb submission to the inevitable, that of the Epicurean a free rein to sensual indulgence. The Stoic's god was fate, the Epicurean's pleasure.

Taking a line from one of their own poets, Paul proclaimed that man was more than either Stoic or Epicurean had conceived him to be. He was sprung from God.

The great apostle would stir those Athenians with the doctrine of man's eternal kinships. He would loose their souls from their feet and stomachs and tie them to the stars. He would incite the dull naturalist and the slow sensualist with lofty purposes, and set them on a higher quest. To do this he declares that God not only may be known, but that man is His offspring.

This is the height from which man fell. This is human nature's trailing cloud of glory. Man is more than a spoonful of dust under peculiar atmospheric conditions. He is more than an animal. He is fallen, sinful, plunging like a lost spirit from summits of bliss to abysmal shame and wretchedness, but there trail behind him

clouds of glory from the realms of light which are the evidence of his high birth.

In a buried city like Pompeii or Herculaneum, he who digs amid the ruins may discover the city's plan and form some idea of the beauty and glory of its better days. Likewise one may find even amid the ruins of fallen human nature, the lines which recite a celestial origin.

There is abundant evidence in man himself that he is not a clod in course of evolution, a protoplasmic cell reduplicating, a bundle of sensory nerves, a process of digestion, an act of assimilation.

HIS VICES

The very traits and passions which announce and recite the collapse and ruin of man's nature, at the same time give evidence of the fact that he comes of a royal line.

Covetousness is a part of human depravity, but it is a royal vice. It has a grip which death alone can break. It pursues resistlessly its goal and in order to reach it, defies all hardships, risks all diseases, faces all climates, bears all separations. The perils of the Klondike, the burning sands of the desert, the jungle and wilderness, the privations of exile, the horrors of pestilence do not give it pause. It is a master passion. Little wonder Christ put covetousness into a pillory and branded it as idolatry.

Nevertheless, base as it is, it has a kind of greatness. It requires a soul of no mean size to

be capable of such a monster vice. There are lordly possibilities in a nature, fallen though it be, which sets itself and refuses to swerve, which lays hold with a grip that death alone can loosen. Covetousness is a sin but it is the sin of one who was made but a little lower than the angels.

Hate is a part of man's ruin. Fallen human nature is capable of a hatred which, in its blind and fiery passion, defies all bounds. It nurses a resentment that hounds its victim to the grave and hands down to succeeding generations its legacy of revenge. No wild beast can be more ferocious than this human hyena. Hate revels in pain, rejoices in torture, and dances in a frenzy of delight over the ruin of its foe. It is the ante-room to perdition. Hate is hell. It is nevertheless the trait of a giant. Consider the big capacities of a creature with such powers of feeling; the colossal build of a being that can leap such plunges of revenge.

Hate recites the infamy of the soul, but it is a soul whose vistas are magnificent distances. There is no process of evolution that could impart such a temperament to a clod; no environment that could invest a cell of protoplasm with such capacities. The power to hate proves that man started high.

Remorse is another of the fallen passions with a trailing cloud of glory. A mere animal knows nothing of remorse. He licks the blood of his prey from his paws and without a pang retires to his lair to sleep with no spectre of crime to

trouble his dreams. The human assassin, on the other hand is haunted by a constant fear. He cannot shake off the nemesis that dogs his tracks. He sees a shadow by his side. The stain of his victim's blood will not wash out. He starts in his sleep and shrieks out his despair in troubled dreams. Remorse blanches his face, makes him haggard and hollow-eyed, gives him the heart of a coward and the brow of a Cain.

Remorse is the torment of the damned. Surely a soul that can suffer remorse must have a bigger destiny than time. Remorse can be explained only by the eternal in man. It is a sign of the persistent survival in the fallen soul of those divine sentiments man got from his divine progenitor. It is a high and eternal sense of right delivering its indignant protest against crime, and, in the central chamber of consciousness, executing on itself the penalty for wrong-doing.

Suicide is the mad act of one to whom the ills or sins of life have become unendurable. It is the strange sepulchral testimony of the soul to its own immortality. If the soul be not immortal, why should one's misdeeds drive to self-murder? Why care for exposure, disgrace, degradation, sin, if they are only shadows? But man does care. He cannot help himself. The wild beast has neither remorse nor self-murder. Man is the only creature that takes his own life. The fact that he is, lifts him out of the animal class. It is the proof of a lingering divinity in the soul whose presence is so persistent, imperial, inex-

orable, and whose fiery anathema against evil is so unendurable, that at last in the vain, mad effort to escape itself, the soul betakes to suicide.

These are some of the trailing clouds of fallen human nature—covetousness, hate, remorse, suicide. They are the ruins of a soul, but they signify a soul that was cast in heroic mould.

HIS VIRTUES

If this be the testimony of his defects, much more is it the testimony of his powers and virtues. There are certain traits and appetites which persist despite the fall, and which announce and certify the fact that man is God's offspring.

One of these is the human will. It is not omnipotent, but it is powerful. It can be broken down by sin and enslaved by vice, nevertheless in the worst and weakest of men, the will survives. It is the element in whose might one may set himself against the tide, stand up to hardship and disaster, defy fate, shake off the handicap of heredity, and conquer conquering circumstance. It gives to putty the stiffness of steel. Lord Kelvin says: "Every action of the human free-will is a miracle to physical and chemical and mathematical science." It cannot be weighed nor measured, but it exists. Next to the Almighty it is the greatest force in the universe. It is one of the voices of our nature which names God as our Father.

Another is the imagination. It is the soul's

creative faculty, by which a man may make a universe of his own. The man of imagination may live in all worlds, on all planets, in all ages. Imagination speaks all languages and shares all experiences. It travels through history and makes every century its own. It fights all battles, suffers all defeats, achieves all victories, lives all lives, dies all deaths. It is a citizen of the world at large, the true cosmopolitan. It breaks through the boundaries of time, descends into hell, ascends into heaven. Who can tether the imagination? How ridiculous the philosophy that would attempt to confine to time's brief localities a being who has already travelled in all worlds and lived in all ages!

Aspiration is another of man's eternal traits. The soul has a way, to which we have given the name of "worship." It looks beyond, above. It prays, reverences, fears, hopes. It is not satisfied. It believes in and seeks something better. What is all this but the cry of a lost child for home? It is the sigh of the longing heart for a sight of the Father's face. It is the evidence of divine possibilities. It is a declaration that man will never be happy until he recovers the heights from which he has fallen and awakes in the likeness in which he was created.

Perhaps the greatest of all these godlike attributes in the human is love. Man can hate, but he can also love; and his love is as tender as his hate is fierce. He can be tamed by love and ruled by kindness. What is this but saying that

there is something within which still hears and hearkens to the call of the eternal? Under the influence of love, man goes out to live the life of God, turning his back on ease, putting self aside, suffering, sacrificing, and going at last to his Calvary. It is a spark of divinity smouldering within him. It is love, and God is love. To love as God loves is to be as God is.

These are some of the glory-clouds that trail in the wake of the fall, will-power, imagination, aspiration, love. Following their wake takes us back into the court of heaven and up to the eternal throne.

One can understand how a flower may wither, but not how a soul with such power and beauty can ever die. The cloud on the horizon will pass, but a nature capable of these eternal traits and passions will never resolve into a wraith of mist.

EXPLANATION, PROTEST AND PROPHECY

Human nature's trailing cloud of glory becomes an explanation, a protest and a prophecy. It explains God's interest in man. He has always been interested. His yearning has been eternal. Why? Because we are His offspring. It was a sad day with God when man fell. It was the rebellion of a child, who threw himself out of his Father's house and became a prodigal. But God's love went after the wanderer.

It explains the gospel. This is the heart beat

of Calvary. It explains the sufferings of Christ and the joy among the angels over a penitent sinner. The prodigal has returned, and God is the father whose rejoicing heart is saying: "My son that was dead, is alive again."

It is a protest against sin. Man has too high an origin to live in sin. He was built for a bigger destiny than to grovel in animalism. He comes to his own as he strangles lust and breaks with sin. The eternal in man calls for a holy life.

It is a prophecy of redemption. God cannot afford to neglect a human soul, even though it be a soul in ruins. There is too much that is precious still left. The ruin must be restored. It is worth restoring. If, despite the fall, so much of eternal value remains, what tongue can tell the glory of a soul redeemed; the rapture and blessedness of the heights recovered?

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."¹

¹ John 3 : 2.



THE WITHOUT AND WITHIN OF LIFE

“Outward life is light and shadow,
Mingled wrong and struggling right,
But within the outward trouble
Shines a healing, inward light.

“Not to us may come fulfillment,
Not below our struggles cease,
Yet the heavenly vision gives us,
Even here, an inward peace.”

It requires no profound analysis to discover in human life two parts—body and spirit, flesh and soul, the temporal and the timeless. Both must be provided for, since each is important.

The body insists on attention. While man was never meant to live by bread alone, he cannot long live without it. The Christian Scientist, in his higher creedal moments, may relegate the substantial and material to the realm of the imaginary and unreal, but even the Christian Scientist is usually ready for dinner. On the other hand, one who stops with his dinner, whose aspirations are all appetites, and whose ambition never gets beyond his cook and tailor, must be classed as an inferior animal.

Both body and soul are facts of being, and life's business is rightly to relate them to each

other. It is a mistake to live in the body as if there were no soul; and almost as great a mistake to magnify the soul in such a way as to debase the body.

THE WITHOUT OF LIFE

There are temporal needs which must be met. Food, shelter and clothing are necessities of life. Beyond these things which appear on the daily bill of fare, all that which ministers to a comfortable and happy condition of existence must be regarded as a part of the rights of the flesh.

Asceticism is life's abortion. There is no great need however for uttering a protest against the niggardly treatment of the physical. Much of man's time and effort is devoted to the without of life, and necessarily so. One must live. Nineteenths of the working time of the average man is spent in earning a livelihood. We spend ourselves for wages or salary. Outside liabilities must be met. Life is a scramble to get on; and the common estimate of the difference between two given men is not in native ability or acquired culture, but in what they have. One has succeeded and the other failed in property, position, condition.

This standard is not to be dismissed with a sneer. To many it is the imperative standard and refuses to be set aside. Even God does not altogether despise it. He is interested in the temporal as well as the eternal. The Lord's

Prayer contains a petition for "daily bread." There is a gospel of labour as well as a gospel of pardon and peace.

It is something to God that people are hungry and cold and weary and diseased. The Son of Man came with a ministry to the without of life, and when John the Baptist sent to ask whether He were the Messiah, Christ said: "Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them."¹

Jesus was touched by the spectacle of physical suffering and bodily want; and the religion that is not, is a sham. "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."¹ God is man's friend in the struggle to keep the wolf from the door.

The mistake is made when one becomes so engrossed with the without that he forgets the within of life, and concludes that when he has gotten a living he has gotten all worth having and seeking.

The neglect of the spiritual is a common oversight. "What is honour?" some one asks and answers, "Honour will not buy a breakfast." Let a man be well groomed and well fed and what prayer remains unanswered? Is it not enough

¹ Matt. 11 : 5.

² James 1 : 27.

to be worth a million dollars or a billion if one care to raise the figures ?

It is the eager chase for something to make the outside richer that produces the fever of unrest in modern life. People rarely suffer a nervous break-down on account of anxiety over the state of the soul. Nervous prostration may often be diagnosed as nervous prosperity. Often the valuation put on God is in proportion to His ability to bless the body. Can He help us get on ? Can He give us business success ? Is He a Deity that can deliver the goods ? To analyze the average prayer is to discover that our most earnest supplications are fervent petitions to get on. The oratory smacks of the purse, the larder, the wardrobe, crops, investments. These are the main things. A paragraph at the close, which we are not anxious to have considered immediately, and which is thrown in for spiritual flavour, usually suffices for the needs of the soul.

Much of one's moral and philanthropic concern terminates on the outside. It proceeds on the theory that man's chief end is to have a well groomed body. If only the without can be kept in a state of good repair, little else is needed. It is vastly easier to get people interested in sociological reform than in spiritual work. What the dependent classes need is sanitation, wages, better tenements, a cleaner and more commodious outside. This is society's millennium.

What is all this but making the baggage of more importance than the man ? It is deifying

dust and glorifying the accidental. It is the worship of rations and the adoration of uniform. The results must be disappointing; for important as it is, the without is the lesser part of life. There is a gospel for the body, but its fundamental doctrine is that the body is the servant of the soul. As Moses bade his people farewell, he became prophetic and gave to each tribe a blessing. To Asher he said: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."¹ It was a promise for the without and within of life; a promise of shoes and strength; shoes for the journey and strength for the journeyman. It was a proffer of supplies for both body and soul, for time and eternity. It covered all life and pledged enough for every emergency.

Moses' blessing also defines the relative value of the two parts of human life. The journeyman is of more importance than the journey; his strength is of more value than his shoes. Success is a bigger thing than getting oneself well shod. It is the acquisition of character. It is the recognition, assertion, and development of the eternal in man.

THE WITHIN OF LIFE

There is a soul as well as a body. There is a realm of the moral, the intellectual, the spiritual, where thought lives and the will is king. There is a world of imagination and memory, of faith,

¹ Deut. 33 : 25.

hope and love. There the assets are not what we have, but what we are. There the eternal tops the temporal, the spiritual towers above the carnal, the soul escapes the dust. To this God gives the first place. It is the kingdom within us. It is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

It ranks first because the life is more than meat and the body than raiment, and though a man should gain the whole world he is profited nothing if in the quest for the without he sacrifice the within of life and lose his own soul.

Man is more than his sandals, the picture than its frame, the book than the paper on which it is printed, the soldier than his uniform, the soul than its playground or field of work.

Existence is reversed and the logic of being discredited when the without is rated higher than the within, when tools are made more of than skill, position than character, circumstances than being. Christianity is preëminently the religion of the inner life. It is not unmindful of the outside, but its plan is to bless the temporal by building up that part of man which is eternal.

Things get a value only because there are people. Caste and place dwindle in the majestic presence of personality. It is not a great question whether one be president or wage-earner, general or corporal. The spiritual part is an infinite dimension, and in the lens of the infinite, a grain of sand and a universe measure the same.

No wonder Christ's gospel spends itself chiefly

on the soul, building up the spiritual man and developing the kingdom that is within. He came, not that His people might have lands, houses, titles, degrees, but life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

His plan is not to lessen man's duties, but to enlarge his privileges ; not to shorten his tasks but to lengthen his skill ; not to diminish his burdens but to increase his strength ; not to obliterate sorrow, poverty, misfortune, but to make the man so great that these shall lose their power to distress him.

He creates and rejuvenates the within. Occasionally He says to some storm on the sea, "Peace be still," but ever He whispers to the soul, "Be not afraid ; it is I." He gives contentment in annoyance, happiness in adversity, rest in work, peace in strife.

The great things of life are within. Honesty is better than wealth. A poor man is better than a liar. Honesty never decays. It is needed, even in time, more than millions from the mint.

In the University of Virginia hangs an old oil portrait of Thomas Jefferson, the founder, and beneath it this line from the great statesman : "The art of government is the art of being honest."

Courage is better than peace. Courage vanquishes opposition and makes defeat into victory.

"Sudden the worst turns the best to the brave."

Sacrifice is better than opportunity. It is that trait which, behind and above honesty and cour-

age, builds manhood towards God. He who has learned how to sacrifice expediency for goodness, rights for duties, self for fellow, has acquired the divine way.

These are some of the divine products of the inner life—honesty, courage, sacrifice. No external value approaches them, and the personality which incorporates them into its make-up is forever.

THE ETERNAL TEST

An hour comes when the without of life is put out of action. It is left behind and laid aside. The journey is ended and at the gate of the invisible world the command to the journeyman is "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground."

We do not take the without of life into the other world. Houses, positions, titles, belongings, circumstances, opportunities are all left behind; and over the tabernacle of flesh, crumbling to decay on the final shore of time, the ritual pronounces "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

The question of immortality locates in the within of life. Character determines destiny.

"I myself am heaven and hell."

What is life?—shoes or strength, protoplasm or spirit, cash or vision, appetites or aspirations?

"This mortal must put on immortality."

The eternal in man pleads for a life that here in time "tastes the powers of the world to come,"

and seeks the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Through the deep caverns of destiny it hears the voice that sings :

“ Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul !
As the swift seasons roll !
Leave thy low vaulted past !
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea ! ” ¹

¹ Oliver Wendell Holmes.

IV

A CITIZEN OF TWO WORLDS

“ Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way ? ”

— *William Cullen Bryant.*

“ Life—the childhood of immortality ! ” — *Goethe.*

SOME one has said that man is one world and has another to attend him. The truth is man is both worlds. He is a citizen of the temporal and of the eternal, and all his acts and aspirations poll a double suffrage. His time-relations affect his eternal interests ; and his eternal longings, either consciously or unconsciously, elect his choices, his conduct and his character in time.

THE TWO WORLDS

Both worlds are real and their existence does not admit of reasonable doubt. No one in his senses thinks of doubting the world of time. A kind of metaphysics that has lost its way in the fog-banks of empty and absurd speculations may question the substantial reality of the material universe. It may say that the iron pillar against which one drives his fist has no tangible reality, that the dollar he chases is imaginary, that the food he eats and the clothes he wears are mere mental concepts or nerve sensations with no sub-

stantial entities corresponding to the mental impression ; but common sense diagnoses such metaphysics as mild dementia.

The temporal exists. It is too insistent to be ignored. We eat it, breathe it, hear it, taste it, see it, walk and work with it. It is all around us. We could as easily doubt our own existence as that of this world in which we dwell.

Of this time-world man is a citizen. He has certain privileges, duties, franchises here. He is tied to this world and cannot emancipate himself from its dominion until that mysterious power which presides over human destiny says, " Loose him and let him go."

Man is also the citizen of another world. The eternal is just as real as the temporal, just as substantial. Although it is often treated as a dream-world and conceived of as existing only in the imagination, with no corresponding realities to its faiths and hopes, the doubt that discredits the eternal is also dementia.

Man is a citizen of eternity. He is akin to the divine as well as to the human. The ages as well as the hours peal their tones around him. The invisible no less than the visible hovers over him.

He has faculties that can find no field for their employment short of the eternal, and experiences for which there is no other assignable origin. Whence come thoughts of God, the disposition to worship, the sense of responsibility, the spell of the infinite, if the eternal be fictitious ? How

does it happen that the soul, shut in a windowless cell, gets visions of limitless stretches of being, if the cell be all there is of life, and death's touch total extinction?

The eternal must be recognized. The conviction that existence overleaps time is too widespread to be despised and too strong to be strangled. In every human heart there is a cry for God, a sigh for the permanent. The longing at times may become obscure but it abides. The passion for pleasure may retire it, the greed of the money grubber may despise it, but it survives, deep as the soul, solemn as conscience, majestic as being.

It was Aristotle who said, "Whatsoever that be within us that feels, thinks, desires, and animates, is something celestial, divine, and consequently imperishable."

Time and eternity are the two worlds in which every man holds citizenship. He can no more evade one than the other. He can no more afford to lose one than the other. He no more needs to fear one than the other. Just as certainly as this world in which one sees, speaks, breathes and works, is a reality and he is a citizen of time; not a whit less certainly is there an invisible world flowing around him, waving signals, calling, warning, making impressions, offering opportunities, demanding duties, and declaring him a citizen of eternity. He cannot escape either. To try to do so is futile, to desire it is foolish.

THE GATES OF ENTRANCE

Man breaks into time with his senses. The body is a machine, with which consciousness is equipped and by means of which personality gets into correspondence with time. To conceive of a consciousness located in a body without the five senses ; lacking eyes, ears, touch, taste, and smell, is to conceive of a body that has lost its time-connections. In the process of its development,—shall we say?—the body achieves an eye and consciousness breaks into the world of light ; an ear and consciousness breaks into the world of sound.

It is evident that in the apprehension of the material, the soundness of all these sense-perceptions is of prime importance. To go blind is to lose part of one's temporal franchise. To go deaf is to be made a poorer citizen of time. When all these faculties fall into decay and lose their powers of perception, the time-world is so completely lost that the collapse is called "death."

Man breaks into eternity with his soul. There are faculties of spiritual perception, more intangible but not less real than the senses of the flesh.

One cannot taste or smell or see eternity. It would be as reasonable to try to determine the flavour of a banana by hunger for righteousness as to investigate the realm of the spiritual with a surgeon's scalpel or to explore for the eternal with a microscopic slide. The Professor of

Anatomy in a certain University who sneered at the existence of the soul, because he had never been able to dissect a place for it in the body, had about as much sense of the use of tools as the man who would try to judge colour with his palate or enjoy music with his nose.

The soul is a machine with which consciousness is equipped and by which personality gets into correspondence with eternity.

It becomes, therefore, not only important to have a soul, but to have a sound one, if we are to get the best eternity has to give. One will derive from his citizenship in the eternal, no more and no less than the soul apprehends. If the soul be diseased, if it be base and sordid and selfish, the eternal in man will be correspondingly infirm. If the soul be sound, generous, merciful, truth loving and seeking, the eternal will be of the same character. As well try to get the glory of a sunrise scene into consciousness from the temporal through sightless eyes, as the glory of righteousness and holiness into consciousness from the eternal through a sightless soul.

It makes all the difference, as to the eternal in man, what kind of a soul one has.

“I sent my soul through the invisible,
Some question of that after life to spell ;
And by and by my soul returned to me
And answered, I myself am heaven and hell.”

Redemption is not so much a scheme to achieve

the existence of a soul, as it is a method to cure a diseased soul. The soul already exists. It may be blind and deaf, but it is. What it needs is to have all its powers in unblemished perfection and its divine capacities developed and made usable. Jesus' mission is to put the soul in a position to get the best out of the eternal, to open up avenues into realms of ineffable peace, victorious power, and unclouded joy. Granted that such realms exist, of what value are they to man unless his soul be able to enter them? A great oratorio has no special delight for a deaf man.

The question of salvation is not so much as to the size of the eternal world but as to the size and character of the soul. Shall a man be equipped to enter the utmost of the highest, or will he shut himself in narrows of eternal unrest and remorse? The soul determines this, and its ability to invade the eternal must be not a future hope, but a present acquisition.

THE RELATIVE VALUE OF THE TWO WORLDS

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul says: "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."¹ There he names the two worlds of which man is a citizen, and declares their relative value.

The things acquired by the senses have a transitory value. This is not saying that they are without value, but their value is limited. The

¹ 2 Cor. 4 : 18.

time-world is not a permanent condition. It is only an incident in human progress. The ground is leased and the tenure is up at death. The days of the years of our pilgrimage are threescore years and ten. The generations crowd each other off the stage of time in swift succession. The sand runs out in the hour glass. Time is only the tick of the second hand in the clock of the ages. Some morning the senses will fail to resume business. Every door will be locked, every shutter drawn. Eye, ear, and hand will fail to respond. There will no longer be any medium by which to enter the temporal. An invisible hand has written "finis" across another human career, and people say "the man is dead." He has not ceased to be ; he has merely finished with time.

The ephemeral value of the temporal is seen in the decay of the senses. They were not built for a long tenure. The avenues of entrance wear out. The senses were not made for long use. The sight grows dim, hearing difficult, the hand trembles, the step totters. All these are indications of the limit. Nothing of this appears in the soul. Faith does not grow decrepit, nor hope infirm, nor love cold with old age. The soul warms to its powers as it advances. It has no age limit.

The same lesson is read in the short value of time products. Change affects them. All the institutions of time lack permanence. The strongest government may go to peices. The

mightiest monument crumbles. Human greatness, so far as it registers in terms of the time-world, is transitory. Mutation is stamped on all that is material, and the mournful threnody of the sense-world is "The things which are seen are temporal."

"The things which are not seen are eternal." The values acquired by the soul are permanent. The proof of this is not less convincing than that just considered.

Even in time, the highest values are those which the soul apprehends. The finest thing in a picture is not what one sees with his eye, but feels with his soul. It is not the canvas and colour, not even the technique and conception, but a certain undefined and intangible something that flies all time-limits; a flight of soul rapture and ecstasy that refuses to be tethered to the senses. The picture may be destroyed but what the soul has felt is imperishable.

Our greatest treasures are those which cannot be handled by sense. One cannot mete out friendship in a bushel measure nor weigh it as so much avoirdupois. It is not possible to estimate character by the ounce nor to discover thought with a spectroscope. Love cannot be treated with analyzing fluids and truth cannot be tested with an exhaust pump.

In the catalogue of eternal values are some things whose present reality it does not occur to us to question, but whose permanent existence is sometimes doubted.

One of these is conscious personality. A man is conscious of himself. He cannot see it, nor weigh it, nor measure it, but he cannot doubt it. It belongs to the things which are not seen. The senses have nothing to do with making me conscious of myself, and the decay of the senses or death, cannot destroy personality and make me unconscious of myself.

Consciousness is the soul's recognition of its own existence. It is a part of the eternal in man.

Another is the sense of moral accountability. One does not hear or smell his moral accountability, he feels it. It is a feature of his citizenship in an endless and imperishable world. He may cease to hear and smell and see and breathe, but this will not mean that he has ceased to feel his moral obligations. They are soul perceptions and they last forever.

Still another is the ability to suffer or be happy. The physical element in pleasure or pain is infinitesimal. Away beyond it are the passions of the soul, often so strong as not only to eclipse but sometimes to discredit the physical. It is a common thing for the soul to find the keenest happiness in a course that involves acute physical suffering. The agony of the flesh may be the ecstasy of the spirit; the temptation in the wilderness a road to godhood. These and other spiritual experiences in time, that might be mentioned, are so many declarations not only of the fact that man is a citizen of eternity,

but of the high and holy value of his eternal franchise.

MAN'S RELATION TO THE TWO WORLDS

The business of life is the problem of man's relating himself aright to the temporal and the eternal. His happiness and his usefulness depend upon getting the right attitude to the visible and the invisible. Two extremes must be avoided. It is of course a blunder to sacrifice eternity to time, to be so immersed with the temporal as to be oblivious of the eternal, so absorbed with the senses that the soul has no chance. To do this is to grow gross and materialistic. It is to blunder like the rich fool who tried to house his little soul in big barns. It is to make the mistake of Esau who bartered his birthright for a mess of pottage. The sensualist sells out for a small price. It is a blunder, well nigh as fatal, to sacrifice time for eternity, to be so enamoured of the unseen as to despise the seen ; to be so spiritually minded as to neglect common duties and disdain the present world ; to be so taken up with trying to be an angel as to fail to be a man.

This is a good world and God doubtless expects man to appreciate it. His senses put him in communication with it not that the world may torture him, but that he may enjoy it.

There is nothing to be desired in that canting, sallow, sepulchral piety that makes happiness a future dream and God a post-mortem asset ; and

whose hymnology and prayers are a preparation for dying. The saint who sings "I want to be an angel," would probably be disappointed were God to take him at his word. He would ask for a continuance of his case and a little more time in the flesh.

This is the best world of its kind, that even God could make. When He finished creation, heaven's verdict was "It is good." It is not a world to be sacrificed, discredited, despised. It is to be used, and he is in the business of life to some purpose who makes the most of his citizenship in time. In order to do this, he must remember that eternity is more valuable than time. It is one thing to sacrifice the temporal to the eternal, but it is another and a very different thing to sway the temporal with the eternal.

There is such a thing as being in the world without allowing the world to be in us; or to use an inspired phrase "to be in the world, but not of it."

The eternal in man must be allowed to control his existence in time. "Our citizenship is in heaven." This is just a way of saying that the duties of an earthly citizenship must be discharged in harmony with heavenly principles and aspirations. One should bring to the duties of the temporal the motives of the eternal. It is the man whose faith taps the dynamos of omnipotence and whose soul tastes the powers of the world to come who makes "this life worth while and heaven a surer heritage."

His "solitary way" is lit up with a glory "the last steps of day" cannot reach nor its "far rosy depths" penetrate. "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."¹

¹2 Cor. 5:1.

V

RACE-SIN

“Man is the only creature sublime enough to sin.”—*Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst.*

“I can only hope for forgiveness in a confidence upon the blood of Christ. As a statesman, I am not sufficiently disinterested ; in my own mind, I am rather cowardly ; because it is not easy always to get that clearness on the questions coming before me, which grows upon the soil of divine confidence. . . .

“Among the multitude of sinners who are in need of the mercy of God, I hope that His grace will not deprive me of the staff of humble faith in the midst of the dangers and doubts of my calling.”—*Bismarck.*

“ORIGINAL sin” is a theological phrase. Perhaps a better name is “race-sin.” One does not need to follow human nature very far to discover sin’s existence. A superficial diagnosis regards it as the decay and death of man’s eternal parts. It is, however, not so much the destruction as the disease of the eternal in man.

Sin is the characteristic of a being with an eternal outlook. Protoplasm and blood-cells cannot sin. The ability to sin is one of man’s immortal features, and the fact of race-sin or original sin, discredits the theory that man’s immortality is something to be won by an evolutionary process. His sin is merely a blunder unless he possess infinite relations. Every man sins, and every man

is sinful by practice because he is first sinful by nature.

The author of the fifty-first Psalm exclaims, "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me." ¹

It is a prodigal's prayer. The prodigal is a people's king. David had sinned grievously. He was guilty of as foul and loathsome an offense as ever stains the record of a human life. How could he get his consent to an act of such infamy ? He was the ruler of his nation. He was himself a husband, a father, a friend, a neighbour. The integrity of his throne, the sanctity of his home, the purity of his character, the worth of his influence, the happiness of others and his own happiness for time and eternity were at stake. Every consideration that should stir one to better things, tried to block his way and prevent his sin. With so much at stake, how could David get his own consent to go wrong ?

It is an old story. How can any one gain his consent to commit sin ? How could that husband who murdered his young wife, get his consent to do it ? How could those assassins that slipped into a farmhouse in New York State and killed a defenseless girl and tried to kill her mother, and murdered two helpless old men, have it in their hearts to do so brutal a crime ? How can the thief bring himself to the point of robbing his neighbour ? How is it possible for the prodigal to be willing to slay the life of his own soul ?

¹ Ps. 51 : 5.

The criminal was not always such. The most hardened offender was once an innocent babe cradled in the arms of a mother's care and hushed to sleep with the lullabies of love and hope. The face seamed with passion and scarred with crime was once fair with the innocence that leads Christ to say, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Why could not the child retain its innocence? Why must the heart ever be defiled?

Is sin accidental? Is it merely an indiscretion? Are we to conclude that the evil is mightier than the good? Is it because God is a failure and holiness a vain dream? What is the explanation of sin?

David gives his explanation, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." He affirms that he was born with a sinful nature. The tendency to sin, he inherited from the mother who bore him. It came to him by ordinary generation. He was not born good, but bad, with a love for sin rioting in his blood, and this inherited evil nature was the source of his sins.

Is David's explanation correct, or is he slandering his mother? Is there anything in this theory of an inherited sinful nature or is it the cowardly shifting of responsibility and the shameless defaming of one's forbears? Was the king's sin accidental or was it the result of an adequate cause?

There are no accidents. David sinned because of what he was. There was a law in his mem-

bers commanding him to sate his lust. He inherited it himself, and he handed it down to his children, notably to Absalom and Solomon. In theology, David's explanation is called "Original Sin," in science they prefer to speak of it as "Heredity."

The Scriptures teach the doctrine of race-sin, not once or twice, but repeatedly; not merely in explicit statements, but in the entire related scheme and system of the doctrines of saving grace.

"As in Adam all die. . . ." ¹

"They are all gone aside, they are together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." ²

"The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." ³

"To me who would do good, evil is present." ⁴

"I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members." ⁵

It is difficult to see how David's explanation of the motive to sin can be set aside without invalidating the entire teaching of Sacred Scripture.

Is the Bible correct in its position? Was David fool or knave when he diagnosed sin, or was he a profound philosopher? Is racial-sin a fact or merely an effort to shift responsibility?

¹ 1 Cor. 15 : 22.

² Rom. 8 : 7.

⁴ Rom. 7 : 21.

³ Ps. 14 : 3.

⁵ Rom. 7 : 22.

ITS UNPOPULARITY

A strong prejudice lodges against the dogma. We do not like its face. It is homely and unattractive. It is nothing to be proud of. It lends no help in the effort to deify human nature. It sounds bad.

It is the fashion to ridicule it, and class those who profess to believe it with the hopelessly non-progressives.

A gay pulpiteer, in his effort to ridicule the doctrine, mirthfully depicts the sorrow of a gloomy devotee, who mournfully recites the decay of religion by saying: "They have taken away our eternal punishment and they threaten to take away our original sin, and directly nothing will be left for our souls to feed upon."

That sounds funny; but, when one reflects, it is neither funny nor clever. There is a coterie of rose water poets and novelists who dip their pens in mist and write nonsense. Their mission in life is to make virtue as homely and vice as attractive as possible. They are dead set against original sin. They regard the sinner as an accident and the criminal as a victim.

Their esthetic temperaments affect a severe shock when confronted with the conditions of so horrible a dogma as inherited depravity or race-sin. They are the apostles of the fog and their creed is to believe nothing that fails to please.

What is to be said of all this? Are we to make a new creed that leaves out original sin? Paul preached original sin. Was Paul wrong? Au-

gustine preached original sin. Was Augustine mistaken? John Calvin and John Knox preached original sin. Were their intellects infirm?

Is the Bible wrong on this subject? If so, can one be sure that it is right on any subject? If it be astray from the facts in what it says about the origin of sin, may it not be as far afield from truth in its teachings about pardon, salvation, hope and heaven?

THE MEANING OF THE DOCTRINE

One need not be frightened by a name. What is meant by race-sin?

It does not mean that when God made man, He preferred to make him a sinner rather than a saint. It does not mean that when God made the human race, He made a failure. It does not mean that God prefers sin to holiness, nor that He would rather condemn than redeem.

God hates sin. The fact that He does constitutes man's eternal hope. God made man holy. Why sin was permitted to enter the world is the great mystery for which we have no explanation. While we cannot explain why it was allowed to enter, we know when it entered and through whom. A human hand opened the door, a human voice said "Come in," and a human heart gave sin its first abode in the world.

The flippant agnostic who says: "Were I God, I should have made goodness catching rather than sin," is exploding an empty shell. God did make goodness catching, but man let sin enter

and in doing so must bear the burden of responsibility for sin's contagion.

Neither does original or race-sin mean that any one will be punished hereafter for another's sins. Each soul must answer for itself. When one stands before the Judge at the bar of final account, he will not be examined as to the sins of his ancestors. Each life must render account of itself to God.

Neither does it mean that all men are equally bad, nor that any one is as bad as he might be, nor that any one is ever so bad as to have no good. In the breast of the worst, there lingers that divine propulsion God gave man when He made him His own image. On the face most marred by sin there lingers the tracery of angel's fingers.

A river thief, innocent of the crime charged, deliberately confessed and went to jail in place of a guilty comrade, because, he said, his comrade had a wife and children who would suffer if he were imprisoned, and he himself had none.

Daily such white spots shine out on the blackest record and say :

“There is so much good in the worst of us,
And so much bad in the best of us,
That it ill becomes any of us
To find fault with the rest of us.”

Original sin simply means that man is born with a sinful nature which inclines him certainly to evil rather than to good. Sin is neither an in-

discretion nor an accident. It is a result, the product of adequate causes. In the central soul there is a disposition to transgress. Man's nature is utterly and wholly averse to God's will. It is spiritually dead. This evil nature is the source of actual transgressions. Circumstances affect, but do not compel sins. Sometimes the sinner makes his opportunity to do wrong.

Original sin does not mean that there is to-day anything original in sin. What was sin six thousand years ago is not righteousness now. The moral law has not been revised. What was crime has not become virtue. What was wrong in Adam is not right in his descendants. No process of evolution will ever unmake a moral distinction.

Original sin means that the same sinful nature is inherited by all regardless of position, culture, nationality or earthly condition. There is no one naturally good. The evil may not have developed, but its germ lies hidden, and there needs but a sufficient provocation to rouse the beast of carnality. One of the most gracious and gifted of Christian women in describing the baleful influence over her of a teacher in childhood, said that all her evil nature was aroused and she found herself cherishing feelings of which she did not dream she was capable.

People differ in temperament, some are gentle and some turbulent ; in culture, some are refined and some coarse ; in position, some are on the avenue and some in the slum ; in conditions, some

have everything and some nothing ; but the doctrine of original sin holds that however great these differences, if one go deep enough he will come to identically the same fallen nature in every human life.

THE PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE

For all who regard the Bible as of infallible authority in matters of faith and doctrine, its teachings should be proof enough of the truth of this statement. The Bible treats a disease called "sin." It proposes to cure sin. The only trouble it finds with man is that he is a sinner ; and it offers a gospel that saves from sin by giving the sinner a new nature. In all its treatment of sin and in all the provision it makes for the cure of sin, the Bible implicitly and explicitly assumes the fact of man's fallen and sinful nature.

No other explanation is adequate. If man be not born with a tendency to sin, why should he do wrong ? To say it is the result of example is to run into a blind alley. Where did the original sinner get his example, and how does it come about that every member of the human family has followed the same example ? If it were a case of example, one would think that individualism would assert itself and produce variety. But the record of sin is deadly monotonous from Adam down. The only sufficient explanation is that deep down behind all conduct is the play of a steady, always present force disposing to evil.

The cashier of a bank in the state of New York used the bank's money for himself. He was detected, tried and sent to prison for a long term. He had one child, a lovely little daughter, whom he idolized. A few days after the trial she came home sobbing, and said : "Oh, mother, I am never, never going back to that school. Send for my books. One of the girls said my father was a thief." The doctor came, but he said he could not mend a child's broken heart. The little daughter faded like a frail flower, pining away, and begging for her father. Through powerful influence he was allowed to come, attended by the warden, to see his dying child. She looked up with a smile on her wan face and said : "Father, I knew you would come. Now lay down your head beside mine on the pillow as you used to do."

That man loved his child better than his life, but he committed a crime whose shame killed her. He knew when he became a thief that he was taking the life of his home as well as of his own character, and yet he ran the risk. He rode down all the angels of love and hope that tried to block his way. Why ? The philosopher who tries to explain that without a fallen nature prompting to sin will stop short of an explanation that explains.

"Heredity" is only an exaggerated symptom of original sin, but it proves the doctrine. If a parent can and does transmit to his offspring cer-

tain physical and mental traits, why may not a disposition to sin be transmitted from sire to son? Such a case as that of "Margaret the Criminal" with her numerous and notorious progeny of criminals is a striking commentary on the prodigal's prayer when he says: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

The universal fact of suffering proves the fact of race-sin. The penalty has passed upon all men. Part of the penalty is death, and death is universal. If sin be not a heritage, why should its penalty be inherited? "Death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Indeed, one need not go beyond his own experience for the evidence. Conscience is a witness. Not a man, woman, nor child but transgresses. It is easy to do wrong. One must struggle to do right. Why? Because there is a law in his members warring against the law in his mind.

Every police court preaches the doctrine of original sin. Go there, if you will, and look into those sodden faces. Hear the story of their revolting crimes. Gaze upon the rags and wretchedness of pauperism. Consider how the black stream of vice rolls on from generation to generation. Why are these people not warned by experience? Why are sins as dark and infamous as those of six thousand years ago still committed? It is because human nature is the same. Sin is in the blood. It is the awful nightmare of the race.

THE PROBLEM OF RELIGION

Human nature is what it was and religion faces the same problem now that it did the day Adam fell.

The world is growing better. There is more goodness in the world and it is of a finer kind. There is a better vision of God and man and duty. There is a saner interpretation of life. There is more unselfishness, more sacrifice, more brotherliness, more love, for there are more who have the spirit of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of original sin is not the doctrine of pessimism. The world is improving.

Yet when one comes to the individual life, human nature is the same. God must begin with the sinner to-day, just where He began with David. In this fair age there are crimes as horrible, dishonesties as colossal, lusts as devilish, as when a fallen king said : "In sin did my mother conceive me." There are murderers as red-handed as Cain, traitors as black-hearted as Judas, liars as infamous as Ananias, adulterers as lecherous as Lot, covetousness as sordid as Ahab's.

It takes as much of omnipotence to make a bad man good as ever. It takes as mighty a Saviour for the modern as for the ancient sinner.

If so there is no need of a new religion. The grace that saved David, suffices. The gospel that redeemed the thief on the cross and transformed a runaway slave, is the only gospel needed. One must get back to Calvary and gain the merits of the cross. The Jesus who saved Matthew from

covetousness and Peter from instability and Paul from bigotry is the Saviour human nature needs to-day. If original sin be a fact, what the sinner needs is a new nature. It is folly to think that any mere man can absolve him; that human merit or good works or the ritual will bring exemption. He must be born again. His nature must be changed. The eternal in man must be cured.

There is an old legend of a crab-tree that said one day to a cherry-tree, its nearest neighbour: "I shall grow cherries next season." The cherry-tree laughed and replied: "When was it ever known in the history of trees that a crab bore cherries?" But the crab-tree said: "I have determined to bear cherries, and you shall see." Spring came on and the crab-tree had many blossoms, but they were not cherry blossoms. By and by the blossoms became fruit, but it was not cherries, for the tree was not a cherry-tree but a crab-tree. And it is not in the nature of a crab-tree to bear cherries, even when it says it will.

Human nature must have more than a great determination if it is to change its conduct. The nature must be changed. To David's explanation of sin, we must add his remedy: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

It takes Almighty God to grapple with the problem of sin: "Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."¹

¹ John 1: 13.

It is not enough to plant a Social Settlement in a slum and send some of the "privileged class" to dwell there. Sin is not cured by scenery any more than is smallpox. The cross of Jesus must be planted in the slum, and the radiant presence and saving power of the matchless Christ, in whose person dwells all the fullness of the God-head, and through whom the Great Father seeks His wayward children, must come with a Gospel that imparts life and says to them who are dead in trespasses and sins: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."¹

Sin can be cured by but one physician. He is no general practitioner, but the great specialist who cures sin, and who alone is able to prescribe for and treat the eternal in man.

¹ Isa. 1 : 18.

VI

THE ATROPHY OF A SOUL

“ Alas ! the voice returned, 'tis thou art blind,
Not I unmerciful : I can forgive
But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes ;
Only the soul hath power o'er itself,
With that again there murmured 'Nevermore !' ”
—*James R. Lowell.*

THE eternal in man may suffer atrophy. Because man comes into being with immortal parts, it does not follow that these without proper care and use will maintain all their functions unimpaired.

There is such a thing as the atrophy of a soul. It is perhaps as great a calamity as that produced by sin. Both are spiritual diseases. Sin produces deformity ; atrophy causes the cessation of spiritual functions.

The atrophy of the physical is familiar enough ; —an arm hangs limp and helpless at the side, a withered leg is dragged as so much dead weight tied to the living body. Some physical function has suffered atrophy and as a result, there has been the breaking down of virility and the easy victory of disease over the body.

There is, however, a far more calamitous atrophy than this which wastes the tissues, with-

ers the muscles, paralyzes the nerve functions and creeps like the palsy of death through the living body. Worse than atrophy of limb or brain or heart is the atrophy of soul.

It is possible by the misuse or disuse of spiritual powers, not to destroy the eternal, but to put it out of action. It is possible to stand amid the glorious revelations of duty, privilege and grace; and regard existence as a long, unbroken night. The eye of the soul has gone blind through disuse. God calls, but the soul fails to respond.

He discloses, but there is no vision. He moves with the ministries of the infinite, but there is no impression. The trouble is not that there is no soul. The soul exists, but the spiritual faculties are shrivelled. The eternal is as irresponsible as dough, as impassive as clay.

In such a condition it is an easy thing to deny God's existence and be sincere in the denial; to scoff at religion and ridicule faith as credulity and worship as a form of insanity. Indeed a soul suffering from atrophy may honestly doubt its own existence. The organ of religious knowledge is gone. As easy for one to see whose eyes have been plucked out, or to hear whose ears have been poured full of molten lead, as for an atrophied soul to apprehend the eternal.

One may so neglect his soul that his spiritual powers will wither. He may so resist and discredit and deny the longings of his higher nature, and surrender to carnal and sensual appetites, that the call of the infinite will fall upon him

like the kiss of the living on the lips of the dead.

THE SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL ATROPHY

The evidence of atrophy in the soul is not far to seek. It is seen in a life whose pleasures are sought outside the soul. The man leads an animal existence. His joys are animal, his delights are animal, his ambitions are animal. He locates heaven in the sensory nerves. To him any other kind of heaven is an insoluble riddle. To suggest to him the joys of communion with the Eternal is like offering Emerson's essays to a kitten or entertaining a pup with a picture gallery. Religion is a dead language to him, not because religion is dead, but because his religious organs are suffering atrophy.

The same condition manifests itself in a contempt of God's providential dealings and the absence of any serious reflection in the presence of sudden and startling catastrophes.

A normal soul does not mock at disaster nor defy calamity. Earthquake, pestilence, famine, and other catastrophes in which the helplessness and despair of the temporal appear, instead of leading a normal soul to scoff, drive it to the eternal that it may find there the sense of permanence and security which the eternal in man craves and without which peace is impossible.

To make a farce of providence; to ridicule serious reflections; to treat the universe with a chemical formula and a glass retort; and to con-

clude that by this process the Supernatural is eliminated, may seem clever. It is, however, a cleverness that is dropsical. Its swollen conceit is the symptom of a diseased soul.

To treat the moral government of the universe with supercilious contempt is merely to betray a withered and atrophied spiritual function. God is where He was. Man has analyzed the sun-beam, but he has not dispensed with the sun. The same old sun is still doing business. He has made a chart of the ocean's currents, but the same mighty deep rolls between the continents. He has measured the stars, but he has not plucked them from their sockets in the sky. He has given names to the laws of nature, but he has not eliminated the God of nature; and he who does not apprehend Him is spiritually blind.

From his shallow and superficial and imperfect knowledge of the world, which manifests God, and in which and behind which, though unseen, God works, to jump to the conclusion that God is not or at least is no more than His product, is for man to show that his eternal perceptions have gone stone blind.

Religious indifference and unconcern are further symptoms of the same disease. There are those on whom the truths of religion apparently make no impression. An appeal that has in it the very eloquence of heaven elicits no response. Motives that beat with the pulses of Calvary fail to stir. Calls that are musical with the harmonies of heaven meet with stolid unconcern.

A friend of the writer once visited a dying man who realized that his end was near and who desired to lay hold of some immortal hope before surrendering to dissolution. The story of Calvary was set before him in earnestness and simplicity, the gospel invitation was extended, the precious promises and the glorious possibilities of the Christian's hope were set before him. His only response was to turn wearily away from it to die, saying: "I cannot understand anything you say. It is a hopeless riddle." By a life-long disuse and neglect of his spiritual functions, his soul had suffered atrophy, and he had lost even the power to grasp a spiritual idea.

A fourth sign is the doubt and denial of spiritual realities.

How is it possible to deny the character or existence of God, when the proof is so abundant and convincing? Man need not take a step outside of himself to find a sufficient argument to convince him of the existence of the eternal. In addition to himself, there is a world packed with irrefutable testimonies, and a Book eloquent with infallible proofs.

The only adequate explanation of the doubt and denial of God is the atrophy of those faculties by which God is apprehended. When the wire that ties an arc light to the dynamo loses its connection, the light goes out. The wire has not ceased to exist. It is still there as long, as thick, and as heavy as it was. It has merely suffered atrophy and ceased to perform its func-

tions as a light bearer. Spiritual darkness or doubt is explainable in the same way. Man has not ceased to be an immortal being. The soul still exists, but it has ceased to perform its functions as a light-bearer.

THE DISASTER OF THE DISEASE

The soul is the man. After all discussions of the subject, we must come back to the conviction that we are not our hands, nor our feet, nor our eyes, nor our tissues, nor our nerve cells. Man has a body. He is a soul. It is in the soul that the measures of manhood reside. Courage, fortitude, patriotism, devotion to duty and unselfishness are not nerve secretions and muscular contractions. They are soul activities. Therefore a withered soul is a withered manhood.

Every break-down in character takes place in the soul. Sometimes one who has stood fair before the community for a score of years suddenly goes to pieces. An examination usually reveals that behind the act which wrought his undoing was a career in which conscience was compromised and the integrity of the soul impaired. The effect of an infirm soul on the moral nature is like that of a weak heart on circulation. It gives disease an easy victory. Spiritual atrophy is the creeping paralysis of manhood.

“It is the soul’s prerogative, its fate,
To shape the outward to its own estate.”¹

¹ R. H. Dana.

All future progress for man must be in the spiritual realm. It must be through the exercise and development of the eternal within him.

The difference between two men is not their avoirdupois but their spirit. Some great men are of mean bodily presence, but the soul is majestic. It is not girth nor stature nor weight, but vision and daring that make a man great.

It will not be by growing a stronger hand, a keener eye, a swifter foot, a better system of circulation and digestion that the man of to-morrow will be a higher being than the man of to-day. If a better type of man is to be grown, the soul must push out into eternal realms. There must grow a being with a vaster apprehension of the infinite. He must have a keener hearing for the voices of the eternal. What is this but saying that all future progress for man must be spiritual progress? The man whose soul is atrophied has made further progress impossible. His evolution has called a halt. If he is ever to go on, the soul must throw off its paralysis.

“Wander at will,
Day after day,—
Wander away,
Wandering still—
Soul that canst soar!
Body may slumber,
Body shall cumber
Soul flight no more.”¹

All future as well as all present happiness for

¹ Robert Browning.

man must be in the spiritual realm. The atrophy of the soul is the negation of heaven. The size of one's heaven is the exact dimensions of his soul. Happiness is a matter of appetite and capacity. As well prepare dinner for a corpse as heaven for a soul whose spiritual functions are dead. The problem of the hereafter is not the matter of a celestial climate and a city beautiful. It is the problem of the eternal in man. The kingdom is within him. The greatest concern of a human being therefore should be to feel God's presence, to be stirred by His message, to have faith in the invisible, and to follow aspirations which leap over the boundaries of time and seek satisfaction in the infinite. For to be devoid of all this is to fall a victim to the disease that destroys character, paralyzes progress, and forbids happiness.

VII

A GOD IN RUINS

“Every man is a divinity in disguise, a god playing the fool.”—*Emerson*.

“’Tis the divinity that stirs within us,
And intimates eternity to man,
Aye thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter and the crush of worlds.”

—*Joseph Addison*.

“We desire immortality, not as a reward of virtue, but as its continuance.”—*Jean Paul Richter*.

MAN is a ruin, but God does not lose interest. Why? It is the question Job asked centuries ago, and which thoughtful men have always asked.

Looking up out of the ruins of his life the distracted, distressed, afflicted old patriarch cried out to the divinity he recognized and sought to understand. “What is man that Thou shouldest magnify him?”¹ He was conscious of his own desolation and degradation. Open-eyed, he stared full into the spectacle of his own ruin. He recites the chapter of his woes and miseries. He paints the portrait of a man in total collapse and

¹ Job 7 : 17.

hopeless eclipse, and says: "I loathe my life; I would not live alway."¹

And yet he is convinced that for some reason God retains His interest in the ruin. He has not forgotten man. Even hardship and afflictions are signs of divine concern. What God sees in the heap of rubbish represented by defeated, dis-crowned and broken manhood, leads Him to take it into His hands as the potter the clay, and to put it to the wheel on which Deity fashions its best work. This was Job's puzzle. For the moment the wonder of it made him forget the pain and shame of his own defeat. It was the spectacle of a God in thought and travail over fallen man.

THE PUZZLE OF THE RACE

The thing which puzzled Job, puzzles all. The fall is a fact of which every man must be conscious. It matters not for this, whether Adam and Eve were real persons or race terms, whether the story of the lost Eden in the Bible be a historical narration or a pictorial portrayal of the tragedy enacted in every man's experience. The fall is a fact. Man is confronted daily by the spectacle of his own sin and shame. He sees the ruin in himself. He stares full at the dismal spectacle of his moral and spiritual collapse.

The question arises: Why should God retain His interest? Why should He be concerned for such a ruin as fallen, besotted, imbruted human

¹ Job 7:16.

nature? Is He not the Creator? If He wants a race of perfect beings why not make them outright? Why waste Himself on the broken fragments?

What can the Infinite find of interest in that creature with low forehead and narrow eyes and misshapen skull, whose countenance is seamed with vice and written over with the ruin of the ten commandments? He is base enough to plot the betrayal of his best friend. He is treacherous, licentious, anarchistic, diabolical. Passions that would make a hell seethe in his brain and riot through his blood. Thoughts foment that would blacken the face of the father of lies. Surely there is no element of eternal kinship here.

Why should a holy God continue His interest in a creature so abandoned and apostate? Why not efface such a moral monstrosity and with a fresh creative start, people the earth with a race of worthies?

It is because man, fallen though he be, is still God's offspring and God cannot consent to deny His own. Man is a prodigal in the far country, in rags and haggard want and dire wretchedness, but he is a son. The life of his Maker courses in his veins. The father-heart of God yearns for His wayward child and the arms of divine love are waiting to embrace the prodigal when at last he sets his face towards home.

This is why God does not lose interest. Man has a celestial origin. He is in ruins, but he is a god in ruins.

One summer day, while spending a week with a friend in Virginia, I was driven some ten miles across the country to see the remains of an old colonial mansion. The place stretching along the banks of the Rappahannock had, in former days, been one of the great estates of the Old Dominion. The stone mansion, with graceful colonnades running off to wings on either side, stood on an elevation, with the ground in front terraced to the river's edge, where boats had once been kept in waiting to carry merry parties on pleasure trips. In the rear of the building stood a large grove of great oaks, and further back were the negro quarters. Slightly removed was the family burying place, where for generations, the sons of the house had been laid to their rest. On all sides and as far as the eye could see stretched the ample acres of the vast estate. It had been the ancestral home of one of the proudest families of the Commonwealth, and its sons had served in the army, in the National Congress and in the official life of Virginia.

Such was the past of the great house. But all this had changed. It was a dismal scene that confronted the visitors. During the war between the States some Union soldiers had spent the night in the house, and the next morning on departure had applied the torch, leaving the mansion in ruins. The sons had fallen in the Southern army. The family's wealth had been wiped out by the ravages of the war. The roofless walls stood like skeletons with here and there

a climbing vine to hide their shame. A few charred rafters remained to tell the story of the flames. The colonnades were standing but the wings had crumbled into heaps of broken stone. The fences were fallen and the graves weed-grown and neglected. The great oaks still stood, splendid in their prime, but the winds seemed to sigh rather than sing through their branches. Across the fields, miles distant, in a modest cottage dwelt the sole surviving representative of the family. The estate of his fathers had passed into other hands, and he was a small renter who should have been the heir. It was the ruin of a noble house, the collapse of a great family.

As the visitor looked upon the ruins and listened to the story, he could not repress the longing to see the ruins restored, the mansion rebuilt, the broad acres tilled again, the terrace and flower gardens in repair, the boats once more on the river, the halls and colonnades filled with laughter and the gaiety of music and song; not by strangers, not because some alien, newly rich, had bought the place, but because some scion of the old stock with the light and glory of other days, was back in the house of his fathers.

Must it not be with feelings, kindred in their nature while divine in their yearning, that God looks down upon the ruins of fallen, sinful human nature? He is thinking of the old times; of the high hour of man's divine origin; of what He meant man to be when He thought of him first; of the praise and place, the light and joy of a life

sin had not yet stained. As He gazes on the ruins, the empty rooms and crumbling walls and weed-grown gardens and untilled fields of fallen manhood, who can doubt that a great longing arises in the heart of God that the ruins may be restored? So God thinks and plans and toils, not that an alien race may dwell beneath His roof, but that some day the prodigal may come home, and the scion of the old stock dwell again in His Father's house.

This is the sinner's hope. It is well for him now and then to think of what he was; to catch the first flush on the world's sky of that morning when God said: "Let us make man in our image," to hear the far-off strains of music, sweeter than a seraph's song, when the morning stars sang together for joy over man's advent into the family of God.

There is a message of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," of total depravity, of apostasy and moral pollution and spiritual collapse. There is also a message that this fallen sinner fell from the skies. The low dust in which he lies is no argument against the high place from which he fell.

One may destroy a noble canvas of some old master, but on every brain that has gazed upon it, the picture has stamped itself. The iconoclast may shiver a marble statue, but here and there a chip tells of the artist's chisel. One might crush the Kohinoor with ponderous blows, but the fragments of the crystal would flash forth

the fact that it was a diamond the hammer struck.

It is true of fallen man. There may be found the marks and signs of what he was before he fell. As one scans the ruins, he may detect here and there, the tracery of godhood, and discover "the divinity in disguise."

THE SIGNS OF DIVINITY AMID THE RUINS

The evidence that man is a god in ruins is found in the Bible-story of creation. However one may interpret the opening chapters of Genesis, two facts are made plain.

One is that God made man in His image, in His likeness. He stamped him with the face of the Deity. He put the thought of a god in his mind, and the impulse of a god in his heart. He set the work of a god before him and placed the destiny of a god within his reach.

The other fact is that man was God's highest product. He was divinity's best. Man was the master. At the summit of creation God made one like Himself and crowned him with the empire of the world. The Bible teaches that man was not always a fallen creature.

Similar evidence is found in the world's story of human history. History after all, is but the biography of man. It tells us his mistakes, but also his triumphs. What has come to pass, man has wrought. Here and there some world leader has stepped forth and made the race tremble or rejoice, as he has revealed the prowess of a man.

We call such an one a genius, but he is but showing what every man might be were the race at its best.

Some one has said that institutions are but the lengthened shadow of a man. Governments are a man's thought, civilization is a man's product, religion is a man's aspiration. Man is more than a bit of animated dust, far more than protoplasm floating up into consciousness. The man of history, despite all his barbarism and cruelty, carries some lines that are like the lineaments of God.

Human personality tells the same story. A babe is born. It is untaught, unskilled, helpless. It seems to be but a bundle of breathing animalism in a nurse's arms. One day it startles its audience with a voice. In articulate speech it makes known its wants, and gives its commands. It has thoughts and volitions. Inside the little body of nerve cells and tear glands, there is a soul; and the voice of the child rings like a message from the court of God. A later day comes when the child wants more than nourishment. More than the senses must be fed. There are aspirations as well as appetites. These assert themselves and call for higher heights and finer sights. The soul stretches out its hand. There is prayer. The slumbering memories of a Face which stamped its image on the soul awake and call for the Father's presence. The prayer-cry harks back to the courts of heaven.

The mind begins to think, who shall set limits

to the realm of thought? Man thinks out beyond the sky-line, beyond the farthest planet. He thinks all the thoughts that were before him and time is obliterated. He thinks beyond the senses and space is annihilated. He thinks on and up and out, great world thoughts, until directly he is "thinking God's thoughts after Him." Man's thought as well as his aspiration is a path back to his Father's house.

The man begins to work and his thoughts are embodied in the world he creates. A Gothic Cathedral arises; a man built it. We wander through picture galleries and halls of statuary; they are the works of men's hands. Forests are subdued, mines opened, cities builded, the sea covered with ships, the lightning chained, the air filled with invisible and intangible lines of communication that carry man's thought around the globe. Man is at the summit of the modern world. In ruins as he is, he possesses more knowledge and vaster power than any of the gods of ancient Greece and Rome.

As he toils on, he must have a wider platform, a bigger world. The race is his audience, eternity his time-table, and God's limitless universe the realm in which he would exploit himself. As man studies himself, there begins to break in upon him an explanation of God's infinite concern for the highest of His creatures.

As if fearing lest his study of himself might fail to convince man of his high origin, God, in the fulness of time, sent into the world a man

whose form and face, whose saintly character and sweet life could not cancel his godhood. He sent Christ to disclose man's high destiny in the plan and purpose of God. Jesus Christ is God's thought for man. He was God in the flesh and God in the flesh is not a god in ruins, but a man in the glory of redeemed character.

Then as if He feared that in the supreme moment, the sinner's heart might fail him as he turns from the vision of the Christ to the sight of his own fallen and ruined life, and say : "Such glory is not for me," a gospel was given which speaks in promises not to be misunderstood. Jesus is declared to be "the first-born of many brethren," and those who find themselves in Him are called the "Sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," the heirs of the ancient ancestral estates, scions of the divine stock.

THE PUZZLE SOLVED

It is no wonder that God is interested in man. Shall God forget His own ? Shall the love of the Eternal Father fail ?

Man is no freak of evolution. The Darwinian theory of the origin of man is the pedigree of a bastard-race. At the Scientific Congress in Moscow, Virchow declared that this theory of man's origin from an inferior species "had been beaten on its whole line of battle." Fogazarro, the distinguished Italian writer, says : "We must admit that science does not possess a single reliable direct proof of the origin of man from an inferior

species"; and Moleschott declares that "men were more generous to Darwin than the facts." The fancy that man is a demon in the slow process of development, a mere animal at certain stages of this development, and worse than an animal at others is too weird for credence. Man is not a gorilla with his savage propensities tamed by the gang spirit or social instinct. Back of Adam is God. The soul of man cries out for God as a lost child for parental love. The sinner is a prodigal far from home, evil has its foot on his neck and base passions have left their mark upon him; but deeper is the tracery of God and more enduring is the Maker's image. Salvation is God's effort to get His child back home, not merely as good as he was when he left, but with soul stature achieved in the gymnasium of life.

He is restoring the ruins and carrying the work of character building on to conform to His perfect and eternal plan for man. Since God cannot fail, He will not rest until the ruins are restored, and

"—— the divinity that stirs within us,
And intimates eternity to man,"

is once more on the throne.

VIII

A NEW CREATURE

"The finest fruit earth holds up to its Maker is a finished man."—*Humboldt*.

"And you, a Thought incarnate here
On ministries of trust,
Must tread the sacred way, and scorn
To run a race with dust;
Hold the high gospel up to men;
That all the thoughts that thrill
Along the nerve-lines of their lives
Are indestructible."

—*Marion V. Dudley*.

SALVATION is the eternal in man recovering the use of itself by means of what the Bible calls "being born again." The new birth cures the soul of original sin and delivers it from the paralysis of spiritual atrophy.

When the eternal in man thus gets the right of way, he becomes so completely changed that it is not exaggeration to call him a "new creature." He has not lost his identity, nor surrendered his personality; but the transformation is so striking, so fundamental and so far-reaching as virtually to make a new man of him.

It is this that led Paul to say to the Chris-

tians at Corinth : "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." ¹

He is writing out of his own experience. He is not theorizing. He is not discussing theology, but life. The two are not always the same. Chemistry is not always food, astronomy is not always stars, botany is not always flowers, and theology is not always religion. One may be a very good theologian and a very poor Christian. He may be well supplied with dogma, but short on experience. Paul tells of a thing he knows because he has found it true in his own life. Those who knew Paul best, believed him. When Paul became a Christian, it made him a new man.

A THOROUGHGOING SALVATION

Salvation is a thoroughgoing cure. Christ does not say : "I will mend you ; I will patch the holes of your ragged and worn-out character ; I will brush the dust from your reputation and freshen your appearance ;" but "I will make you new." It is an offer to replace the old, to substitute soundness for disease and fresh robes for rags.

He does not say : "I will treat your symptoms ; I will stupefy your senses and deaden your pain ; I will cover your hurts with bandages and disguise their offensiveness with perfumes ;" but "I will make you a new creature."

He does not say : "I will change your home,

¹ 2 Cor. 5 : 17.

your business, your acquaintances, your wages, your work ;” but “I will change you.” It is not the promise of new climate nor new scenery nor new diet but of new manhood.

He does not say that He will make man think he is changed, that He will fool him into believing he is something he is not, that He will dupe him with mental delusions and admit him to a fool’s paradise. Christ proposes to enter the central citadel of human nature and right all that is wrong in us and our surroundings, for time and eternity, by so completely reforming and transforming and renewing and regenerating us that we shall be nothing short of new creatures. This is what Christianity proposes to do for a human life, and it is the only remedial agency of any sect or school that dares make so astounding a proposal. The offer is divine in its audacity.

THE ONLY SALVATION THAT WILL MEET THE CASE

A thoroughgoing cure is what man needs and it is the only salvation that will meet the case. It is not enough to get mended. It is not enough to get a ragged character patched. The old and new will soon part company and the rent be worse than ever. It is not enough to have symptoms treated and pains deadened. After a while drugs will lose their effect. The soul will shake off its stupor and be racked with pent-up tortures. A change of surroundings or of work will soon lose novelty, and the old monotony will

grind in upon us. The mental delusion will strike against the solid wall of life's actualities and we shall open our eyes to discover that our fool's paradise has disappeared. If things are ever to be better the individual must be cured.

Some have low appetites. It is not enough to starve them. A fast only whets the edge of their hunger. The need is to have that which is low replaced by that which is high.

Some have bad tempers and belong to the class of explosives. We go off at the wrong time and disastrously to those in our vicinity. We say sharp and hurting things. What we need is not a ball and chain for our temper, nor a cell in which to confine it. We need the thing replaced by a new one that can keep sweet.

Some have hateful ways, and do mean things, that wound others, and make them unhappy. They need a change of disposition, a new temperament.

Some of us have bad habits and do things that are wrong. We know they are wrong, but we go on doing them. With every indulgence the bad habit increases its power, and we become more hopelessly and helplessly its victims. What we need is not to be told what is wrong, for we know that full well already. We need to be emancipated.

Some are down. We have been unfortunate. We are disheartened and disappointed. We have failed. What we need is not so much a spirit of resignation and submission, as a dauntless faith

which will enable us to stand up, with fresh courage and resolution, for a new career.

To meet all this there must be a thoroughgoing salvation. A man has got to get saved so that he can live anywhere. He wants to be fixed so that it will be unnecessary to be continually running away from temptation. Temptation is the kind of thing that cannot be entirely escaped. One may betake himself to the lonely desert and lead a solitary life, but he has not escaped temptation. It is entirely proper not to run into temptation; and he is worse than foolhardy who goes out of his way to meet the tempter; but the soul needs more than a sanatorium. It needs to be saved so that it can live anywhere, in town or out of town, and fight its battle through to victory.

It is not the salvation that gives one a new way of going to church, or a new way of reading the Bible, or a new way of behaving in God's house that is needed. It is not a gospel with a new creed or a new ritual or a new confessional. All these belong to the shallows. They are mere superficialities. The need is to become new creatures and Christ promises that we shall.

God has not stopped creating. He made the world, and made it so beautiful that the artist's pencil and the painter's brush are in despair. But God is still the Creator, and His product now is more beautiful than His world. He is giving to His work some of the beauty of Himself. He is creating human souls in the image

of the Christ. This is His way of restoring the god that is in ruins. The man that is fallen.

CHRIST MAKES NEW CREATURES

The divine thing about Christ is His ability to make men new, to impart life. He did not come to confer things, but to impart life. Only the Deity can do this. Lord Kelvin in a recent address to physicians said: "Let not your minds be dazzled by the imagining of the daily newspapers that because Berthelot and others have made food stuffs, they can make living things, or that there is any prospect of a process being found in any laboratory for making a living thing, whether the minutest germ of bacteriology or anything smaller or greater. There is an absolute distinction between crystals and cells. Anything that crystallizes can be made by the chemist. Nothing approaching to the cell of a living creature has yet been made."

Only life can beget life. God is the author of all life. When we come to that highest of all the kinds of life, the spiritual, it is preëminently true that the chemist must be divine. Christ's claim is to give life to the dead soul. He says: "I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly."

Like all creations, the origin of this new life is a mystery. We do not know how Christ makes us new. To Nicodemus, Jesus said: "The wind bloweth where it will and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and

whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit." ¹

The new birth is as much a mystery now as then. The origin of life is always a mystery. It cannot be explained, but one can be perfectly satisfied of its reality by its results.

I do not know how the Creator, away back in that primal dawn of existence, lifted nothing into something by the word of His power ; but I know the world is here. It is a great reality.

I cannot understand how Christ makes new creatures, but I know that He does, for I see the product. Some have experienced the change. We have seen the wonderful transformation come to pass and can no more doubt its reality than we can that of the natural world whose existence is certified to our senses.

Dr. Gordon of Boston used to tell of an Irishman named Daley who had been converted in one of the Moody meetings. He had a companion named Murphy, who was a wretched drunkard, and in whose salvation he became deeply interested. At the close of a prolonged debauch, when Murphy was miserable and half-penitent, Daley got him to a meeting, and he became a Christian. Daley knew the struggle that was before his comrade and set himself to try to shield him from temptation. The next Sunday morning Daley saw one of Murphy's boon companions coming and he feared that if the two men should get together, it would be an-

¹ 1 John 3 : 8.

other spree. He met the man at the door and said : "Murphy is not here. He does not live here any longer."

With much anxiety Daley told what he had said, to Dr. Gordon, and asked, "Did I lie, sir? You know Mr. Moody said that when a man is converted, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away and all things have become new. Now what I meant was that old Murphy did not live there. Old Murphy has passed away and Murphy is a new man."

It is not necessary to settle the question of veracity raised by the new convert; but of this there need not be any sort of doubt: Jesus Christ is able to make men new. This is the gospel offer. No matter how hard the case, how far gone in sin one may be, nor how much in despair about himself, he can step through the open door of divine grace into Christ and a new life.

WHAT IS IT TO BE A NEW CREATURE?

What does the promise mean?

Perhaps it would be better first to consider what it does not mean.

It does not mean that temptations will cease, nor that one will be given a nature that cannot be tempted. Christ did not have that kind of a nature. He could be and was tempted. Temptations are not the worst things that befall us. They have their mission. They develop force of character. The trial of faith is precious. God does not promise to keep us clear of temptation.

His promise is that we shall not be tempted beyond that we are able, and that with the temptation there shall be a way of escape.

It does not mean that responsibility will cease. To be saved is not to be lifted into a condition where one can live any way and escape the consequences. There is a penalty for wrong-doing here from which exemption is impossible. Even the atoning work of Christ does not cancel the individual's personal responsibility.

Neither does it mean that the things of life which worry and trouble will necessarily be taken away. It does not mean that the sea will never have a storm, the sky a cloud, the road a stone, nor the day a regret. It is not a new environment that is promised, but a new nature in the old environment. A humming-bird could not live long in the climate of the Arctic zone. The bird is not built for such weather. But a Polar bear does not mind the Arctic ice. He is equipped for such conditions. The zone presents the same climate for bird and bear; one dies and the other thrives. If one can get within him a power to rise above conditions and conquer environment, let the zone stand. It is better to acquire vigour than to seek a change of air.

It does not mean merely that a new chance will be given when we fail. It is true God gives this. He never says "no" to any soul that turns towards Him from the dust. But God does not mean a man to stay on crutches forever. He

does not intend him to collapse before every gust of temptation. He has something better than the chance to rise after a fall. It is the chance not to fall. Nor does it mean that by becoming a new creature one loses his identity or changes his faculties. Paul was a new creature in Christ, but his personality was the same. A new power had come in, however, to reënforce him.

The landscape does not change at daybreak. The hills and valleys and rills and rivers are where they were, but the night is gone and the world is beautiful. It is a change something like this which takes place in the soul when it catches upon it the glory of Him who is the Light of men. The night is gone. The earth is what it was when the kisses of the spring-time and the warm caresses of the summer came to release it from the lock of the cold. But there is a wonderful transformation. The trees are full of song and the fields are daisied and emeralded. Winter is gone. And the soul kindles with a passion for Christ.

Or perhaps a better illustration is the wire along the street. It lacks power until it connects with the dynamo ; but when it gets into the power house, the wire becomes a new creature. It is the same in size and shape and weight that it was, but it is charged. When a man enters Christ, God reënforces him with omnipotence.

It means to be free, and to be free because forgiven. It means to have the sentence of condemnation for sin blotted out. What a change

it would make in the heart of the criminal who lingers in prison under an impending death sentence, were a messenger to enter the cell with a pardon and say : " You are free ! " It would mean a new life and a new world. But such a pardon is nothing compared to that God gives the sinner when in the name of Christ He says to the guilty : " Your sins are forgiven and you are free ! " " If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

It means also to have a new mind, a new way of interpreting life, a new way of thinking about God and self and neighbour and duty. It means to acquire the same mind that was in Christ.

It is what people see in life that makes the difference. What they see, depends on the kind of mind they have. A new mind will make God's word a new book and His world a new residence.

It means also to have a new heart. One feels different. He loves some things he hated, and hates some things he loved. The heart is the centre. Out of it are the issues of life. If we could get the heart cured, it would go far towards curing us.

God is the only physician that can cure heart trouble.

Some one writes of the *Oregon's* accident on the China coast, when, in a fog, she ran on the rocks and was seriously injured. She was not far from important Chinese ports. At Canton she could have been repainted, at Shanghai or Chefoo she

could have gotten fresh provisions, but she needed steel plates and had to go to the dry dock at Nagasaki, Japan.

There are many things one can do for himself, some his friends can do for him, some the church ; but only God can mend the heart. He is saying to every sinner : "Give Me thy heart." He wants to make it new and keep it safe.

When Napoleon went from Egypt, having captured Joppa, he expected to make short work of Acre, but the Turks despairing of holding the town themselves, had given it into the hands of the English. For two months the French troops bombarded the town, but they did not capture Acre. They found it invested with a force they could not subdue. God's plan is to invest the human heart with Himself, and hold it safe against the assaults of the enemy. The heart thus occupied becomes an impregnable fortress.

It means a new will. The trouble with many is a weak will. It is not that one is ignorant of right and wrong, but he has no resisting power, and when temptation comes, his weak will goes down in defeat. God renews the will. Yonder in the freight yard stands a modern steel traveling crane. Its capacity is twenty tons. Along the horizontal beam runs a wheel from which hangs a big chain, ending in a hook. A truck containing twenty tons of freight, is run out on the track. It stops under the crane and a man throws a switch which connects the crane with the storage batteries, and the chain that is

alive now, lifts and deposits its twenty tons of freight where wanted, as easily as a man picks up a feather.

If a man can charge a piece of cold metal with a power like that, shall it be deemed an impossible thing for God to charge, so responsive a thing as the human will, with His own power?

Free, a new mind, a new heart, a new will! The soul is becoming a new creature. Thus changed it does not make much difference about the conditions of the market or weather, of work or wages. One is getting where he can succeed in any market and be happy in any climate.

This is not all. It means to acquire a new motive. "The love of Christ constraineth us." That is the motive of one who is a new creature in Christ. No man can rise higher than his motives. Here is a motive that comes down from the ascended and reigning Christ, and enters the human heart and lifts it to victory.

With all of this, to be a new creature means to live a new life. It means to live as the motive directs. The constraining love of Christ flows through and makes its own channel, so that: "We thus judge that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him, who for their sake died and rose again."¹

This is the new life. It is the life a man lives who has become new in Christ. It is the unselfish life of service and sacrifice. It is the happy

¹ 2 Cor. 5:14.

life. It is the eternal life expressing itself in time.

Some are unhappy for the reason that an over-fed appetite is stale. They need the exercise of service. If they would get out into the community, under the motive of Christ's constraining love, and live the life of service and sacrifice, existence would cease to be stale. They would find the secret of happiness.

The question of future happiness will solve itself. The great question is not how to get to heaven, but how to have and be heaven here. Paul was not worried about heaven. He was convinced that things were satisfactory there. He says: "We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."¹

There need be no fear that heaven will be a disappointment; but the problem is how to live a happy and triumphant life in the flesh, "for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed but clothed upon."² Paul does not want to die, but he wants to acquire the secret of heaven here. He has found it. He says: "Put on Christ and Christ's life, and your groans will change to peans of praise, your burdens will become pinions." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." The great prayer is not for the

¹ 2 Cor. 5:1.

² 2 Cor. 5:4.

climate of a future heaven, but for the pulses of an eternal life now and here.

It is a great salvation. It is great in its length. It will last. It is not for a day or a year but for eternity. The soul thus saved will never lapse. It may fail and sometimes fall, but it will never be lost. "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand."

It is great in its depth. It can reach to the deepest depths of human sin and misery. No case is hopeless. It is as easy for Christ to save the worst as the best; just as it is as easy for the sun to kill the blackest as the whitest night.

It is great in its height. It can lift into fellowship with God. It can elevate sinners into the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

IX

THE INCARNATION

“Look I not eye to eye on thee,
And feel'st not, thronging
To head and heart, the force,
Still weaving its eternal secret,
Invisible, visible, round thy life?
Vast as it is, fill with that force thy heart,
And when thou in the feeling wholly blessed art,
Call it then what thou wilt, —
Call it Bliss! Heart! Love! God!
I have no name to give it!
Feeling is all in all,
The name is sound and smoke,
Obscuring Heaven's clear glow.”

—Goethe.

THE incarnation was the highest manifestation, in time, of the Eternal in man, that the world has seen. It was a great hour when God put His creative energy into flesh and made a man; but it was a greater hour when God put Himself into flesh and became a man. This was the incarnation.

It was a new rôle for the Deity. God had never done anything like it before.

He had been a Creator, He now becomes a creature. He had been a king, He now becomes a subject. He had been a succourer, He now becomes a sufferer. He had been a protector, He

now becomes persecuted, hunted, exposed. He had been honoured, worshipped, obeyed, adored ; He now becomes despised, betrayed, executed. He is slain, hanged on a cross, laid in a tomb, wept over, lamented, mourned as dead. He had been God, He now becomes man.

It was a strange rôle, an unheard of procedure. Men had vaguely dreamed of the possibility of such a thing, but they had never seen an incarnation of the Deity. It looked like the abdication of the Eternal. It was as if God had surrendered His throne. There had been a fall of man. Is there to be a fall of God ? Heaven had witnessed man's fall and it was sad enough. Is it to witness the fall of God ? God had made man and man had sinned. Now God seems to be following in man's footsteps. It looked like the defeat of the Almighty.

For when "the word became flesh" and the Creator a creature, it meant for God to empty Himself of those powers which man cannot share with Him, whatever they are. He must come down to the knowledge a man may have, to the resources a man may possess. He must limit Himself, humble Himself, and get where He can be tempted, suffer and die. If not, the incarnation is only an imitation. If it was to be genuine, God must do more than veneer Himself with human nature and hide His godhood behind the face of a man. He must become flesh. This He did in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

It must have astounded the angels when God

told them what He was about to do. At first they must have been amazed and perplexed beyond measure. The very suggestion that God was about to become a man must have filled them with alarm and dismay ; for they knew how man had blundered and wandered and rebelled. Perhaps they tried to protest. They were willing for anything but this. Perhaps like Peter later, some high angel attempted to take the Deity to task for rashness and said, "Lord, this be far from Thee." But it was all in vain. God had made up His mind to become incarnate, and all angels and archangels could not block the way. Then perhaps a scene, something like that which John describes in the Revelation, took place. There was silence in heaven. God has made it plain beyond misunderstanding that He is about to become flesh and the angels are voiceless. They have ceased to sing. Their harps are laid aside and they are dumb with mingled astonishment and despair. Heaven seemed tottering on the brink of chaos, and happiness and order hang on the verge of the abyss. Ruin stared their world for God was about to leave them for a cross and allow the universe to go bankrupt.

Then, it must have been, that God revealed to the angels something of what the incarnation meant. He showed them His heart. He told them of His longing for the home-coming of His earthly children, who had gone astray and who were dwelling far down below that happy land of light and love, "sitting in darkness and in the

shadow of death," the prey of fears and the victims of evil. For the first time into listening ears there was told the parable of the prodigal son. God told the angels what later Jesus told to men. He described His children in the far country, and said, "I am going after them. I am going to seek and to save that which was lost."

No doubt as the angels began to comprehend the wondrous plan and take in all the incarnation expressed of love and yearning in the great fatherly heart of the Deity and all of hope and restoration it conveyed to fallen man, their perplexity and dejection gave way to holy rapture. They were jubilant with praise. Nothing like this had ever been attempted before. It was not defeat but victory. God was at the summit of His mercy and power and at the height of His wisdom in the incarnation. Nothing but the genius of God could have devised it. Heaven resounds with a new song. The chorus swells and sweeps and rolls its holy tide of celestial melody so high and wide that heaven cannot contain the song. It breaks on the confines of earth, and some shepherds watching their flocks by night catch a bar of the great anthem of the annunciation ; and listen to angels singing : "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will towards men."

THE INCARNATION WITHOUT PRECEDENT

The incarnation was unique, original. It was not merely a theophany, a spasmodic display of

divinity. It was God in the flesh. Jesus stands solitary and alone in all the files of time. The stupidity which would classify Him and make Him one of a kind with Buddha and Confucius and Zoroaster and Mahomet is as blind as it is irreverent. The incarnation was not a foot-hill, a swell in the lofty range, but a solitary peak whose summit is out of sight.

To say that the incarnation was miraculous is not to say very much about it. To hold up faith in the incarnation until one can determine whether miracles are credible is to try to see the heavens through a key-hole. From the human standpoint, it was certainly miraculous; but much that God does would be a miracle if man were required to do it. From God's side, however, there was nothing miraculous in the incarnation. It was no harder for Him to become a man than to make a man.

Given God, and the incarnation was as easy as light and as natural as life.

It is well to be delivered from the key-hole critics who affirm the non-existence of all they do not see, and the incredibility of all they do not understand. They cannot get the eternal into their perspective. They would limit God's knowledge to their cave, His activities to their corner, and His glory to their opacity. They would cancel the universe they cannot measure. They are trying to manacle Hercules with a shoe lace. If God wanted to become flesh, He could. If He ever made up His mind to such a course,

the incarnation came to pass. It was without a precedent, but it was not without reality.

THE INCARNATION A SPIRITUAL NECESSITY

If the incarnation was real, it was a great risk for God to take. It was God placing Himself where Adam stood before he fell. It was the Creator putting Himself into His theory and saying: "I will prove if it be possible to live the eternal life in time. I will demonstrate whether it be possible to dwell in the flesh and not sin. I will see by experience whether I have demanded too much of My creatures."

So God came down from His throne, laid aside His authority and power, shut Himself in a human body, took a human brain and senses and appetites, and lived where Satan could get at Him as easily as he got at Adam.

He was made flesh. He was made what any man is, except sin. He was made to be weak, hungry, tired, lonely, sad, discouraged, tear-stained, sorrow-marked. It was an awful risk. It was God unarmed meeting His enemy in the open. Suppose Jesus had failed? What if He had yielded to temptation and gone down as Adam? It would have been, not the ruin of man, but the downfall of the Deity. It would have been the ruin of the God of gods. It would have meant hopeless chaos throughout the universe. No wonder heaven watched with infinite concern the outcome on Calvary. For if Christ had failed, there could have been no gospel of

hope for fallen man; and no way by which a ruined soul could be made a new creature.

The risk was tremendous, but it was necessary. We may rest assured it would never have been taken had there been any other way to save the lost.

If it be true that man can by his own effort, recover the lost image of godhood, there would have been no incarnation.

If it be true that suffering makes a saint and discipline creates a new nature, there would have been no incarnation.

If it be true that penitence secures salvation, and that remorse for evil disarms penalty, God would never have taken the risk of becoming flesh.

The incarnation was an eternal necessity. It was not an afterthought, but a part of the divine plan from the foundation of the world. It was necessary for man and for God. It was a hard way, but if God had been unwilling to come, if He had been content for the prodigal to remain in the far country, if He had loved His throne more than His lost children, He could never have been the divinity to drive from man's heart the madness of sin and wake to vigorous action the atrophied functions of a palsied soul.

THE INCARNATION WAS GOD'S CLIMAX

It was God making His way to us. Sin blocked the way. It was not possible for God to get past our sins until the law demanding their punish-

ment was satisfied. God suffered the penalty, satisfied the law, and got sin out of the way. He secured the sinner's justification. This is the story of Calvary. The cross was God's way of getting past man's sin. It was the second glory of the incarnation. After proving the life in the flesh livable, His next step was to reach fallen man. This He did on the cross. The incarnation was essential to the atonement. It was God making His way to us.

Then it was God making His way within us. Salvation is not so much a spectacular as it is an experience. It is the incarnate in a reincarnation. Again He becomes flesh, but this time it is our flesh. He takes up His residence in our brain, senses, activities. Having tied Himself to us by the blood of the race-kin, He ties us to Himself by imparting to us the divine nature ; until instead of saying, "Christ was in Galilee," We say : "Christ is in Me, and He is in Me the hope of glory."

After this, it is God making His way through us. The eternal in man must be given expression. The beautiful life of the Man of Galilee must be perpetuated in the lives of His followers ; His loving ministries must be continued ; His holy sacrifices must be repeated ; until it will not be necessary to go back to Bethlehem's cradle or up to heaven's throne to find Christ, for every man who trusts and loves Him shall be himself something of the Christ.

It is also God making a way for us. The in

carnation blazed a way to glory for all who follow in Christ's steps.

The glorified Christ did not lay aside His body when He ascended. The nail prints were in the hands and feet, and the wound of the spear in the side of that transfigured body that mounted from the slopes of Olivet to the heights of glory.

A road was opened then by which the redeemed body can travel. Jesus made it possible for all who follow Him, having the print of the nails and the sign of the cross, to mount the invisible ladder and walk erect along the dizzy heights, and be with Him in the glory.

All in whom Christ dwells will share His destiny. Where He is they will go. Nothing can hinder them. No gate nor wall nor chasm can stop their progress. Even death must play the part of a servant to open the door to glory for them of whom the incarnate God has said, "I go to prepare a place for you," for God became man that man might take on godhood.

X

GLORY AND SUFFERING

“ But all through life I see a cross,
Where sons of God yield up their breath ;
There is no gain except by loss,
There is no vision but by faith,
Nor justice but by taking blame ;
And that Eternal Passion saith,
Be emptied of glory and right and name.”

— *Olrig Grange.*

WE are disposed to place glory and suffering as far apart as possible and regard them as the antipodes of the universe. The realm of the redeemed we call “glory,” and of the lost “suffering.” The glorified are those who have forever escaped suffering; the damned, those eternally doomed to suffer.

Human life concentrates itself in the effort to escape suffering. It is the search for a painless process. If one could only devise some method by which to be rid of suffering, he might begin to live. Pain prevents happiness and suffering spoils life. The problem of the sociologist is to prevent suffering. He proposes to solve his problem by preventing the things which produce suffering. One of these is poverty; so he proposes to cure poverty and prevent suffering. Another is industrial injustice, so he proposes to right the wrongs of labour and prevent suffering.

Another is shiftlessness, so he proposes to diminish shiftlessness and reduce suffering.

The effort is laudable. We feel that suffering has no right to exist if it can be prevented. He is a benefactor of the race who drives pain from the world.

In view of all this it is rather startling to find that Christ, who is man's hope of glory, links glory and suffering in an embrace stronger than life and more lasting than death. "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." ¹

What is this but the deification of suffering? Christ deliberately elected to suffer. It was His choice, His sovereign preference. Could the average man be clothed for awhile with the authority of God, his first endeavour would be to eject suffering from the universe and terminate its despotic sway. But God, so far from preventing suffering, seems to promote it. He makes it the method of divine procedure in His most stupendous undertaking. We may rest assured that the eternal in man is not the experience of a painless process.

THE GLORIOUS CHRIST

Men may denounce the system which proposes to administer Christ's cause. They may repudi-

¹ Heb. 2:10.

ate the gospel narrative as legendary. They may rebel at Christianity's demands, and brand as false much that is put forth in Christ's name. Many things catalogued as Christian are not glorious. There has been Christian bigotry, priest-craft, avarice, hatred, persecution, bloodshed. All this was infamous; but Christ Himself is glorious. He has been arts' inspiration and the best in art has been its effort to portray Christ. Were history asked what it thinks of Christ, it would reply: "He is glorious"; its greatest epoch is the Christian era. Were literature, trade, government asked for their opinion, they would make the same reply. The latest of the sciences must have His approval. Sociology claims Christ. Civilization is the race following in His footsteps. This is the more amazing when we consider the facts of His earthly life. There was everything to make Him inconspicuous. Born a peasant in a small and obscure country, of a subject people, with few friends, with a public career lasting but three years, never outside the land of His birth but once, scorned by His own townspeople, suspected by His own family, betrayed, deserted and denied by His disciples, dying the death of a criminal, apparently Christ was hopelessly doomed to an ignominious obscurity. Despite all He is the glorious Christ.

"In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was born across
the sea;

With a glory in His bosom, that transfigures you
and me."

Infidelity may scoff at the dogma and ritual of the Church, but it respects Christ. It may curl its lip in merited scorn at philanthropists and benefactors who seek publicity, but there is no scorn in its tone when it speaks of the Son of Man.

Wherein consists Christ's glory?

It is not in the fact that He ascended to heaven. He is glorious anywhere. He would be glorious in hell. It is not because He has gotten where the pharisees cannot taunt Him nor the soldiers thrust a spear into His side. It is not His crown nor His throne.

These are not the insignia of lasting glory. A king's crown on a slave's head does not make the slave royal. A white robe on a black heart does not make the black heart clean. A saint's vestment on a murderer will not atone for his crime. Position, possession, power did not give to the peasant of Galilee that majestic glory which flamed in Pilate's judgment hall and shone on Calvary's cross. It was not what He did that made Christ great. He seems to have attached comparatively little importance to His miracles. They were of value because they blessed the needy. Christ proves the miracles rather than the miracles Christ.

It was not even His teachings that made Him perfect. They were faultless, but to divorce them from Christ is like draining the blood from the body. They lose their life-giving quality.

The glory of Christ is Christ. It is what He

is. It is His spirit. Beyond all creeds, rules, rituals, organizations, He is the world's supreme personality. With a spiritual capacity as high as God's life and as deep as man's need, Christ possesses the power to bring the world into communion with God. This makes Him the Author of salvation, revealing, conferring, developing and directing the eternal in man, and for this He is the glorious Christ.

THE IMPARTED GLORY

The chief glory of Christ's glory is that He imparts it. It is communicable. His mission is to "bring many sons unto glory." His is not a glory to be gazed at as a far-off and impossible ideal. Christ is not merely something to preach and sing and wonder about. He is something to be. He is the discovery of the glory that is possible for every man. Christ is one of a family. He is an elder brother. The promise was that He should "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." His words are "all that the Father giveth unto Me shall come to Me." His glory is for all who come ; for the poorest and meanest ; for sinners as guilty as the woman of Samaria, as avaricious as Zaccheus, as self-righteous as Simon the Zealot. The glory of Christ haloes the least and worst equally with the best.

Salvation is not getting to heaven ; it is getting Christ, it is having one's nature purified, broadened, deepened, enriched by the life of Christ. It is not merely imitating His ways, and

shining with His reflection. It is sharing His personality. It is having the miracles of the nativity, the resurrection and the ascension transpire in our experience. It is having "Christ formed within us, the hope of glory."

For a man to possess this is for him to acquire a glory criticism cannot dull nor infidelity deride.

THE GLORY ACQUIRED BY SUFFERING

Jesus was no seeker after a painless process. Isaiah's portrait of the Messiah is that of a sufferer. Jesus suffered temptation, opposition, loneliness, rejection, struggle, betrayal, doubt, denial, crucifixion. He lived in the shadow of the cross. His moment of supreme victory was His hour of unutterable anguish, when, in a passion of suffering too terrible for words, He cried, "My God ! My God ! Why hast Thou forsaken Me ?"

"The best of men

That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer ;
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
The first true gentleman that ever breathed." ¹

Yet Christ did not seek suffering for its own sake. It was not with Him an exalted method of penance. He suffered for the sake of His ideal, in order to bless others. For this reason His sufferings did not deject Him. He gloried in sufferings. By them He was made perfect. The path of suffering was the path to glory.

¹ Thomas Dekker.

Had His been a life of ease, He could not help us. Had He never been tempted, He would be nothing to any man that is tempted. Had He lived a life of self-indulgence He would possess no capacity to save. He would lack idealism. He grew great in the school of trial. His crown was given Him on a cross. He found deification in death. In submitting to all that any human life may suffer, He became able to succour all who suffer.

THE GLORY IMPARTED AS ACQUIRED

The man who is to share Christ's glory must acquire it in Christ's way. If he is to be exalted, he must humble himself. If he is to stand on the Mount of Transfiguration, he must walk through the vale of sorrows. If he is to win the crown, he must endure the cross. If he is to know "the power of his resurrection," he must experience "the fellowship of his sufferings."

It is in this school the soul acquires power and develops capacity. It is not through ease and applause and success that the soul awakes but by some great shock that staggers existence and sounds the alarm to the life fenced in by the senses. Sometimes one browses like a contented animal, on the bit of pasture in sight, seeing little and seeking little, until some great calamity overtakes him, some crushing sorrow, some sore misfortune. Then the soul awakens and, in the school of suffering, the eternal in man begins to assert itself.

Suffering is not the worst thing. There is one thing worse. It is not to suffer. The remorse of the criminal is hard ; but it were worse to have no remorse and remain a criminal. The school of suffering is the school of glory. As scraps of iron are thrown into the furnace and melted and, on the forge, welded and hammered once more into shape and use, so life acquires new powers and beauties in the furnace and on the forge of suffering. The scars of the soldier are not to his shame. They are his glory.

Suffering is not a scourge in the hands of the Almighty. It is not the Deity wreaking vengeance upon helpless creatures for their disobedience. God is not a deified brute clubbing into submission those who may stand in His way.

It is not a scheme by which to accumulate merit in the world to come, on the theory that those who take life rough here will find it easy hereafter.

It is not a school of compensation. Emerson's doctrine of compensation falls far short of the Christian doctrine of grace. Compensation is only the skimmed milk of theology. Grace offers to those who suffer, not bare compensation but glory.

These light afflictions shall "work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The ability to suffer is a divine capacity. It is the chance to grow. It is the opportunity to enter a bigger world, to become perfect, to escape the dust and achieve the spirit, to live towards

the heights where the gates swing wider and the vision dawns fairer. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us wards." ¹

¹ Rom. 8 : 18.

XI

THE STORM-WIND

“There is a grandeur in the soul that dares
To live out all the life God lit within ;
That battles with the passions hand to hand,
And wears no mail, and hides behind no shield ;—
And that with fearless foot and heaven turned eyes
May stand upon a dizzy precipice,
High over the abyss of ruin and not fall.”

— *Sara J. Clarke Lippincott.*

IF glory and suffering are so closely related, some light seems to be thrown on the problem of the existence of evil, for suffering and sin came to man on the same day.

It is an old question. Why did not God make human life an eternal summer sea? Why must its quiet ever be broken, its peaceful rest and happy content be disturbed? Why did not the Almighty tie down the storm-wind in some great cavern of a dead world, somewhere in the vast realm of His universe and keep it forever a prisoner? Why was it ever allowed to break its tether and come forth to lash the calm and quiet surface of life's sea into peril, and cover wild waves with wreckage and death?

To answer this question is to answer all questions. If one can answer it, he can solve the riddle of the world and make believing as cheap and easy as seeing. For in this question of the storm

wind is the whole problem of evil, the maddening mystery of suffering, the bewildering perplexity of trouble, the dark and awful secret of the purpose of punishment.

An old Hebrew poet sings : “ He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind.” ¹ His theme is life. His verse is an artist’s canvas. He shows us a ship in a storm at sea. We behold the white, frightened faces of the people, we hear their groans and moans and prayers, we see their danger, but we understand that it is a picture of human life. The ship is a soul in its storm-hours, a heart in its trials and tragedies and sorrows. It is the spirit of man in its desperate agonies and despairs.

We know what it means for we have felt the storm-wind. We have been driven by its deadly gales and tossed on the crest of its fierce tumults. We have had our prayers drowned by the sullen roar of its awful tempests. We have been drenched by its icy spray. We have gazed into the dull face of its gray, leaden sky ; and have been terrified by its wild alarms, its hopelessness.

THE PROBLEM OF THE STORM-WIND

Who has not asked Why ? Why the storm-wind instead of the summer sea ? Why peril instead of safety ? Why trial and sorrow and struggle and grief and anguish and perpetual unrest ?

Why does God give man a stormy passage ?

¹ Ps. 107 : 25.

Why has He given to human life the experience of suffering? Why did not God fix this world so that evil would be impossible? Why did He not decree that none should ever sin and consequently that none should ever suffer? Why not a world with no sickness and no pain and never the sob of sorrow nor the shriek of fear as the storm-wind drives the boat on the rocks?

It is the question we are constantly asking. We may keep it from our lips, but we cannot drive it from our minds nor banish it from our hearts.

The mystery of the storm-wind is the riddle of the universe. The origin of evil is the night whose blackness refuses to lift. If I could understand the storm-wind, I could fathom God. If I could fathom God; if I could drop plummet and strike bottom in the divine nature and say: "I have measured the Almighty; I know His height and depth and length and breadth," that instant I should lose God. God must ever be beyond us, dwelling in a mystery that can be entered only by a blindfolded soul willing to trust where it cannot trace, to believe what it cannot see.

Nevertheless we need not be lost in the labyrinths of the mystery. Faith in the midst of the storm is not to be confounded with credulity in the midst of a fog. There are certain landmarks which do not disappear even when the storm-wind blows. We cannot understand the origin of evil nor the mystery of suffering, but there are certain great facts we can lay hold of and by means

thereof keep hope alive even when the tempest is at its worst.

THE LANDMARKS

Let at least three of these outstanding facts be mentioned. The first is that in order to growth of character and spiritual development, it was necessary to make man a free moral agent. For this freedom to be real it must include the ability to choose evil no less than good. The ability to choose evil made possible sin and all its resultant sufferings. Therefore the possibility of evil in human life is the price God paid for that freedom which makes possible spiritual growth. It was not possible for even God to buy this freedom for less. This is the first fact. We are free that we may grow ; but freedom makes evil possible. It sets loose the storm-wind.

The second fact is that if God is to govern the world, He must govern it by law. To violate law is to create penalty. A law whose violation does not involve penalty is not a law, but a precept. To say that God inflicts the penalty is to tell the truth in a roundabout way. It is merely to recognize the law-giver. He is responsible for the punishment only as law is responsible for penalty. There would be no penalty were there no broken law. It is the criminal rather than the law that is at fault.

The third fact is that back of all penalty and punishment and suffering is God Himself, and God is love. This is His nature, and this is the

world's guarantee that in the mystery dwells a friendly presence, and that out of suffering good will come. It is the belief that, after all, the storm-wind is a harbinger of hope. It is the eternal faith of the race, whether on the rack, in the dungeon, amid the billows, or on the quiet summer sea, that

“ — good will fall
At last far off, at last to all,
And every winter turn to spring.”

It is the holy conviction that “all things work together for good to them that love God ; to them who are the called according to His purpose.” To let go that faith is to lose God and to find existence intolerable.

Holding to these three great facts one can at least rest in the conviction that sin did not eliminate and destroy all that was eternal in man. Had this been the case, there would have been no suffering, for there would have been nothing left to suffer. A creature, the totality of whose being is a nerve cell, cannot pay sin's penalty. The penalty is God's way of dealing with an immortal being.

THE STORM-WIND IS A DIVINE PRODUCT

God is its author.

He is not the author of evil. It will never do to harbour for an instant that suspicion against God. It slanders the Deity. God is against evil. He always has been and always will be. His

business is to drive evil out of the world, to exterminate it. God is at war with evil. His entire force is in the field in this conflict. It is a glorious cause for even the Almighty to champion. He will not fail. God is fighting and the victory is sure.

While God is not the author of evil, He is the author of the punishment of evil. He is always in control. We say that the man who is locked behind prison bars has broken the law. The fact is the law is intact, it is the transgressor that is broken. It is so in the realm of the moral and the spiritual. God never abdicates. The reins never slip from His hands. When evil days come, God has not been thwarted. Evil will never be able to subdue nor evade Him. In some mysterious way, it will be made to praise Him.

God is in the storm as well as in the calm ; in the sorrows as well as in the joys ; in loss as well as in gain ; in death as in life. One must believe this, whether or not he can believe any more.

We must not give up faith in a divine friend and helper when the storm-wind blows. If we listen we shall hear His voice ; if we look we shall see His face. His voice may be hoarse with the note of the tempest, His caress may be rough with the violence of the warrior, but it is God, and God is love.

IS GOD THE AUTHOR OF THE STORM-WIND
WHEN IT DESTROYS?

Sometimes the storm-wind destroys. Is it a divine product then? There are some whose sufferings make them no better. They sin and suffer, and sin again and suffer more, and continue to sin and suffer, until evil destroys them. Some never get in sight of the harbour lights. They go to pieces on the rocks, and never come to anchor in the desired haven. What of the drunkard who dies in a debauch? What of the criminal who is killed committing crime? What of the prodigal who never comes back from the far country? What of the soul that rejects God, denies God, and goes out apostate into the everlasting darkness? What of the people whose troubles drive them from God? Is there any beneficent purpose in this?

I have no answer; I am dumb before this aspect of suffering. It is easy to theorize and speculate. It is not difficult to say that the majesty of the law must be maintained; that an infinite offense demands an infinite penalty, that eternal crime creates an eternal dungeon. But what is all this save words that darken counsel? They may satisfy the reason, but they do not heal the hurt of an aching heart. For after all, our conviction is that this universe is not so much a huge court-room as our Father's house; and we are not so much jail inmates, haled forth from our cells to the prisoner's dock to stand trial, as members of our Father's family; unworthy, im-

perfect, undeserving members ; but for all that, held in a deathless love.

One may have no answer to the terrible question an anguished heart asks concerning those whom suffering seems to destroy : but he need not surrender his faith in God because he cannot understand all His ways, or be able to see the divinity in a storm-wind that drives a soul on the rocks. This is God's problem. He is great enough to handle it. He will handle it to the satisfaction of all who sail the seas of life. We may leave it with Him and trust Him to make this horrible nightmare of the race "as a dream when one awaketh," in that morning when we shall see Him face to face and know as we are known.

THE STORY OF THE STORM-WIND AS A SAVIOUR

There is another side to the subject. It is the story of the storm-wind as a saviour. It is always this to those who have the Pilot on board. The suffering of God's children ; the troubles of those who trust Him ; the wreck and loss, the cold and night, the pain and anguish of all in the tempest with Christ, is part of a holy discipline.

It develops the heroic. The people who never suffer have no chance to be heroes. Heroism is born of conflict and peril. The heroic in God is His age-long, eternal conflict with evil. The Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world. If there had never been an enemy

there could never be a battle-field. If there had been no battle-fields, there could be no heroes.

One summer Sunday ten thousand men and women lined the shore at Atlantic City, and rent the air with tumultuous cheers as Captain Mark Casto, lashed to the wheel of his fishing schooner, with his brave companions rode out on a wild sea to rescue sixty-nine people from the doomed Clyde liner, *Cherokee*, stranded on the Brigantine shoals. It was magnificent heroism because that little company rode out before the storm-wind to what seemed certain death. Had the sea been quiet, there would have been no cheers.

The roar of the storm-wind is the tumult of conflict and struggle. It is the shout of the God of glory as He makes pigmies into giants ; weak, tempted, struggling men and women into heroes.

Again, the peril enhances deliverance and makes possible the enjoyment of safety. One who has never been in peril has no appreciation of safety. The people who have had no storms, take fair weather as a matter of course. Those men who were rescued from the *Cherokee* walked the shore with feelings far different from any they had ever had before. They enjoyed the land. One of their number declared that before their brave rescuers reached them, they had ceased to hope. The men had fallen to their knees muttering prayers for mercy, the women lay around the cabin moaning and distracted. They believed they must die. But now they are saved ! They are on land again. The solid

earth is beneath their feet, and the joy of their deliverance is so great that they could prostrate themselves upon the ground and kiss the sands.

It is so in a man's relations to God. He does not prize His care until the storm breaks. We take God's goodness as a matter of course until we are in the peril of some blinding tempest, the awful shock of some terrible tragedy. Then "we cry to the Lord in our trouble and He bringeth us out of our distresses. He maketh the sea a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are we glad because they be quiet." We have discovered the value of holy deliverance. The Saviour is precious. The storm has shown us the face of God.

Suffering also develops the capacity of the soul. It enlarges one's nature. It breaks down the barriers which separate us from one another. It gets us out of selfish isolations and enables us to live a world-life. The people who have never suffered are ill-prepared to sympathize with others.

Some one writes of an island whose shores are washed by silver and turquoise seas, whose air is filled with the fragrance of blooming flowers and with the music of the winds and the song birds; but the island is uninhabited, for it has no harbour. High sand cliffs or dangerous rocks girt it around and make impossible the landing of any vessel. One day a great tidal wave rolls in from the outer sea, and a mighty earthquake shakes the island from centre to circumference.

The cliffs of sand crumble and a great gash is cut in the island's side, into which the waters rush and form a bay that calls to the open sea. Great ships come and drop anchor there. A populous city springs up along the shores, the fields are farmed, and the air resounds with the shouts of children and the chimes of bells. The storm has given the island a harbour.

The story is all fiction, says the Southern girl who writes it, until we call the island the "Heart" and the tidal wave "Sorrow."

Our storms are harbour builders. They open quiet bays in our experience, restful havens that call to mariners on the open sea, and into which human barques "tossed on life's wide restless main," worn with the voyage and in need of supplies, may drop anchor for a little while and get fixed to continue the voyage.

The storm-wind is also God's way of opening up the life for His own entrance. There are some fastenings that must be shaken loose. There are some shutters that must be battered open. There are bolts that will yield only to the fury of the storm, and chambers that can be entered only with the gales of the tempest. Is it not better to have God come in thus than not at all? Better a divinity that rides into the soul on the crest of the breakers than to be without God. Better a hope that sobs its way into the heart than to have no presence that is sacramental.

Is there not also such a thing as being beaten into port by the storm-wind? Is there not some

connection between suffering and that eternal experience for which the soul aspires? One may not say that immortality is wrought out by suffering; but may he not say that the capacity for suffering is a sign of immortality, and in some strange way inseparable from it?

In the Smithsonian Institute, at Washington, are the remains of huge animals that ages ago roamed the earth. They were armed with tremendous members for attack and defense. Their hides were like steel plates on a battle-ship, well nigh impervious. These huge beasts have become extinct. They had no capacity for suffering. Their nerves were completely covered and protected. What seemed their security sealed their doom. Their place has been taken by frailer animals, whose nerves are more exposed and whose capacity for suffering is greater.

Of all God's creatures, man has the greatest capacity for pain. His nerves are all on the outside. To him alone of all God's creatures is given the hope of eternal life.

In some strange way the storm-wind and the final port are friends. Suffering and immortality go together. If there were no trouble, there would be no eternal peace; if no stormy voyage, no quiet haven; if no agony and anguish, no divine fellowship.

It looks as if God can get man into that high port of the infinite, only with the gales of a tempest, and so "He commandeth and raiseth the stormy-wind."

Blessed storm-wind ! Wind from the higher levels and the upper heavens ! Wind with the strong gales of God's relentless love in thy breath ! Wind with the tumultuous passions of eternal yearning in thy caress ! Wind with the moan and anguish of pain, with the roar and shout of war, but with the music of many waters, and the lap of the crystal sea in thy lullaby ! O mighty storm-wind from across the boundless ocean of God's infinite purpose, have thy way with me !

“Winnow me through with thy keen, clean breath,
Wind with the tang of the sea !
Speed through the closing gates of the day,
Find me and fold me and have thy way,
And take thy will of me !

“Use my soul as you used the sky —
Gray sky of this sullen day ;
Clear its doubt as you sped its wrack
Of storm-cloud bringing its splendour back
Giving it gold for gray.

“Batter the closed doors of my heart,
And set my spirit free !
For I stifle here in this crowded place,
Sick for the tenantless fields of space,
Wind with the tang of the sea !”¹

¹ Arthur Ketcham.

XII

THE CALL OF THE GOOD

“ No man may say at night
His goal is reached ; the hunger for the light
Moves with the star ; our thirst will not depart,
Howe'er we drink. 'Tis what before us goes,
Keep us aweary, will not let us lay
Our heads in dreamland, though the enchanted palm
Rise from our desert, though the fountain grows
Up in our path, with the slumber's flowing balm :
The soul i o'er the horizon far away.”

—*John James Piatt.*

SOME one has written the story of a dog and called it “The call of the wild.” It is the tale of how a dog, under wanton abuse and brutal mistreatment, lost every trace of gentleness and went back to the wild life of his beast ancestors and became a wolf. There is a great sermon in the dog story. It is the narrative of how fallen human nature, under the baleful influences of sin and evil association, loses its nobility, and following the call of the wild, goes back to the beast. It is the tragic and pathetic story of an immortal soul dying down into animalism.

Some one else has written the story, not of a dog, but of a soul, and we may call it, not “The call of the wild,” but “The call of the good.” It is the tale of how a soul under the spell of divine love's gentle entreaties, hears the call of a celestial ancestry and breaking away from the

beast life, becomes a child of God. There is a greater sermon in the soul story than in the dog story. It is the narrative of how fallen human nature gets back its heavenly heritage. It is the stirring record of an immortal soul getting back among its kindred and recovering its birthright.

The call of the good is an older, earlier, and higher call than the call of the wild. It should have the right of way. Man's start was not in the lair of a wild beast, but in the bosom of the divine Father. God made man in His image. Man was a saint before he was a sinner, and when he goes back to his own he is not going into bestiality and sensuality and animalism, but into the divine nature. God made us like Himself, and through all our waywardness what we were when God thought of us first is calling, pleading, beseeching.

Many are listening to the call of the wild, going away from the good, being deformed, getting further and further from purity, integrity, sobriety; less Godlike, more beast-like. Their friends see the change and are disappointed. Their acquaintances notice it and are surprised. Those who love them see it and are broken-hearted. God looks down and with infinite pity and concern calls them to turn from evil ways.

IT HURTS GOD WHEN MAN GOES WRONG

The call of grace is a sob of divine love over a human life going to the bad. God is disappointed in His own. He made man for better

things than to be the slave of sin and to wear the livery of lust. When he yields to temptation and stifles the good voice of conscience, and abuses his body, and wastes his opportunities and makes himself cheap and common in the markets of evil, God is hurt.

It is no pleasure to God to punish people who do wrong. Righteousness demands that sin be sufficiently punished, but God is not of the kind that gets happiness from administering an adequate penalty to evil-doers. There is such a thing as "the death of the wicked." Every death sin causes, hurts God and, across the barren and unmarked graves of souls slain by sin, God calls to arrest man in the career of evil.

What if God were not hurt by man's sin? Suppose it were nothing to God how man lives; whether he be good or bad, saint or beast, son of light or degraded outcast? Could we care for a God that would let us go to hell, and never sound a warning nor lift a hand to stay our course?

Suppose earthly parents were of the kind not to care when their children do wrong? What would a son think of his mother were she to declare that it is nothing to her whether he be virtuous or vicious, upright or criminal? What kind of a father would that be who would say of a wayward son: "Let him go to hell, if he will; it is his own funeral." One could not care for such parents. Respect would turn to scorn for a father who could be indifferent as to whether his son rise or fall. Love would become bitter re-

sentment against a mother that has no anguish over a child going to the bad. God is a good father. He is not deified indifference and unconcern. It hurts Him when we are bad.

I am glad it does. I am glad God can feel. I rejoice that He is not a stone, a heartless law, a blind decree, an arbitrary force. I love that story of Jesus weeping over guilty Jerusalem, and crying out in mingled grief and disappointment, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee!" When I do wrong, I am glad that God cares, and that my sins hurt Him enough for His love to cry out after me.

It hurts God when we do wrong. One may say: "What of it? He is God. He can stand it. Why should man worry over God's troubles?"

There is another element in wrong-doing.

IT ALSO HURTS MAN WHEN HE GOES WRONG

The call of the good is a tame song to many. Goodness is monotonous. It has such a homely face and such uninteresting ways. There is no dash nor excitement nor colour in goodness. Good people tire us. Being good bores us. We want to eat the apples of Sodom and drink the wine of lust and be bad. We are great fools. The devil has an easy time making us rise to his naked hook.

Doing wrong is damage against which there is no insurance. To sin is to suffer. To yield to lust is to sink. Sin is the suicide of character. It kills the good in man.

A life changes under the influence of evil. It is the process of deformation. All generous and noble impulses depart. Gentleness and consideration and patience and good-will and unselfishness are driven into retreat, and in their stead come the traits of the beast, meanness and sourness and smallness and petulance and surliness and gnawing discontent. The disposition completely changes. People say: "He is not the same man," and he is not. The good in him has been killed. Nobility has been dethroned, and animalism rules.

We are unwilling to confess to this disintegration of character. We are reckless of the damage, and call red ruin "a good time."

We do not care to be preached to. We know our schedule and are willing to take the consequences.

Sometimes the change for the worse is gradual, sometimes sudden and spectacular. Some mutinous sailors broke into the Russian stores at Cronstadt, drank themselves into a state of beastly intoxication, and set fire to the buildings. Three hundred of them were burned to death in the flames their own hands had kindled.

The penalty is not always so swift. Frequently it delays. It is stealthy and conceals its approach, but it comes. It is possible to hide a thorn with a flower; to make poison palatable; to contract malaria in a garden luxuriant with tropical plants and in an atmosphere fragrant with witching perfumes. But however slow or

stealthily the approach of the penalty or successful its disguise, the feeling that any one can do wrong and not be hurt is a lie. "The wages of sin is death."

Granted that God can stand it ; can man ? Can he afford to ruin his life ? There is yet a third element in wrong-doing.

THE FACT THAT IT HURTS MAN IS THE REASON THAT IT HURTS GOD

Doubtless God could get along without man. He could continue to govern the universe and maintain law and administer justice whether or not He have man's approval. It is likely the Bible will continue to be the Word of God, whether we believe it is or not. It is probable that the cross of Calvary will continue to save sinners, whether or not it ever saves us. Man is not necessary to God's success. He will still be omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, whether man do right or wrong. He said to Moses : "I am that I am." He is the self-existent and self-sufficient God.

Nevertheless, He is enough of a father to feel for His children and to be hurt by whatever hurts them. This is the parent's way. If God had merely made man as the potter makes the clay into a vase, He might not care. Yet they tell of a potter who at a critical moment, when his work was in peril, fed the furnace fires with his body, that his work might not suffer damage. If God were only a potter handling common clay, surely He would not care less for His work,

If He had merely made man, as the sculptor makes the insensate stone into a statue, He might not care. Yet they tell of a poor sculptor working at midwinter, in a fireless studio, who took the clothing from his own body and wrapped it around his work that the frost might not injure it. They found the sculptor frozen to death in his room, but his work was saved. If God were only a sculptor cutting pulseless marble into shape, surely He would not care less for His work.

God is more than a potter, a sculptor ; He is a father and we are His children. When we go wrong, God feels as the father who sees his child caught in the snare of the enemy.

A mother said of a son who was going to the bad : "Would that I had buried him in his babyhood !"

Few who are parents but sometimes find themselves longing that they might keep their children back in innocent childhood, in the state of sheltered dependency, where the call of the wild cannot reach them.

Does God ever feel this longing ? Does the heavenly Father ever repent of having made man ? When He sees him surrendering to sin and wandering into the "far country," does He regret having given him freedom of will ?

When man goes away from God, further and further into the night and the peril, do not imagine that God looks on and makes no effort to save. His is not a dumb and helpless grief. He does not content Himself with a declaration of

sorrow, but taxes the resources of heaven to rescue the lost.

His word is full of entreaty. God talks to fallen man and tells him what he must encounter on the road of evil. With His heart in His voice He says: "Come, let us reason together." He pleads, instructs, warns, entreats, beseeches.

He comes in the person of His Son to save. He dies on the cross. In a sacrifice more wonderful and winsome than any potter or sculptor ever made, He gives Himself to save His work.

He comes in the person of the Holy Spirit to contend with man's foes, to regenerate his fallen nature, to give him strength and fortitude for the conflict, and to bring him off more than conqueror.

Through His word and His Son and His Spirit, He is sounding out the call of the good.

MAN'S PART IN DELIVERANCE

God is doing all this, but there is one thing He cannot do for man. He cannot determine him to do right or not to do wrong. He can love him and warn him and suffer for him and die in his stead and pay the penalty due for his sin, but He cannot give up sins for him. If that is ever done, man must do it himself.

God keeps the hand of force off of the human will. It hurt Him when Adam fell, but He let him fall. He did not step in with omnipotence and prevent that first transgression. It hurt God when David fell, but He let him fall. He did

not take the king's human nature in the grip of almighty power and compel him to abstain from licentiousness. It hurt Christ when Judas Iscariot betrayed Him and when Simon Peter denied Him, but Christ did not interfere with the freedom of these men to do as they pleased.

If man is ever to turn from his evil ways, he must turn himself. Nobody can quit doing wrong for me. There are some things my friends can do for me and some things God can do for me, but there is one thing I must do for myself, if it is ever done. I must turn from that which is wrong to that which is right. This is my battle. I must face about. My will must throw itself towards life.

If I am going away from God, it is not God's fault. He is not with me because He cannot travel my road. He cannot dwell where I have taken up a residence. When a man steps down into sin he parts company with God. Blasphemy, adultery, dishonesty are all steps away from God. We have not lost His love, but we have gone where He cannot share our life. He has not left us, but we have left Him. If we are to recover fellowship with Him, we must return.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” ¹

The eternal in man is saying that no one can

¹ Isa. 55 : 7.

afford to go away from God, to turn his back on Christ's cross, and walk with his feet towards moral ruin and spiritual death. Whoever does wrong is going away from joy and peace and hope and love and heaven. He cannot afford to do it.

No man can afford to throw himself away.

God cannot bear to see him do it, and sounds through the wayward soul the call of the good. He is urging man to help himself, that he may be helped. The instant he turns he finds God, and God becomes available. The instant David turned, he found God. The moment Simon Peter turned, he found his Saviour. The very day the prodigal said, "I will go to my father," he was a son again. God is there at our back. Let a man turn from his evil ways and he will find himself looking into the face of his divine friend. God is anxious to help us, but we must come where He can bless us. For Him to give a career of sin His approval would be for Him to forfeit all claim to man's respect and reverence, and for God to give anything but a loving welcome to the returning penitent would be for Him to lose His character.

THE RESPONSE

It must be one thing or the other. None can ignore this issue. He who thinks that he can go towards God by doing wrong is more stupid than he who takes a bath in a cesspool. There is an eternal difference between right and wrong. It

is not possible to compromise with a moral issue. Not to do right is to do wrong. Not to return to God is to go further away from Him.

The eternal in man pleads that he turn from evil ways. It is not necessary to say what these evil ways are. With some it is an evil way in business ; with others an evil way in the private life and the personal character. It may be an evil way in the home, towards one's neighbour, towards the church, a dishonest way, an avaricious way, an adulterous way. It may cost a hard struggle, the loss of money, the surrender of pride. Cost what it may, the higher nature urges man to turn, to move out of the swamps and the malaria, to shake off "the body of death," to get right with God, and live.

The call of the good is sounding above the call of the wild. It is singing down from the skies. It is singing over the years from Christ's cross. However far we may have wandered, we can hear it. Sometimes it sounds like the low refrain of an angel's song ; sometimes like a war cry summoning us to battle. Now it is like a lullaby of love, the heritage of happier and better days ; and now it is a thunder peal of warning ; but whatever the music, our listening souls can hear it, as we sit in the chamber of memory, as we lean out of the window of promise, as we stand in the door of hope, when the old longing comes over us for our own ; and always, whatever the tones, it is our Father's voice saying to His child in the far country : "Come home !"

XIII

FAITH

“Father, hold Thou my hands ;
The way is steep ;
I cannot see the path my feet must keep ;
I cannot tell, so dark the tangled way,
Where next to step. Oh, stay ;
Come close ; take both my hands in Thine ;
Make Thy way mine.
Lead me. I may not stay.
I must move on, but oh, the way !
I must be brave and go ;
Step forward in the dark, nor know
If I shall reach the goal at all —
If I shall fall.
Take Thou my hand ;
Take it ! Thou knowest best
How I should go, and all the rest ;
I cannot, cannot see ;
Lead me, I hold my hands to Thee ;
I own no will but Thine ;
Make Thy way mine.”

—*George Kingle.*

FAITH is the call of the eternal in man for God. It is one of the strongest and most convincing of all the proofs of man's high origin and destiny.

Faith is health. It is moral soundness. It is vigour and power, sanity and sanctity. It is what God seeks in every human life. There may be culture, but if there be no faith, God is not

pleased. There may be ability, but if there be no faith, God is not pleased. There may be activity, but if there be no faith, God is not pleased. There may be prayers and praise and generous giving, but lacking faith, there is no worship.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

A little reflection will show why this must be so.

A man's faith is his acquisition of God. Without faith it is impossible to please Him, because without faith it is impossible to have Him. Faith acquires God. No man can possess God who denies Him. Faith is the living link between the human and the divine. It establishes the circuit between God and man. It is the act of the soul grasping and appropriating the invisible and spiritual. God is for His creatures. He desires them to possess Him. Because He does, He cannot be pleased without faith.

A man's faith is his estimate of God. Abstractly considered, God, of course, is infinite. Practically, He is limited to the dimensions of our faith. No one has a bigger God than he believes in, for faith is vision. It is the window of the soul, and one can see more with an unobstructed horizon than through a chink in the wall. Because God is not willing to be reduced, because He prefers a portrait to a caricature, He is not pleased without faith.

A man's faith is God's opportunity. Faith

limits divine activity in the individual life. Christ is represented as standing at the door of the heart, knocking and seeking entrance. All of God waits without any life, and seeks admittance ; but the door must be opened from within. God is no intruder. He does not force an entrance. Faith must throw the lock and open the door, if God is to enter. He is anxious to do a divine part by us, but He must have the chance. Faith is God's chance to bless us, and because it is, without faith it is impossible to please Him.

A man's faith is the essential condition of all that God seeks to develop within and confer upon us. He wants us to have hope, but hope is impossible without faith. "We are saved by hope, but hope that is seen" ; that is, hope that lacks faith "is not hope."

He wants us to love Him supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves but one cannot love a God he distrusts ; nor is he likely to trust his neighbour if he distrust God. He wants our obedience, but it is folly to speak of obeying one we deny. He wants our service, but no one will serve a God he discredits. Thus faith is back of all God seeks to develop in the life. Because it is, without faith it is impossible to please Him.

It is the thing Christ sought in His disciples. Whenever He found it He was delighted. To one He said, in happy astonishment : "O woman, great is thy faith" ; and to another, "I have not seen so great faith, no, not in Israel." He conditions salvation solely on faith. He makes the

prayer of faith the conquering appeal, the battle of faith the supreme victory, and says, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

FAITH IS NOT COMMON

Nevertheless, faith is rare.

Those who profess to have it, and who seek to increase what they have, must confess that doubt mingles with faith. Faith is weak and wavering, and often goes lame. Like the man in the gospel story, often the best one can do is to pray "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." One, who might scorn the name of "agnostic," reads the Bible and wonders if it can be true. That is, he doubts. He says his prayers, and wonders if they are heard. That is, he doubts. He thinks of heaven, and wonders if it can be real. That is, he doubts. He has not much respect for his faith. It lacks heroism. It has nervous prostration on slight provocation. A spell of bad weather is a great trial to faith, and a counter attraction is something it cannot withstand.

There are those who do not even profess faith. They are not in the opposition, but they do not believe. They have no particular reason to give. They are simply not convinced. Religion fails to appeal to them. It has no attractions. Perhaps they attend church. It is respectable, and it pleases the women. Maybe they drop a coin in the collection plate. It is expected. But the preacher's story is a foreign language. They have no organ to apprehend what he discusses.

They lack faith, and it would be as sensible to try to see with the nose, or hear with the foot, as to try to apprehend God without faith.

Again, there are those who ridicule faith. They regard it as a sign of intellectual decrepitude. A man said to a friend, "I am too much of a New Yorker to go to church." It is a pleasant conceit with such people that all the religious are weak-minded. It is quite the fashion nowadays to abolish the supernatural. It is claimed that the scientific method has done the work. The biologist, as he enters his laboratory, knows nothing of the supernatural. He is there to explain, and the instant anything is explained it ceases to be supernatural. As if God could be confined to a glass retort, or heaven discovered with a field-glass! The scientific method has one task in connection with religion. It is to distinguish the supernatural from the superstitious. To say, however, that there is no supernatural, because it cannot be scientifically apprehended, is to take an unjustifiable liberty with language. The supernatural is the tenant of the spiritual realm, and it can be entered only by faith. It would be easier to see with the mouth, or hear with the eyes, than to find God with the senses.

One other class of doubters remains to be mentioned. It is composed of those who declare faith impossible because of the mysterious character of what they are asked to believe. Religion demands the acceptance, they say, of insoluble mysteries and incredible doctrines. Reason can-

not comprehend these. Therefore, faith is impossible.

We may rest assured that faith and reason, when rightly related, are not in conflict. They are complementary in man's being. For reason to oppress faith, is for reason to be despotic ; and for faith to belittle reason, is for faith to be superstitious. It is not necessary to degrade the head in order to exalt the heart. Reason does not need to abdicate in order that faith may reign. One may believe what he cannot understand. We are doing it daily in the natural world. If a man can have faith in the incomprehensible of the natural, surely he can have faith in the incomprehensible of the supernatural.

In "The Natural Law in the Spiritual World," Prof. Henry Drummond has a striking passage, in which he describes "the wonderful adaptation of each organism to its surroundings—of the fish to the water, of the eagle to the air, of the insect to the forest bed ; and of each part of every organism—the fish's swim-bladder, the eagle's eye, the insect's breathing tubes." All these, he says, inspire us with a sense of the boundless resource and skill of nature in perfecting her arrangements for the individual life. "Down in the last details the world is made for what is in it ; and by whatever process things are as they are, all organisms find in surrounding nature the ample complements of themselves."

All this holds as one ascends the scale of being. Man finds every want met and need answered.

It is as true of his mental as of his physical make-up. When we reach the apex of the pyramid of being we must hold that the same law obtains. Faith must have realities adjusted to its varying needs. For faith, the supernatural is the natural. It is faith's medium, its native air. Therefore, the incomprehensible, instead of destroying or preventing faith, permits it. It creates faith. It demands faith. It is faith's glory.

THE EVIDENCES

The lack of faith is not due to a lack of evidence. The reason men doubt God is not because there is no convincing proof of His existence. There is abundant evidence to convince any fair-minded man that God is a reality and Christianity true.

Dives, in the lost world, is represented as begging permission to return to earth and warn his brothers, lest they fall into as dreadful a fate. The request takes it for granted that Dives felt he had not had a fair chance when in this life. The evidence of the end to which his conduct had brought him was insufficient. It is not hard to create some sympathy for Dives on this score, and there are others who would plead a lack of evidence.

It is a lame plea. There are at least four witnesses whose testimony ought to make faith possible for any one who is not willfully skeptical.

The first is the Bible. When one considers the

character of its composition and contents, the marvellous manner in which it has been preserved, the effect of its teachings on the world, its transforming power, and the high regard in which it is held by millions of the best people, its testimony is deserving of attention. There is no other such book. It stands the most scrutinizing investigation. There need be no fear that higher criticism will demolish the Bible. Such criticism, provided it be sane and scholarly, is legitimate. To be sure, higher criticism is not exactly the kind of material with which to feed the soul. It is not nourishing. It makes poor preaching. A cartoon entitled "An Interesting Sermon on the Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch," appeared in a popular magazine. The preacher and sermon were left to be imagined, only the audience appearing in the picture. There was a vast array of empty pews. Three seats were occupied. In the front sat a family of six, husband, wife and four children. The wife leaned forward, looking wise, as if she felt it was a great occasion, and she must rise to what the hour expected. The man looked dejected and unutterably bored; while the children wore expressions which seemed to say that purgatory was a present reality. In the second pew sat an old lady in poke bonnet, with spectacles well down on her nose. Her face was greatly distressed, and she seemed to think there was trouble somewhere in Zion, but she was not able to locate it. In the last pew sat a hard-headed elder, with a

look of despair, as if he had reached the conclusion that if this thing went on much longer the church would have to go out of business.

Such was the illustration of "An Interesting Sermon on the Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch." The picture was a fair commentary. Higher criticism is poor preaching. It is a legitimate method of Bible study. Of course it must be scientific. It must not assume that it has proven what it has assumed. But one need not be nervous about the Bible. It can stand any investigation. It is "the impregnable rock of Sacred Scripture." "Forever, O God, Thy word is established in heaven!" The Bible proves that faith is not unreasonable.

A second witness is Christ. Christ is. Let one hold any theory he please about His birth, His miracles, His death; Christ is a reality. He is historic. He is alive in the lives of His followers. He is the highest climb the race has made towards God. He was the greatest and best of men. His teachings need no theory of inspiration to prove them. They are axiomatic. Christianity has Christ. Christ proves Christianity. Christ is a lie, if God be false and Christianity untrue.

The third witness is the church. It is imperfect, to be sure, but indispensable in all valuable efforts to uplift the world. The church is precious, judged by any standard. Take so low a form of valuation as that of real estate, and the church is a positive asset. The Rev. G. W.

Hinckley, of the Good Will Farm, in Maine, tells of a man in whose house he was making a brief call, and who made a pathetic appeal for help to sell his farm. Mr. Hinckley told him that he was not in the business of selling farms, but that if he found any one wanting to purchase he would mention the place. It comprised one hundred and fifty acres of land, a house costing \$4,000 to build, and two large barns, and was in speaking distance of the post office, town hall and schoolhouse. "How much do you ask for it?" Mr. Hinckley said. "Well," replied the man, who was an avowed infidel, "we pretend to ask \$2,000 for the place, but we would sell it for much less if we could get away from here."

"Can you not sell it at that price?" "No. Men come here and look at it. They like the farm, they like the house and the general location, but they all ask for the church, and I am compelled to confess that the town has been incorporated forty-five years, and there is no church here, and never has been one. No one wants to move to such a place."

The man, who was the most prominent citizen of the community, and an enemy of the church, had by the force of his influence been able to keep out the church, but he was moving away, unwilling to abide by the fruits of his own work.

He was like the young agnostic, who was very careful to state that while not believing in Christianity, he would be unwilling to live in any community where there was not a church and

Christian people. He was like a man who believes in sunshine, but not in the sun. The church is not built on a lie. If one believes in education, philanthropy, good government, charity, decent society, he must believe in the church. The church is evidence enough for faith in the worth of Christianity.

The fourth witness is Christian experience. It is the testimony of people who have tried Christianity. Whenever we wish to know anything we go to one who knows. We seek an expert. If we wish to know something about bridges, we go to a bridge builder. If it be medicine, we go to a physician; law, to a lawyer; agriculture, to a specialist in that department. Why not follow the same rule in religious investigations? Instead of asking an agnostic, whose boast is that he knows nothing about Christianity, let us have the testimony of one who has tried it and who out of his personal experience can say: "I know whom I have believed." Christian experience pronounces faith reasonable.

Here, then, are four witnesses—the Bible, Christ, the Church and Christian experience. The evidence is sufficient. If they will not believe these, they will not believe any. Dives was reminded that his brothers had Moses and the prophets, and that if they would not hearken to them neither would they believe, "though one should rise from the dead." After some of Christ's most striking miracles there were those

who would not believe. Even the raising of Lazarus from the dead was not all-convincing. The cause of doubt is not the lack of evidence.

THE CAUSES OF DOUBT

It is unfair to consider all who lack faith as bad, or to charge dishonesty upon all who doubt. There are people who lack faith but who are thoroughly sincere. Their characters are good, their lives above reproach. To say that they are skeptical because of sins is to say what the facts do not warrant. Perhaps their avowal of doubt is not so much doubt of God as of something connected with His worship. There are those who confound church rules and Christianity. Certain churches lay down certain rules as conditions of church membership. There is a church, for instance, which forbids dancing and card playing, and yonder is a man who does not believe as the church believes about these things. Therefore, he remains outside with his doubts. Again, there are those who confound church dogmas or views about God, the Bible, and Christ, with Christianity. Here is a man who does not believe in a hell of literal fire, but he imagines that to be a Christian he must, and so he remains outside and doubts. He confounds Christianity with impossible dogmas. There is a man who does not believe that the world was made in six days of twenty-four hours each. He supposes this to be the faith of the church. Because he cannot hold this faith he remains outside and doubts.

Evidently those who class themselves as doubters for these and similar reasons are not doubters at all. They have faith, and should rank with believers. Church membership is not, in the Christian conception, a promise to obey some man-made rule, nor a subscription to some human view of God and salvation. Faith is not hidebound by dogma. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is enduring, as "seeing Him who is invisible." It is believing that "God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Eliminating those who doubt because they think the evidence insufficient, and those who doubt because they confound the accidental and non-essential with the fundamental in Christianity, there still remain the great majority of unbelievers whose lack of faith can be explained only on Scriptural grounds.

THE BIBLE'S ANALYSIS OF DOUBT

Some doubt because their hearts are hardened. They have heard and resisted. They have repeated the process until the spiritual sense has atrophied through disuse. When Paul preached in the synagogue at Ephesus, some who heard him "were hardened, and believed not." It is a most dangerous state of mind and heart. The remedy is to respond as far as one may be able, to live up to the little faith that may be possible, to follow all the light one has. Doing this, more

light will be given, and doubt will slowly but surely yield to faith.

Others doubt because of skeptical training. They have grown up in an atmosphere of unbelief. Paul, in writing to the Romans, speaks of those who in "times past" believed not. Doubt was their inheritance. The writer is acquainted with a man who spent his boyhood and young manhood in the home of an atheistic uncle, whose library consisted of a large collection of infidel literature. Through this the boy's growing mind roamed at will, and while becoming a man of good moral character he has never been able to shake himself free of the nightmare of doubt caused by vicious training.

Others doubt from lack of sense. This is Christ's diagnosis. "O fools and slow of heart to believe." Jesus did not regard doubt as a sign of mental vigour. With Him it was an evidence of stupidity, a sure mark of mediocrity. It is a comfort to remember that God has made special provision for infants.

There are those who do not believe because religion is distasteful. "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe not." One who is doing wrong does not care to be rebuked. If the truth hurts, he prefers to believe something else. He doubts because it is more convenient.

There is still another class, whose doubt the Bible explains when it speaks of those who are not of the redeemed. Christianity does not teach that every one will be saved. It is not univer-

salism. One may live in America without being an American citizen. One may enjoy the privileges of the gospel without being a Christian. He who fires on the flag is not a citizen, but an enemy. He who rejects Christ can hardly be called Christ's disciple. It is this fearful and solemn fact which the Saviour announced when He said: "Ye believe not because ye are not of My sheep."

Then there are many like those described by the prophet Habakkuk, who believe not because they "will not believe." They have no particular reason. There is nothing in the way but their will. After all this is the supreme barrier, for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Any one can believe who wills to believe, or wants to believe, or is willing to believe.

Such are some of the explanations which the Bible gives of unbelief. They are accentuated by the materialistic age in which we live. It is a hard era for faith. We believe so thoroughly in the visible. Men are after money. The age worships success. A common spectacle is the inglorious surrender of the future for the present, and the prodigal sacrifice of the eternal for the temporal.

THE CALL FOR FAITH

Over against this God calls for faith, and without it, it is as impossible now as ever to please Him. The demand for faith is urgent. The

people who represent God must believe in Him. Those who administer and would experience His kingdom must possess vision. They must look beyond the narrow rim of sense and apprehend the eternal. They may have energy, culture, ability, wealth, position, but they must have faith. They must believe in something. They must get away from hard materialism and sordid calculations, and venture out on trust, and wait, enduring as though seeing Him who is invisible.

A man with a future must discredit doubt and honour faith. He must believe he can. God never asks for that which is impossible. Let a man give up intellectual pride, ride down his difficulties, release his hoarded gains, break with sin, bend his stubborn will, and have faith in God.

“The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart ; that is, the word of Faith, which we preach ; because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”¹

¹ Rom. 10 : 8, 9.

XIV

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

“My will, not Thine, be done, turns Paradise into a desert ; Thy will, not mine, be done, turns the desert into a Paradise, and makes Gethsemane the gate of heaven.”—*Edmond de Pressense.*

HUMAN life is a battle-field. There never was a victory without a fight. The conflict is on ; the battle is raging.

We see it all around us. Wherever one looks, he may behold struggle and contention, strife and opposition, aggression and resistance. The forces of life are pitted against each other. They lock arms in the death grapple. There is charge and counter-charge, attack, assault, repulse, renewal. The wounded, the fallen, the dying are on every side. We can hear their groans and shouts and sobs mingled with the noises of marching soldiers and the roar of the cannonade. The battle is raging.

We see it within us. One need not go outside of himself to discover the conflict. Every soul is a battle-field. Every human heart is the scene of a terrific engagement. There the forces of two worlds contend for the mastery. A law in the members wars against the law in the mind. Sometimes our plight is so desperate that we cry :

“Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?”

The conflict is not to be lamented. The battle is no blunder. Some things are worse than war. The supremacy of evil is worse; the reign of lawlessness is worse; the dominion of lust and avarice is immeasurably worse.

Of course peace is desirable, provided it be honourable peace; but never, when it means the surrender of principle, the sacrifice of honour, and the compromise of truth. There must be no peace that allows greed and caste, vice and crime to have their way. The eternal in man can never capitulate.

Yet this is the kind of peace wickedness wants. To a fighting church, that shows the war spirit and unsheathes its sword, wickedness cries: “You ought not to fight. Your Master preached Peace. Put up your sword. They that use the sword, will perish by the sword.” Even the devil can quote Scripture. He did it on a certain historic occasion long ago, and he probably still amuses himself in the same way. Such worldly interest in the cause of Christ and such anxiety for the church to honour Christ is truly wonderful. Such keen solicitude on the part of the world, lest the church should betray its Master is most remarkable. It reminds one of the kiss with which Judas Iscariot betrayed Christ.

When the forces of evil get pious one should beware. When institutional vice lectures the army of the living God as to how it should con-

duct its campaign, and advises it to quit fighting and "just preach the gospel," one may rest assured the forces of evil are more interested in themselves than they are in the Lord. They want to be let alone ; to be allowed to work their nefarious schemes unmolested, to fill their coffers and glut their capacious maw without restraint. Christ never prostituted peace to so base an end. For this sort of thing, He said, "I bring not peace, but a sword."

Jesus calls for the martial spirit in His followers. The Christian must be something of a warrior. He is given weapons and armour and a war-cry and a call that summons him to conflict. The great hymns of the church are battle hymns.

"I was ever a fighter, so one fight more" —

The Christian can never consent to a peace that sacrifices truth, nor yield to a truce which betrays righteousness. The cross is in the field !

THE ENEMY IS THE WORLD

The victory to be sought is "the victory that overcometh the world."¹

It is not the world as God made it ; the universe as it came from the Creator's hand ; the earth as divine love and care prepared it for man's home. This world is perfect. It has a charm no poet can sing ; a beauty that flies the

¹ 1 John 5 : 4.

painter's brush. Its blooming flowers and shining stars and singing rivers and glowing sunsets repeat the refrain of Genesis. The world is "good." It is not the world as God will make it. This world is to be redeemed. It is to be delivered from the curse. Every wound will be healed, every sorrow comforted, every scar glorified. Society is to be regenerated. God did not despair when the world went wrong. His dream for man is coming to pass. Exiled John sitting on the shore of lonely Patmos, with the monotonous sea stretching like a prison wall around him, caught a prophetic vision of this coming world and said: "I see a new heaven and a new earth."

It is the world which sin makes that is to be fought. It is that world whose soil grows briars and thorns, whose lot is sorrow and disappointment, and whose people suffer the curse. It is the world of disobedience, hate, selfishness, rebellion, in which the soul surrenders to the senses and the spirit is the slave of lust.

It is the world where wrong is insolent, dishonesty cunning, greed brazen; the world of imposture, deception, despotism, calamity, death.

This world is the foe. It is arrayed against everything dear to the soul. It belittles the Bible. To be sure it is willing for one to be amused by Sacred Scripture. It is gracious enough to allow him to retain the Bible provided he treat it as literature and think of it as a story book; but it says: "If you are daring enough to

believe what is in that book ; and to try to live as if it were true, you shall not have it."

It is offended by the Saviour's cross. It belittles Calvary. To the church the cross is the power of God and the wisdom of God, but to the world it is a stumbling-block and foolishness. It gives the lie to eternal hope. It declares man has no future but the dust. It says : " Let us eat, drink, and be merry ; for to-morrow we die."

This world is the enemy. It is a powerful foe, a formidable antagonist. Its craft is great, its resources inexhaustible, its armies imposing. It fights with the latest weapons. Its methods of warfare are the most approved. Its uniforms are brilliant and its martial display dazzling and bewildering. What can the soul hope to accomplish in a conflict against this mighty, insolent, and aggressive foe ? The world looks invincible.

THE WORLD WILL BE DEFEATED

There is no note of alarm in the war-cry of Christendom. " This is the victory that overcometh the world." It is a bold prophecy, but it is a true one.

This world which sin has made and in which sin reigns will be overthrown. Its dominion will fade, its thrones will crumble, its armies will be vanquished. The world of evil is doomed. Its power will decay, its gold will canker, its gains will rust, its gaudy trappings and guilty pleasures will turn black in death.

The soul will rout the senses, the seen will sur-

render to the unseen, time will capitulate to eternity.

Everything that is wrong will fail. One may make up his mind to that.

The defeat of evil may be delayed. The battle may rage through century after century; but God does not get tired. The eternal is a stranger to weariness. "A thousand years in His sight are but as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night." Only truth survives. Let us not grow discouraged. Let us not mistake a skirmish for an engagement. We look at one blackened, blasted stalk and forget the waving fields of golden grain that billow the limitless prairie.

Evil has only a temporary lease. Its years are numbered. This world built on caste and greed and lust and violence; this world of injustice, debauchery and despotism, must go. The fiat of Omnipotence has gone forth against it. Everything that is wrong will fail.

"Right is right, as God is God,
And right the day will win."

As one lines up in this fight, let him remember that. If he wishes to be on the winning side let him fall in behind the cross and fight for what is right.

THE VICTORY IS TO BE WON BY FAITH

This is the victory—"even faith." The victory of faith is the only victory worth winning.

It is faith ; not martial spirit, not military prowess, not impregnable position, not war-like equipment, but faith. It is not wealth nor numbers nor culture nor knowledge nor influence, but faith that wins. It is the faith of tried, tempted, timid mortals ; half the time tempted to take refuge in flight, sometimes wounding themselves with their own weapons, sometimes mistaking comrades for foes, often fleeing the field at the first sight of the enemy. Nevertheless faith is the secret of victory.

It is a great thing to say of faith, but it is a thing that is repeated and emphasized on every page of Revelation. "All things are possible to him that believeth." If we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, we may say to this mountain : "Remove and be cast into the sea," and it shall be done. Faith is the great acquisition for life's conflict. When the enemy temporarily overcomes us and drives us from the field, it is not because we are few and he is many,—that is often the case ; it is not because our position is poor and his commanding—that too is often the case. The real reason of temporary reverse is the failure of faith. Peter walked on the water to go to Jesus as long as his faith lasted. When faith failed, he began to sink. Christ's rebuke was not : "Wherefore didst thou start?" but "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

All that God asks of a man is that he have faith in Him. He does not ask him to be an expert but to trust. He will plan the campaign,

He will direct the battle, He will provide arms and ammunition and reinforcements. Man's part is to have faith.

Yonder is a weak man in a tattered uniform. He is awkward in the use of his weapons, and he is surrounded by a host of foes ; but he has faith, and there where he stands, the tide of battle sets towards the cross.

There is a weak woman. She is timid and retiring and unknown. She can do little but pray : but before her the forces of evil fall back in confusion. She has faith. Faith is the victory !

“ And were this world all devils o’er,
And waiting to devour us,
We’ll lay it not to heart so sore,
Not they can overpower us ;
And let the Prince of Ill
Look grim as e’er he will,
He harms us not a whit,
For why ? His doom is writ,
One little word shall slay him.”

HOW DOES FAITH CONQUER THE WORLD?

It discovers allies. Part of the host have crossed the flood, but they have not gone out of the fight. They are still a part of the army of the Lord in this campaign for the destruction of evil ; and they are all the more formidable because they are invisible. Faith discovers this army of the skies. Jesus once told His fearful disciples that He had but to ask and God would send Him twelve legions of angels. Had the

ablest general the mightiest army ever marshalled on earth, he might well hesitate to go into battle against twelve legions of angels.

The king of Syria wanted to capture the prophet Elisha. He sent to Dothan horses and chariots and a great host. They came by night and compassed the city. It was rather a formidable force to send against one man, and that man only a preacher.

The next morning when Elisha's servant looked out and saw the enemy, his heart died within him, and he said, "Alas, my master; how shall we do?" Then Elisha asked God to open the young man's eyes and let him see the real army in the field. The Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. Then the prophet prayed God to smite the foe, and this invisible, invincible, angelic body-guard of the prophet drove the army of Syria headlong from the field, until the rout became a panic.

Faith has allies. It discovers these legions of the skies and exclaims: "Seeing we 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 perfecter of our faith." ¹

Furthermore, faith acquires power. It connects with the Almighty as the electric wire with the power house. God's promise is:

¹ Heb. 12 : 1, 2.

"You shall have power." It is His to furnish the power, it is faith's to receive it. He whose faith in God remains unshaken will overcome the world, because he has become a spiritual battery charged with omnipotence.

Faith also releases power. It makes it possible for God's personality to enter the campaign. We are told of a certain place, that Christ could do no mighty work there because of the people's unbelief. God does not work in an atmosphere of doubt. Faith is the quality that loosens out omnipotence. Faith is the track along which the mighty energy of God runs to the overthrow of evil. Nothing is too hard for God, if only His people have faith.

Faith is already overthrowing the world. As the eye sweeps the field, it is not difficult to see that the battle is for the good. It is a long distance back to that first Palm Sunday, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, listening to the hosannas of a crowd who to-morrow were to shout "Crucify Him!" What a small beginning was there! How mean and weak and helpless it looked! What was there in that humble group to stir a world? The change has been marvellous. The cross has become the inspiration of the world's finest civilization. The foremost nations of the earth delight to call themselves "Christian." One-third of the human race worships Jesus as God. The choicest of the youth of the nation are volunteering, in larger numbers than the church can send, to go to non-Christian lands, to fight

the battles of the hero of Palm Sunday. Faith is already winning, and there can be no doubt of its ultimate and complete victory.

Not only so, but faith is the victory. It discovers allies, it acquires power, it releases power, and it is conquering the world. But that is not all. That is not even the daring thing about faith.

Faith is already victory—just faith. When one reaches the point where he can say: "I believe," he has conquered the adversary. The citadel of the senses falls, and the spiritual takes possession of the fortress. The eternal in man has won the battle.

Let us understand what the victory is. Greater than the calamity of conscious defeat, is the folly of a supposed victory, won at tremendous cost, that turns out to be defeat.

Victory is not siding with the majority. It is not getting on the world's side. It is not outwitting a competitor. It is not getting schemes through. He is defeated already who champions a bad cause, who is guilty of wrong-doing, who stains his honour or slays his conscience.

To be true and to do right is to be victorious.

This is what John meant, when he wrote: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." When one reaches the point where he can see the divine in Jesus Christ, he has conquered the world. When he gets where Christ's mind is his, where Christ's ideals control him, where Christ's motives sway him, where

Christ's cross inspires him, the world has lost its power to rule him.

To have enough faith to resist temptation, to be faithful to duty, to say "no" to lust and greed, to keep sweet under trial and patient under affliction, to be courageous before peril, and to keep honour unstained and conscience uncorrupted is to be the victor. Such an one has already overthrown the world. He has driven iniquity into retreat and routed the adversary.

A man's weapons may be old-fashioned, his uniform worn and faded and tattered, and his supplies meagre. The world may despise him. It may see nothing in him but the peasant of Galilee; but the victory is not in what doth appear. Faith is the victory.

I am only one, but I believe. I am awkward with the weapons of war, but I believe. I am often frightened and discouraged, but I believe. I believe in God. I believe in His Son Jesus Christ. I believe in my great Commander. This is the victory of the soul over the senses. It is eternal triumph.

XV

FAITH AND THE INFINITE

“ We keep the watch together,
Doubt and I,
In stress of midnight weather,
Doubt and I
Stand peering into darkness,
Foreboding rock and shoal ;
Or shrinking in our weakness,
From waves that o’er us roll.

“ We pace the deck together,
Faith and I,
And catch in darkest weather
The far off eastern sky,
Where, robed in dazzling splendour,
Shine planet, star, and sun,
Where, lost in truth’s eternal,
Doubt, Faith, and I are one.”

—*Heinrich Heine.*

FAITH is the invisible link between the finite and the infinite.

In writing to the Corinthian Christians, Paul said : “ Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”¹

He seems to be getting rather far from shore.

¹ 1 Cor. 2 : 9.

He has lifted anchor and set sail in the ship of faith on the sea of the infinite. Will he ever reach port? He is boldly and baldly and boastfully proclaiming his acceptance of and adherence to a religion which is incomprehensible. He is subscribing to what he has never seen and never can see, has never heard and never can hear, has not imagined and in the nature of the case can never adequately imagine.

Has he lost his reason? Has he gone mad with fanaticism? His are not empty words. He backs what he says with his all. He says, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."¹ Paul has sold out the finite for the infinite. He has given up everything and set sail in the ship of faith on the sea of infinity for the shore of eternity.

In this we are face to face with the fact that Christianity is a religion which requires faith in the infinite. It proposes more than reason can handle. It demands that we accept what we cannot understand, seek what we have never seen, and serve and obey one whom we cannot comprehend. Precisely this is the difficulty which Christianity presents to many honest minds.

REBELLION AGAINST THE INFINITE

There are those who rebel at the infinite; who are unwilling to stultify themselves by professing

¹ Philemon 3, 7, 8.

to believe what they cannot understand. They regard such an act as hypocrisy, and they are not willing to be hypocrites even "to get saved." Christianity may or may not be true. They have no means of knowing, so they stay near the shore.

The Rev. Samuel Phillips Verner, for some years a missionary in Central Africa, is the author of a volume entitled, "Pioneering in Central Africa." In the book Mr. Verner relates an incident which took place on the journey out. He fell into conversation one day with a big trader, whose tone and attitude to religion were friendly and respectful, but who said that he would not believe what he could not understand; and that the Bible and most religious creeds required belief in doctrines which were incomprehensible mysteries. This is precisely many a man's difficulty. He meets the infinite with a shrug of the shoulders. Is there a God? How should he know? Eye hath not seen Him. Is there a heaven? How can man tell? Earth hath not heard Him. The doctrines of the virgin birth, the new birth, the dual nature of Christ, the resurrection are incomprehensible mysteries. Can a man believe what he does understand?

How was the missionary to meet the objection? He asked: "Then if you found anything in which you had to believe, although you could neither understand nor demonstrate it, that objection would be removed, would it not?"

"Yes," said the trader, "but I cannot believe that any such thing exists."

“Will you name to me the highest number that you can possibly think of?”

The man paused to think and soon saw that whatever number he named, there would be a higher number just above it. If he named a trillion, there was a trillion and one.

“But do you not know,” Mr. Verner continued, “that up somewhere there must be that high number? You know it exists, although you can neither name the number nor demonstrate its existence. So it is with the nature and attributes of God. We can no more comprehend Him than we can name that number, but we can conceive of His existence, and can imagine some of His attributes.”

Rejection of the infinite because it is incomprehensible is not argument but evasion. We are continually accepting the incomprehensible. I cannot understand the forces of nature, but I do not for that reason discredit them. I do not understand my own dual nature, why should I expect to understand Christ's? The infinite and unknowable are crowding in upon us on every side. Eye sees not, ear hears not, but we believe. We cannot help believing. There is nothing in the infinite to stagger faith. There must be some other reason for rejection.

DESECRATION OF THE FINITE

Back of this doubt of the infinite is a desecration of the finite. The story of the big trader and the young missionary is not finished.

The trader finally admitted to a belief in God, but said he found that the standard of Christ and the Bible was not practical. "I am a trader with native Africans," he said. "I have to sell them immense quantities of rum of the vilest quality in exchange for their goods, although I know the stuff ruins whole tribes of them. But suppose I stop selling rum; then my rivals keep it up, the company I serve calls me a fool for my conscience, I lose my position, and am thrown back on England without work, and drift into poverty." Mr. Verner asked him what he thought of Christ. "He was a great and good man," was the reply, "and I only wish I had power enough to follow Him as I see some few people do."

In closing the story Mr. Verner says, "I shall never forget that Englishman's departure into the darkness of Africa with such a tribute to the Master on his lips and such a trade upon his hands."

It was the trade that was his trouble; not the God he could not understand, but the trade he understood too well. This is the real difficulty with many who go religiously lame with intellectual troubles. They rebel at the infinite because they desecrate the finite. They deny what they cannot understand because they despise and defy what they can and do understand. If they would serve God in the known, it would be easier to trust Him in the unknown.

Christianity is not all infinite mysteries. There

are daily duties. Honesty has no intellectual difficulties. It is simply a question of telling a lie or the truth. Purity is not an inscrutable mystery. It is merely a matter of obeying the seventh commandment.

Faith in the infinite is not unreasonable. The objection is a quibble. "If any man will do My will, he shall know."¹ Let one live right and his intellectual difficulties will dissipate.

THE INFINITE CREATES FAITH

Faith in the infinite is not only possible, but the infinite instead of hindering, helps faith. It is not difficulty, but assistance; not calamity, but asset. Instead of shaming, it glorifies faith.

Man may admire, but he cannot worship what he comprehends, for he knows that what he comprehends is no greater than himself. It is therefore unworthy of worship. God must be inscrutable if He is to remain God. The finite cannot contain the infinite any more than a thimble can hold the ocean. Infinity is not a blemish of the Deity. It is the sure mark of divinity. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"²

If I could comprehend God, one of two things would be true. I should be God or God would be but man.

Religion is search for the infinite. It is the soul's quest for the eternal. It is faith's aspi-

¹ John 7 : 17.

² Job 11 : 7.

ration for that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor heart conceived.

Any religion which reduces its infinite proportions to finite measurements, ceases to be a religion and becomes a cult. Men may go through its ritual and pay tithes for its support, but it lacks power. The effort to get rid of the supernatural in Christianity is an effort to get rid of Christianity. There are efforts to get rid of the supernatural in the Bible. Suppose they succeed. We retain a book, but we have lost the Word of God. There are efforts to get rid of the supernatural in Christ. Suppose they succeed. A man remains, but we have lost Christ as a divine Saviour. Man worships only the infinite.

And he must worship, for he is a religious creature. He must be puzzled about something. He may reject Christianity because he cannot understand it, but he will take up with something else that is incomprehensible. If he discard faith and the infinite, he will substitute credulity and mysticism, or curiosity and the occult.

This is precisely what some are doing. There are people who cannot believe in Christianity because of Bethlehem and Calvary and the resurrection, and so they darken the room and have table rappings. They cannot believe in heaven, so they take to palmistry. A charming woman held forth at great length about two lives that had been saved by palmistry! In excusing a

gentleman who was running daft over spiritualism some one said, "But you know his son died and you can't blame him for seeking comfort." As if there were no comfort in the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

What a fall ! What a retreat ! What a defeat for reason ! The supernatural has been surrendered for the superstitious.

The infinite is no hindrance to faith. It helps faith. It makes faith possible. God is not arbitrary when He asks man to believe what he cannot comprehend. He knows that worship is possible only in the presence of the infinite.

If there had been no more in Christ than man sees and hears, He would not be worshipped. Because He towers beyond us, successive generations have been saying with Simon Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The gospel's infinity is its credential. Man not only believes what he cannot understand, but he believes it because he cannot understand it.

Is even this all ? Have we reached the limit by saying not merely that there may be faith in the infinite, but that there must be faith in the infinite ? Is it not possible to rejoice in the infinite ?

FAITH HAS THE INFINITE

Faith possesses itself of the infinite. It not only commits us to God ; it also commits God to us.

One can apprehend what he cannot compre-

hend. He can ride on a ship he cannot steer. He can depend on a force he cannot control. Because the infinite is inscrutable, we need not conclude it is unusable. We do not understand electricity, but we reach out and harness it and it serves us. We do not conclude that the little we use is all the electricity there is in the world ; nor that when we have used it, we have consumed it. In the same way faith reaches out and lays hold of God, and He blesses us. We must not conclude that what we experience of Him is all there is of God, nor that God is less because He has been used. Faith connects with the infinite.

It is faith in the infinite that man needs for the finite. Man needs more than his own short arm and perplexed judgment for the conflict. Human strength is soon exhausted. To resist temptation he must be reënforced with eternal righteousness. To be honest he must come under the control of infinite obligations. The man who desecrates the finite is he who lacks faith in the infinite. Let him believe in the incomprehensible and he will quit his dirty work.

This was what the great apostle meant when he said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." We are not dependent on eye and ear and reason. God has given the Holy Spirit to reveal to man the infinite. Christ said :

"It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." The Spirit reveals to the finite the infinite. The man of faith can recall times when the infinite came into his life and strengthened him. It was an hour of temptation, but he loved God and trusted Him, and help came. It was a time of sorrow, but he loved God and trusted Him, and was comforted. It was an occasion of great perplexity, but he loved God and trusted Him, and light came. He cannot explain it, no more can he doubt it. He stands up from his struggle, victorious, saying, "I know whom I have believed." Thus the infinite, instead of killing faith, confirms it.

THE GOSPEL OF THE INFINITE

There is a gospel of infinite measurements. Faith rejoices that God is incomprehensible, for that fact is the assurance that He will remain God.

Christianity is true because no plummet can fathom its depths, no wing can soar to its heights, no creed can embrace its vastness, no ritual can express its effulgent glory.

Will a man turn away from all this because he cannot understand God? Will he lose it all because he cannot reduce it to his brief time-tables?

He is after what the eye can see and the ear can hear. He believes in substantial values that hands can touch and the markets will respect.

Some day there will be a fire and his house will go up in smoke. He will be poorer then. Some day the markets will stagger and stocks will tumble and he will be poorer still. Some day death will come creeping on and take all in sight, and penniless and unshriven he will go out into eternity. He will be unutterably poor then. It is sane to seek the infinite, to lay hold of the eternal. God will not disappoint us. It is wise to forsake doubts and follow faiths. If one can do no more, let him say with the man of the gospel story, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."

This little cabin is not all. This dim sky-light is not all. These tired arms and weary feet are not all. "God hath prepared." Christ has gone to prepare, and when He comes again we shall exchange the cabin for a mansion and the sky-light for eternal day. God's provisions are on a Godlike scale. There are no meagre measurements, but infinite proportions, so that when at last we step inside and look around we shall say: "A God hath builded this."

It is a great inheritance. Gather together all the treasures of sight, all that is fair and beautiful. Gather together all the treasures of sound, all sweet harmonies. Add to these all the treasures of the heart, all dear loves and happy fancies. Beggar the banks of earth. Ransack the treasuries of time. Pile them all in one.

Then double them. Then treble them. Then quadruple them. Then multiply them a hun-

dredfold. Then multiply them a thousandfold.
Then multiply them by thousands of thousands.
Then multiply them by all the mathematics of all
the ages —

- “ And still the soul a far-off glory sees ;
 Strange music hears.
A something, not of earth, still haunts the breeze,
 The sun and spheres.
- “ All things that be, all thought, all love, all joy,
 Spellbind the man,
As once the growing boy,
 And point afar, —
- “ Point to some land of endless, endless truth,
 Of light and life,
Where souls renewed in an immortal youth,
 Shall know the INFINITE.”

XVI

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

“God is the green in every blade,
The health in every boy and maid ;
In yonder sunrise flag He blooms
Above a nation’s well-earned tombs ;
That empty sleeve His arm contains ;
That blushing scar His anger drains ;
That flaunting cheek beneath the lamp
He hoists for succour from a heart,
Where love maintains a wasted camp
Till love arrives to take its part ;
That bloodless face against the pane
Goes whitening all the murky street
With God’s own dread, lest hunger gain
Upon His love’s woe burdened feet.”

—*John Weiss.*

THE Fatherhood of God is the Deity’s fullest proof of and strongest plea for the eternal in man.

God is a father. To discover that is to be saved. God is more than “infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.” He is a father. God is more than a just judge, a mighty creator, a supreme intelligence, an invincible ruler, the world’s master mind and resistless force. God is a father. “I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”¹

¹ 2 Cor. 6 : 17, 18.

This is the highest vision man has of God, and he is not likely to have a higher. After one has called Him "Father," what higher, holier, dearer, diviner thing remains for him to say about God? He is Creator, Preserver, Redeemer; He makes all, keeps all, saves all, rules all; He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, but what of it? If this be all God is, I may be no more to Him than the dust on the highway or the flags in the marshes. What is God? The Spirit in our hearts is crying, "Abba, Father."

The fatherhood of God is the greatest truth of religion. It includes all other truths, not as a vessel holds its contents, but as a cause contains its results. One may have a decent creed about himself, his neighbour, the world, his work, destiny, but if he have a low view about God, all is spoiled. He is like one who holds in his hand a bouquet of cut flowers. They are beautiful and fragrant, but their beauty will wither and their fragrance die, for they are severed from the source of life. So it is with any creed which fails to connect with the fatherhood of God. What one thinks about God determines what he thinks about himself, his neighbour, his work, the world, destiny. The finest thought one can have of God is fatherhood.

Whence comes this thought? How did man acquire the belief that God is his father? He did not reason it out for himself. Man is not the discoverer of the fatherhood of God. If history shows anything, it is that the God man finds,

when left to himself, is more foe than friend. Fears weave a veil across the face of God. Guilty conscience sounds its alarm and cries that God is a peril. Fallen human nature flees from God's presence and calls the rocks and hills to fall on it and hide it from the face of the angry judge. A man-found, man-made deity is a demon, pursuing remorselessly the victims of its consuming fury.

The fatherhood of God is not the outcome of evolution, a truth that has slowly dawned on the race in its upward climb. It has been revealed. God has told us He is a father, and this is how we know it. He has told us in His Word and more clearly in His Son.

Christ's message to men is that God is a father. Christ's name for God is not "Judge," "Creator," "Ruler," but "Father." "I and My Father are one." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "The Father" was Christ's ideal. At Calvary, a nail-pierced hand was stretched forth from the cross to tear away the veil which human fear had woven over the face of God. As we gaze upon the face revealed, the Spirit crieth, "Abba, Father."

Because the fatherhood of God is not a fancy sketch drawn by the religious imagination, nor a pen picture produced by romantic pious art, but a photograph handed down by God Himself, the likeness is true. Whatever else God is or is not, He is a father. "A father of the fatherless is God in His holy habitation." "Like as a father

pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." God is a father; to discover that is to be saved.

A burglar broke into an unoccupied house on the seashore. He carried his plunder to the dining room to arrange it, but left it there. In the room was a marble bust of Guido's Christ, the Christ wearing the crown of thorns. When the rifled house was entered afterwards, this bust marked with the burglar's black finger prints, was found with its face turned to the wall. Evidently the thief could not proceed, with the face of even a marble Christ looking down upon his crime. What then must it mean, by faith, to discover the living, loving face of the Almighty Father watching one's life? To feel that, is to find sin not only hateful but impossible. It is to have life transformed. It is for the eternal in man to recover control of the life.

Since it is a fact of Revelation, we must go to the same authority for further information about the fatherhood of God. One of the first questions asked is as to the size of God's family.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD AND THE HUMAN RACE

Is God the father of all or a part? Is He the father of some and the judge of all the rest? How

wide is the zone of God's fatherhood? Is it the dogma of a sect or the hope of humanity? How large is God's family? It is not uncommon to limit the fatherhood of God to the zone of the elect; to confine it within the circumference of the divine decrees. Sometimes the lines are so closely drawn that it is said the size of God's family is so definitely fixed from all eternity that the number thereof can neither be increased nor diminished. God's children are those who have been foreordained from all eternity unto life. The rest are left out in the cold, or, to be more accurate, are remanded to the fires of Gehenna.

So far as God's revealed intention goes, His family is not limited. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." "And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come, and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." These are not terms of exclusion but of inclusion.

The entrance to God's heart is not barred. The door to God's home is not locked. There is not a syllable of Scripture to show that God wants a small family. God is like the sun that shines

for all. Does the sun shine for one blade of grass and not for another growing beside it?

The zone of the fatherhood of God, in its sympathies, capacities, provisions, invitations, and intentions is as wide as the race. God is for all, for all that have ever lived or that will ever live; for all races, kindreds, tongues, and tribes; for all creeds and sects; for white men, red men, yellow men, black men; for Buddhists, Confucianists, Mohammedans; for pagan and heathen; for Jew and Gentile; for skeptic and Christian; for Catholic and Protestant; for elect and non-elect. God is for all and the infinite capacity of His love can be neither stinted nor taxed.

Nevertheless when one comes to lay God's declared intention alongside of man's actual condition a difference appears as deep as hell and as high as heaven. All men are not God's children in their intentions. There are those who repudiate God as a father, blaspheme Him, deny Him, defy Him. They are in open rebellion against God's plans. God is not in all their thoughts. To call such people members of God's family is to speak a pious lie. The fatherhood of God is no more to them than the sterile sands along a barren beach. Thus we come to the second great question in connection with the subject.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD AND SIN

A child may throw himself out of his father's house and cast away his birthright. That is what

sin is. Sin is the rejection of the fatherhood of God. It is the act of rebellion by which man makes it impossible for God to treat him as a father would a child. Sin does not change God. It changes man. Sin does not alter God's attitude to man ; it alters man's to God. Sin does not take the father's feeling out of God's heart, but it does take the child's feeling out of man's soul.

Sin changes the sinner. It beggars, brutalizes, disfigures, estranges him. It is the old story of the prodigal son, wandering from his father's house into the far country. The father and the home have not gone away from the son ; the son has forsaken them.

A woman was sent from the New York police court to Blackwell Island to serve a sentence of six months for getting money under false pretenses as a professional beggar. It was discovered afterwards that she was the daughter of a Scotch Earl. Heir to a title and of gentle blood, she was living the life of a condemned pauper. It is the picture of every sinner who repudiates the fatherhood of God and wanders into the "far country."

Sin does not make God turn against man. It does not transform God from friend to foe, nor change His love to hate. Whoever says it does, blasphemes God. Such a charge could not be lodged against our human love. Should a child of the home become wayward and leave us, our love would not change to hate. All tears cannot drown that love, all neglect cannot wither it, all

abuse cannot kill it. We are not better parents than God. His love is changeless and if the prodigal could but believe this in all its height and depth and stretch of holy meaning, he would set his face once more towards home.

If God be such a good father, why does He not prevent the estrangement? Why did He allow sin to enter and lead astray His child? It is an easy question to answer. Because God is a father and not a policeman; a father and not a jailer. The prodigal son might have been kept at home with bolts and chains, but home would have become a prison. The moment God ceases to be a father and becomes a prison official, His house becomes a cell and His child a convict. A child is not kept at home by force, but by love. Hence God's children are left free, and when they sin and leave Him, there is a sorrow in the Father's heart for which human speech has no words.

While He uses no restraining force, when the sinner throws himself out of his Father's house, God does not stand helpless in the agony of grief and in the paralysis of disappointment. He makes bare His arm to destroy the enemy that has broken up His home. It is not surprising that God cannot look upon sin with "the least degree of allowance." Suppose some one should enter a home and steal away the affection of a child, and lead a son or daughter into a life of folly and shame and rebellion, all the righteous fury of parental love would rise up against the seducer. This is why God's face is relentless

against sin. Thus we come to the third and supreme fact in the story of God's fatherhood.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD AND CALVARY

The cross of Christ is God's supreme effort to reclaim His wandering children and bring home the lost. Christ lived, suffered, and died to reveal that God is a father. His message to men might be summed up in this, "God is your Father." Jesus uttered the profound depths of His mission when He said, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father;"—not the Creator, Ruler, Judge, but the Father. Christ refutes guilty fears, and whispers, "God is love," and teaches men to pray, "Our Father." To accept Christ is to find God the Father.

Thus it comes about that so far as the actual experience of it goes, God's fatherhood is limited to those who come to Him in Christ. It is Christ's Spirit that cries, "Abba, Father." And so it is true that "whosoever denieth the Son hath not the Father." "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." But may not one believe in the fatherhood of God without believing in Christ? No more than one can honour his parents by denying his brothers and sisters.

Calvary, therefore, is not a cold theological necessity, not a shrewd deal between a clever Deity and a suffering Saviour, not a tragic effort to restore the moral equilibrium of an unsettled universe, but the heart-beat of God, the home call of the Eternal Father. At the cross God is

saying to His lost, wayward, wandering child: "Come home; come back from the wilderness; come where light and joy and peace and love await you; come home," "for I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." When one comes thus, he comes to stay. He is in his Father's house not by accident of birth, but by the election of love and the decision of choice. He is there under the spell of a new happiness, for a new force has entered into his nature. He is God's child now through the Spirit. Salvation has become sonship. He is not only God's creature, but His offspring. He has come home to stay; for Calvary was not a skirmish, but the decisive battle of an age campaign. When the Lord Almighty delivers, deliverance is complete.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD AND THE RE-DEEMED LIFE

The world has a different look when seen through the windows of home, and when gazed at through the grated bars of a prison. The fatherhood of God changes the look on the face of every fact of life. It is the difference between a sky of clouds, lurid with red lightnings, sullen with muttering thunders and drenching storms; and the glorious, undimmed sun, pouring his soft and mellow radiance down upon a happy world.

The fatherhood of God transfigures the decrees. Sometimes they are regarded in such fashion as to fill the soul with a doubtful hope or a growing

despair. God's eternal decrees are just His everlasting plans and purposes for His children. They are not the fiat of blind force nor the decision of an arbitrary judge, but the provision of a father. An earthly father, who is worthy the name, looks out for his children, not that he does not expect them also to look out for themselves, but because he wants to do all in his power to make life safe and happy for them. Shall God the Father do less for His children? That is what predestination and foreordination mean. He is not lifting obligations for us, but He is making the future safe. Peter writes of the "foreknowledge according to the Father." It was because Paul was looking at the decrees of God from the inside, that he could say, "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 us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God's decrees are not the arbitrary fiats of Deity, scheduling a section of His creation to eternal punishment. They are the Father's plans for His own. Discipline and hardship are transfigured by the same light. Sometimes there is the fear that the hard things of life are signs of Divine anger. When interpreted by the fatherhood of God, they are seen to be discipline rather than punishment. They are the proofs of divine concern. "For whom the Lord loveth He cor-

recteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”

“I know not where God’s islands lift,
 Their fronded palms in air ;
 But this I know, I cannot drift,
 Beyond His love and care.”

When one has discovered the fatherhood of God, it is not long until he finds the brotherhood of man. We are not making too much of the second of Christ’s commandments—love to neighbour ; but we are not making enough of the first—love to God. Christ did not say love to man was the first and great commandment, but love to God. Love to man is like unto it, or a corollary of it. Preaching it will never bring human brotherhood. Society needs more than maxims and mottoes. Let a man discover that God is not only his Father, but also the Father of the man who works beside him ; the Father of that high man he envies and of this low man he despises ; of that man of prosperity and of this man of adversity, of trembling old age yonder and of helpless infancy here ; of the waif, the pauper, the criminal ; and that God has as much of care and love for one of His children as for another. Then not from the lips merely, but from the heart, he begins to pray “Our Father.”

The fatherhood of God and foreordination ; the fatherhood of God and human struggle ; the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man ; and finally the fatherhood of God and eternity !

Out of the mists of that far future, fears as well as hopes arise. Sometimes conditions are conjectured which seem to defy even the bliss of heaven to make tolerable. Suppose the family circles of earth are incomplete there? How can one be happy, unless all his loved ones are happy too?

God is a father. We can trust when we cannot understand. One should not try to work a sum in calculus before he learns the multiplication table. God has told us some things, but who will say that He has told us all? He has told all we need now to know of the provisions of His love; but there are things to come which we are not ripe to receive as yet. I cannot understand how I can be happy in heaven, if a child of mine should be shut out. That is mystery enough, but that mystery is lost in another. How can God the Father be satisfied and happy, if one of His children be left out in the everlasting night?

And so, upon every dark cloud that banks itself against the sky of hope, there pours the light which streams from the fatherhood of God.

This light suffuses life and transfigures man. It declares that in the very nature of the Deity is written the high and holy certificate of the kinship of the human with the divine. It is the testimony of the heart of God to the eternal in man.

XVII

AT THE GATES OF THE INVISIBLE

“You lack prayer, you lack believing, persevering and courageous prayer; and the lack of prayer causes all that drought and disunion from which your soul is suffering. I wish you therefore, my Lord Bishop, that you will betake yourself again to God, saying: ‘I come, O my Lord, to Thee, bishop as I am, to the children’s school of prayer; I come to Thee not as a teacher, but as a learner, I come to be taught how to pray.’”—*Saint Theresa to the Bishop of Osma.*

PRAYER is the eternal in man at the gates of the invisible. It is the soul longing for some sign or token of its heavenly kin. It is the cry for communion and fellowship of a nature whose home country is the realm of the infinite. If man be no more than his tissues and senses, and his destiny no further than a grave, prayer is as great a folly as it is a mystery. The fact that man prays out towards the infinite proves that there is within a faculty or trait built to move in that realm.

The prayer-life therefore becomes essential to the soul’s highest development. As man waits in the attitude of devotion, at the gates of the invisible, the eternal within him breathes its native air, and the spiritual transforms and glorifies the temporal.

In his description of the Transfiguration, Luke

shows us Christ at prayer. He tells us that "as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering." ¹ A tide of glory poured through the silent portals of the invisible world and flooded Him with ineffable light. His countenance was changed, and His raiment transfigured. Directly the dead were holding converse with Him.

Two sainted figures of the spirit world stepped from out the drapery of shadow and revealed themselves. Moses the lawgiver and Elias the prophet stood beside the radiant figure of the praying Christ. Peter, James and John recognized these heroes of their race. The leaders of the two dispensations touched in spiritual contact. The living and the dead conferred. Time greeted eternity and eternity glorified time.

Such was the Transfiguration and the fact which made it such was no trick of locality or altitude. It was not the longitude and latitude of the place that made the experience possible. It was not scenery nor atmosphere nor temperament nor even personality that explains that shekinah. One word explains it and that word is prayer. The Mount of Transfiguration was an epiphany of prayer.

Prayer throws ajar and swings wide the gates of the invisible. It summons the unseen and gets responses from the silent eternities. As man prays, glory pours forth the tide of its ineffable light upon him, the law and the

¹ Luke 9 : 29.

prophets greet him, and the forms and faces of saints and angels tenant the world about him. As man prays heaven and earth meet and greet and the seeking soul is haloed with the flame of a celestial presence, in an apocalypse of light and joy, at the gates of the invisible.

Prayer has a high and permanent value for a human life. No man can get along without prayer. He may go at a wretched hobble, but if he would rise and run, if he would have joy and overcome, if life is to be victorious and ecstatic he must pray. If the eternal is to have the right of way, with growing confidence and deepening reverence, man must tarry with the Son of Man at the invisible gate.

DOUBT DISCREDITS PRAYER

It is an old fashion to be skeptical of the efficacy of prayer. It has been attacked times out of number, by critic's bark and skeptic's bite.

It is neglected. It is robbed of its life, beaten and reduced to a bare and barren formality. People say their prayers, but seek little. They make requests of God but do not expect Him to do much. Were God to take them at their word, they would be greatly surprised, and in some cases dismayed. They are not looking for a prompt response.

Prayer is declared to be unscientific and much else that seems to brand it as weak if not bad. It is said that the world is governed by law and

that things come to pass by the way of cause and effect, and not in answer to the whims of some individual who would have the universe upset for the sake of his selfish interests. Prayer is pronounced an impertinence. It is asking for the suspension of a universal law to humour a midget who hardly knows what he wants, often asks to be asking, and would be embarrassed were his petitions honoured.

If prayer be only this, it were well to neglect it; but real prayer is other and vastly more. It is the shekinah where the soul meets its Maker, and is transfigured, as was Moses when he waited on Mount Sinai at the gates of the invisible, as was Stephen on the threshold of martyrdom at the portal of the land of light.

It is acquisition, enrichment, reënforcement. It is the needy soul getting supplies of grace for the nourishment and sustenance of the inner, spiritual life.

It is contact with the dynamos of omnipotence. It is an exhausted and discouraged life touching the source of power. It is consolation and cheer and training and growth.

It is the communion of the finite with the infinite. It is not only petition but confession, thanksgiving, adoration, intercession, supplication, vision. It is opening the soul to the powers of the world to come, tarrying for divine endowment, prostrating personality at the gate of the invisible to be suffused and transfigured by the glory of the eternal.

Prayer is to the soul what air is to the lungs. The prayer-life dwells on the heights nearest to God.

THE CONVICTION OF THE REALITY OF PRAYER

Perhaps the greatest need is not so much to be taught how as to be convinced that it is worth while to pray.

The skepticism based on its scientific impossibility is shallow. Prayer is not so much breaking the laws of nature as overcoming certain forces by the introduction of a new and higher force. In this sense the laws of nature are being constantly broken. Not a bird flies nor a geyser spouts nor a man walks without breaking into certain laws of nature. If there be a God, His personality is an infinite force, and for Him to answer prayer is not to imperil order with chaos, but merely to introduce a new and higher force. Indeed it would seem that science is on the side of prayer. It furnishes one of the most striking illustrations of prayer in wireless telegraphy where two men, one on land and the other it may be in mid-ocean, with no medium but the air around them and two instruments set in the same key, send and receive messages. Shall it then be deemed an incredible thing for a soul set in the key of the will of God to commune with its Maker, who may be closer to it than breathing, and to send and receive messages from the supreme Intelligence of the Universe?

It would seem that the hard thing is not to believe in prayer but to doubt it.

There are four witnesses for its reality. The first is the Bible. If prayer be impossible, the Bible is false. It is committed to prayer in the most unmistakable terms. Every page gleams with promises to him who prays. The Bible is the literature of a people whose existence was the prayer of life. As well try to protect gunpowder from explosion by throwing it into the fire as to save the Bible while making a bonfire of its teachings on prayer.

The second is Christ. If prayer be false, Christ is an impostor. He prayed Himself, taught His disciples to pray, told them when and how and for what to pray, actually gave them a form of prayer, and in every way possible committed Himself to the efficacy and reality of prayer. If He was mistaken there, He is fallible elsewhere. One must do one of two things; he must either believe in prayer or give up Christ.

The third is the example of the early church. If prayer has no reality, the apostles were deceived. Prayer was all they had. Every step was taken with prayer. The acts of the apostles is the story of the prayer-life. The early church was an oratory. Apostolic Christianity becomes an insoluble riddle on the theory that there is nothing in prayer.

The fourth is Christian experience. It is a fact that the people who have lived closest to God, done most for Him, been used most by Him, and

have been most like Him, have been men and women of prayer. To get on the inside of a saint's life is to discover a soul living at the gates of the invisible.

In view of the testimony of these four witnesses, one may well doubt the doubt that would discredit prayer. It is easier to believe in prayer than in geology, chemistry, astronomy, history, or any of the many things which the senses require us to take on faith.

THE ANSWER TO PRAYER

If prayer be a reality, why are the returns so small? This is the question which is as old as skepticism. Are the returns small? How is a man who has no place in his arithmetic for the statistics of the invisible, to know? Before one can discover an answer to prayer, he must give up the very grounds on which he doubts prayer. He must recognize the invisible and supernatural.

In forming an opinion of the value of prayer from its returns, certain things must be borne in mind.

Some prayers are not answered because they are not prayers. They are vain repetitions. Others are unanswered because of human impatience. The command is to be importunate and to pray without ceasing. Many a man fails to stay on his knees long enough to hear what God may have to say. He breaks away with half a message, like the impatient trooper at the battle of Waterloo, and the result is disaster. Had he

tarried longer defeat might have been changed to victory.

Some fail to receive because they ask for what they ought not to have. God does not humour man's whims. The divine will is best and must be sought as man's highest good. Indeed prayer is impossible until man has learned from the heart to say to his Maker, "Thy will be done." If God be a real God we must trust Him to know what is best. For Him to decline a request that is not for our highest good is for Him to answer prayer. He answers by withholding.

Sometimes prayer is a request for what God has already bestowed. He is not likely to do for us what He has made us able to do for ourselves. Prayer is not a crutch for indolence and shiftlessness. Faith without works is dead. It is a mistake to use the means and neglect to pray ; but it is as great a mistake to pray and neglect to use the means. God will not discredit what He has already done. If I ask Him to do what He has made me able to do, no wonder He declines. He will not lift a load I am amply able to carry.

He will not cure me with a miracle, when the remedies are at hand. He will help me to think clearly, but He will not do my thinking for me. Prayer is no subterfuge for a race of parasites. If prayer is to be answered, man must comply with the conditions.

He must have the right attitude to God. He "must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." He

must believe that He is sovereign and that His will is best.

He must have the right attitude to Christ. Prayer is to be made in Christ's name. He is the only mediator between God and man, and the prayer falls short that denies Him "who ever liveth to make intercession for us." God cannot have a very high estimate of the prayer that dishonours His Son. An appeal in Christ's name is irresistible at the throne of grace. "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it."

One must also have the right attitude to his fellow man. He must love his neighbour as himself. There is not much at the gates of the invisible for the man who comes with a heart full of hatred towards his neighbour. He must forgive who would be forgiven. Let one pray thus, and whether it be in temple or on the highway, in forest close or by the riverside, in the crowded street or the solitude, in stumbling speech or faultless phrase, God will hear. The soul has scaled the mountain-top and is at the invisible portal. The glory light is on him, and he has gotten his transfiguration.

Work would be easier, life would be sweeter, people would be kinder, duty would be haloed with beauty and drudgery made divine if prayer were more frequent. There would be more to live for and hope for. It would be less hard to conquer temptation and overcome the world.

During Rudyard Kipling's desperate illness in America, the trained nurse at his bedside, at the

most critical stage of his sickness, noticed that the author's lips were moving, and bending over him, thinking that he wanted to say something to her she heard him pray: "Now I lay me down to sleep!" Realizing that he did not need her services, she apologized, saying, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Kipling, I thought you wanted something." "I do," he faintly answered. "I want my heavenly Father. He only can care for me now."

Not only at the end, but in the midst of the journey, when dulled and tired by contact with the world, we need our heavenly Father. We need to climb the altar stairs, and be suffused with the transfiguration of the invisible; not that we may stay there, but like Christ, with fresh power and new beauty, come down into the world of work again to touch common toil and dignify it, to meet weak and worried people and help them, to consecrate drudgery and sanctify the hard and homely things, and to look into the faces of our brothers and sisters with something of the tender pity and white hope of the transfigured Christ.

XVIII

MAN HAS FOREVER

"I feel in myself the future life. I am rising, I know, towards the sky. The sunshine is over my head. Heaven lights me with the reflection of unknown worlds. You say the soul is nothing but the result of bodily powers; why then is my soul the more luminous when my bodily powers begin to fail? Winter is on my head and eternal spring is in my heart.

"The nearer I approach the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invite me. It is marvellous, yet simple. It is a fairy-tale and it is a history. For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose, verse, history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, song—I have tried all. But I feel that I have not said a thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave, I can say like so many others, 'I have finished my day's work.' But I cannot say, 'I have finished my life.' My day's work will begin the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley. It is a thoroughfare. It closes in the twilight to open in the dawn. I improve every hour because I love this world as my fatherland. My work is only beginning. My work is hardly above its foundation. I would be glad to see it mounting and mounting forever. The thirst for the finite proves infinity."—*Victor Hugo*.

MAN is immortal. Some one has called time "a parenthesis of eternity." Just now man is dwelling in the parenthesis. He is bracketed on one side by birth and on the other by death. Some day the brackets will be removed and man

will break out into the regions beyond. He will invade eternity.

“What’s time? Leave now for dogs and apes ;
Man has forever.”

It is not easy to prove this mathematically, for all the tables of mathematics are finite. Immortality is not a mathematical proposition. It is not like a sum in arithmetic or a theorem in geometry. One does not prove immortality, as he does the sum that twice two is four or the proposition that the square of the hypotenuse of a right angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides.

It is true that the Society for Psychic Research is proposing and attempting to demonstrate immortality with the tools of the senses ; but the society is making slow progress. About all that it has proven thus far is that, if messages from the spirits of the departed be genuine, intellect undergoes a tremendous shrinkage after death.

It is not safe to expect much from any scheme that proposes a mathematical demonstration of immortality. It is like hunting for light with grocer’s scales, or trying to measure incense in a spoon.

Immortality is a moral proposition. If it is to be proven, it must be done somewhat as one proves that truth is right, duty imperative, virtue obligatory and love godlike. The appeal must be not to flesh perceptions but to the eternal instincts in man. This is not to throw the sub-

ject out of court nor to leave in doubt the question of a future existence. One may be as well assured of the fact that man has forever as of the fact that truth is reputable and justice right.

THE EVIDENCE

The thought of immortality is evidence of its reality. If there be no such thing as a future life, whence the thought of it, the dream of it, the longing for it? Call it a shadow, but whence the shadow? Even a shadow proves that somewhere there is light and substance. The fact that man is capable of thinking it proves that he is capable of experiencing immortality.

The soul craves immortality as naturally as the lungs air. It longs for an endless existence as the heart longs for sympathy. It is ever battering at its bracket walls and crying for a larger world. The universal desire of the race is a proof that man has forever.

The immortal instinct is a reality. It is not necessary to reason out everything. Some things we know instinctively. Indeed instinct is a stronger conviction than reason and usually less fallible. Men vary in their conceptions of the future life. They do not give to the land beyond death the same name. They do not furnish heaven alike, nor condition entrance upon its happiness with the same terms. But all men, in the face of the fact that it continues a bourne from whence no traveller returns, feel that there is a country beyond death. The immortal in-

stinct is not local nor provincial, but racial and universal. No argument can destroy it and no neglect efface it. It is the deepest voice of the soul proclaiming that man has forever.

In "Sartor Resartus," Carlyle says: "To the minnow every cranny and pebble and quality and accident of its little native creek may have become familiar. But does the minnow understand the ocean tides and periodic currents, the trade winds and monsoons and moon's eclipses, by all which the condition of its little creek is regulated and may from time to time (unmiraculously enough) be quite upset and reversed. Such a minnow is man, his creek this planet earth, his ocean the immeasurable all; his monsoons and periodic currents the mysterious course of Providence through æons of æons."

There are eternal appetites and aspirations. There is not only a desire for immortality, but for that which can be realized only in an immortal state. The eye is no more built for seeing nor the ear for hearing than the soul for living eternally. The soul possesses faculties which find no sufficient explanation for their existence unless man has forever. Faith and hope range beyond the sky-line. They break out of the parenthesis of time and refuse to be tethered to any century or planet. These immortal aspirations are themselves the evidence that somewhere there exists the reality for which they cry. They are as much the proof of a forever life as the eye is of light or the ear of sound.

Nature is itself a prophet of the soul's immortality, not only in the fact that matter is indestructible, but in its marvellous activity as revealed under the microscope. It is said that a particle of radium so small that it cannot be seen save with the most powerful microscope possesses the power to blaze with energy and light for thirty thousand years. If such a future may be predicted of a microscopic particle of dust, who would dare fix a short range for the destiny of the soul?

"If God has hidden in the tiny curve of an almost invisible speck of radium," says Fitchell in "The Unrealized Logic of Religion," "a physical energy so tremendous, an energy whose pulses will beat through tens of thousands of years, what possibilities of sustained energy has He not hidden in the spirit of His child! Is He mightier in the atom than in the human spirit?"

"To one who has seen that pulse of fiery particles streaming from an invisible speck, and realizes that it will maintain its energy through whole ages, a belief in the immortality of the human soul gains a quite new credibility."

There are immortal experiences in time. Thought is an immortal experience. It measures the distance between a soul and a clod. It is hard to believe that a being who can think beyond the stars has no higher destiny than the dust. Love is immortal. God is love. It is not credible that a being with a capacity big enough

to experience a part of the divine nature is to become extinct when the tabernacle of flesh falls away. Conscience is immortal. Right and wrong do not die. It is not likely that the being in whom they are passions, will be wiped out. Thought, love, conscience are prophets in the soul declaring that man has forever.

There is another witness whose testimony is worth the considering. It is individuality. It is that, in a man, which cannot be stated in statistics nor put into a definition. It is that which makes him what he is. Says Professor Merz in "The History of European Thought": "If the idea of order underlies all scientific thought, standing as it were at the entrance of scientific reasoning, there is another idea which stands at the end of all scientific thought. This is the idea of unity, in its most impressive form as individuality."

Individuality is a form of unity out of the range of the laws of disintegration, decay and death. Personality is the intangible, indestructible monad.

It is that in every human being, which cannot be weighed nor measured nor photographed, and yet which talks, trades, reasons, hopes, trusts, sins, plans, determines, feels, loves, suffers, rejoices. It is the ego. At death, it moves into a bigger world. It invades eternity.

Thus far, nothing has been said about the teachings of Revelation. Surely on such a question God who made man is entitled to be heard.

He is the great witness of the fact that man has forever.

The teachings of Scripture are clear and unmistakable. Man was made in God's image. How in God's image if his existence be a bubble to be punctured by death? God was worshipped as the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob; and His people declared He was not the God of the dead but of the living. The old Hebrew prophets all had their faces towards the future. They were the apostles of a world to come.

The teachings of Christ are worse than meaningless if this life be all. He taught His disciples to labour not for the meat which perisheth, but to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. He promised everlasting life. He raised the dead and declared Himself to be the resurrection and the life.

THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is the unanswerable proof of the reality of the future life.

"I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."¹ Jesus spoke no braver, brighter word than this to weary, waiting, toiling men. Into the sad heart of a sorrowing woman, beside a bleak tomb, where grief was crying out its woe, Jesus first gave this holy Gospel of the

¹ John 11; 25, 26.

resurrection. But since that wondrous day at Bethany, over many a grave, and into many troubled hearts, the old triumphant words have poured comfort and consolation. Around the sepulchred dust of the beloved dead, the angels have sung the hope songs of faith, and out of the sere sod of the silent grave, the fair Easter lilies have blossomed. The most triumphant message Christ has for His people is on Easter morning. Some go as far as Bethlehem and with the magi worship the babe. Some go as far as Capernaum, or the sermon mount, and listen to the Teacher. Some go to Calvary and behold His passion and adore His cross. But there is a farther goal and a greater glory. It is to go to the empty tomb and listen to the white-robed angels saying "He is risen." It is to stand with Mary in the Easter garden and hear the risen Lord call His disciple by name and have the conquering Christ say, "Go tell My disciples that I am risen from the dead and that I go before them."

This is the Easter message. It is the gladdest note that sweeps the harp of faith. It is the assurance that all the lofty aspirations and holy hopes of the seeking soul are not in vain. It is far more than a dogma of theology or a chapter in Christian evidences.

Because Jesus rose from the dead, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, and with growing confidence pray "Our Father." I cannot see nor hear nor touch God. Does He exist? and if so, how far from my life? If Jesus be risen from the

dead, God is and is not far away. This returning risen Lord, whose face flashes on me out of the death-shadows, is the way my Father in heaven has of saying, "My child, I am near you. Be not afraid."

The risen Christ also tells of the throne of truth and the dominion of right. The good is stronger than the evil. There is ultimate and complete victory for all who resist sin, and struggle against temptation. The grave may hold a lie, but no grave was ever deep enough and no tomb strong enough to contain the truth. It may be a sepulchre hewn out of the solid rock, sealed with a great stone, and guarded by armed battalions, but if the inmate be the true and good, the tomb will have to yield. The death bonds will be sundered; the walls of the death-house will be left in ruins. Truth has an Easter morning.

But the regal message of the risen Christ is higher still. It is the clear, musical note of the eternal in man.

Beyond the grave line the risen Christ makes heaven secure. Where is Jesus now? He is somewhere. Wherever He is, heaven is. Tired, weary, jaded pilgrim, this is one of the words the great God speaks to men at the empty tomb. He tells of a summer land. Somewhere the flowers are always blooming and the day is never dark. There is no sin, no shame, nor sorrow, but love and light and peace and joy. The winter has passed and the spring has come.

Standing by the mortal remains of a friend, William Jennings Bryan, in one of his most eloquent moments said : "If the Father designs to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn, and make it to burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, who was made in the image of the Creator? If He stoops to give to the rose bush, whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another spring-time, will He withhold the words of hope from the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the spirit of man suffer annihilation after it has paid a brief visit, like royal guests, to this tenement of clay?

"Rather let us believe that He who in His apparent prodigality wastes not the raindrop, the blade of grass or the evening's sighing zephyr, but makes them all to carry out His eternal plans, has given immortality to the mortal and gathered to Himself the generous spirit of our friend."

This is the Easter message to the soul of man :

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust ;
Thou madest man, he knows not why ;
He thinks he was not made to die ;
And Thou hast made him, Thou art just." ¹

For months the earth is held in frost and snow.

¹ Alfred Tennyson.

Every leaf has fallen and every green sprig has hidden its face under the barren sod. Through dismantled trees the wintry winds have sighed and moaned a requiem over the dead world. But the grass is springing again and the flowers begin to bloom. Snowdrops and crocus blossoms say "Spring is coming." The sap is racing to the tree-tops and the swelling buds will soon be a leaf. It is nature's Easter message of a summer land. It is the way the seasons have of saying : "This mortal shall put on immortality."

"Shall man alone, for whom all else revives,
No resurrection know? Shall man alone,
Imperial man! be sown in barren ground,
Less privileged than grain on which he feeds?"¹

There are sublime celestial heights for the risen soul. Who can speak them till the peaks appear? There are rapturous, celestial visions for the risen soul. Who shall try to paint them before the soul beholds the sight? There are seraphic transporting, celestial melodies for the risen soul. Who would try to strike them till the harp is strung? But there is One who gathers in Himself all highest heights and fairest sights and sweetest songs. At the mention of His name and the touch of His hand the risen soul presses up and on along the glory heights. This matchless one is He, who even now says to every struggler: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

¹ Dr. Edward Young.

XIX

THE MIST-VEILED HARBOUR

“To die is landing on some friendly shore,
Where billows never break nor tempests roar,
Ere well we feel the friendly stroke, 'tis o'er.”

—*William Garth.*

“Heaven will be the sweet surprise of a perfect explanation.”—*Dr. Robert Price.*

DEATH is a veil of mist between two worlds; the world of time and sense and the world of eternity; the world of our toil and the world of our hope; the world of faith's struggle and the world of faith's reward; the world that is now and the world that is to come.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the Christian's hope is compared to “an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”¹

Outside the veil of mist which we call “death,” is the open, storm-swept sea; inside, the tranquil haven and the land of rest.

Life is a voyage on the open, storm-swept sea. Heaven is safe anchorage in the tranquil haven. Death is passing through the veil of mist into the safe and quiet harbour whose waters lave the golden sands which shore the land of rest.

¹ Heb. 6: 19.

It is a beautiful and blessed truth that for the Christian, the tranquil haven is no uncertain port. He cannot see its piers and harbour lights, nor the spires and domes of the city beautiful beyond. He is still outside, but hope's anchor has been cast within the veil. His moorings are in the quiet harbour, albeit his boat is yet without the veil upon the open sea. But the cable of divine promise holds and some day he will pull on the cable and sail into the mist-shrouded harbour and reach his long home.

Once, aboard a ship of the Merchant and Miners' Line from Norfolk, Virginia, we were stopped outside Boston harbour by a dense fog. The trip had been stormy and the fog was so dense that one could not see twenty feet away. For awhile we crept along at a snail's pace, blowing the fog horn incessantly ; but the sea was crowded with vessels and progress was dangerous.

At last we dropped anchor and waited, sounding signals constantly to keep other boats from running us down. We could see nothing of the great city. Its wharves were hidden ; its buildings obscured from sight by the veil of mist. Thus we waited while the hours went by. Then the sun smote the mist and the light had the victory. The fog cleared, the mist lifted, the city broke upon our view, and directly we had made our landing.

It is something like this, on a grander scale, that takes place there on the border line that skirts two worlds. We are voyagers on the sea

of life, but a mist hangs between us and our destination. We cannot see the city. The voyage has been stormy. We creep along at a snail's pace and take soundings. We stop and wait and give danger signals. We peer into the thick darkness, but there is no discovery. Then comes the magic hour when the light is victorious. We call it "death." To those who remain in the outer sea, the darkness tarries; but to those who go in, all is light. The mist lifts, the veil is rent, and in the quiet haven of eternal rest, life's long voyage ends and the soul's endless heaven begins.

There is one place, however, where the illustration fails. To those of us who waited until the fog lifted in Boston harbour, the city hidden from view by the veil of mist, was known. We had seen it before. It required no faith to accept reality. We had walked its streets and mingled with its people and by previous experiences we knew what was coming.

Not so with those who wait outside the mist-veiled harbour of death. It is an unknown city beyond the fog. None of us has ever walked its streets nor talked with its inhabitants.

It is the city of the invisible and intangible. The grave gives back no voice. The land of the dead is sightless and silent. Is it any wonder that man is curious about the city of the mist-veiled harbour? Is it real or a mirage? Is death the end or the beginning of life? Is the thick veil a dead wall, or will a door swing in

the shadows to let us through? Does death end all or is there more beyond? If more, of what kind? Does the best or the worst await man beyond the veil?

Such questions are not idle. This present is our world to be sure. If we fail here, we have failed; if we succeed, we have succeeded. Here destiny is determined. Nevertheless man is a citizen of two worlds, and what he thinks about the next, powerfully affects the present. His view of the port shapes the voyage. If death be but a burial at sea, why not drift? If it is reaching land, let us trim the sails and make for the desired haven.

The voyager is sustained by hope. If there be a blessed and glorious destination, he can cheerfully endure all that befalls him by the way. He may grow weary and wonder if he can outweather the gale; his hand may grow nerveless and his sight dim with watching; the winds may be contrary and the waves tempestuous, but if his hope is "an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, entering into that within the veil," he will press on undismayed. The fierce winds and biting tempests and threatening billows cannot keep him back. Some day he will sail into the mist-veiled harbour and the long voyage will end at the piers of the city of light.

Hence it is good to treasure what divine Revelation declares about existence beyond the veil. The Bible tells us some things. What it says is trustworthy; all else is conjecture. If the Bible

be true, what has faith to expect hereafter? When the fog lifts and the soul enters the mist-veiled harbour, what will it behold?

BEYOND THE VEIL

There is a city. John saw it in his Patmos vision and writes about it. "I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven."¹

It is a city that is promised. It is the eternal city; for it hath foundations and its builder and maker is God. If there be any truth in the Bible, there is another country. Christ said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you."²

This world is but the vestibule of the world to come. Heaven is as much a reality as earth.

The Christian's death is not burial in mid-ocean, but sailing into harbour. It is making port. At times, death may terrify us. There is nothing so awesome at sea as the fog. Death may seem to take on frightful shapes, but when the mist lifts, death is found to be but a shadow. The sunshine of heaven pours into the soul and all fear departs. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."³

It is better there than here. We know but little, it is true, of the occupations and experiences of the disembodied state. Perhaps we should not comprehend, if we were told. But we know enough to be satisfied that it will be better there.

¹ Rev. 21 : 12.

² John 14 : 2.

³ Ps. 23 : 4.

Want will not be there. They will hunger no more and thirst no more. Famine will be banished. Poverty will be cured. It is the land of plenty, "for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water."¹ Sorrow will not be there. "God will wipe all tears from their eyes."² Sorrow will persist to the very end of the voyage, but as the soul steps ashore God's hand will brush away the last trembling teardrop and there will be no more tears forever.

Knowledge will be there. We shall know as we are known in that realm of perfection. There will be no more blinding mystery and baffling perplexity. No longer will the questions man asks mock and deride Him. The light will be clear and all will be plain.

Compensation will be there for all the hurts of time. Losses will turn out to be investments, and hardship and sacrifice will change to celestial gains and triumphs. The grain that has seemed to perish will flourish in the glory of the harvest, and the surrender that has given up all for Christ's sake will enter upon its incomparable inheritance.

Coronation will be there. "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."³ There will be no more falling down before the enemy, no more

¹ Rev. 7 : 17.

² Rev. 21 : 4.

³ Rev. 3 : 2.

sinking from exhaustion in the struggles, never again the crushing burden of the heavy cross ; for the cross will give way to the throne, and the eternal in man will take the long sought sceptre of dominion.

It will be resourceful life rather than celestial stagnation.

The notion that heaven will be a continuance of the Puritan Sabbath, an endless era of Psalm singing, an estate of unbroken indolence, slanders the city of light. Better a wreck on the open sea, than to find oneself doomed to such a port for all eternity.

Christ's gift is life, not existence, but life, life abundant, eternal life. Stagnation is an impossible condition for life. The soul will go on growing, achieving, acquiring larger capacities and new powers forever. It will be no fool's paradise, no Eden of dependent parasites, but a realm of congenial pursuits and ennobling occupations where the redeemed toil with God in building the new heavens and the new earth.

It is of this vocation of the future life that Kipling writes in "L'envoi" :

"When Earth's last picture is painted, and the tubes are
twisted and dried ;
When the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest critic
has died,
We shall rest, and faith we shall need it—lie down for an
æon or two,
Till the Master of All Good Workmen, shall set us to work
anew.

"And those that were good shall be happy; they shall sit
 in a golden chair;
 They shall splash at a ten league canvas with brushes of
 comets' hair;
 They shall find real saints to draw from—Magdalene, Peter,
 and Paul;
 They shall work for an age at a sitting and never be tried
 at all!

"And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master
 shall blame,
 And no one shall work for money and no one shall work
 for fame;
 But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his separate
 star,
 Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as
 They Are."

Perhaps this is as good as human tongue and pen can do in describing man's eternal vocation, but doubtless it falls far short of the glorious reality. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him."¹

Time is but a school in which the soul is trained for its eternal vocation. It is the period of apprenticeship in which we learn to handle a few tools and trace a few patterns.

No lesson will be lost, no preparation useless. The discipline and tutelage of time take on new meaning and value in the light of an eternal occupation.

There is an old story which says that when the

¹ 1 Cor. 2:9.

temple of Minerva was nearing completion, it was determined to crown the building with a statue of the goddess. All the sculptors who desired were allowed to compete for the prize that was offered.

On the day of awards, among others, a world-famed sculptor unveiled his statue. It was a life-size figure of the goddess and so faultless that the crowd of spectators burst into applause; but as it was lifted to the top of the temple it dwindled and when set in place, looked so poor that it was rejected.

As the examination proceeded, a man unknown to fame presented a huge, rude, uncouth image of Minerva; but as it was lifted to the summit of the great building, the rude lines disappeared, the roughness vanished; the figure took on symmetry and grace; and when at last it was posed in place, it seemed to be the very embodiment of the goddess herself. Without dissent the judges chose the work of the sculptor who had wrought with a big perspective.

Man is getting ready for an eternal sphere. He is being schooled for an infinite vocation. When he remembers this, the lessons of life seem less irksome. Let a man get the perspective of eternity on his work in time, and he will see

“How all God’s ways are right,
And how, what seems reproof,
Is love most true.”

Better than all else, Christ will be there. The

redeemed soul shall see Him face to face and be satisfied. We have been following Christ by faith. We have reverently carried His image in our hearts. Sometimes in moments of intense longing or the rapture of the spirit we have seemed to catch glimpses of that face. We have said, "Whom having not seen, we love." We have sung :

"I see Thee not, I hear Thee not,
Yet art Thou oft with me ;
And earth has ne'er so dear a spot,
As where I meet with Thee."

At last the veil is rending. The supernal glory of the spirit world is breaking on our sight. Amid the seraphic disclosures of that ecstatic moment, in the central effulgence of that celestial light, we shall see the King in His glory and recognize Him as our Lord and Redeemer.

A young Englishman blinded at the age of ten by an accident, but winning, despite his infirmity, high honours at the University, was about to be married to a beautiful girl whom he had wooed and won but never seen.

A short time before his marriage he submitted to a course of treatment, by eminent specialists, which reached its climax on his wedding day.

The young man, his eyes still shrouded in linen bandages, drove with his father to the church where the ceremony was to take place and where the doctors awaited him in the vestry.

There was a brilliant assembly to witness the

marriage of the son of a lord to the daughter of an admiral. Entering on the arm of her white-haired father, so moved that she could scarcely speak, the young girl drew near the altar where her lover surrounded by a strange group awaited her. The oculist was cutting away the last bandage. Would he at last be able to see her ?

As the eyelids lifted he took a step forward as one who was waking from a dream, and then with a joy that had never been his before he looked upon the face of the woman he loved.

"At last!" she said. "At last," he answered, as they bowed in the light, to plight the troth that makes of man and woman husband and wife.

That thrilling scene is a suggestion of what will take place when at last the soul gets its vision and sees the Saviour face to face.

It will be something like this to enter the mist-veiled harbour. Without in the blinding gloom and darkness, we have learned to love our Lord. We have felt the pressure of His hand, the hallowed joy of His sanctifying presence ; but we have never seen His face. The hour is coming when death will cut the bandages, the veil will fall away, and flesh will no more fetter us. Then at the altar throne we shall see the rapturous sight. We shall awake in the likeness of our Lord and look full upon His blessed face. The discovery will be heaven !

XX

RECOGNITION BEYOND THE VEIL

“ When for me the silent oar
Parts the silent river
And I stand upon the shore
Of the strange forever,
Shall I miss the loved and known?
Shall I vainly seek mine own? ”

—*Lucy Larcom.*

WILL there be recognition in heaven? Shall we know each other there? Will the mother know her child, the wife her husband, the daughter her mother, the friend his loved one? Will family circles broken here, be reunited there? Will feet, long estranged, walk once more a common path, and old comrades, with arm linked in arm, make heavenly fellowship sweeter with the memory of earthly ties?

One of death's saddest features is the fear that we part to meet no more. Should we meet by some kind chance or happy fate, it is the apprehension that the meeting will have about it none of the joys of earthly companionship, for we shall not recognize the faces of old friends. It is the dread that the chasm between time and eternity is too deep and wide to be bridged by memory. We know not what changes death may work. What if heaven should be a land of strangers?

Will existence begin in the next world as it begins in this, with a blank wall between us and the past, so high memory cannot climb it, so deep memory cannot tunnel it, so thick memory cannot pierce it? Will all that has gone before be blotted out by the lap of oblivion?

The old pagan doctrine of the transmigration of souls, has a subtle fascination for some who call themselves Christians.

This dogma which holds that one existed in another form before birth, and that in that earlier stage, he may have been a cat, or a cannibal, or a cricket on the hearth, or a soldier, or a slum-worker, or a seraph, of course looks forward to no recognition beyond the grave.

The transmigration of souls, however, is not a Christian doctrine. Christianity does not teach that we had an existence previous to birth. It does not suggest that one was ever any one else, or that he will ever be another than himself. It says nothing about his becoming a cat or a cricket or a seraph after death. It has a nobler message. It declares the dust shall return to the earth as it was, but the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. It does not say that this mortal shall put on another form of mortality, but that "this mortal shall put on immortality."

Christianity does not teach that we shall start in the next world as in this, with a blank wall between us and the past, but that we shall go so inextricably bound to all the past that we can never get away from it. All that we have ever

said and done and been will go with us. "Their works do follow them."¹

"Then shall I know even as also I am known."² There will be recognition in heaven. If otherwise, heaven is a port not worth making. If as one enters the mist-veiled harbour, he is to find himself among strangers, seeing no face that is familiar and hearing no voice he has heard before; if he is not to know again those he has loved and lost awhile, heaven becomes an eternal disappointment.

How are things to be better there and knowledge clearer and life larger if I cannot know those I have always known? If I am not to know those I have known, how can I know those I have never known? It is incredible.

We shall know each other there. The mother will know her child, the wife will know her husband, the daughter will know her mother, the friend will know his loved one. Recognition in heaven is not a visionary hope, but as well-grounded as any other belief about the future life.

IMMORTALITY

It is a part of the doctrine of immortality, of the belief that death does not end all. It is a faith as old and as wide as the race that something in man survives the touch of death. There are aspirations which can be satisfied with nothing short of immortality. Whether people be

¹ Rev. 14 : 13. ² 1 Cor. 13 : 12.

pagan, heathen, or Christian they have cherished the hope of a hereafter. They have been one in the race-faith of something in the soul of man which defies the touch of death, leaps the gloomy grave, and escapes the tomb.

“The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years ;
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.”¹

Suppose this doctrine of immortality be merely the assurance that I shall be some one or something else in the world to come? Is that true immortality? Suppose it mean that nothing which made my earthly life what it was, shall be recognized there ; no earthly experience, no friendly face, no human tie? That is not immortality. My identity is gone. It is not I that live, but another whose divorce from me is absolute.

The doctrine of immortality is not that the soul survives death as an atom of matter survives change nor as a transmitted force endures in its equivalent. The atom of matter may be dust in the street to-day, a year hence a part of a blade of grass, later in the side of an ox, and some day a bit of a man or monkey. This is not what is meant by the soul's immortality. It is rather

¹ Addison.

that conscious being lives on beyond the death line. If so, we shall know each other there.

PERSONALITY

It is a part of the doctrine of personality.

A chasm yawns between a clod and a soul. It is measured by what we call personality. Personality is not a nerve sensation nor a brain secretion. It is more than the ability to think or feel or determine. It is the definite coördination of thought, feeling and volition issuing in an individual who is conscious of himself.

No known power can destroy personality. No force or influence with which we are familiar can make one into some one else. I am what I was and what I am I shall be. My conscious identity maintains itself in the face of all that tries to change me.

Time cannot destroy personality. The years go by and we forget or seem to forget some things. The boy has become an aged man, but personality ties him to his boyhood and some of his most vivid recollections are those of early years. Time has changed his body but it has not made him another person.

A change of surroundings cannot destroy personality. One may change his climate, his garb, his flag, his friends, his language, but he himself abides.

Physical changes cannot destroy personality. Every few years the human body renews itself. The blood and tissues change, and a body that is

altogether another in every physical constituent, comes to pass. If personality reside in the physical, in the tissues of the brain, in the nerve centres, in the blood, why is it that personality does not change with the physical ?

Conversion is the most tremendous force that ever touches personality. It is the divine influencing the human ; and yet even conversion does not destroy personality. It powerfully affects it ; but conscious identity is maintained. One has become a "new creature" not in the sense that he has lost himself but in the sense that he has found his God. Personality has been reënforced by omnipotence as the brook acquires the river or the wire the dynamo.

Unite the doctrines of immortality and personality and the result becomes an unanswerable argument for recognition in heaven. If I am to live forever, and nothing can destroy my identity ; if everywhere and always, wherever I am, I am myself, others will be able to recognize me and I them. Those who have known me will know me again, and those whom I have known I shall continue to know.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

Recognition in heaven is essential to the doctrine of rewards and punishments.

It is a belief as old as the race that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. It is as true for eternity as for time, for the spiritual as for the natural. This world and the next are

related in such a way that this determines the next.

This world is full of inequalities, of glaring injustices. Innocence suffers and guilt escapes. Vice prospers and virtue is afflicted. Courts miscarry and wrong is in authority. We believe that hereafter all this will be straightened out, and it is this faith which enables us to endure present injustice.

This life is full of mystery. There is much that we cannot understand. We ask questions into that great silence which refuses to release its explanations. We believe that some time it will speak, and that then we shall know.

There is discipline here. Adverse winds blow and the soul must meet the storm. We believe it is only that character may be developed. The soul must be fitted to move in that higher sphere. It must acquire strength and capacity and conviction. Therefore it is disciplined. Its future will be determined by itself. The gospel, in its entirety, is the divine method for making the human soul into the likeness of Christ.

To what puny and ridiculous dimensions does this lordly creed of the race dwindle, if one's identity is to perish in the grave, and he is to be in the next world a being who has no recollection of this; so changed that neither will his old acquaintances be able to recognize him nor will he be able to recognize himself?

Suppose the future does reward the good and punish the bad, what will it mean to me if I am

unconscious of ever having done anything for which to be rewarded or punished? Suppose mysteries are explained, what will it mean to me if I have no recollection of anything I ever wanted explained? Suppose discipline does not affect character, what is it worth to me if I have lost my identity, and become another? Whatsoever a man soweth, not he, but another reaps. The whole creed has become a lie; and the universe the mockery of justice.

THE BIBLE

All the light the Bible sheds on this subject confirms the belief that we shall know each other in the future world.

There are at least four distinct lines of Scripture teaching bearing on this subject. The first is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. It is a classic on conditions beyond the grave. Christ lifts the curtain and gives a prophetic vision. However one may interpret what is called the "fringe" of the parable, its essential teaching is plain and one fact is incontrovertible. It is, that identity is maintained in the other world. Personality is immortal. Recognition is complete. Dives is there and he is still Dives. He recognizes himself. Lazarus is there, and he is still Lazarus. He recognizes himself. Dives and Lazarus recognize each other. They have changed positions, but they have not changed personalities. They not only recognize each other, but they recognize Abraham and Abra-

ham recognizes them. They all know each other and remember and discuss the associations of the earthly life. Evidently Jesus believed in recognition beyond the grave, or He never could have spoken this parable.

The second is the transfiguration. Jesus took Peter, James and John up into a high mountain, and was transfigured before them. Moses and Elias appeared and were recognized. Moses had been dead some time, and Elias long before had been translated. Neither, however, had become some one else. Moses was still Moses, and Elias, Elias. The vision Christ gave to that inner circle of His disciples on the mount of transfiguration was a glimpse of conditions higher up.

The third evidence comes from the declaration that our "names are written in heaven," written in the "book of life." A name is the index of individuality. It stands for a person. Why write my name in heaven, if I am to be some one else when I get there? Why perpetuate my name if my identity is to be lost, and I am not to be recognized either by others or by myself, when my name is called? The record demands recognition. I shall answer when my name is called, and not another. It will be impossible to evade. God will know me; all heaven will know me; my old acquaintances will know me, and I shall know myself.

The crowning testimony is in Christ's resurrection. Jesus had experienced death when He appeared unto His disciples. He was not in the

flesh, but in the resurrected body after He came forth from Joseph's tomb; but they knew Him. Mary was slow to see that it was Christ. At first she thought He was the gardener, but it was because her senses were dull, and her heart slow to grasp the glorious fact of a risen Lord. The two on the way to Emmaus were slow to recognize in the stranger who walked and talked with them, their Master, and not until the breaking of the bread, did they see Jesus; but it was because their hearts were gross and their minds slow. The risen Christ was recognizable, and many times and to many people, He appeared after His passion. If with their dull eyes of flesh, so slow to see, they knew Christ, surely when the veil of flesh has been put aside and faith has become sight and every shadow has lifted, we shall know even as also we are known.

RECOGNITION WILL BE CLEARER IN HEAVEN

Not only shall we know each other in the spirit world, but our recognition will be more accurate and complete than on earth. "Then shall I know even as also I am known." The reference is of course, to the vision of love. Love is the theme of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and the prediction refers to conditions which shall obtain in the kingdom of love. As love increases here or anywhere, acquaintance-ship increases. The more we love people the better we know them. Heaven is the realm of love.

It is ruled by the King of love. Hate cannot live in heaven. Heaven is the place where recognition climaxes. Here recognition is merely on the surface. We get acquainted, but we rarely know each other. People are not always what they seem. They are encased in conventionalisms and veneered with artificialities. It is hard to know the real man. In heaven all disguises will be stripped off, and we shall be known as well as recognized.

It will not be possible to keep from being known. It will be as easy for others to know us as it is for us to know ourselves. Personality will be so transparent and self-evident, that there will be no need of introductions. We shall announce ourselves. The disciples had never seen Moses and Elias, but they recognized them on the Mount of Transfiguration. Christ did not have to announce the identity of the celestial visitors. There was something about them that proclaimed them.

In heaven, we shall not only know those whom we have known, but we shall know all. None will be strangers.

OUR FEARS AND HOPES

Amid the joy this hope brings, to some there comes a fear which threatens to make eternal oblivion preferable to recognition beyond the veil. You are saying under your breath: "Suppose I should miss a loved one?" What if a mother should look for a son and not find him? What

if a wife should seek her husband and discover he is not there? What if a daughter should ask for her father and be told that he is shut out? How could we be happy with our loved ones gone?

Whether or not our fears can be explained away, the teachings of Scripture stand. Our fears will not alter the facts. But we shall be happy, and we shall be happy not because we are truant to those we love. It is easy to raise difficulties about conditions in a world we have not entered. We must wait for some things to be found possible. There is one glorious fact however that we can bank against our fears. It is the love of God. God loves our loved ones better than we. His is a stronger, deeper, tenderer, deathless love; and the bigger question is not how we can be happy in heaven without our loved ones, but how can God be happy with any of His loved ones shut out in the eternal night. I like that saying in the Gospels "until he found it." Will God ever quit the search so long as one lost soul is a wanderer? I am willing to trust the tenderness and ingenuity and tirelessness of divine love. If after all, there is to be a disappointment, it will be consecrated by the thought that God shares it.

There is, however, another side to the subject. If it be true that we shall know each other there, there will be reunions in heaven. What welcomes await! Loved ones gone before shall meet again. The parting was but for a little while. The mother shall have her baby back in her arms.

The dear ones we have lost awhile shall be ours once more, and there will be no more partings. We only said "good-bye" for a little season.

And so with another: "I will not pray for my dead; I will give thanks for them. I will bring a wreath to the sepulchre—a wreath of immortelles. I will sing an Easter hymn in the winter of the year. I will remember the departed among the members of my household; I will say with the little girl by the grave-stone: 'We are seven.' I will keep a place for the old chair in the corner of my heart. I will garner the old songs in the fields of memory. I will observe the birthdays on the fly leaf of the old Bible as anniversaries, not of the dead, but of the living. And when within Thy house I bend my knee, in the moment allotted to silent prayer, I will not say 'Father, raise my dead,' but 'Father, I bless Thy name that my dead are raised already.'"¹

"God does not send us strange flowers every year;
When the spring winds blow o'er the pleasant places,
The same dear things lift up the same fair faces,
The violet is here.

"It all comes back—the odour, grace and hue,
Each sweet relation of its life repeated;
Nothing is lost, no looking for is cheated;
It is the thing we knew.

¹ George Matheson.

“So after the death winter it will be ;
God will not put strange sights in heavenly places ;
The old love will look out from the old faces ;
Veilchen, I shall have thee.”¹

This is the Christian's comfort. Death is but a brief parting. Christians never part to meet no more. Death lifts anchor and sets sail in the night, but hope fills the sails and the prow of the boat turns towards that shore where loved ones await us, singing the love songs of heaven and the call songs of home.

¹ John W. Chadwick.