

SERMONS PREACHED

IN

The King's Weigh-House Chapel, London

1829—1869.

BY

THOMAS BINNEY.

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Quinta Press

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TO
THE CONGREGATION
OF
The King's Weigh-House Chapel,
THIS VOLUME
IS INSCRIBED AND PRESENTED
AS A SMALL MEMORIAL OF
A MINISTRY AMONG THEM
OF
FORTY YEARS.

PREFACE.

THOSE for whom this volume is more immediately, intended, do not need the explanatory statements which a preface is usually intended to supply. It has been thought, however, that as the book may possibly here and there fall into other hands, a remark on one or two things may be desirable.

1. As to the Inscription. The “forty years” there referred to will not be completed till the first Sunday in July next (1869); but as so few months of the period remain, the use of the round number may be allowed.

2. The discourse that stands first in the volume was taken down by a reporter at the time of delivery, and with the preacher’s permission printed in a newspaper. The type was made up afterwards into the form of a small tract. In this way it got dispersed, and copies fell into the hands of strangers. Not long since, a clergyman wrote to the author, *taking for granted* that it was constructed with an eye to *Ecce Homo*. It seems but right to mention—lest others should think the same thing—

that it was preached and printed in October 1863, some time before the appearance of that work.

3. Several of the sermons included in this volume have appeared in print at different times. Some were published under circumstances that necessarily restricted them to a very limited circulation; two or three were inserted in different periodicals; one, in consequence of a special request, is transferred from a "Life of St. Paul," intended for the young. The rest appear now for the first time; but almost all will be new, even to the majority of those who now constitute the authors congregation.

4. The excessive length of some of the sermons may require, perhaps, explanation or apology. The fact is, that such sermons were not written out till after they had been delivered. Then, the necessity for brevity and compression having ceased, the author leisurely filled up his first outline of thought, and expanded and amplified his subject, to give something like completeness to the argument. Hearers cannot always conveniently escape from the sermon when spoken, and their case must therefore be considered; but a reader can lay down a book when he likes, stop at any page, take it up again at a future time, or, if he has had enough, take leave of it for ever. Mr. Archdeacon Denison says that he never preaches more than ten minutes. That may do for a simple Christian exhortation, coming after protracted

worship; but if a sermon, as such, is to have any power in it, either of instruction or impression, it must be something very different from what can be put into ten minutes. There are times when a subject must be treated exhaustively, and when intelligent hearers—who really wish and expect to get something—are willing to have it so: then, six or eight times ten minutes may be needed, and, if felt to be deserved, will be conceded without either murmuring or weariness.¹

5. In looking through the volume, the author observes that one particular subject, or a special aspect of it, is recurred to again and again, and sometimes in the same words. There is generally, indeed, some distinguishing attendant condition in each case, which may account for the repetition. For this fault, if fault it be, two excuses are offered. In the first place, the sermons were preached at different, and sometimes distant intervals, in the course of the last twenty or thirty years. It was unavoidable that some thoughts should recur, and not easy to exclude them when once they had taken their place in illustration or argument. But secondly, the subject in respect to which this recurrence of thought or phrase takes place, happens to be that which the preacher is accustomed to identify with the essence of the Gospel,

¹ On the evening of Good Friday, last year, 1868, the author heard the Rev. H. P. Liddon, at St. Paul's, and listened to him, with unabated interest, for an hour and twenty minutes.

its central truth,—namely, the redemptive *work* of the Christ, as distinct from, and additional to, the *instructions* of Jesus as a teacher and prophet. On this account, he is willing to take any blame which his frequent references to that may provoke—though sometimes, perhaps, “out of season.” If Christianity has not in it the work of a Christ—something accomplished on behalf of Humanity—it is only a somewhat higher form of religious thought and moral injunction than what any one might erect on the three—in one aspect *natural*—principles: God, virtue, future life.

6. As the volume is intended to furnish, to those interested, something like recollections of a past ministry, hardly a verbal alteration has been made in the reprinted discourses, though here and there a phrase or statement may occur, which the author might now perhaps omit or modify. For the same reason, some sermons have been included, differing from the rest, and from each other, both in matter and form. If life and leisure be granted, and circumstances warrant, a second volume may possibly be prepared for publication.

UPPER CLAPTON, N.E.

February 1869.

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SERMON I.

THE WORDS OF JESUS, AND WHAT UNDERLIES THEM.

“Jesus saith, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”—JOHN xiv. 6.

THE Gospel narrative is described by one of the evangelists as the record of what “Jesus began both to do and to teach.” There can be no doubt that it is a very imperfect record of either—not imperfect in the sense of being inadequate, but only as being incomplete. It is sufficient for the purposes for which it was written, but it contains only an outline or abstract of what the Lord taught, and specimens only or examples of what He did. We are often told that “He taught the people,” but what He said is not given. We are informed of the fact that He went about preaching and teaching in the synagogues; but we have no reports, or next to none, of many of His discourses. As to what He did, it is expressly stated at the close of St. John’s Gospel, “Many other things truly did Jesus which are not written in this book, but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name.” This is only another way of stating what we have just said, that the record is imperfect in the sense of being incom-

plete, but it is perfect or sufficient, in the sense of being adequate to the end for which it was written.

Our Lord, when teaching, was often surrounded and pressed upon by His audience. He stood in the midst of them, on a level with them, and He was liable to be interrupted by comment and inquiry. He had to meet the one and answer the other, so that frequently we seem rather to have the reports of conversations, of objections and replies, than the record of a regular or continued discourse. Sometimes, however, it was different. He sat in a ship pushed a little way from the shore. The people stood in crowds on the land, and He addressed them at great length. He stood on a plain and did the same when a vast multitude assembled to hear Him and kept silence that they might hear. He ascended a mountain, the crowds followed; He sat down, "opened His mouth, and taught." When the last pass-over of which He was to partake was prepared, "He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him." "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end," and that love was expressed by the number and the character of the Divine sayings which on that memorable night fell from His lips.

It is perhaps worthy of a passing remark that the two longest of our Lord's recorded discourses are placed respectively at the, beginning and at the end of His public ministry. The one is the sermon on the Mount; the other is that in the apartment. The one was addressed to a large crowd; the other was confined to the twelve—rather, to the eleven. In the one He speaks as the prophet; in the other as the Christ. The first contemplates His audience as thoughtful and inquiring Jews; and is mostly concerned with what is general and elementary, preparatory to the approaching kingdom of God: the second is addressed to the expanding though

incipient Christian consciousness which belonged to the apostles whom He had chosen, and it touches on sublimer spiritual mysteries, on higher and deeper Divine things than had yet been spoken to those that were without. The sermon on the Mount was not connected with worship, with prayer or song; at the conclusion of that in the secluded chamber, Jesus, having uttered the last words of His ministry to man, sanctified all by "lifting up His eyes to heaven" and addressing God. The most wonderful sermon that was ever preached was followed by the most wonderful prayer that was ever offered. Nor was praise wanting, for "they sang a hymn before they went out to the Mount of Olives"—a hymn that was at once retrospective and prophetic, the plaintive lament of an expiring dispensation—the birth-cry of a new age.

Returning from this digression to the ordinary teaching of Jesus, we notice, as appropriate to our present object, one of its remarkable characteristics. Every one of you may have observed that when addressing the multitude our Lord frequently expressed himself in a way to excite surprise. He made statements which baffled comprehension—which provoked an inquisitive or longing wonder as to what He could possibly mean. He threw out some great thought, some mysterious intimation it might be about himself, something the import of which the hearers could not understand, which they could not satisfactorily harmonize with what they saw, or with their customary and accepted forms of opinion. He gave no explanation. Occasionally, indeed, when He seemed to do so, He made matters worse, for He would add something that not only increased perplexity, but aroused rage. He acted in this way, it would seem, for the purpose of stimulating inquiry, awakening interest, and producing at length that state of mind which would be

fitted to receive, to welcome, and appreciate the ultimate revelations of spiritual truth. In the same way He seems often to have spoken to the disciples themselves. He uttered words filled with thoughts that they could not receive. They were awed, confounded—looked at each other in blank bewilderment—at one time inquiring, "What *does* He mean?"—at another acknowledging, "We cannot tell," or cannot understand, "what He saith." Of course this state of things was not to be permanent; it belonged to a time of preparation. It might even be felt to be distressing and painful; but it was meant to be of use. There can be no question but that the very process of excitement, of awe, wonder, and doubt, through which the apostles were made to pass, might prove an appropriate and salutary discipline, fitting them for the reception of those objective truths, the first glimmer of which astonished or repelled.

The text before us may, I think, be fairly regarded as belonging to that class of mysterious and startling utterances to which we have referred. The more, and the more anxiously, its words are weighed, the more will it be felt that they are sufficient to excite unutterable wonder—to provoke thoughts and questionings, of which it is difficult to say whither they might lead—to occasion, in fact, painful perplexity as to the mental condition, the moral and personal character, of Jesus, *unless light is thrown upon them from without*—light that may pierce into the depths of the enigma and reveal to us the idea that is hidden within it. It is quite possible that the vague thoughts, the perplexing doubts, the painful inquiries, the disturbances of feeling suggested or occasioned by a text like this, may, in relation to ultimate truth, do for us what the same sort of thing did for the apostles.

The object of this discourse will be to show that THE TEXT TAKEN BY ITSELF, AND LOOKED AT WHERE IT STANDS IN THE LIFE OF JESUS, NATURALLY GIVES RISE TO SPECULATIONS AND QUESTIONINGS WHICH THE SUBSEQUENT REVELATIONS OF THE GOSPEL ARE REQUIRED TO SATISFY.

We begin with looking at the text *in its relation to those to whom it was immediately addressed*—how it may be supposed to have sounded in that upper room where it was first spoken. Our Lord had intimated that He was about to go away. As “He had come forth from the Father and had come into the world, He was about to leave the world and go to the Father.” In connexion with His own consciousness of this, He expresses himself in words which, as recorded by our translators, assume on the part of the apostles a perfect knowledge of what was about to occur—“Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” If these words are to be taken as an affirmative and positive statement, they must be supposed to refer to our Lord personally—that is to say, they can only mean this—That whither He was going was to the upper world “where He was before,” and that the way to it—the way of return—was, to *Him*, through a violent death. This He had so often explained that, on the hypothesis of this being His meaning, He may be supposed either to assume that His disciples understood it, or, knowing the obtuseness of their minds, to make use of the positive form of expression to arouse attention and stimulate inquiry by giving them credit for more than they knew. The literalism and materialism of what falls from Thomas, speaking for himself and the rest, would show how little they had comprehended what they had been taught. Thomas had no notion of anything but of a distant earthly locality—city or village, wilderness or mountain,

he could not tell—to be got at by some road or pathway running east, west, north, or south, but in what direction none of them knew. "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?"

Instead, however, of taking the words "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," as a positive expression, asserting a fact, it has been proposed to read them as an inquiry, suggesting thought. "Whither I go, know ye? the way, know ye?" Put in this light, and looked at in connexion with what has just been said, the words need have no reference to what was merely personal to Jesus—that is, to the fact and mode of His own removal from the world. They would rather have a direct bearing upon the apostles, and on something moral and spiritual in relation to them, and through them upon all mankind. They are tentative words, preparing the way for some new announcement. "I go my way to Him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest Thou? I go to the Father. I go to prepare a place for you. Know ye whither I am going, and to what? know ye the way?—the way by which you are to get there yourselves?" The reply of the disciples is then to be taken either in the low, material sense already given to it, showing an utter mistake of the question, or, if there was some slight glimmer and perception of the spiritual import of the Lord's words, the meaning might be, "*Whither, Lord?—the way?* Alas! we know neither the one nor the other, We know not what is meant by going to the Father, or by the Father's house—how can we know the way of access to *Him* or of admission to *it*?" "*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*" Such was the marvellous declaration which met the apostles' acknowledgment of ignorance; such the announcement made—made, as it would seem, to supply them with the requisite

and desiderated knowledge. It does not appear to me that, on the first hearing, it could have conveyed to them any clear or intelligible idea at all.

Nothing is plainer than that the apostles were often surprised, not enlightened, by many of the startling sayings of Jesus. The words of the text would certainly not be an exception to this. They would appear rather more than usually mysterious. What the disciples thought of them at the time it is impossible to say. It is most likely that they fell upon the ear, or passed over it, without conveying any distinct idea, or leaving on the mind any deep impression. Do not think I am bringing any very strange thing to your ears. The supposition is corroborated by the fact that a little afterwards, on the same evening, and during the continuance of the same discourse, when our Lord again referred to His going to the Father, intimating that the hour was at hand, and that His departure must take place in a little while, they were still utterly perplexed and bewildered by the subject. They whispered among themselves, “What is this that He saith? A little while and ye shall see me, and—because I go to the Father. We cannot tell what He saith,”—that is, we cannot make out what He means. It is thus, I think, perfectly manifest that the apostles were embarrassed rather than relieved by the declaration of the text. Having, however, ascertained that fact, it is not our purpose to pursue the matter further at present. Some of the disciples were, indeed, more observant and thoughtful than the rest, and it might be possible to imagine what the words would suggest to them when they came to reflect upon their meaning and significance. But leaving all that, we shall now advance to the next thing that we purpose to notice, and which more nearly concerns ourselves. Here is this wonderful utterance of

Jesus. Looking at it—at its form and substance and all that it involves—HOW DOES IT AFFECT US? TO WHAT RESULT DOES IT SEEM TO LEAD?

Take it by itself. Let any thoughtful man of average ability take it up, lay it before him, look at it on all sides; let him by an effort of imagination lift his eye from the thing said to *Him that says it*. Let him realize His appearance, position, and circumstances when He lived and taught. Let him do this, or let us do it for ourselves, and then mark the impression made upon us—the sort of speculations, suggestions, inquiries, to which the words will inevitably give rise. It may be seen perhaps that such a mode of illustration is not unnatural and need not be useless. It may be felt too, possibly, that the mental exercises to which we refer if actually experienced might in some cases be a fitting preparation for the apprehension and acceptance of apostolic truth.

1. The first thing that we notice is this, *that the text*, while perfectly of a piece with the characteristic habit of Jesus, in constantly referring to himself, *is* in that very particular *quite different from anything to be met with in the speech and bearing of any other inspired man*. The obtruding personalism, if I may so term it—the self-assertion, which distinguishes and pervades the discourses of Jesus—is altogether unique. There never was anything like it—never, before or since. No mere prophet ever spoke in such terms or so frequently about himself. None of the apostles fell into such a habit—even when they had passed the limits of Judea, to which he was confined, had come into contact with many peoples, and were turning the world upside down. The old prophets shrank into nothingness before God—concealed themselves behind the glory of His name and the import of His message. They spake *of Him and for*

Him, each seeking to secure attention, not by proclaiming “*I say unto you,*” but by the humbler and more becoming announcement, “*Thus saith the Lord.*” The constant references to himself which appear in the sayings of Jesus—the “*I*” and the “*me*” as the topic of discourse—is something altogether new. It was not thus with Isaiah, or Ezekiel, or any of their class. It was not thus with Moses, who, while he spoke like a prophet, ruled like a king. In a variety of ways, and on many occasions, Jesus speaks of himself as none other of the servants of God ever dreamed of speaking. But in such a passage as the one before us He uses expressions and puts forth claims which are remarkable even in Him. There is here not only the ordinary phenomenon that, as usual, He says something *about* himself, but there is the additional circumstance that *there is something very extraordinary in what He says.* Let us look at it.

2. “*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*” Every word is emphatic and remarkable. It is not, you observe, “*I teach the way; I declare what is true; I reveal or announce the life to come.*” Not that; but “*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*” I am all this, in a sense quite distinct from my prophetic teaching. I, *personally*, am the way to God. I am myself embodied truth. I have in myself the source and springs of immortal life. That by “*the way*” He means “*the way to God*” is, you perceive, clear from the relation of the last clause of the verse to the first. “*I am the way;—no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*” This way, then, Jesus does not simply assert that He reveals and opens to the eye of the reason by an authoritative message—that He sets it forth in His discourses—that, by word and speech, in sermon and parable, He makes known to man in what

way he may approach God, have communion with Him, enjoy His favour and friendship, and be ultimately admitted to His presence and glory in the upper world. It is not that, or that only, that He does. All this He may do, but there is something else and something more. He does not merely teach the way, He is the way. He not only says what is true, He himself is the truth. He does not utter merely, in the Divine name, the promise of eternal life, He gives it. He is the author of it. In some mysterious sense He claims personally to be that life.

3. A third thought springs up out of all this. Taking the words to mean what we have suggested—what indeed they plainly express—that Jesus claims personally to be the way to God—the light and the life of men—then the question naturally arises, *What does this imply in respect to the speaker, especially regarded as what He seems to the eye of the human observer?* If He speaks thus in relation to others, what about himself? What? If other men's needs require to be met, what about His own? "I am the way to God; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." But He who says this is to all appearance a man. If then the need of a way to the Father be the need of Humanity it must be His. Who, then, or what is the way for Him? He stands before us like one of ourselves. He is made in the form and fashion of a man. He has eyes and hands, limbs and members, just like ours. He lives and breathes, eats and sleeps; He is hungry and fatigued, as we are. In spite of what is special and peculiar about Him—the ability to perform wonderful works—a faculty of speech at once sweet and authoritative—a power of persuasion almost irresistible—personal virtue complete and un-sullied—the spirit of inspiration without measure—in spite of all that, He moves among us a man among men. If men then, as such, need a way to God, does He not

need one? He either does or He does not. If He does, some one must have been that to Him. Who could it be? When was it that He thus interposed? How was it that the result was accomplished? But if He does not—if He who uttered these words needs no way to the Father, but is himself the way to all men besides—if the whole race are subject to a necessity from which He is exempt, and not only so, but which He is to supply, and can supply, who, then, is He? what is He? what is His moral and spiritual condition as contrasted with ours, seeing that He sustains towards us this mysterious relationship? He is one of the race, and yet not one,—for He is distinguished from all else by the greatest possible personal peculiarity. He needs no way to God; all other men do. He is not a *saved* man—saved by external assistance as others have to be; but by professing to be for them, and to them, that which He does not want himself, He claims to stand apart, and to be regarded as *the Saviour of those that need Him*—and that is the whole race!

4. Fourthly, and lastly in this division. This claim, in the way in which it is put in the text, becomes still more startling when further considered. “I am the way—no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” To religious faith at times these words are sufficiently marvellous, to undevout reason they are intolerable. Looked at on both sides, they suggest thoughts that are painful and oppressive. Luminous and resplendent as they seem at first sight, they throw behind them a dark shadow. “*No man cometh unto the Father but by me.*” This not only reveals but limits; it not only opens but shuts; it not only admits but excludes. From what the words imply they almost seem as terrible as they are mysterious. “*No man cometh unto the Father BUT BY ME.*” There is then, on the one side the Father—the Father of the

spirits of all flesh—He who hath said, "All souls are mine," and who is supposed to hate nothing that He has made. On the other side there are all the souls that are the work of His hands—the whole human race in all its generations, of which race it is said that from all eternity He looked forward to it with parental fondness, for He "rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and His delights were with the sons of men." "It is not His will that any should perish." There are these two parties, if we may so describe them, brought before our view. But remembering how they are related to each other by ties which have their roots in the primary and original constitution of things, the question springs up to the lips of an indignant philosophy, Who shall separate them—who shall come in between them—who shall pretend either to unite them, or to stand in the way of their being united, or to interpose obstructions to their union by claiming to bestow facilities for it which are only to be effective on a condition? "I do," says Jesus. "I do. I do not, indeed, forbid the access of man to God—I invite it, urge it. I beseech them to come to Him; but Jam the way; no man cometh *but by me*."

But this is obstruction and limitation, and not simply invitation and welcome. He who speaks thus, however soft His words and tender His accents, seems to stand before us invested with a power and majesty that are terrible, stretching out His mighty hand and moving *off* the world from coming to God, unless all come by a certain definite and prescribed way, and that way Himself. All the great souls that have ever lived or that may live—all who have risen as columns or shone as stars—men of renown, of thought, action, genius, virtue—philosophers, legislators, poets, heroes—the brave, the noble, the suffering, the good; nay, all God's servants—all holy, inspired men—men who wrought righteousness,

subdued kingdoms, obtained promises, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens—men who were stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, who were afflicted, tormented;—the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of martyrs—all who have ever so lived that their names are held in everlasting remembrance, as well as the obscure, the vicious, the reprobate, the base—*all must stand aside*; they are put apart, far apart, and, so far as they are men, they are regarded as at a distance from God—as separated from God. Jesus alone is near to Him.

Nor is that all. He so stands where He is as to come between heaven and earth, between God and man. He holds out His hand indeed—He invites attention—He expresses His willingness to introduce, so to speak, all men to the Father—they have liberty to approach, but—*only* through Him. The fearful words reverberate through the world—“No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Claims and pretensions like these are perfectly appalling. Words like these are the words either of inspiration or insanity. They either contain a Divine truth, or they are the delusion of one “who hath a devil and is mad.”

THEY ARE NOT THE WORDS OF HIM THAT HATH A DEVIL. We believe them to be true and faithful: to be worthy also of all acceptance, for if they are true at all they contain one of the greatest of all truths. If they are not to be admitted in their plain, literal, grammatical sense, the Gospel, properly so called, must be given up—Christianity must be abandoned so far as it professes to be a remedial or redemptive system—and we must take up with some sort of absolute religion—a religion without a revelation, or a revelation without a Saviour, or a Bible without the supernatural, or a Christianity without a Christ. We are not prepared for this. The

Bible is to us what it says and means. We accept the declaration of the text as certain and sober truth, in spite of its troubled aspect of mystery, or the perplexed thoughts to which it gives rise. Those very thoughts, indeed, may prepare us for the further developments of Scripture by leading us to anticipate that its discoveries may be as wonderful as the mystery to be explained is profound and oppressive.

It will now be our object to set forth in a few words THE ISSUES OF THIS ARGUMENT AS IT BEARS ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. First of all, then, I observe, that *we know of no way by which the troubled thoughts, the questionings and perplexities to which we have given utterance, and which the words of the text so naturally suggest, can be met, or any defensible sense given to the text itself, but that which is furnished by the doctrinal statements of the orthodox creed.* In any mere teacher, however ample his inspiration or Divine his authority, the claim of the text is inconceivable. On the lips of a prophet, if he were nothing else and nothing more, the words would seem to be arrogant or blasphemous. They would be unjustifiable, if taken to mean exactly what they say. They would have to be weakened and attenuated till they meant nothing, if reduced to the dimensions of the speaker's position. Looked at alone and as uttered by one in the circumstances of Jesus the words of the text "are," as we before remarked, "sufficient to excite unutterable wonder; to occasion, in fact, painful perplexity as to the mental condition, the moral and spiritual character, of the speaker, unless light is thrown upon them from without—light that may pierce into the depths of the enigma, and reveal to us the idea that is hidden within it." That light—according to our reading of the New Testament, and what we hold to be the full

discoveries of the Christian system—we have, and only can have, in the fact of the incarnation,—the consequent peculiarity of the person of the Christ, the Son of God and Son of man, through the Eternal Word being made flesh and dwelling among us; and in the further fact that as “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners”—*separate*, observe—not having their needs, not belonging to their class, though recognised among and numbered with them—“He offered himself without spot unto God,” being “set forth a propitiation to take away the sin of the world,” The redemptive work of a Redeemer “who died for our sins and rose again for our justification”—ascended up on high and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers—who “has consecrated for us a new and living way through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, by the which we draw nigh unto God,” and through which all men—Jew and Greek, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free—“may have access by one Spirit unto the Father,”—this it is which throws light upon the marvellous declarations of the text—which shows it to be not the wrapping of a human enigma, but the shrine of a Divine mystery—which gives it a consistent and possible sense—which makes it, as proceeding from the lips of the Lord, appropriate and credible. Only by the doctrine that “He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”—only by this and its correlative truths is it possible, as it seems to us,, to redeem the text from presumption and absurdity, as the claim of a teacher and prophet, and to give to it anything like an intelligible meaning. Such is our conviction, and such, consequently, the way in which, by one part of Scripture explaining another, we are led to interpret the words before us *by a reference to that work of mediation* which was ultimately accomplished by Jesus as the Christ.

2. But this passage is one of a class—not so numerous a class, perhaps, as some imagine, but still a class which is to be met with in every one of the four Gospels. The passages I refer to are of this nature—which you may have ascertained already by the train of my reasoning—that, *on the hypothesis of the mere human character of Jesus as a Teacher and a Prophet, it is utterly inconceivable how they could ever have come to find utterance at all* On the ground taken, there were no such facts in existence as those passages seem to assume and to set forth by the language employed, and yet the language employed cannot be made to have any meaning except as referring to such facts. How was it that the ideas were generated? Where did they come from? When was it that the writers or speakers obtained the notions which they put into their words, when, by hypothesis, there was nothing anywhere, in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or under the earth, which, as facts, answered to, or were the archetypes of what they expressed? If Jesus was a prophet *and something more*—if He was a teacher and an example, *and something else*—we can account for His being spoken of as a teacher even when the something else and the something more are the principal subjects of discourse. But if He was nothing but a teacher, and never pretended to be anything else, and was never known by His disciples to be anything else, how was it that both He and they got into the habit of saying things which involved and expressed far more than anything they knew, or anything that was? The text is an example. But, as we have said, it is one of a class—a class, too, which increases in number and emphasis as the narrative of the Gospel unfolds and develops. In this discourse we confine our references to such expressions as bear on the subject in hand—that is to say, on the work of the Christ

as distinguished from the teachings of the prophet—on that something that was to be *done* in addition to all that might be said, and which was to be a ground of hope and source of life to sinful humanity. Now mark, the first three evangelists, though principally concerned with the outward life, the ordinary teachings, and the visible miracles of Jesus, all give the details of the Last Supper, in which occur the memorable words, expressive, I think, of something far above and beyond any mere teaching whatever, “This is my body which is given for you; this is my blood—the blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you—shed for the remission of sins.” The language reminds us of such apostolic declarations as “Our Saviour Jesus Christ *gave* himself for us that He might *redeem* us from all iniquity”—“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Matthew and Luke both begin their Gospels with the narrative of the conception, and the announcement that One so singularly born was to be qualified for a special work—the work of “saving from sin.” Mark seems to assume the supernatural fact referred to, and proclaims, without introduction—“The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God.*” In John, the miraculous birth spoken of by Matthew and Luke becomes an incarnation;—“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” In this last Gospel the class of passages to which we are referring is strongly marked. The Baptist, looking upon Jesus as He walked, said, “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.” Jesus himself says—“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world that He gave His

only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I shall give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save the lost, and to give His life a ransom for many." "I lay down my life for the sheep." "I am the door." "*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*"

By these specimens, then, you see the nature of that class of passages to which we refer. They occur in the Gospels—in those narratives that are occupied with the personal teaching of Jesus; and the point is, how their very existence can possibly be accounted for, if Jesus was nothing but a teacher, and had no other work to accomplish but to utter promises, precepts, and parables, and to exemplify in himself the virtue He inculcated. If that was all, whence those frequent and emphatic allusions to something else? If there was no something else, you have an effect without a cause—you have wonderful language and thrilling ideas without any corresponding reality, any equivalent objective truth.

3. It may not be amiss to bring distinctly before the mind the fact that, taking all the Gospels together, there are three classes, distinct as to time and circumstance, of these remarkable sayings of Jesus;—the sayings, which tell upon what He *was*, and upon "the decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem," as distinct from the discharge of His duties as a prophet.

In the first place, there are certain forcible and suggestive expressions which were uttered in the hearing of the multitude, or arose out of His public disputations, such as His claiming "to forgive sins," His suggesting

the inquiry how the Christ could be to David at once “Son and Lord,” and so on. Then, secondly, there are the profoundly significant sayings, of which the text is an example—sayings which belong to those hours of sacred privacy in which Jesus spake with His disciples alone. And, thirdly, there is the record of what marked those wonderful forty days which come in between the resurrection and the ascension, and which are of far more importance than many people imagine. Those wonderful forty days—which were, so to speak, a second life of Jesus—in which not only the nature of the facts, but the character of the teaching, was altogether different from the first. He was now no longer the prophet of Nazareth—no longer a minister of the circumcision. His work as the Christ had been accomplished, and now His teaching is directed to the exposition of the prophetic word in respect to the nature and the objects of that work. He deals no longer with sermons on the Mount and parables by the way, addressed to the general ear. He appears to the twelve—He “opens their understandings that they may understand the Scriptures.” He shows them what is written “in the law, in the psalms, and in all the prophets concerning himself,” so that they may be brought to understand how that “the Christ ought to suffer—that it behoved Him to suffer, that He might enter into His glory,” having given His life and poured out His blood for the putting away of the sin of the world. That is the teaching in Christ’s second life—in those forty days, as distinguished from the public ministry of the three preceding years.

4. It is now to be noticed that, in spite of all that our Lord said and did, the apostles, during His lifetime, and even with the advantage of His second ministry—His special ministry and mission to *them* when “He

showed himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, and gave them commandment, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God"—it is to be noticed that, *in spite of all this, the apostles never advanced, till after the ascension, to the understanding and apprehension of Christ's peculiar redemptive work.* Whenever in His lifetime he alluded to His sufferings and death, one or another of the apostles remonstrated, and even went so far as to rebuke, saying, "Lord, that shall not happen unto Thee." Never was one born into the world like Him. Other men are born to live, to act, to do; He was born to *die*, His "decease was to be accomplished"—all else was preparatory. But this the apostles could not understand. Hence their "Not so, Lord; that shall not happen to Thee." When He said on one occasion, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished; they shall scourge Him and put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again"—when He said this (and surely it was sufficiently plain), it is expressly added, "And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things that were spoken." Why, they could not embrace and entertain even the outward fact. They never did realize it. At the crucifixion they saw nothing but the triumph of their adversaries. On the day of the resurrection they could hardly allow themselves to be persuaded of its truth. When the outward fact, then, was not apprehended, there could not of course be any conception of the doctrine which it enshrined. That such was the case we have seen in the incapacity of the disciples to receive and understand the discourse from which our text is taken, and especially its allusions to Christ going to the Father, and becoming to all men the way to

God. And still further, they were dull scholars in relation to the prophetic Word—the voices of those “who spoke beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow,” even after having followed the finger of Christ from scroll to scroll, and from page to page. They were dull scholars. They saw nothing of the meaning of this. Their understandings though “opened” got closed again; and, instead of rising to the height of the great argument and learning to preach “repentance and remission of sin to all nations,” they sank down into mere expectants of secular glory and national deliverance. This is evident from the fact that, —on the very morning of the ascension, as it would seem,—they actually proposed the question, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”—thus still dreaming about mere political ascendancy and national advantage, when such pains had been taken, by His opening to them the meaning of the law and the prophets, to make them understand that which had been said, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth” (signifying by what death He should die), “*will draw all men unto me.*”

5. Now, fifthly—things being thus, as they certainly were, we are prepared to see *the importance that belongs to the pregnant words with which Christ concluded His discourse in the upper room* before He went out to the garden and the cross. Let me invite your attention to this.

We before observed in relation to the words of the text, that when they were first heard they would probably appear to the disciples as more than usually dark and mysterious. The fact is, they belonged to a sphere of thought beyond the reach of the apostles at the time they were uttered. The apostles were not then in a position to penetrate that sphere—to receive or appre-

hend the higher truths and revelations that belonged to it Of many things far inferior to the wonderful utterance in the text it is expressly said, "These things understood not the disciples at the first, but afterwards—when Jesus was risen, or had ascended—they remembered that He had said these things unto them." The words came to their recollection with a new force. They flashed upon their minds with a Divine light They saw in them a depth of meaning which they failed to see before.

In harmony with this, mark that our Lord closed His instructions with the blessed assurance clothed in these words:—"The Spirit of truth, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." This promise seems to involve two things: first, the recalling to their minds the substance and matter of His many lessons; and then the teaching them to understand their spiritual significance, which they did not do when they heard them. But that is not all. Christ further said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. He shall glorify me, for He shall receive (mark you, He shall *receive*) of mine, and shall show it unto you." If words have any meaning, there is here, I think, an additional promise—the promise that new communications should be made to them, which should perfect their knowledge by putting them in possession of the many things that the Master had to say—but which He did not say to them. "I have many things to say, but ye cannot bear them now." They were held in reserve; they were kept back; and kept back not only till after the resurrection, and to the period of the forty days, but beyond that, even to the time of the coming and the ministry of the Spirit. The Spirit was to receive these

things—to receive them from the glorified Saviour, and to impart them to the apostles. They were not old things to be recalled to the memory, but new things to be added to their knowledge. And these things, it is further intimated, concerned himself. “The Spirit of truth,” in showing them to you, “shall glorify me.” Who shall say, but that among these things might be such communications as would lead them into the meaning of the text before us, and of the wonderful discourse of which it is a part, which they did not at all understand at first—certainly not in that sense in which we have learned to understand it from the study of their writings? Finally, we are warranted, then, I think, in expecting that THE SUBSEQUENT REVELATIONS, IF I MAY SO CALL THEM, CONTAINED IN THE APOSTOLIC LETTERS, WILL THROW GREAT LIGHT ON MUCH OF THE PERSONAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

The promise just now referred to being fulfilled by the donation of the Spirit, the apostles would be able to discern, in their perfect development, the great truths of which the words of the Master contained only the germ. What He expressed with something like oracular mysteriousness, they would be prepared to expound with all the minuteness of familiar discourse. Nor must we be Surprised, I think, to find in the teachings of the apostles, after they had been guided into all truth, views, statements, arguments, illustrations, which, compared with the first lessons they received, would have all the appearance—why not the reality?—of what was in substance additional and new. Admitting, however, that there may be nothing in the apostolic writings but what is to be found wrapped up in one or other of Christ’s pregnant words, still, looking at those words, brief, compressed, mysterious—looking at them in connexion with the fulness of statement, subtilty of argument, amplitude

and diversity of illustration in which the apostles indulge, the conclusion is manifest that the first impression produced by some of the Lord's sayings must have been that of perplexity and surprise, a confusion of thought, an incapacity to attach any distinct or intelligible idea to what was heard—a vague sense of being in contact with the mysterious, if not the incredible.

This is very often the case still. I do not see how it can be otherwise with those who confine themselves to the life of Jesus—who accept Him only as a prophet or teacher—who disregard or depreciate the doctrinal arguments of apostolic men—and who account the writings of the apostles of no authority, or of less authority than the narratives and reports of the four evangelists. I do not wonder at men who regard Jesus only as an authoritative teacher being utterly perplexed by many of His utterances about himself; and I do not wonder that such men eliminate entirely from the sayings of Jesus whatever they find hard to be understood, and reduce His instructions to the preceptive inculcations of a superior morality. The Church, however, is established on "the foundation of the apostles and prophets," though Jesus Christ is "the chief corner-stone." The central truth in the Church is placed in the light of two revelations—the one the prophetic Word, as our schoolmaster, leading us to Christ; the other the apostolic Exposition, to show us the meaning of His mission and work. I would not depreciate the instructions of Jesus, but I do say that, with the exception of those sayings of His which are dimly anticipative of suffering and sacrifice, I regard most of His practical lessons as intended to have their place after we have learned to trust in His atonement, or as tests and demands to show us its necessity. It is no disparagement to Him or His laws if we accept those as our guide to the cross whom

He has inspired and commissioned for the purpose. It is no disparagement to Him if, led by them, we are brought to trust in His work for our salvation, and then to listen to His regal utterances with a feeling that finds its embodiment in the words, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” The apostolic epistles lead us to Christ, and then we listen to His moral teaching and all His preceptive laws.

The discourses of Jesus, which were difficult to understand by those who heard them, must be the same to us, (if we have a faithful record of what He said,) unless we can read them in the light, and with the help, of what was made known by the ministry of the Spirit, If the evangelists have not given, pure and simple, what Jesus said, but what they afterwards understood Him to mean, then we have not the Words of Jesus, properly speaking, at all. The Gospel in that case would come to be a commentary, not a text. If it should be said that the Gospels were written “that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing we might have life in His name,” I accept the statement; but I take it in conjunction with the historical fact that the Gospel had been *preached* some years before the Gospels were written, and that they would be read for the most part in the luminous atmosphere extensively diffused through the pervading influence of Christian thought.

With one brief word I now close this discourse. I mentioned, you remember, that the way in which Jesus referred to himself was altogether distinct from anything to be met with either in the inspired prophets of the Old Testament or the equally inspired apostles of the New. I now observe—and with this I wind up the whole matter—that the way in which the apostles referred to Christ is precisely the way in which He referred to himself. They do not speak about them-

selves, as He is constantly doing; but when they speak of *Hint*, they do speak of Him with that very peculiarity of presentation which we before noticed in himself. That is to say, they do not profess to teach amply what He taught; they do not confine themselves to ideas which He put into words; they do not carry about with them reports of His conversations and copies of His discourses, and offer these as the sum and substance of what they have to communicate. These were not, in their estimation—valuable as they might be in other respects—the one thing needful, the saving truth, the unspeakable gift, the source and means of immortal life. No; it was not what Jesus had said that they dwelt upon, but what He was—what He had done. They preached Him—they spoke of what He had “accomplished,” and spoke of it in such a way as to show that He, *personally*, was the life of the world and the light of men, and not that He had simply taught or revealed it.

SERMON II.

EXPERIENCE AND HOPE CONSERVATIVE OF FAITH.

“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve. Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”—JOHN vi. 66–68.

IN this chapter we have one of those discourses of Jesus in which occur many “dark sayings,”—mysterious statements, some of which, it must be admitted, are hard to be understood. They gave great offence to many who heard them. They so startled and confounded some who had avowed themselves our Lord’s disciples, that “they went back, and walked no more with Him;”—that is to say, on account of certain difficulties which they met with in His teaching—things which they could not at once unravel and understand—they gave up attending upon Him; would no longer listen to His words; and thus, we may suppose, expressed their utter disbelief in His personal claims, and their rejection of His teaching as a whole. They went away, to become perhaps the followers of other teachers, whose instructions might be felt to be less objectionable by being less encumbered with doctrinal difficulties. Seeing this movement, our Lord turned to the twelve, and inquired, in a tone that might be expressive either of apprehension

or confidence, "Will ye also go away?" To which they reply, in the person of Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Now it is to be observed, that the men who thus spake, and who were resolved on continued adherence to Christ, probably felt the mysteriousness of His teaching as much as others. They could no more understand all His utterances than those who abandoned Him. *They*, too, had often to say to each other, while listening to their Master's wonderful words, "These are hard sayings." "What is it that He saith to us? We cannot tell (or understand) what He saith." When appealed to, however, as to whether they would leave Him, as others had done, on the ground of what startled or perplexed them, they at once and emphatically rejected the thought. They seem to say that, in spite of the difficulties they encountered, the mysterious statements to which they had to listen, and which they understood as little as the rest, there was one thing which they *did* understand, and because of that they would continue with and cling to the Master who taught it. They had a deep consciousness that they had heard from Christ "the words of eternal life;" that they had learnt from Him something about that—the great subject of human speculation and of religious anxiety—something pregnant, forcible, clear; and something, too, which they had never heard, or could expect to hear, from any one else. Whatever there might be of the startling and mysterious in some of the wonderful words that fell from Him, however they might feel themselves amazed and perplexed as they listened to these, they felt perfectly sure and certain of this, that He had thrown such light on "eternal life" as enabled them so to apprehend the sub-

ject that it became to them a distinct and positive object of faith. Thus far they had advanced; this general truth they in some measure understood; they had such a firm persuasion about it, that they would not, on the ground of other things which at present baffled and surpassed their comprehension, give up what they felt to be clear and undoubted. For the sake of this, therefore, they determined to adhere to Christ, to remain His disciples, and to look up to Him with docility, reverence, and trust.

The subject thus suggested might admit of application to our own experience in relation to certain forms of modern thought; and, indeed, to the experience of the Church in all ages, for every generation has its own intellectual battle to fight against what would endanger or destroy faith. The disciples would not give up Christ; Christians will not give up Christianity. In spite of the pressure of acknowledged difficulties, the one did not and the other does not abandon the Master. They know not where to go if they did, for they know not where so much that is distinct and positive is to be had, notwithstanding the difficulties they are called to encounter, or where they might not meet *more* difficulties with fewer alleviations. It may be well, however, to confine our attention to the case of the disciples, and to leave the subject to apply itself as the successive steps of the illustration may suggest.

The case was simply this: certain points in the Lord's teaching were so mysterious, that they were felt to be incapable of solution; they could not be understood, and some insisted that therefore they were not to be admitted, nor He listened to. Even the loyal and faithful might have been perplexed. Alive to the acknowledged difficulty, they might have been tempted to seek relief by going to other teachers. But if so, if the disciples

felt this, the thought lived but for a moment—the idea was instantly checked and overcome by their experience and consciousness; their perfect persuasion that the Master had, and alone had, "the words of eternal life."

A question has been started with respect to what we should understand by "eternal life," the consideration of which may be made to illustrate the feelings of the disciples. It is said that the term "eternal"—at least, in the phrase before us—should not be regarded as having any reference to duration. It is to be understood as expressive of the character or quality of a thing, not of its continuance. "Eternal life" is something distinct from, or opposed to, what is natural, earthly, carnal. It is out of the reach of all terms merely indicative of time. It does not mean everlasting, as if what it refers to could be measured by hours, or years, or centuries, and so, by being drawn out without limit, become, or be characterised as, eternal on that ground. It stands for what is divine, spiritual, Godlike, and may be applied to what is possessed and enjoyed now—the life of God in the soul of man, which is "eternal life" because of its distinctive quality and nature. It is that at this moment, wherever it exists, as much as it can ever be—as much as it will be myriads of ages hence, and when time itself shall be no more.

It is not, perhaps, easy to make this aspect of the subject, in all its bearings, very intelligible. An illustration or two may possibly assist us. Let us accept the statement that "eternal life" expresses *quality*, not *duration*. The two following results will flow from this:

Supposing any being possessed of mere animal life, or even of a high form of intellectual life, were, as such, to become immortal—to have its existence perpetuated for ever, and was never to die—this, though it would be life *everlasting* as respected duration, would not be

“eternal” life properly so called. It would not raise the being distinguished by it into that higher sphere of thought, feeling, and blessedness, that harmony with God, which is spiritual and divine, on account of which the subjective life thus indicated is exclusively and emphatically denominated “eternal.”

In the same way, suppose an angelic intelligence possessed of this spiritual and divine life, or suppose a man raised and exalted into it by some supernatural process; if you can imagine that either or both were to be annihilated two minutes, say (“speaking after the manner of men”), after they had been created or re-created, it would still be proper to say that they had been made partakers of “eternal life,” for the terms would describe the *kind* of life they had respectively enjoyed, not the *length of time* during which they had enjoyed it.

If these explanatory illustrations correctly represent the question that has been raised with respect to the meaning of the phrase “eternal life,” we are ready to admit that that meaning contains a truth, or rather a half truth; for something certainly must be added to it, if we are fully to grasp what we believe to have been in the minds of the disciples when they replied as they did to the appeal of Jesus. Let it be granted that “eternal life” may be thought of as something distinct from and transcending the mere idea of duration, and as having, in fact, no essential relation to it; it does not follow that that spiritual and divine life which is the object of religious hope, and was the subject of our Saviour’s teaching, may not include two ideas—the idea of perpetuity as well as nature. We quite understand by “eternal life” something divine and Godlike in man—life far above anything merely earthly and natural in any sense; but we also mean that that life is what will belong to its subject for ever, or as being capable of, or

intended for, that. We further think that the immediate disciples and apostles of Christ understood the matter in this way; and that by Christ's "having the words of eternal life" they meant to say that He called them to a subjective divine life now, and declared that *that*, in its ultimate issues, was intended to be the everlasting possession of those who received it. Whatever might be the blessedness it brought to them now, they expected it to be perfected in that world where they would be "equal to the angels," and be placed under such a law of existence that it might be said of them "neither can they die any more."

Looking, then, at the subject as thus explained, let us see how it may be illustrated by the answer of the disciples to the question of Jesus, "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Now, we cannot suppose that these words, as used by the disciples on the occasion in question, expressed and embodied all that we know. We must be content to look at them in the light of that state of opinion and feeling, knowledge and experience, to which they had attained, and which, it is not improper to say, was, just at this time, much inferior to what ought to be ours. This conversation occurred long before the completion of our Lord's redemptive work; previous, therefore, to that accession of light which that work, when accomplished, threw on the Lord's words; and previous to that guidance "into all truth" which the apostles enjoyed during the subsequent ministry of the forty days, and after the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. Besides this, even in respect to Christ's personal teaching, we know that the twelve were slow to learn; that they had often no insight into things which seem plain to us, and sometimes fell into great misapprehension of the meaning

to be attached to the Lord's words. Nevertheless, they had learnt something about “eternal life.” However vague their views as to some things, however mistaken they might be as to others, however perplexed in respect to what was dark and mysterious and “too high” for them to comprehend, they *did* understand so much respecting that “eternal life” of which Christ's words were the exponents, that they clung to *that*; it was not only something in itself of which they felt certain, but it was something only to be met with in the teaching of Jesus. How far their views went may be set forth in two particulars, corresponding to those two aspects of the subject, which have been brought before us in our previous remarks on the import and meaning of the phrase. The matter may be put thus:—

In the first place, there was the teaching of Christ with respect to what He required of His disciples, and what He revealed as ready to be given to them of God. He demanded spirituality and holiness—not merely virtue,—and declared that the gift of the Holy Spirit was waiting to descend upon those who asked it. He gave a deep and Divine meaning to religion and the religious life, distinguishing it from those external things in the observance of which some supposed it to consist. He surprised a “Master in Israel” by asserting the necessity of a man being “born again,”—born of the Spirit, born from above—which, whatever that might mean, or might not mean, certainly did signify the becoming the subject of a Divine influence—the being renewed and purified by the Holy Ghost. He pronounced His blessings on the meek and the merciful—on the poor in spirit and the pure in heart. He laid His hands on thought and emotion, and required them to be cleansed, that they might be the source of an elevated visible obedience. He inculcated an active and universal

conformity to the Divine will, that men, by resembling God, "might be the children of their Father who is in heaven." He stigmatised formal religious acts, separate from an inward religious life. He denounced the hypocrisy of those who "made long prayers," or dispensed their charity, only "to be seen of men." He sent His disciples to the privacy of the closet for communion with God, and taught them to do everything as consciously in *His* sight "who seeth in secret." He told them, that unless their righteousness exceeded that of the punctilious formalist, they could not enter the kingdom of heaven. He exposed the hollowness of that proud piety which talked of fasting twice in the week, paying tithes, and being better than others; while He spoke lovingly and hopefully of him who smote upon his breast and cried, from a broken and contrite heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He ridiculed the notion that meats and drinks, the observance or the neglect of ceremonial niceties, could either promote or defile the Divine life in man. He enforced the necessity of intercourse with God, the culture of the spirit and habit of devotion, filial trust, brotherly love, mutual forgiveness, beneficence, righteousness, and everything else that could exalt character and beautify life,—and all as the fruits of that inward condition of the soul which grew out of a spiritual birth unto God. So much, and even more than all this, the apostles had learned from the words of Christ of that Divine life of which He came to be the source, which was to be imparted through the knowledge of His doctrine, and the enjoyment of the blessings He promised or dispensed. This was that holy thing of which they spake, which they felt to be distinct and clear as so much objective truth, but which was to be realized also in their personal experience, as it was a "life" of which, as the Master taught, man was capable, and that, too, for which he was made.

But, in the second place, Christ authenticated the popular belief of a life after death, and the future resurrection of the dead. He taught His disciples to anticipate an ultimate, glorious, divine futurity for divine men; for those who received His doctrine, and who lived an unblemished and holy life upon earth. He spake with great familiarity of Heaven as His Father’s house, told His friends of its many mansions, and of His going to prepare a place for them. They heard Him pray that they might be with Him hereafter, to behold His glory and to participate His joy. He evoked the expectation of their rising to an equality with those higher orders of beings who stand continually in the Divine presence, and look familiarly on the face of God. There was nothing dark, vague, or uncertain about His teaching as to the *reality* of a future life; and, as to its *perpetuity*, it was to be “life eternal” in the sense of being that which was to be enjoyed for ever; they that were thought worthy to attain it should be like the angels of God, so confirmed in their immortality that they could “die no more.” He spake of himself as “the resurrection and the life;” and though the disciples could not understand what He meant when He referred to His own “rising from the dead,” they had no difficulty in respect to His assurances that those who believed in Him were one day to rise from their graves, to be gathered to the society of the perfected and glorified, and to sit down for ever “with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

It may be further observed, that in relation to these two things,—the possibility of living a divine life here, and the prospect of its becoming eternal in respect to its endless duration, the disciples of Jesus had them constantly before their eyes in what they saw in himself. They witnessed what He was. They knew of His

habitual devotion and intimate communion with God. They beheld His daily life—so holy, loving, beneficent, pure; so spiritual and unspotted; so far transcending anything that could be seen in others; so Divine and seraphic, even though He lived among the familiarities of ordinary society, and sometimes sat "with publicans and sinners." He affected no austerities; He went into company, and ate and drank like other men, and yet He always maintained such a spiritual supremacy, that he seemed to move in a sphere that was not of this world. And all this, from His confidential conversations, and occasionally from His addresses to the multitude, they knew to be connected in Him with the prospect of returning to the Father, and of entering on an exalted and endless life, in which His disciples were ultimately to share. In this way it was that they felt He had "the words of eternal life"—a life Divine in its nature, that might be enjoyed here, and endless in its duration, to be possessed in heaven and spent with God. They could not doubt this. What they heard from the lips, and saw in the habits and experience of Jesus, kept the truth before them as an ever-present and palpable reality. Whatever might be mysterious in some of the sayings or discourses of the Lord, there was no doubt or uncertainty about this. It took the form in their minds of a clearly-defined, grand, central, regal thought. They clung to it with a sort of sacred tenacity. When asked if they would go away and abandon Him of whom they had learnt it, they felt it to be impossible; and they expressed that impossibility in a way that combined the simplicity of children with the understanding of men: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

And to whom *could* they go? Looking at the circumstances of the disciples—the condition of Jewish society

in their day—there was no teacher, or class of teachers, to whom they could have gone with any prospect or hope of being benefited by the change.

We read in the New Testament of two recognised and distinguished schools of theology—the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and we know from other sources that there was a third, denominated the Essenes. The prominent members of these sects were of course teachers; they professed certain views in relation to religious thought, and the nature and nurture of the religious life. If they taught anything, or had anything to teach, that could stir the soul, and come into living, influential contact with man’s spiritual instincts, it required to be something about that subject of which the disciples before us spake. High aspirations in respect to what might be felt now and hoped for hereafter, are characteristic of all deeply thoughtful and thoroughly earnest and inquiring men. To yearn after both the divine and the immortal—a spiritual experience and “a blessed hope”—belongs to humanity, in spite of its degradation, and is showing itself continually in many ways. Anything in the form of religious teaching, if it is to be effective, must stimulate or meet this hunger of the heart. The disciples of Jesus felt this, and the question is, how would they have fared if they had gone for satisfaction to any of the recognised teachers of their day?

Take the system of the Sadducees. “They believed in neither angel nor spirit;” they rejected the doctrine of a future life, and denied the resurrection of the dead. They were the *rationalists* of their age. They accepted the law, admitted the Divine mission of Moses, and belonged to the Hebrew Church; but they did away with everything in the constitution of humanity and its relation to God which could sustain the edifice of any thing like a high religious life. Eternal life, in the sense

of a future immortality, was exploded altogether, and thus the one-half of the complex idea which was grasped and clung to by the disciples vanished into nothing. But this being gone, it would be difficult to enforce the culture of an inward life that should be elevated and divine. It may be true that the elements of our nature are such, its spiritual instincts and capacity so strong, that religion would be possible even without the prospect of a future life; and it may also be admitted that social morality is enforced and provided for by the present constitution of things, independently of religious motives. It could not, however, but inevitably follow, from the system of the Sadducees, that anything like the culture of a spiritual and divine life in man must have been felt to be meaningless, have become irksome, died for want of appropriate nourishment, and sunk down into formalities that went for nothing. In addition to which it *might* be that the most eloquent teaching of the Sadducean schools, the most elaborate inculcation of secular virtue, would be insufficient to inspire a passion for the ideal of even the good man of society, in those who felt the power of the world, and the impulses of appetite, and were taught that nothing could have serious ultimate results, seeing that "we might eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." To have gone to the schools of the Sadducees would certainly for the disciples have been a change for the worse, after they had been accustomed to the teaching of Jesus.

Their case would not have been improved if they had gone to the Pharisees. Though they believed in a resurrection, and taught the expectation of a future life, and so far held out the hope of a possible immortality in the kingdom of heaven, they yet held such views of what constituted the present religious life of man as to rob it of everything spiritual and divine. They were

the *ritualists* of their day. They inculcated and practised a scrupulous formalism, attaching importance to minute and meaningless ritual peculiarities. “Meats and drinks and divers washings,” an elaborate system of mere bodily service, the tithing of “mint, annice, and cummin,” a righteousness which consisted in external observances, and which knew nothing of inward sanctity and holiness—these were the things which the system of the Pharisees held up as religious virtue. Without referring to the charges brought against them in the indignant criminations of our Lord, without saying that all were guilty of the hollowness and hypocrisy, the rapacity and covetousness, the selfishness and pride with which He charges them, this at least must be admitted, that there was nothing in their professed and characteristic opinions that could encourage the culture of such an inward life as that which the disciples of Jesus had learnt to appreciate; while that outward life which the Pharisees approved could be no possible preparation for such an ultimate life with God as they had been taught to hope for. The same result comes out as before. To have gone to the Pharisees would have been to the disciples a change for the worse.

Nor would anything have been gained by their going to the third class of contemporary religionists. These were the monks and *ascetics* of their day. They held very much the opinions of the Pharisees, and they were devoted, like them, to the ritualism of the law and the traditions of the elders; but they went further: they lived in community, abjured marriage, submitted to many bodily austerities, and sought thus to reduce and conquer the flesh. They tried to reach the divine by ceasing to be human. By renouncing the obligations of men, they expected to become, and to be accounted, saints. If their views were to become universal—and

what is true must be intended for that—life would be depressed, society impossible, and the world itself soon come to an end. There *must* be some radical mistake here. Such men could not have the "words of eternal life." The spiritual life inculcated by Christ was to go with men into the world, to be cultivated in connexion with the relations of society, and to make everything beautiful by all service becoming Divine. He desired not that His disciples should be taken "out of the world," but that they should be "preserved from the evil." Even if the Essenes believed in the resurrection, and admitted the hope of a life to come, they made the present life anything but an appropriate and fitting preparation for what might be expected. The two things constantly united in the teaching of Jesus—the Divine and the Everlasting—a present spiritual subjective life, to be perfected in heaven and perpetuated for ever; these, in effect, were always disunited in one way or another in the Jewish schools. The disciples of Jesus, having grasped these two things, and felt them in combination to become one great central guiding truth, might well reply to the inquiry, "Will *ye* go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Where shall we look for instructions like Thine? Some of Thy sayings are hard to be understood—we may not always know what Thou meanest: but this we know, that "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

SEEMON III.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY BROUGHT TO LIGHT

BY THE GOSPEL.

“Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light; through the Gospel”—
2 TIMOTHY i. 10.

I.

AT first sight, or on first hearing, these words would seem to express *more* than, after consideration, they can fairly be supposed to mean. The two statements made, taken absolutely, are contradicted—the first, by a fact in providence, daily before our eyes; the second, by a fact in history, apprehended by our understanding. Death is not “abolished” since the appearance of Christ; and the doctrine of “immortality” did not remain to be “brought to light” by His advent. Among both Jews and Gentiles, previous to His coming, there was the belief of a future, immortal life; and, since His resurrection, death still reigns over the whole race, just as it reigned “from Adam to Moses,” or from Moses to Malachi. It is obvious, therefore, that the text must mean something less than what it seems to say, or something different from its literal or conventional import. A single remark may help us to the apprehension of this modified meaning.

The word which, in the passage before us, is rendered "abolished," is, it may be observed, rendered "destroyed" in the 14th verse of the second of Hebrews. It is there said, that Christ "took flesh and blood," that, "through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." We cannot be far wrong, I think, in inferring from this, that Christ has "abolished" death in some sense similar to that in which He has "destroyed" the devil; that is to say, that, without literally annihilating either, He has so wrought against, and so far weakened and subdued them, as to restrain them from hurting those that are His. With respect to the word rendered "brought to light," it may be observed, that it does not so much mean to discover, or make known, as a new thing,—which is the ordinary import of the English phrase,—but to illustrate, clear up, or cast light *upon* a thing; it thus assumes the previous existence of that which is illustrated, but it asserts the fact of its fuller manifestation. Thus explained, the meaning of the text would amount to this, or may be thus paraphrased:—Previous to the coming of Christ, the idea of immortal life stood before the human, or the Hebrew, mind, like some vast object in the morning twilight; it was dimly descried and imperfectly apprehended, through the mist and clouds that hung upon or invested it. In like manner, Death, seen through that same darkness, (for "the light was as darkness,") was something that appeared "very terrible," and made many "all their lifetime subject to bondage." The advent of the Messiah, including the whole of His teaching and work,—the "appearing" of our Lord Jesus Christ, as "the light of the world," and "the sun of righteousness,"—was, to these spiritual objects, like the rising, on the natural world, of that luminary whose

power and splendour symbolized his glory in prophetic song! To those who received Him, whose reason and heart He alike illuminated, the outward became clear and the inward calm; the shadows departed and fear was subdued: objective truth had light cast upon it that made it manifest, and “the king of terrors,” seen in the sunlight, was discovered to have an aspect that did not terrify!

This exposition of the import of the text is sufficient for the present. The object of the discourse will be to develop and confirm it. Confining ourselves to the Bible, we propose to show—FIRST, That the idea of a future life was indicated to, and entertained by, the Church, from earliest time, and that it grew and enlarged, till it became what it was when our Lord appeared: SECONDLY, How, when He appeared, He did that which gave it as a truth a new character, and made it to man a new thing. The meaning of the passage before us will thus, we trust, come to be clearly apprehended, and our view of it be established and justified:—“*He hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.*”

II.

I. In proceeding to adduce, from the Old Testament, indications of the belief of a future life, and of the progress of that belief, in ancient times and in the Hebrew Church, I shall first quote the greater number of the passages from which the existence of that belief may be inferred; and then request attention to certain considerations which ought to be taken into account, and by which the impression upon us of such passages may be greatly modified.

Without attempting to say anything about the creed of the primitive and unfallen man, of which we know

but little, though we conjecture much, it may be observed, that the very existence of religion, under the form of wiring and hoping for *the forgiveness of sin*, would win to imply something of future spiritual expectation. I do not see, indeed, that, even as we now are, we should cease to be religious, though we were certain and assured that there was no life to come, provided we believed in a personal God. With a nature like ours and a world like this, whatever maybe thought to have happened to either of them, life appears to me no great a thing—its capacities are so vast, it may be made no beautiful and felicitous, or so illustrious and wonderful it has in it, even with its struggle, and battle, and work, so much that makes it a glory and a joy to have been born, that I do not see that we should cease to worship, to love, and to obey, even if God had not destined us to be immortal. We were nothing, and deserved nothing, and He made us *men*—placed us here, with our foot on the earth and our face to the sky, the lords of the world, with heads for thought and hands for action, capable of comprehending the idea of duty, and of cultivating towards Himself devotion and love; all things beneath us—the spacious earth, the arena for achievement—nature, the raw material for skill—the successive steps and stages of our being, pregnant with such elements of interest, that the story of a life may be the progress of a poem. Why, to be *a man*, simply a man, and nothing more, is so much, that I do not think that we should abrogate our manhood, and sink into brutes, because we were not to become angels. The great Creator would still deserve our gratitude and devotion, and religion would be our duty, “while we *had our being*,” and *because* we had it. The forgiveness of sin, however, as it does not mean deliverance from its present temporal consequences, but something that has

to do with the soul's inward life, as affected not only by present consciousness, but as related at once to the past and the future, by memory, remorse, apprehension, and hope, would seem to be important only as bearing on another and a higher form of being. A religion, therefore, whose leading idea was that of forgiveness, and whose central rite was that of propitiation, would appear to necessitate the belief, in the minds of those by whom it was professed, of something beyond death, however imperfectly felt or indistinctly apprehended. But this *was* the religion of righteous Abel; the first of those who are “all” described as having “died in faith;” and it must have been that of the pious patriarchs who illustrated the ages of the antediluvian world. This kind of religion was that that was retained in the family of the second father of the race; that was restored in Abraham, and developed and expanded among his descendants; that was embodied in the Levitical institute, and taught and enforced, with more or less clearness, in the words and writings of the ancient prophets. So far, therefore, as the religious life of the Church was of that peculiar nature that seems to require, for its very being, the existence of the hypothesis, and the indulgence of the hope of a future life, that hypothesis may be supposed to have been entertained, and that hope encouraged, though the one may have been shaped by limited knowledge, and the other have been productive of but little joy.

We advance, however, from this preliminary probability of the early belief of a future life, to the enumeration of some specific proofs that such belief did exist, or might have existed. These proofs are contained—in certain facts that are recorded in the Old Testament history;—in several utterances of its devout men, expressive of their feeling and experience;—and in some

statements of its prophets and teachers, in which they appear to embody their own, or the people's, objective faith. These three things will be followed by a fourth, which, though gathered from the New Testament, belongs to the Old, and which, therefore, while conveyed in the words of Christian evangelists, will be seen to cast light on the nature and the history of the Hebrew creed.

1. Among the facts referred to, we mention the translation of Enoch before the flood, and of Elijah after it—the two dispensations preceding the Christian being thus each illuminated by a similar wonder—a wonder, apparently, splendidly prophetic of what was to come. Then, there is the account of the manner in which God acted towards Abraham and his immediate descendants—promising them a possession, not giving them “so much as to set their foot upon,” *they* being satisfied, because “they looked for another country, even an heavenly,” and *He* “not being ashamed to be called their God, for He had provided for them a city,” and calling himself such to Moses in the bush, long after their decease, saying, “I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.” Then, there is the conduct of Moses in his early manhood, when waking up to the idea of duty and the mystery of life—not merely his refusal “to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,” in itself considered, and his preferring suffering to “the pleasures of sin,” but his doing this from religious faith, and from “having respect to the recompense of reward.” Then, considered simply as a recorded fact, there is the promise to Abraham, that he should not only “be buried in a good old age,” but that he should “go to his fathers in peace;” and there is the additional fact of the appearance of Samuel after death, through the intervention of one who had “a familiar spirit;” his being disturbed, as it

were, and “coming up” from the dark regions of ghostly rest, with the language addressed by him to the fallen monarch—“To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.” Now, all these, and similar facts, or traditions of facts, could not have been, or could not have been believed, without, as it would seem, either suggesting to men the idea of a future life, or indicating its existence already in their minds, and that, too, associated, apparently, with other ideas of spiritual natures and a spiritual world.

2. Among the expressions of devout feeling, which can only—or at least, best—be accounted for on the hypothesis that the patriarchal and Hebrew faith included the idea of a future life, may be enumerated such as these:—The words of Jacob on his death-bed, “I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord;” words, which are not a complaint, like the dying declaration of the philosophic heathen, “O Virtue, I have worshipped thee as a god, and have found thee a shadow,”—but a thanksgiving and a song, as if he had said, “I have *been* waiting, I *have* waited,—but *now* I am about to enjoy, or, at least, to lie down and ‘rest in hope.’” Then there are the wonderful words of Job, especially those in the fourteenth and nineteenth chapters of the book. In the first of these passages, when he asks the question—a remarkable thing by the way, for such a question to be asked at all—“If a man die, shall he live again?” he is supposed, by some, mentally to answer it, and to answer it in the *affirmative*, saying, “Yes,” and, therefore, “all the days of my appointed time (in the grave) will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.” In the passage in the nineteenth chapter, the Patriarch is supposed not only to anticipate a personal resurrection, but to anticipate it

through the agency of a Divine Redeemer:—“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and that, though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” Then there are the words of David in several of his Psalms, but especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth, both of which close with something like jubilant exultation:—“My heart is glad, my glory rejoiceth, my flesh also shall rest in hope: for Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, (Hades, the subterranean region of the dead), neither wilt Thou suffer Thy holy one to see corruption (in the grave). Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.” ... “As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.” Similar to these, though not quite so glowing and ecstatic, is the expression of Asaph in the seventy-third Psalm,—an utterance the more remarkable, as it is the triumph of devotion and faith over sceptical doubts. The good man describes himself as looking round, and being “grieved” at perceiving “the prosperity of the wicked;” his own circumstances would seem to have been at the time depressed, for he appears to be affected by the contrast, and inwardly to feel the rising murmur, “Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and (in vain have I) washed my hands in innocency.” He continues to be perplexed by the proceedings of Providence, till he goes “into the sanctuary of God.” There, religiously connecting the course of life with its consummation and close, and devoutly bringing the anticipations of another world to explain or alleviate the mysteries of this, he stands in awe of the coming destiny of the wicked,—is humbled and penitent at the thought of his recent ignorance and discontent,—and then rises into the region of calm and

steady faith, and *rests* there in relation to himself:—
“Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee.” “Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.” Now, the belief of the fact, and the vivid, spiritual realization of the doctrine, of immortal life—a future, glorious, happy life—would, at first sight, appear to be necessary to account for the existence of such an experience, and the expression of such feelings, as seem to be indicated by these and similar passages in the more sublime portions of the book of Psalms.

3. With respect to passages in which the writers of the Old Testament would seem to express their own, or assume what was the people’s objective faith, on the subject before us, such as the following may be enumerated. The forty-ninth Psalm looks like a deliberate and solemn annunciation of the truth. “All people, the inhabitants of the world, low and high, rich and poor together,” are called upon to come and to constitute an audience, who should hear the utterances of “wisdom” and “understanding,” as the Psalmist “inclined his ear to a parable, and opened his dark saying on the harp.” The instruction turns on the ultimate destinies of the righteous and the wicked; and the amount of what is communicated would seem to be, That the difference now, in their temporal circumstances, is nothing to the difference there will be hereafter, when the one lies down to be utterly “consumed,” and the other is “redeemed from the power of the grave.” The import of the Psalm is very similar to that of the seventy-third; but it comes with more of the appearance of a dogmatic statement, though the personal feelings of the writer are mingled with it. In the book of Proverbs, a book very much concerned with the secular virtues of the working-day world, we meet with the following remarkable saying:—

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death." The book of Ecclesiastes is perhaps an argument, or discussion, between the author and an objector, on this very subject. Its different statements are supposed to be best interpreted on the hypothesis of two speakers. The one contends that appearances are such, in the present world, as to exclude the idea of a superintending Providence,—to confound together, without discrimination as to their fate or fortunes, their demerit or desert, the wise and the foolish, goodness and sin,—thus destroying all rational hope for the future, and leaving to man nothing better than that he should eat and drink, and enjoy himself here as well as he can. The other speaker seems to meet, examine, and reply to these objections; he exposes the vanity and unsatisfactoriness of mere pleasure, and insists on the regality and supremacy of duty; the whole discussion terminating with the assertion of the great truth, not only of a future life, but of future responsibility:—"Rejoice in thy youth,—let thy heart cheer thee,—walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but *know*—that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." In the expostulations of the prophets, when in the name of God they reason with the people, and call upon them "to turn and live," assuring them that Jehovah "hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked," it is not impossible that to "live" and to "die," in such passages, the blessing and the curse, awaiting respectively obedience and sin, may have in them a true spiritual significance, and admit of being interpreted in a sense far higher than what belongs to temporal adversity and deliverance. Ezekiel's vision of the valley of the dead—the dry bones

scattered abroad, whitening in the sun, then coming together, being clothed with flesh, covered with skin, breathed upon from on high, and then made to stand up “an exceeding great army” of resuscitated men,—this, though used only to illustrate a spiritual resurrection in the national religious life of the people, may yet imply, that the *idea* of a resurrection was not altogether foreign to their thoughts. Hosea and Isaiah have each expressions of great pregnancy on this subject. “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O Death, I will be thy plagues; O Grave, I will be thy destruction.”—Hosea xiii. 14. “The Lord of Hosts—will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He shall swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.”—Isa. xxv. 8. In the last chapter of Daniel two passages occur, remarkably grand, forcible, and explicit:—“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” “But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

4. In addition to these quotations from the Old Testament itself, we have now to notice what is stated in the first books of the New, illustrative of the state of opinion and feeling among the Jewish people at the time that our Lord appeared. The Gospels open by revealing to us the Hebrew world and church, previous to the infusion of the Christian element; and from them we learn, that a future life, and even a resurrection of the dead, had then become a part of the prevalent and popular creed. There was a learned sect, indeed, distinguished by denying them. The Sadducees believed in nothing beyond the present life and material

forms; they said “there was no resurrection,” or separate state,—“angel or spirit:” but then there was another class, equally learned and more numerous, and having far greater influence with the people, who believed and taught “both” and all. The sister of Lazarus was not indebted to the teachings of Jesus, but to her previous creed, for the promptness with which she replied to His assurance that her brother should rise again, “I know that he will rise again at the resurrection at the last day.” And this, there can be little doubt, was the general belief of the Jewish people, (with the exception referred to,) at, and immediately before, the coming of Christ. We find Paul, some years afterwards, not only referring to it as such, but describing it as the result of the revelations given through the prophets. “I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night hope to come.—Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?” ... “I believe all things that are written in the law and the prophets, and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust”

III.

Having thus collected and arranged the most striking, and the greater number, of the proofs furnished by the Old Testament of the belief of the Church previous to the Incarnation, I shall request attention to some considerations which, while looking at the passages adduced, it is important to keep in mind. Listening to the detail which has just been given; hearing, one after another, the statements of fact, and the utterances of feeling,

which have come before us; it is quite possible, I think, to get a false impression as to the amount of light they respectively imparted or expressed. We are apt to forget, that the scattered rays that we can thus concentrate, and the combined force of which we can feel, came athwart the darkness of former ages at distant periods and with feeble power. Not only are the passages we have quoted the most remarkable of any that occur in a large series of writings which took for their composition above a thousand years; not only is it easy for us to have brought before our minds, in half an hour, what was gradually revealed, by little and little, to many generations; but we are apt to interpret these ancient words by our own perfected Christian conceptions, and to imagine that they appeared as pregnant and luminous to the fathers as to ourselves. That this could not be the case is very obvious when it is once thought of; to what extent it was not the case, the following considerations may help us to conjecture.

1. It is to be remarked—for it must, I think, be admitted—that the doctrine of a future life, either in its lower or higher form, that is, either as an immediate state of continued consciousness, or as the ultimate restoration of our entire being, is never used in the Mosaic law, properly so called, as the source or instrument of any moral or religious influence whatever. It is not plainly and unequivocally declared; it is not dogmatically inculcated; it is not distinctly taught; it is not, properly speaking, taught at all. It does not stand out in precept or sanction; it is not held up to the reception of faith, or in any way used as an incentive to hope, or an aid to duty.

2. With respect to some of the facts we referred to, clear and distinct as is their voice to us, it does not follow that it was equally audible or intelligible to

the ancients. To us, the visible, bodily translation of a man to heaven,—his being "taken" by God, or "carried up" in luminous splendour to the sky,—leaves hardly anything to be added by way of assurance of the possible or destined glorification of humanity. But, in the time of Elijah, this could occur, and they who believed it could enter so little into its marvellous significance, as to imagine that "the Spirit of the Lord might have taken him up, and cast him on some mountain, or into some valley!" As the translation of Enoch, at a much earlier period, was, in all probability, less public, or less known, than Elijah's, it is not to be supposed that greater knowledge was gathered from *it*. With respect, again, to the conduct of God to the patriarchs, expounded by Paul in the eleventh of the Hebrews; and the import of the words spoken from the bush, in which our Lord found a proof of immortal life and the resurrection of the dead; I am not sure that, without these Divine expositions, even *we* would have discovered the force of the texts. *With* them, I think the argument clear and strong, and of great weight; but if, without them, it could not have been obvious, how can we suppose that it was understood and felt in Egypt or the wilderness,—in the half-enlightened, depressed, and dislocated times of the Judges, or even in the more settled and civilized periods of David and Solomon—the kings and the prophets?

3. With respect to the expressions of hope and joy in the prospect of the future, which we find in parts of the patriarchal history, and in some of the loftier of the Hebrew Psalms, two or three distinct but connected observations may be made. 1. The passages in the book of Job—the one, as interpreted by some critics, the other as given in our translation—appear to express too much; the improbability, especially, of the anticipations of Job, in the nineteenth chapter, meaning what the English text

makes them appear to mean, is so great, as almost to force upon us the suspicion of some lower sense. 2. But, even if not, then it is to be observed, that the passage in question, the conclusion of the sixteenth Psalm, and similar passages, are, or may be, prophecies of the Messiah. David is expressly said, by Peter, not to have spoken of himself, but of Christ, “that *his* soul was not left in hell, neither did *his* body see corruption.” Now we know that the prophets did not always comprehend the scope and import of their own prophecies, especially of those that were directly Messianic; they “ministered not to themselves but to us;” they “inquired,” therefore, and “searched,” sometimes, to see if they could discover “what, and what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ that was in them did signify, when it spake beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” Hence, it is quite possible for David, and others, to have employed language, under the prophetic inspiration, far beyond both their knowledge and experience. 3. In confirmation of this, it may be remembered, that the Hebrew idea of the state after death, was that of a place of gloomy repose in the centre of the earth. To descend thither, as a disembodied ghost, was the literal meaning of “going,” or “being gathered,” to their fathers. From this place it was, that Samuel was supposed to have “come up.” Here, in the sublimely poetical language of Isaiah, “lay the kings of the nations, even all of them in glory, every one in his own house.” When the king of Babylon was described as about to enter into this region, “it was moved from beneath to meet him: it stirred up the dead, even the chief ones of the earth; it raised up from their thrones the kings of the nations.” It was to this place of the dead that Job anticipated going; he describes it, at the close of the tenth chapter, and, in doing so, expresses, as it seems to

me, what is far more likely to have been his personal feeling in respect to death, than anything else in any of his utterances:—"I go, whence I shall not return; even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death. A land of darkness as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness." This being, with the Hebrews, the ordinary idea of dying, rather than anything suggested by words like David's, which were used prophetically in relation to Christ, we have, perhaps, the more accurate type of the way in which death was generally encountered by them, in "the writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness." From this and the historical record together, we learn how he was alarmed at the intelligence of his approaching end; how he "turned his face to the wall," and "wept" upon his bed; how he was agitated by the gloomy prospect before him; indulged in dark and melancholy "forebodings; and most earnestly besought, *not* to be taken from the light of day and the number of the living!

4. As to the direct or dogmatic teaching of the doctrine, there is really not much of that. What there is, as we have already seen, is sometimes mixed with the arguments of objectors, and sometimes ends in the expression of the speakers subjective belief. Many of the striking expressions of the prophets are not quite incapable of being confined to national changes and mundane affairs. It is remarkable, too, that in "pounding" and uttering what is greatly inferior to the knowledge of one of our Sunday School children, the speakers seem to labour under the load of what they deem themselves to possess; invite "all people" to listen to the wonder; and would have their words, if it were possible, engraved with a diamond, or written on a rock.

5. With respect to the state of Jewish belief at the time of Christ, it is to be observed, that this would seem to have been the result, not so much of clear and unequivocal announcements of a future life, as of thought and reasoning on those scattered, occasional, and fragmentary intimations which we have been reviewing; hence it took the form rather of an opinion sustained by argument, than of a truth established by Divine testimony. It was religious philosophy, rather than religious faith. It was possible to reject it and yet to be a Jew—a teacher in the schools, a worshipper at the temple, a member of the Sanhedrim, or even in the highest office of the priesthood! The very words of Paul in relation to the Pharisees, and to their admission of the doctrine, seem to attach something of this argumentative character to the nature and foundation of the popular belief. “I believe what is written in the Law and the Prophets, and have hope towards God that there shall be a resurrection—which they themselves also allow.” *Which they themselves also allow*; that sort of language is much more descriptive of a state of mind that entertains an opinion as the result of logic, than of one that exercises simple faith in a “thus saith the Lord.”

6. But, lastly,—even admitting all that could be asked, on the largest hypothesis, as to the knowledge or hope of immortal life possessed by the Jew; admitting his belief of an actual resurrection at the last day, and that too, if required, preceded by a spiritual “fulness of joy” in Paradise itself; still, it is certain, that while he might anticipate the general fact involved in these beliefs, he could have no adequate conception, or rather, no conception at all, as to the manner through which, consistently with the principles of the Divine government, the expected blessings could be given to the guilty. Whatever might be his confidence, therefore, in respect to

futurity simply considered, there was ample room, after all he could know, for "life and immortality to be ILLUSTRATED by *the Gospel*." Light might be cast on the anticipated life to give it, as a fact, greater distinctness, certainty, and splendour; and, as a doctrine, to discover, in some degree, to devout reason and intelligent faith, the grounds on which it was to be expected, and the agent through whom it was to come.

IV.

II. We now proceed to the second part of the argument, and propose to show, in a few general, suggestive observations, in what way immortality was illustrated, and death abolished, by our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Gospel.

I. In the first place, *He gave certainty and assurance to the popular expectation*, exalting it from an opinion to a revealed and ascertained truth. He could not announce immortality as a new thing. He never pretended to do that. He found the people in possession of the general idea, and He confirmed it;—He found it believed and disbelieved, and He took the positive side. As a prophet, He spake of the future life with authority, and by that authority presented it to faith. Contending with objectors, He reasoned with demonstration, and by that demonstration convicted them of error as "not knowing the Scripture nor the power of God." He cast light on the meaning of Scripture, and brought out from beneath the surface treasures of truth that lay concealed there. He spoke of heaven, and of heavenly things—of eternity and accountableness, of the day of judgment and the resurrection of the dead—constantly and familiarly. No one could mistake Him. There could be no doubt as to what *His* doctrine was. His views

were distinct; they were frequently expressed; they were often vividly and largely amplified. Moses might be obscure,—there might be two opinions as to the nature of *his* teaching,—but Christ’s was transparent; it might be rejected, but it could not be misunderstood. The first five books of the Old Testament, and the first five books of the New, are a perfect contrast in respect to their disclosures on the subject before us. You read the LAW, and you meet with nothing, or next to nothing, bearing distinctly on the future life; you feel everywhere the pomp or pressure of the present. You read the GOSPELS, and you are continually face to face with the future,—the present and passing are utterly lost in the solemnity and grandeur of what is to come. Our Lord was minute. He often descended from that sublime vagueness which so naturally invests views of the future, and dilated on various accidents and accessories of the grand events which He authenticated or foretold. “The Son of Man was to come in His glory,” and “in the glory of His Father,” and “with His holy angels;” “the dead that were in the graves were to hear His voice, and were to come forth;” He was to be seen “sitting on the throne of His glory, and before Him were to be gathered all nations.” Speaking afterwards, through His Spirit in the apostles, He revealed other and similar wonders. He was to come with “suddenness;” “as a thief in the night;” “in the clouds of heaven;” “at the last trump;” “with the voice of an archangel and the clarion of God!” “A mystery” was made known, and information communicated, respecting “them that should be alive and remain to the coming of the Lord.” “Flesh and blood” could not inherit the future world, “neither could corruption inherit incorruption;” it was revealed, therefore, and declared that they that “sleep” and they that “wake” should equally be transformed,—that the dead

and the living should alike be "changed;" that all present physical relationships should cease and determine, should end with the world in which they originated, and should be superseded by higher spiritual ties, replaced by deeper and richer affinities, in *that* world "where they neither marry nor are given in marriage," and where those who have been found worthy to attain it "are equal to the angels, and can die no more."

2. This glorious life was not only thus distinctly revealed or recognised as a reality, but, in the new law given to the Church in the writings of the apostles, as the Spirit of Christ guided them in the apprehension and the uses of the truth, *it was constantly applied to practical purposes*. All the powerful and invigorating motives brought to operate on the Christian mind to animate and to purify it, are drawn from the views given by Christ of the future world, and from Himself as connected with it,—as securing it by His passion, preparing it by His power, adorning it with His presence, and filling it with His glory. In the Old Testament, motives for action are drawn from the grave;—from its silence and darkness; its weary solitude; its lying beyond the region of "device" and "knowledge," "wisdom" and "work." The "fear that hath torment," and that drives to duty, predominates over the love that enlarges the heart and makes obedience a joy. In the New Testament, the grave is almost lost in the vision of "the glory that is about to be revealed;" that glory breaks forth, gleams and gushes over the path of the faithful, compelling them, as it were, to keep looking to the place where their Lord lives, and to rejoice in the prospect of living with Him. The resurrection of the dead; the transfiguration of the living; "the vile body" changed into the likeness of Christ's "glorious body;" the earthy and corruptible image of the first man giving place to

that of the second,—“the Lord from heaven;” “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” “the grace that is to be brought unto us,” when “we shall be made like Him and shall see Him as He is;” “our gathering together unto Him,”—these things, and such as these, are the constant burden (or the ceaseless joy, rather) of apostolic pens; the themes with which the writers glow and burn; to which they are continually referring with delight, and by which they endeavour to diffuse throughout the Church the atmosphere of spiritual health,—the conservative element of practical obedience. They speak little of the immediate advantages of goodness, though they are not unaware of, and do not despise them; they seldom look at the sepulchre itself, or look at it long, though they can feel its force as a motive to virtue: but, getting into a region which Moses and the prophets never reached; gathering together and setting forth the grand objects of Christian expectation; and doing this in connexion with the “passing away” of the heavens, the “dissolving” of the elements, and the “burning up” of the earth and the world,—they urge their arguments and make their appeals with a point and a pungency which it is utterly impossible to gainsay or resist. “*Seeing then* that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hasting to, the coming of the day of God?” “*Seeing* that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” “Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” “Little children, abide in Him, that, when He shall appear, ye may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.” The heavens “open” over

the heads of the apostles, and the face of each of them is "as the face of an angel," while, thus realizing the coming glory, they exhort the Church to a life and conversation becoming the hope of it.

3. In addition to being thus accepted or authenticated by Christ, and applied to the highest practical purposes, the doctrine was, by the Gospel, *authoritatively promulgated to the world*. It became the property of the whole race, and was sent forth upon its mission for all time. So far as the Jewish belief rested upon the Scriptures of the Old Testament, it had something of a local and national aspect; Christ broke the fetters that bound the book to the Jewish territory and the Hebrew people, and sent it forth as the inheritance of the world. So far as the belief sprang from general reasoning and logical probabilities, it was the same as any of the theories of the Gentiles,—a thing that required Divine confirmation in order to its being invested with regal authority. By His utterances, whose words were "with power," who "spake as never man spake," who "gave himself a ransom for all," and who came to be "the light of the world," the doctrine He adopted, enlarged, and ratified, was stamped with the character of universality, and was commanded to be carried to Jew and Gentile equally and alike. It put on the aspect, and assumed the attitude, of a new truth direct from heaven: it had to go forth, and present itself to the acceptance, and to demand the homage of every individual of the human family—even as it was worthy of all acceptance, and deserved the submission of every soul. It was spread abroad to disperse the doubts and to remove the perplexities of the human understanding; to fix the faith and satisfy the hunger of the human heart. It was proclaimed as a part of the "common salvation," and offered to all as a common hope. It was commissioned

to ask for universal welcome, and to be received and prized as a universal good; to sit as a thing divinely revealed and infallibly true,—the queen and mistress of all minds,—speaking with authority wherever it came, and *claiming* to speak the world over;—to Jew and Greek; the wise and the unwise; barbarian, Scythian, bond or free; monotheist or idolater; to those who were “without God,” and to those who erected altars to the “unknown;”—in all schools of learning and religion,—in all places of superstition and ignorance,—where God was either worshipped or mocked—where truth was either sought for or despised.

4. In addition to all this, it is next to be remarked, that the doctrine thus, as a truth, confirmed, used, and given to the race, was, as a fact, *exemplified in the person of the Lord himself.*

Christ taught, not so much the immortality of the soul as the resurrection of the body,—or at least the resurrection of *the dead*; and not only their resurrection, but their incorruption. He revealed the fact, that “as there is a natural body,” so there is to be “a spiritual body,” and that this body is to be as ineffably glorious as it will be found to be infallibly immortal. Everything that He taught he exemplified in himself. “He took flesh and blood” that He “might taste death,” or be capable of death, And He did die; He rose again from the dead;—in the same body, indeed, in which he died, but destined to be speedily “changed” and “fashioned” according to that glorious and perfect type which had ever existed in the Divine mind. It *was* thus fashioned, transformed, and spiritualized, at His ascension. When He rose to take His seat at the right hand of God,—just, probably, as He was lifted from the earth,—“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” all the attributes of His being were altered, “He put on incorruption.”

"He now dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him." Having "died once," and "risen again," He now "liveth for ever,"—the nature He assumed being at once filled and invested with a divine, glorious, and incorruptible life!

Now, the whole of what we thus ascribe to the Redeemer had never before been combined and exhibited in the same person. Others had been raised from death to life—some had been translated without dying—yet *He* was "the first begotten from the dead," "the first fruits of them that sleep." In "all things" He was to "have the pre-eminence;" and He has it in this, as well as in others, that He was the first of the race (as yet the only one), who was "made perfect" in respect to *all* that was possible to humanity. Enoch and Elijah had been miraculously translated, but they did not die. Lazarus and others were raised from the grave, but they came forth to die again. In Christ alone the entire process was successfully passed through in all its parts, and carried on to its ultimate completeness. He died and was buried,—He was raised and changed,—He ascended into heaven and was glorified there! It was meet and fitting that it should thus be, with Him who is at once the model and the Master. "He died, rose again, and revived, and is the Lord alike of the dead and the living."

Moses, it is true, of whom it is said that he was "buried," appeared on the mount of transfiguration; but as we have no reason to believe that he was raised from the grave for the purpose, but only assumed the appearance, for the sake of visibility, of a glorified man, this does not subvert the position we have taken. The case of Elijah was different from his; and you may observe, in passing, that the event we are referring to, when connected with a remark formerly made, strikingly

shows how *literally* it might be said that Christ “illustrated,” or “threw light on,” life and immortality. The sons of the prophets thought and suggested, “that the Spirit of the Lord might have thrown Elijah on some mountain, or into some valley.” Christ, if we may so speak, *produced* Elijah,—brought him forth from his mysterious abode, and set him before the disciples invested with the lustre of a beatified immortal, and thus showed to the three, and through them to the Church, what the upper life really is! Low, carnal, and mistaken conceptions were thus at once corrected and rebuked;—although it still remained for the Lord himself to exhibit the perfect in His own person.

5. In the last place, the life, which was thus authenticated by the doctrine and exemplified in the person of Christ, is further “illustrated” “*through the Gospel*,” as the Gospel, properly so called, explains, in some degree, in what way the blessing has been secured for us, and is brought within our reach.

Christ came—it may without affectation or paradox be said—not so much to “preach” the Gospel, as to *be* the Gospel. He came to *do* something; to do that which should constitute the essence of the “glad tidings” which others were to go forth to preach and to proclaim. If the Gospel consisted merely in the assurance of the efficacy of repentance, (a call to reformation) and the authoritative *announcement* of “life and immortality,” it is sufficiently obvious that any well-attested prophetic teacher would have been competent to the task;—the whole thing, in fact, was, in this view of it, already done before the Messiah appeared in the flesh. When He did appear, though He confirmed and enlarged existing truth, and added many important discoveries, still He did not so much appear to speak as to act; His work was not so much to teach as to accomplish; and

what He had to accomplish was to be effected more by His death than by His life; He was the only being that ever visited our world of whom it could be said, that the grand object of his mission was to die!

If the Gospel be regarded as only the verbal (though Divine) *authentication* of immortality, Jesus must be reduced, in almost all respects, to the ordinary prophetic standard, as nothing more would have been necessary; but if the New Testament representations (or the obvious, or popular, import of those representations) of the Person and Work of The Christ are admitted, it will then follow that the Gospel must be something more than didactic teaching or dogmatic discovery, since it required the wonders of incarnation and sacrifice. "Eternal life" is the gift of God, "*through Jesus Christ.*" The Gospel is "the promise of life, *through Jesus Christ.*" He is not a voice merely, announcing a fact; but a power and a personality achieving an accomplishment. He *effectuates* something,—something which, if it had not been done, the "promise" brought could not have been made—the "fact" declared would not have existed! To attempt fully to grasp this subject, in a discourse like the present, would be useless and vain; it would be to go over, or to pretend to go over, the whole field of evangelical interpretation of the Christian writings, and to discuss the *rationale* of the plan of redemption, and the heights and depths and varied aspects of the New Testament representations of the Redeemer. We purpose, therefore, to confine ourselves to one thing; to select one statement out of the multitude of Scripture statements on this subject; a single utterance,—a far-sounding and deeply suggestive utterance we admit,—one, however, recommended to our selection by its direct bearing on the topic in hand. We shall take this, confine ourselves to it, and out of it bring forth what, we trust, will be a

sufficient exposition of the point or principle which, in this last particular, we wish to elucidate.

The manner, then, in which Christ delivers us from death, and is at length to confer upon us an incorruptible life, may be gathered, in some measure, from the comprehensive words in which the apostle concludes his discourse on the resurrection, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians,, fifteenth chapter, 55th, 56th, and 57th verses; “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Now, venturing to follow the flight of the apostle as he rises into the regions of passion and poetry,—which are only, however, those of truth and argument when instinct with life and invested with beauty; the reason helped by the imagination to apprehend spiritual objective realities, or to trace the course of a logical process,—rising with the apostle thither, and using the personifications which he has fixed glowing and alive in his language, the general import, we should say, of these pregnant expressions might be given, sufficiently for our present purpose, in the following form:—Man has *four* enemies opposing his entrance on immortal life—the Grave, Death, Sin, and the Law. The Law is violated by Sin; Sin is punitively succeeded by Death; the Grave receives the dead. Now, to make humanity immortal, the remedy for its condition must appropriately reach every step of the process, and must conquer or conciliate each of the adversaries. It might be thought that omnipotence had nothing to do but to take the matter into its own hand, and to *make* man immortal, good, and happy, if it so willed. It is forgotten often that omnipotence has its limits—that there are objects which it cannot touch, and regions into which

it cannot enter. Observe its action in relation to the four adversaries of humanity as now standing before us, and mark where it would be stopped if it acted alone in seeking to secure or achieve our deliverance. By mere *power* God could raise the dead to life. He could thus conquer the *Grave*, and compel it to "yield up" its dead. Supposing *Death* stood ready to meet them as they returned, and to inflict upon them his stroke again; then, by mere power, God could subdue *him*, and could continue men for ever on the earth. But this would not be a desirable immortality, nor is it that either of the Christian Scriptures or of human speculation. The two other adversaries must be met, if man is to attain to such an immortality as his nature craves and the Bible predicts; and the question is, whether *these* also can be got out of the way by mere power?—or whether, should it advance as far as we have supposed, and triumph alike over the *Grave* and *Death*—*Sin* and the *Law* would not resolutely confront it, and stand in its path, like the armed cherubim, bearing and flashing the flaming sword that guards the way to the tree of life? Advancing, then, to the *third* of the four adversaries, we ask, Could God by power destroy *Sin*? Could He, by a physical act, annihilate *it*? Could He, which is substantially the same thing, by pure prerogative pass it by—treating it with indifference, and showing that by Him it was "nothing accounted of?" Could He make a seraph out of a Tiberius or a Borgias, each retaining his memory and consciousness, as He can make an angel or an archangel out of nothing? Now, we mean to say, without going at present into the proof of the assertion, that the Bible teaches that the same stroke by which God, if it were possible, should, *by mere power*, destroy *Sin*, would be a stroke that would fall equally on the *Law*. The third and fourth of the adversaries are so inseparably united,

that they must be treated on the same terms, and met with the same weapons, as they *must* stand or fall together. But the Law is the mirror of God, the emanation of His perfections, the element of order to all worlds. To destroy *that* by a stroke would be to annihilate the rule and standard of obedience, would be an injury, so to speak, to God's own nature, and an injustice to the virtuous universe. God has the physical power to do many things which yet we say He *cannot* do; that is> He has the physical power to do wrong;—for right and wrong are not things that He can make for himself or unmake, but have an existence distinct from His will, except as that will is the expression of His own eternal and necessary rightness. He could throw the whole material universe into confusion; could suspend the laws of all planetary harmony, and dash suns and worlds against each other, as if all the stars were drunk or mad. But it would not *become* Him to do this. It would not be fitting in *Him*. It would not exalt His character in the view of created intelligence, or be in consistency with what He owed to himself. Therefore we say He could not do this; He could not throw the material universe into disorder. But much less can we conceive it possible that He should throw the *moral* universe into disorder! and He would do this, if, by physical omnipotence, He destroyed Sin, because this would amount to the virtual or actual destruction of the Law—moral law. It follows, therefore, that after all that Power is capable of effecting to secure our immortality—an immortality of virtue as well as life—*two* of our adversaries out of the four remain untouched, and *incapable of being touched*, by such weapons as it wields. The Grave and Death may both, in some sort, be discomfited by force, but Sin and the Law cannot be reached by it; they still live; and, to secure our deliverance in a way at once suited to

our nature and honourable to God, they must, as *moral* opponents, be met and overcome by a *moral* process.

That process is the redemptive work of the Son of God,—His propitiatory sacrifice and mighty mediation: it is not merely the repentance of the sinner and his return to virtue, together with the Divine pity and love. All that can be conceived of as alike passing in the experience of the human, or in the depths of the Divine paternal, mind, is recognised by the Gospel,—but the Gospel itself is something more; it is something additional to the feelings respectively of both God and man, and consists in the facts accomplished in Christ,—emphatically the cross on which He died, where, meeting together, men and God can be reconciled or *at-oned*. By means of this (the sacrifice of the cross), a foundation is laid for the forgiveness of sin, in those who trust in it and plead it with God, on a reason which, however in most respects inexplicable to us, is admitted *by the Law* to be appropriate and sufficient; it approves and accepts it, as at once preserving its honour, establishing its claims, and aiding its rule, at the very time that it provides escape from its penalties. The Law, therefore, *consents* to the delivery of the sinner from the power and consequences of Sin,—by which, of course, Sin is to all intents and purposes destroyed; but this being done by what, so to speak, has conciliated the Law, not destroyed it,—for Law must remain untouched, and be itself immortal,—the Law is changed from an adversary to a friend; its opposition is not only taken away, but that which it opposed while Sin was alive, it can now itself forward and facilitate. By a moral process, Sin and Law, our moral adversaries, are thus overthrown—the one conquered, the other conciliated—through that great redeeming act, which emphatically constitutes “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” The penitent at

first may mournfully say, “The sting of Death is Sin—the strength of Sin is the Law;’ ‘Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me’ from this double destruction?”—but, becoming a believer as well as a penitent, and awaking up to the apprehension of the Gospel and the hope it inspires, his tone changes from mourning to music, from despair to exultation, as he bursts forth: “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God that giveth me the victory—*through our Lord Jesus Christ!* True, ‘the sting of Death is Sin, and the strength of Sin is the Law,’ but Christ, by His atonement, takes away, for every penitent that believeth on Him, the sting from Death and the strength from Sin, by procuring for him pardon, *in harmony with the principles of that Law*, which is itself the strength of the one, and which causes *it* to become the sting of the other.”

The two moral adversaries of man being thus disarmed, by being respectively destroyed or transformed by moral means; the other two, which are in their nature physical, and which, as we have seen, can be discomfited by force, may now be contemplated as destined to destruction by there ultimately being brought to act upon them that sort of agency which is of a nature with themselves. He who redeems the soul from Sin, is able to redeem the body from the Grave; He who satisfies and conciliates the Law, is able to deliver from the grasp of Death. He is able to accomplish these latter results—these confessedly lower and secondary achievements,—“by the operation of that mighty Power, by which He can subdue all things unto himself.” Our physical degradation shall be removed by the force of a physical omnipotence;—*that* is sufficient to overcome at once, by a single act, the Grave and Death, by transforming the living and re-animating the dead, “changing our vile

body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body.” He “bought us with a price,” that He might make us in all things like unto himself;—lifting us to His throne, investing us with His glory, admitting us to blessedness, completing and perfecting our entire nature, by conferring life, immortality, and incorruption! “Behold! now are we the sons of God; but 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.” “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then, we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD.”

It is now easy to see, as the result of this discussion, in what senses, or to what extent, death may be regarded as “abolished” by Christ. The statement, of course, does not mean that no one dies. We have too much proof of the contrary, in the every-day occurrences of this mortal life. Nor does it mean, that none of the race will ultimately perish,—that no man will die eternally. The Scripture affords no hope of this. The enjoyment of the life that has been revealed, is suspended on the reception of the Gospel that secures it; on “repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;” on states of mind, spiritual relationships, and a spiritual character, which must be experienced, sustained, and possessed here, or, in spite of the fact of redemption, and in perfect consistency with the personal affections and will of the Redeemer, “there remaineth nothing but a

fearful looking for of judgment, and of fiery indignation that shall devour the adversaries.” Nor, finally, does it mean, that death is so destroyed in relation to those who are truly and spiritually the Lord’s, that, while the unbelieving, the wicked, and the false die, the holy and true, sincere and faithful, are visibly translated, and pass to their glorious rest without going through the grave at all! This *might* have been; but it is better as it is. It would be a terrible thing if the manner in which life terminated, manifestly, and in every case, revealed the individual; if the real character and future destiny of every person were made known, by the fact of his body “seeing corruption,” or, his passing away in glory to the sky! To feel certainty respecting the state of the departed is sometimes desirable; but it would be a fearful price to pay for this to have that certainty in relation to *all*. It is well that gloom and doubt should sometimes hang over the sepulchres of the good, because hence hope also is possible in relation to others. In spite of the statement of the text, then, death yet reigns. All die. The wise, the good, “likewise the fool and the brutish person perish;” and sometimes the best are overcome with fear, and the bad have “no bands in their death.” All is so arranged that we may “judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the intentions of the heart.” “Then shall every one have praise of God,”—or blame; then shall all men be seen to be what they are, and each receive “according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

In none of these senses, then, is death “abolished.” But, in respect to believers,—renewed, holy, Christ-like men,—for it is only of such we can be supposed to speak,—it may be said to be “abolished,” in the first place, in that the hope of pardoning mercy, in proportion as it is

felt, alters, so to speak, their relations to it—certainly their apprehensions concerning it. Death is only an outward symptom of an inward spiritual decease; it is the mark and sign of sinfulness; and it is terrible to man just in proportion as sin is felt on the conscience, and feared in its results. Philosophy, like an empiric, looks only at the symptom, and attacks it only, and can do no more;—inculcating stoicism, indifference, submission to inevitable necessity, or some such miserable pretences or palliatives in the prospect of death: the Gospel, like the well-instructed physician, attacks the disease, penetrates to the very seat and core of the disorder, brings pardon to the sinner, peace to the conscience, health to the soul! and then, these things being experienced by the inward man, the power of death to excite apprehension, or embitter life, or bring into "bondage," ceases by way of natural consequence. In the second place, death is "abolished," because, as a general rule, Christians may be said not to die;—they "*fall asleep*" at their last hour, and are not suffered to feel the "sting" that makes dying agony. They *cannot* feel it, since for them it is not; it has been extracted by Him, who, because "sin was in the world," and "death by sin," "came into the world" "*to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.*" The "justified by faith have peace with God, and rejoice in hope." "The righteous hath hope in his death." There are occasional exceptions. Some by reason of physical causes, some from weakness of faith, some from conscious defect, may, more or less, and more or less justly, be disturbed and agitated as they near the grave; but generally, and almost always in proportion to practical consistency, the followers of Christ welcome their departure with assured hope and tranquil trust. In the last place, death is "abolished," because, in respect to the saved, "*he*" (to adopt again

the apostolic personification), is reduced to servitude, placed under authority, and kept for execution. He is no longer a king—the “king of terrors.” His dominion is destroyed, his royalty tarnished, his power overthrown, and he himself condemned to serfdom and sacrifice. Christ is the Master and Lord of Death; He commits to his custody the bodies of His saints;—as a shepherd keepeth watch over his flock by night, so is the “last enemy” compelled to watch over the dust of the holy dead—so is he stationed and commanded to serve, that they may be safe and undisturbed during their season of rest, and be raised again when the morning dawns! When that morning cometh, Death, having delivered up his trust, shall himself die; or, rather, he shall be destroyed and perish. Life will be conferred in every sense in which it will be possible. The Gospel reveals not merely the immortality of the spirit, but the immortality of *humanity*; our whole nature, “body,-soul, and spirit,” shall be purified and perfected, and endowed with endless and incorruptible life! “This corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality: when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, *then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, ‘DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.’” “So let all Thine enemies perish,” O Christ, “and let them that love Thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might!” They shall *be* this; for they shall be “sons of light,” being “children of the resurrection,” and “shall shine as the stars, and as the brightness of the firmament, for ever and ever!” As a wreck may sink in the sea, and the ocean close over it so that not a vestige of its existence shall remain, nor a ripple on the surface tell that it *was*, so shall “mortality be *swallowed up* of LIFE,”—immortal life,—life, sinless, godlike, divine! Nor shall there be wanting the voice

of rejoicing, as heard at the termination of successful war, for "Death shall be swallowed up IN VICTORY." His former victims shall be "more than conquerors," "through Him that loved them" and "*giveth* them the victory." The "abolition" of the Destroyer shall be hailed by the platidits of a glad universe, that shall throng to crown and to congratulate the saved. They shall be met with hosannas by those angelic spectators, who now watch the contest, and anticipate the issue. They shall thus enter upon their new life with the feelings of combatants that have worsted their antagonist; and proceed to the possession of their everlasting inheritance, amid the welcome of those who shall hail their success with sympathetic delight,—heralding them to their home with joy and acclamation, shouting and songs!

SERMON IV.

“THE BLESSED GOD.”

“*The blessed God*”—I Timothy 1:11.

BOTH in the Old Testament and in the New, there are two words, each of which is translated, for the most part, by the term “blessed.” In both cases the one of the words is capable of being rendered by the term “happy,” and is so rendered in several passages. In the majority of cases the New Testament word is translated “blessed;” and though in many of the instances the other term would be at least equally admissible, yet the deeper and richer one is perhaps more appropriate; or, at any rate, it seems so to us, from our special religious associations with it.

It is a singular circumstance—by some, at least it has been accounted so—that the word “blessed,” in the text before us, represents that particular word in the original which admits of being rendered by the term “happy.” To call God “blessed,” seeing that He is the object of all “blessing and praise;”—“the blessed and only Potentate,” to whom is ascribed, by all holy and obedient natures, “power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and *blessing*;”—this seems natural and appropriate. But, to call Him “blessed,” in the

sense of expressing His personal felicity—describing Him, in fact, as the “Happy God,”—this would appear to jar on the feelings, as if it were out of harmony with the majesty and grandeur of the Divine nature. Whatever may be thought of it, however, *there it is*; the word in question stands before us in the text. In selecting an epithet to set forth some Divine speciality attaching to God, the apostle has chosen to employ (doubtless designedly) that particular term, which may be taken to describe Him as subjectively the Possessor of personal happiness. There are learned men who prefer and advocate this rendering. If we accept it (and we propose doing so), then we obtain this thought—that *happiness* belongs to God as a perfection or attribute of His nature, as much, and as really, as justice or truth, wisdom or love. He is not only the strong, the wise, the holy, the eternal, but He is also the “Blessed,” or *happy*, God.

The subject thus indicated, we shall endeavour to illustrate in the following discourse. We propose,

First.—To ask attention to two or three preliminary remarks.

Secondly.—To enumerate some of those things which may be supposed to contribute to God’s happiness.

And then, lastly.—To urge and apply the practical lessons which the subject may suggest.

I.

We begin by requesting attention to two or three preliminary remarks.

1. Observe, then, in the first place, that there is a perfectly understood and appreciable difference between “happiness” and “blessedness;”—I mean, of course, in relation to ourselves. “Happiness” is the result of a favourable concurrence of external circumstances; it has

to do with us very much as beings living in a material world, and possessed of social affections. “Blessedness” belongs to our spiritual nature; it has to do with the development of our religious capacity, and the state of our relations to God. Happiness, indeed, cannot be enjoyed separate from moral culture and virtuous habits; but it may be, to a very great extent, without the possession of a divine life. It is this, however, which is the required ground and essential element of blessedness. “Happiness” is invaded and disturbed by pain, calamity, vicissitude; but in the midst, and under the severest pressure of all these, “blessedness” may not only exist, but may be deepened and enriched. Pleasure belongs to the animal; happiness to *the* man; blessedness to the divine man—to him who has been raised from the death of sin into the life of God, and in whose heart hath been shed abroad that “peace of God which passeth all understanding.”

2. Notice, however, in the next place, that, while the merely happy cannot be called blessed, the blessed can be called happy. Blessedness *is* happiness, but of such sort as to be *something more*—more than the word is meant to stand for in the ordinary usage of common life. Blessedness is happiness of the highest nature; happiness that owes nothing to the senses; that is not dependent on external circumstance or worldly condition; that springs from the nobler faculties of the spirit basking in the sunlight of the upper sky. It is something, in fact, which belongs to a man’s inner self, and which would go with him, and be a part of him, if he were altogether separated from the body, and admitted into the sphere of the purely spiritual. This being the case with man, in relation to that higher happiness of which he is capable, much more must it be true of God. That is to say, in *Him* happiness *must* be blessedness.

God's happiness, whatever it may be—whatever it may include, or whencesoever it may spring—cannot, by any possibility, bear the least resemblance to what results from those enjoyments and satisfactions which constitute with us a mere mundane felicity. Why, *we* are capable, as has just been intimated, of something far greater and nobler than that. It can only be, therefore, by looking to our highest faculties that we can hope to illustrate the subject before us. We must be guided by what belongs to the richest capabilities of our intellectual and spiritual nature, if we are to make any approach to a conception of what may be supposed to contribute to, or to be constituent elements in, the divine, infinite, and ineffable happiness of “the blessed God.”

3. This last observation leads to a third and concluding preliminary remark. You will notice, then, that in any attempt to speak of what may possibly contribute to the happiness of God, all that we can do is to draw out from our own nature analogies or contrasts, which may possibly help us in our conception of the Divine. In thinking of God, at any time, and for any purpose, the most that we can do is to look into our own consciousness; to begin with that, and then, gradually aggravating and intensifying our ideas and perceptions, to venture into the sphere of the Infinite. In relation to the present subject, we have to consider what *we* are as minds,—how we are affected and influenced as such,—what constitutes to us, as to our highest faculties, sorrow or satisfaction, agony or rapture, disturbance or repose; and, from such materials (very poor and imperfect at the best) to construct something which may possibly help us to a faint idea of what belongs to God. The simple notion, the general impression or conviction, of a Divine existence, is inherent in humanity. It is instinctive, indigenous; it is not arrived at by argument; it is not

the result of logical demonstration; it belongs to us as a part of ourselves, and deepens and develops “we know not how.” But this general conviction, this vague, inarticulate, instinctive sentiment, can be strengthened by thought, defended by argument, illustrated by observation of what is mirrored in the outward universe, and may be wrought out into something approaching a *definite* form, by meditating on what we are conscious of in ourselves. Any notions of the Divine personality, spiritual attributes, moral perfections, if we are to have such, are to be gathered, not from what is external and material, but must be evolved out of our own consciousness as thinking beings—beings possessing a moral and spiritual nature. It was thus that St. Paul taught the Athenian philosophers how they might learn to think worthily of God; to rise from their own nature to His,—from what they knew by consciousness to what they might conceive or infer by analogy.

Returning to what is immediately in hand, it is obvious to remark, that, in respect to the subject to be discussed, we can only reason from what we know and feel,—know of ourselves, and feel from consciousness and experience. Of course there are mysterious depths, attributes and qualities, hidden, unrevealed, far beyond the reach of inference or conjecture, in the Divine nature, to which there is, and can be, nothing analogous in ours. Hence, in what constitutes the blessedness of God there must of necessity be elements respecting which we can infer nothing from anything that exists or passes in ourselves. So far, however, as we *can* clearly and distinctly apprehend ourselves, it is probable that we have a basis for, and may advance towards, true thoughts in relation to God. When Paul teaches, in his address at Athens, that men may learn from *what they themselves are* how “they ought *not* to think” of God, he seems to

intimate that, by the same means, they might learn how they *ought* to think of Him. We are His offspring, created in His image; to a certain extent therefore, and in some respects, we must bear a likeness to Him. But it may be said, without irreverence, that, for the same reason, *He*, to a certain extent, and in some respects, must bear a likeness to *us*. Anything we advance, then, on the subject in hand, guided by our spiritual consciousness, may be right *as far as it goes*; but, above and beyond that,—utterly out of our reach, hidden and concealed in the heights and depths of God’s infinite and incomprehensible attributes,—there may be other things which constitute and contribute to His blessedness, of which we can know nothing. These things may be of mightiest potency, but of such a nature that there never can occur, in the human consciousness, anything to lead to a conjecture respecting them. Looking, however, to what may be suggested by matters that come within the limits of that consciousness, we proceed to mention two or three things which, in part, may possibly contribute to the blessedness of God.

II.

1. In revolving in our minds the idea of the Divine blessedness, we are naturally led to think of the Scriptural descriptions of God as “a God of knowledge;” “the only wise God;” He “whose understanding is infinite;” and similar expressions, which impress us with a sense, if we may so speak, of the extent and compass of the Divine intellect. The whole circle of Truth lies in the Divine understanding in all its completeness, without flaw or fracture, or any such thing “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all;” no ignorance obstructs, no obscurity dims, His percep-

tions. “All things are naked and open before Him;” and He surveys all with perfect distinctness and in undisturbed repose. When the mind is darkened by ignorance or perplexed by uncertainty, it is liable to illusions, exposed to mistake, in danger of misapprehension, full of fears; the true or the false may alike and equally irritate and torment it. “God *dwells* in light;” He is “clothed with it as a garment;” it invests Him with a calm and steady effulgence. One element, at least, of this “excellent glory” is the infinite range, the fulness and perfection, of His knowledge; it is this which constitutes Him the sun and centre of the intellectual system—the fountain of intelligence and “the Father of Lights.” All minds, in all worlds, with all their faculties, their diversified gifts, their powers of perception, thought, reason, utterance,—all these everywhere are but beams and rays, which have issued from and are sustained by that luminous orb, that central sun, the God that dwells in the cloudless effulgence of uncreated light, and who is at once the light and the life of angels and men. All knowledge, all science—every conception of the ideal, the beautiful, the perfect—whatever any creature can acquire from without, whatever may appear to originate within—piercing intuition, profound thought, artistic achievement, mechanical invention, eloquence, song—all are but faint and imperfect reflections of what first exists in the Divine mind. There, too, it exists in such infinite and inconceivable opulence—in combination with so much of what is unimagined and unknown—that, if we could enumerate the entire sum of things which constitute the mental wealth of the universe, we should not only have to say, “These all come forth from the Lord, who is wonderful in counsel,” but we should have to add to this, the still deeper thought, “and many like things are with Him.”

Adverting, however, again simply to the fact of the Divine intelligence, it is obvious to remark, that God's knowledge is not only infinite but inherent. From all eternity it has been His. He had never to labour for its attainment; never to employ means and instruments for acquiring it; never to exhaust His strength in putting forth efforts for the purpose. He knows nothing either of a long and painful process of thought, or of having to submit at last to the pressure of a mystery which He cannot fathom. To *Him* there *are* no mysteries—no stern, ultimate facts standing at the extreme limits of discovery, beyond which inquiry is useless and conjecture vain. Intellectually, He has to submit to nothing; there are no perplexities or difficulties to *Him*; His is the blessedness of universal, unobstructed, open vision! What an infinite satisfaction, what a Divine repose, must result from this! As a heart at rest gives a lustre to the countenance—as we refer to the happiness of a man when we say that his face is “lighted up with joy;”—so the image of Light, employed in relation to God, may be understood to express, not only His perfect knowledge and His stainless purity, but His essential and necessary blessedness—the “peace which passeth all understanding,” which it is His to enjoy as well as to impart, and which belongs to Him as the infinitely “happy God.”

2. But, advancing from Divine thought to Divine action, we next conceive of God as of Him “who works all things according to the counsel of His own will;” who says of himself, “I will work, and who shall hinder?” “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;” and respecting whom it is said, “The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever; the Lord shall rejoice in His works.” God is not only “a God of knowledge,” but of power; and not only of power as a slumbering attribute,

—but as an energy, active, diffusive, and fruitful in manifold results. He is not only “wonderful in counsel;” He is “excellent in working:” His thoughts become things. At the creation the words of His lips, sent forth, as it were, into empty space, the infinite void, gradually assumed visibility; became “clothed upon” with what made them take substance and shape, and stand forth as suns and worlds!

All writing is very wonderful. What is it but this—the catching of a sound or a word, detaining it, throwing it upon paper, stone, or brass, and making it visible; so presenting it to the eye that it becomes a sort of incarnation—a formal material embodiment of spirit and thought? It is very wonderful! But such a writing is the outward universe; such, in relation to the thoughts of God! The works of His hands are the material embodiment of His creative word. That word was the vocal expression of a Divine idea; and thought and word are made visible, and are presented to the eye, in the forms and the phenomena of external nature. The earth is an open and pictured page of a great volume; the starry heavens are an illuminated manuscript; above, beneath, within, around us, everywhere, we see the letters and words of a Divine writing—God’s thoughts set forth by His own hand, inscribed in a manner at once luminous and significant, by His ideas and utterances becoming facts. “He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and everything stood fast.” “He said, Let light be, and light was.” “O Lord! how marvellous are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all!”

But God not only created; He sustains and governs. He not only acted, but acts. Not only power, and power once exercised, belongs to Him, but power capable of ceaseless activity, and ceaselessly active—moving, operating, everywhere, always—needing no rest, know-

nothing of fatigue! “My Father worketh hitherto,”—and *ever* worketh, and ever *mil!* The ability to do this is His distinction; the exercise of that ability is an element in His blessedness. “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for Thou hast created all things, and *for Thy pleasure* they are, and were created.” “He upholdeth all things by the word of His power, and by Him all things subsist.” And “according to the counsel of His own will He worketh all things,” both “in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth!”

In respect to action, the Divine wisdom is perfect. God knows nothing of difficulty in the adaptation of means to ends; nothing of uncertainty as to what to do or how to do it. The highest ideal is native to His intellect; the best and most suitable instruments are ready to His hand. Hence, His is the happiness of successful accomplishment. He can never be disappointed. He never discovers defect in His purposes, error in His plans, or some fatal mistake when too late to be rectified! He never feels that “His thoughts must perish;” His cherished expectations or elaborated projects end in nothing; or that, if ever realized, He will not himself witness the consummation! These are some of the things which oppress humanity—things which disturb its peace, embitter its satisfactions, and trouble its joys; but of all which God can know nothing!

“*Our* lives through various scenes are drawn,
 And vexed with trifling cares;
 While His eternal thought moves on
 His undisturbed affairs.”

Moves on, and moves onwards, and moves *all*, by the sweet impulses of that law, supreme, regulative, protecting, of which it hath been said, that “Her seat is the

bosom of God, and her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage; the very least as feeling her care, the greatest as not exempted from her power. Both angels and men, though each in different soul and manner, with uniform consent admire her as the mother of their peace and joy.” Much more might such words be used in relation to God himself. He sits enthroned on the riches of the universe; all holy and obedient natures adore and worship, ceaselessly hymning His infinite attributes, rejoicing that He lives and reigns. “Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all Thy ways, thou King of saints.” And this anthem of adoration, perpetually rising towards the Divine throne, expressive of the happiness He has *imparted*, is but the echo and reverberation of that which he possesses, as the “blessed and only Potentate,” the holy and happy God.

3. In the last place—advancing from what is intellectual and active to the *moral* perfections of the Divine nature, and to the revealed manifestations of God’s mercy and grace—we find in these the highest elements of that Divine blessedness of which we speak.

Unsullied purity, immaculate holiness, infinite excellence, belong to God. He is conscious of possessing all possible virtue—if, indeed, virtue can be predicated of One who cannot be tempted with evil—who needs no strength, therefore, to resist it, and to whom goodness consequently involves no effort. He is never conscious of thought or feeling which He wishes to repress or eject—with which He has to contend or struggle from their felt repugnance to His better nature. He has never been “overcome of evil,” never deceived by it, never seduced. He knows nothing of remorse; has no recollections that can burden or embitter; no memories which He would willingly expunge. He can

“consider His ways,” and review the past, not only without pain, but with deep and infinite satisfaction. He can survey all that He has ever done, looking abroad over the worlds and ages, without lighting on a single thing to disturb His serenity or invade His peace. In himself, too, as to the essential constitution of His nature—if we dare so to speak—it might be said, that not only is He free from passion and excitement, from all that is restless and turbulent in emotion, but that His very joy itself is deep and still—a full, infinite, boundless sea, indeed, but calm and waveless from its very fulness.

Even a good *man* is “satisfied from himself;” in that moral harmony to which his nature hath been wrought there are the springs and elements of a peace which “passeth all understanding.” Much more must He, the infinitely Holy One, the Source and Fountain of all goodness, possess a satisfaction at once *with* himself and *from* himself. This arises from what He is conscious of *in* himself, which would have been there, the ground and object of complacency, had He never given existence to anything whatever *out* of himself. But not only so; it springs also from the further contemplation of the results and issues of His manifold activities, the fruits of His unwearied “well-doing,” His divine beneficence in its twofold aspects of goodness and grace. He has filled space—the otherwise dark, infinite void—with light and beauty; He has made it musical with the movements of suns and worlds; He has replenished these with intelligent natures, and has furnished them all with the means of happiness! And, still further, in relation to that race of which we know most, that world into which sin has entered, where, in consequence of that, all things are dislocated and disordered—in relation to this, “the glorious Gospel of the happy God” must be to Him a source of ineffable satisfaction, and, if possible, must deepen

and intensify that Divine blessedness of which we speak! For to the exercise of goodness He has added the manifestation of grace, to creative work a redemptive process. In this He has employed the most stupendous means for the working out of the most beneficent of purposes. He has “set forth His Son” as a propitiatory sacrifice, that “the sufferings of the Christ, and the glories that follow,” may fill earth and heaven with the restored and sanctified. He “sends forth His Spirit” to regenerate and purify, that, in a far diviner sense than in the material creation, He may “renew the face of the earth,” and re-establish the harmony of things! The chief element, then, in the happiness of God, is that which springs from His holiness—the beauty and perfection of His own nature: the chiefest of all, if we may so speak, is that which flows from the gracious exercise of redeeming mercy. By this, the sinful and the lost are sought out and saved, and made to become “the partakers of His holiness.” The sublime joy which is to fill and replenish the mind of Christ is to issue from the success of His redemptive work;—“He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be *satisfied*.” Of that work we may perhaps say, without impropriety, that it is emphatically “the *pleasure* of the Lord” not merely His *will*, His determined *purpose*, but the object on which He looks with supremest complacency, and from which He draws a divine delight! In this respect, in the gathering of a great and peculiar joy from the work of salvation, the Father and the Son are One. An infinite happiness springs from the contemplation of that which is constructed to secure the happiness of the saved: and hence, perhaps, the conjunction of the two ideas we have in the text, “the glorious Gospel of the happy God.” God is Love; God is Light; because He is so, He is in himself the infinitely blessed One: but the object of the Gospel

is to bring us into harmony and communion with Him as such, that “our fellowship being with the Father,” “our joy may be full.” “Believe and live” are the first words of the Gospel: “Enter into my joy” will be the last. After that, the beatific participation of its ultimate results — “I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness.” “The Gospel of the glory of the happy God” is “the good news,” the beneficent and illustrious design of which is to bring men to be the partakers of the blessedness of the Divine nature. As leading to this, and issuing in it, the Gospel has been felt and realized in every age, though in many instances it may not have been thus distinctly understood or articulately expressed. The humble and devout are often the subjects of a blessedness deeper than they know. But many have departed this life experiencing what the wife of a friend of mine expressed just as she was passing within the veil. Looking upwards—catching, as it were, a glimpse of that to which she was approaching—realizing its nature, and attempting to describe it, her last words were, “God’s happiness—God’s happiness;” meaning, as was believed, “*That* is what is before me—*that* is what I see—I am going into *that*.”

“Come, Lord, when grace hath made me meet
 Thy blessed face to see;
 For if Thy presence here is sweet,
 What will Thy glory be!

“My knowledge of that life is small,
 The eye of Faith is dim;
 But ’tis enough that Christ knows all,
 And I shall be with Him,”

These very few and imperfect hints must suffice as helps towards the illustration of a subject of which it is not easy adequately to speak. It is one, indeed, more fitted for contemplative meditation than for popular

discourse. It is not impossible, however, but that something may have been said which, in some of you, may stimulate and colour private thought—such thought as, by God’s blessing, may not be without results.

III.

We shall now bring our remarks to a conclusion, by pointing out two or three of those practical lessons which the subject may suggest

1. It may be observed, then, in the first place, that the subject, as has indeed just been intimated, teaches us the sublimity and grandeur both of the Gospel itself and its ultimate aim, seeing that that includes our being made partakers of God’s happiness. Out of this one idea much may spring at once to regulate religious thought and to influence Christian character.

The grand end is to be reached by a fitting preparatory process. The way to ultimate repose in the bosom of God,—the secret place of the Divine blessedness,—is by present reconciliation and personal sanctity; by pardon and holiness; by that godlikeness *now* which is to be perfected hereafter by our being made “like Him,” as far as the limits of our nature will permit—but like Him, it must be remembered, both in character and joy. How different this from the annihilation that awaits us, according to some Philosophies; of others, which comes to the same thing, the immortality of the race, but not of the individual; and of others, an indefinite series of successive probations! Very different, too, is this Christian hope from the absorption into the Divine nature of some Religions, or the mere sensuous enjoyment promised by others. Nay, how different the true idea from the low notions and mean aims of many Christian men! There are those amongst us who think only of

escape and safety, the peace of realized pardon, “the blessedness of the man whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is covered.” But that is not *God’s* happiness. He knows nothing of such joy. *That* is a thing for man as a sinner,—for humanity as redeemed, as plucked and rescued out of the snare of the Devil. But we are to be raised, by sympathy with God, into something far greater and diviner than that. There has been too much in the popular representations of the Gospel, as if its *principal* design was to save men from hell, and that, if *that* was secured, they might be happy and content. It is to do that certainly, but it aims at doing far more. It is to save from wrath; but, in addition to that, it is to unite to God, and to make men like Him. Pardon, justification, the blessedness thence resulting, these are not *ultimate* ends; *they* exhaust not the Divine purpose. They are only *means* to a further end, a sublimer result—the production of a subjective sanctity, and, through that, of that deeper and higher blessedness which flows from a new birth unto righteousness; a resurrection from the death of sin into the life of God; the being “created anew unto good works.” “God’s rest” is figuratively represented as a rest *after labour*. He created the world, established its foundations, laid the beams of it, finished the structure, spread out the heavens, gave the sun his splendour, the moon her brightness, and lighted up the stars, and, having done all, “He rested from His work, and was refreshed” Now, it was *that* kind of rest into which the indolent and the cowardly among the Church in the wilderness could not enter. “Christ’s joy,” again, is the joy of one who “finished the work given Him to do;” and they only will be prepared to partake of it to whom He can say, “Well done, good and faithful.” In like manner, God’s happiness is that of conscious, subjective, moral perfection; and they only

who, according to their nature and in their degree, have a similar consciousness, can possibly partake of it. It is the object of the Gospel, its sublime ultimate purpose, by purifying the character to inspire the consciousness and confer the joy.

2. The subject teaches the superiority and grandeur of that nature which is capable of being brought to this ultimate blessedness.

Personally and individually, we may be very poor, wretched, and miserable; morally diseased, maimed, stunted, misshapen. Humanity, too, as a whole, is no doubt spiritually in bondage to its lower tendencies; “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;” in one form or another prostituting its powers in the service of sin. But, however, low it may have sunk, or however contracted its aims may have become, its inherent, original capacities must have been great for a *possibility* to exist of its being raised into sympathy and fellowship with God! The most sagacious of the lower creatures are incapable of this. They may have something of intelligence, and certainly have instincts manifold and marvellous, but they have no capacity for religious faith. They could not become the subjects of moral virtue and spiritual life without ceasing to be what they are, and becoming a different order of beings altogether. However great the change experienced by humanity, in “passing from darkness to light,” it is humanity still; a regenerated man *is* a man; the highest saint does not become an angel; human nature, however it may become *like* unto the Divine, will be human nature to all eternity. There is in it, as such, however dormant, dead, depraved, the *capacity* of being brought into sympathy and communion with the holy and blessed God. In the same way, the most glorious objects in the material creation are incapable of this. The sun yields

to God no voluntary obedience. It neither believes nor worships; it *cannot* bear the Divine image, nor become conscious of the impulses of heavenly joy. But, sunk as humanity may be by sin, it has still within it a capacity for this. The mere fact of its having this capacity, however it may lie buried under filth and refuse, is a proof of its high origin, essential spirituality, and inherent greatness; while its consciousness of stirrings, aspirations, and inarticulate longings after the good and the better is a further indication of what it is, and of what it may be.

3. We may get from this subject a deep and awful impression of the evil of sin.

The means by which such an impression may be produced springs out of this, that sin is represented as interfering with, and breaking in upon, the happiness of God. The Creator, we are told, looked with delight on the primitive world and man. He saw in them the embodiment of His own thought,—what realized and answered to “His great idea!” He pronounced everything “very good,” and “the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.” But afterwards, when moral apostasy had marred the work, and “all flesh had corrupted his way,” and “the thoughts and imaginations of men’s hearts had become evil,” then, it is said, in terrible language, that “God saw the greatness of the wickedness of men upon the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart, and it repented Him that He had made man!” In other passages of Scripture we have corresponding representations. We read how sin “grieves the Spirit of God;” how it vexes, irritates, disturbs; how He is “weary to bear it,” and “burdened” by the sight of it; how it excites His “displeasure,” moves Him to “anger” and “wrath,” as if He had lost his Divine serenity and calm blessedness, and become the subject of human infirmity

and passion! We know that all this is figurative language. But figures must be appropriate; they always mean something when properly used by wise men; and we may be quite sure that some great truth was intended to be set forth by such figurative expressions as have just been quoted. There was some idea answering, in some way, to this strong language, and some terrible idea it must have been which nothing *but* this language could adequately express. Hence the natural and inevitable conclusion, which we shall do well to lay seriously to heart, that *that* must be a fearful and abominable thing which can only be adequately described as disturbing the Divine tranquillity,—breaking in on God’s happiness, and throwing something like a dark shadow on “the excellent glory” that invests His throne!

4. Our last word may be this: the probability that, for the removal of such an evil as that just depicted,, and the securing of such an ultimate object as has been set forth, *means* would be required of an extraordinary nature and vast magnitude. We seem instinctively to expect that there will be something of correspondence, something like proportion, between means and ends. Hence, the more we think of the deteriorated condition of that material on which the Gospel has to work, and the more distinctly we realize what it proposes to do with it, the more readily shall we admit those marvellous revelations of objective truth which constitute, as we think, the substance of the Gospel. Redemption, incarnation, a Divine Mediator, sacrifice, intercession, the mission of the Comforter, with all other correlative truths, seem to be the most natural things imaginable, when it is understood that the grand, ultimate object is to recover man from the pollutions of the flesh and the power of the devil, and to make him a partaker at once of the holiness and the blessedness of God.

SERMON V.

“A MAN IN UNDERSTANDING.”

“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”—I CORINTHIANS xiv. 20.

IN the verse immediately preceding this, the apostle, you will observe, says, that “in the Church he would rather speak five words with his understanding, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” Now, though the English word “understanding” occurs in both verses, two different words are used by St. Paul. The first of his terms stands for the intellectual faculty itself; the second refers to its state of development,—not however without regard to that also of the moral sentiments. In speaking of his “*own* understanding,” the apostle refers to his power, as a rational being, of comprehending any truth or statement, and of making it intelligible to others. In telling the Corinthians not to “be children in understanding,” he refers to that mature condition of both mind and heart, and general character, which distinguishes a person of thought, prudence, discretion, common-sense—of solidity and wisdom, of manly and dignified aims and purposes. So, again, though the English word “children” occurs twice in the text, the words used by the apostle are different, and admit of

being differently rendered. The first may be regarded as standing for boys, the second for babes. The one gives us the idea of youth—very inexperienced, but beginning to display the elements of character; the other takes us back to unconscious infancy, before any of the primitive forces in human nature have begun to be developed at all. Then the word rendered “malice,” though it may be specially regarded as standing for those passions which the English term suggests, yet it may also be taken more generally as designating *all* evil dispositions and affections whatsoever. In the last place, the word rendered “men” is a term that signifies “perfect,” and refers to maturity—as to age, completeness of education, fulness of mental development, fitness for the manly discharge of the great and serious duties of life. Thus looked at, and thus explained, the text, you perceive, would seem to say *this*: “Don’t feel and act like a set of ignorant and conceited boys—with minds immature, vain, volatile, incapable of deep serious thought and high moral aims. With respect to all that is *bad*, indeed—passion, concupiscence, envy, malignity, deceit, and so on—I would that you were even infants—the veriest babes; but as to all that is holy, wise, virtuous, be like those who, having gone through a long course of intellectual and moral discipline, are at once ripe in years and perfectly equipped as to knowledge and accomplishments,—thorough ‘men’ in fact, as to the culture of their understandings, their superiority to all that is narrow, mean, or selfish, and their lofty and dignified idea of life.”

Such, I think, is the full meaning of the apostle’s exhortation. It was most appropriate as addressed to the Corinthians, and will be seen to be so by referring to the context, and considering the condition and behaviour of the Corinthian Church. It is in itself, however, very

suggestive; it shows great knowledge of human nature; it is full of good sense; and will be found, I hope, before we have done with it, to afford us some useful and important practical lessons.

Let us now look more distinctly at the ideas and import of the text, and illustrate them by referring to the conduct of the persons to whom it was originally addressed.

After what has already been said about the meaning of the words of the text, I think the best way of looking at the ideas of it—those which it either expresses or involves—will be to trace the progressive development of a human being, according to the three aspects of humanity suggested by the images and phraseology of the apostle, and to notice how they may be applied, for practical purposes, to the Christian character and life.

In the text, then, we think we can discover traces of the *infant*, the *boy*, and the *man*; and we find something belonging to each used for moral and religious ends. Let us see what can be made of this, or how it may shape itself, when steadily looked at.

A human being comes into the world as a congeries or combination of extraordinary capabilities. It is so much raw material—so many diverse powers or forces, that may be drawn out and developed into different forms of future character. By taking the two terms of the text—“malice” and “understanding”—as representative terms, that is, as standing for the classes of things to which they respectively belong, it would recognise the two great departments of human nature—the *intellectual* and the *emotional*. Under the one term may be included all the capacities of reason, intelligence, and the higher powers of the mind; under the other, the passions and affections, and the lower propensities of the animal constitution. Every human being is made up of

these two great classes of capabilities; each has both and all;—with the exception, of course, of those rare instances in which there is some original and incurable defect, as in the case of idiots, with whom, in our present argument, we have nothing to do.

A little infant, then, has wrapped up within it two great classes of powers—the capacities of the intellect and the forces of the passions. These are to be unfolded and developed in the future man; but at first they lie with him in the cradle as so many slumbering elements, just as if he had them not. Without referring to the undeveloped state of an infants understanding, the apostle fixes attention on the undeveloped condition of the passions. This was the one idea that he wanted; and this, therefore, is what he exclusively refers to. Looking at a little sweet, slumbering babe, or at one smiling and crowing on the maternal lap, the apostle seems to say: “Whatever capacity there may be here for what is bad, it is not manifested yet; whatever germ there may be for what is malign, vindictive, or impure, it is not yet developed and displayed. How calm and beautiful the little thing looks! How free from the gross and turbulent agitations which deform society and degrade *men!* What does *it* know of vanity and ambition, of envy and malice, the burnings of hatred, the swellings of pride, the strife, rancour, bitterness, and malignity which are to be seen and met with in the world? True, all the men in the world were once babes; they once looked innocent and beautiful like this. Would to God that, in one sense, they were babes again I—that, so far as all that is bad is concerned, they were ‘simple concerning evil/ free from its outbreaks and its manifestations I But Christians *ought* to be this. By the conquest and the crucifixion of their worse nature—by the restraining and mortifying of their passions—by the expulsion of

corruption through the cleansing influences of the regenerating Spirit—they ought ‘in malice to be children;’ that is, by the ‘*putting off*’ of the old man, they ought to resemble those in whom his bad elements are yet undeveloped, or by whom, so to speak, he is not yet put on.”

The apostle’s next idea, or that which we take next, is the picture of a number of youths, who have advanced beyond the period of infancy and childhood, but who have not yet attained to man’s estate, or acquired the knowledge, dispositions, and habits belonging to riper years, especially when those years are distinguished by the wisdom of experience and the discipline of virtue. Look, then, at a number of youths—pieces of humanity that are neither boys nor men—and only think what, for the most part, you will find them to be. They are necessarily inexperienced; they have no proper knowledge of life, no deep, just views of the world into which they are advancing, or the business for which they were born. They are often very conceited; they think a great deal of any small acquirement they have made, or of any little natural or social advantage by which they may be distinguished. They are frequently pert, forward, vain, priding themselves on their fathers’ wealth, or their own imagined perfections and accomplishments. They generally attach importance to trifles, and are often torn by the most violent passions, inflamed, mortified, elated, distressed, on account of things which men smile at as small or ridiculous. They have high thoughts of what they would like to do and to be; attaching often vast importance to what is merely showy and superficial. There are often among them envyings, and jealousies, and rankling animosities; and these, too, all springing out of circumstances which, one day, they will come to regard with indifference or shame. They like pleasure

and excitement; they are fonder of reading for amusement than for knowledge; and have no notion whatever of the wearing anxieties or the solid and stern duties of life. They know nothing of sympathy with suffering; they can hardly understand what is meant by self-sacrifice; they have not got to the apprehension of the greatness and beautifulness of duty *as* duty. They may be amiable, cheerful, generous, good-natured; but they are often all this in connexion with an unsuspected selfishness, without deep thought, or steady principle, or real, considerate regard for others. Their minds are not filled with varied knowledge; their hearts have not been schooled and disciplined by experience; their tastes have not been ripened and rectified by time; they have not themselves been subdued by sorrow; their erroneous notions have not been corrected or rebuked by observation: their whole character is raw and immature. However promising they may be, from their uncorruptedness and sincerity, they cannot but be defective in those things which give solidness, weight, polish, and proportion to disciplined virtue and manly worth.

As in infants the reason and the feelings are alike undeveloped—and the apostle fixes on the one idea of the absence of the bad affections and passions from which to enforce a religious lesson—so in youth, when both parts of our nature have unfolded to a certain extent, the apostle directs us to the frequent appearance, at that age, of what is the result of the want of proportion between the development of the understanding and that of the passions. The understanding needs to be opened and cultivated—the passions grow of themselves. If the intellect be let alone, it will not expand; if the feelings be let alone, they will expand the more. The one requires to be encouraged and stimulated; the others to be repressed and restrained. The consequence is, that in

early life, before the higher parts of humanity *can* have been ripened by knowledge and experience, the inferior parts are strong and active, as by the force of an internal impulse. Hence we have the phenomena that so often distinguish immaturity of character,—folly, vanity, conceit, selfishness, ignorance, indiscretion, the want of common-sense, the absence of large knowledge, of just views, of intelligent apprehension of the ends and duties of life; of all those things, in fact, which make up that moral “understanding” in which the apostle wished the Corinthians to be *men*, but which is seldom found to be the characteristic of youths or boys. It is on this last idea, again, that he fixes; to this one thing he wishes by his words to confine our attention.

The last point to be observed is, that the apostle has a third image—the image of full-grown men; men, too regarded as mature in character as well as in years. The human beings who are first presented to us in a state of infancy, with the different parts of their nature equally undeveloped, and then, secondly, in a further state, when both parts have *begun* to be developed, but in which the higher and nobler part is the *less* advanced and unfolded of the two, are now, thirdly, to be seen in a condition the reverse of this—in a last state, in which the reason, the conscience, the moral and spiritual elements of humanity, are all fully developed and matured, and in which, too, the bad and inferior portions have been brought down and have got subdued. The apostle supposes a number of human beings to have passed through a thorough course of culture and discipline, and to have been advanced, too, to contact with the serious and ennobling realities of life. These men have had their minds enlarged by all knowledge; they have been elevated and purified by the contemplation of the beautiful and the pursuit of the true. They have been taught to subdue and master

themselves—to endure hardness; to help each other—mutually to serve, to honour, to prefer: they have acquired an intellectual equipment, and attained a moral fitness, for what they are to be and to do in life: and more than this, by contact with life—by duty, by suffering, by sorrow and change, by deep experience of good and evil—their whole nature has been so affected, that they have attained to a full and thorough “understanding” of what life is, what it is meant for, what men ought to be in themselves, and in relation to one another. And they *are* this: they are sagacious, prudent, discreet, loving, humble, modest, patient, free from the levities and follies of youth, conquerors of the selfishness and the passions of the flesh, ambitious only of what belongs to character and goodness, and fully bent on the brave and resolute pursuit of duty.

Such, then, appear to us the different images which the words employed by the apostle would suggest to the reflective reader, and such the order in which they may be arranged. Now observe, in the next place, the appropriateness of this mode of illustration to the condition of the Corinthian Church, and the force of the text as originally addressed to it.

To do this, you must recall the connexion in which the text occurs, and strongly realize the character of the Corinthians, as seen through the medium of the apostle’s remarks. The words before us occur in a dissertation on those miraculous spiritual gifts by which some among the primitive believers were distinguished; in the progress of which we learn how it was possible for them to be abused, and how, in point of fact, they were actually abused at Corinth. Among these gifts there was that of speaking in foreign tongues—of interpretation—and, probably, of copious and eloquent discourse on the themes of their new faith. The Corinthians, it would appear,

were all ambitious of personal distinction; they each wished to have the best and highest gifts conferred upon them; and those who were entrusted with any, especially with the power of unknown or eloquent speech, were utterly regardless of order and propriety in their use and exhibition. Instead of being used as a sacred trust, for wise, weighty, and useful ends, they were prostituted to purposes of personal display, and made to minister to a puerile vanity. The Corinthians had no just ideas of the dignity and greatness of the Divine life; they did not understand how those singular gifts in which they exulted were bestowed upon them for the benefit of others, not for their own personal glorification, and how they were to be exercised, therefore, with solemnity, wisdom, and great conscientiousness. The Christian church became a theatre of display; and the Christian life, instead of being something serious and earnest—a work and a warfare, a building to be erected by strenuous exertion, an agony and struggle for life and death—instead of this, it put on the appearance of a boisterous holiday, and was as little dignified as a plaything or a song. But, worse than this,—with the immaturity, vanity, and folly of boys there mingled at Corinth the passions of men. They could not *all* be first; some must listen if others speak; where some lead, others must follow. But this is difficult where all are ambitious; and hence among the Corinthians there were “envyings” and “strifes,” “jealousies” and “divisions.” The society was torn by schisms and dissensions; and individuals were disfigured by combining in themselves fully developed bad feelings with a narrow and childish intellect and heart.

It is to this state of things that the admonition in the text refers. The apostle reasons with the Corinthians; he endeavours to *instruct* them by laying down important general principles, and to *reprove* them by severe and

appropriate censure; aiming thus at once to open their understandings and to subdue their passions. He tells them that “gifts” are a solemn trust, and bring with them a solemn responsibility; for that “the ministrations of the Spirit are given to every man for the profit of others.” He insists, therefore, that “everything should be done unto edifying,” that the Church may be benefited, and not that the actor or speaker may be glorified. He ridicules their ambition in all wishing for the best gifts, as if all the members of the body wished to be the eye, which, of course, would be the destruction of the body itself. He mourns over their strifes, their puerile animosities, their silly conceit, their absurd jealousies and envyings of each other; and looking upon these things as sure signs of ignorance and immaturity, of the want of an enlarged, well-informed mind, and of a properly disciplined and purified heart, he embodies his feelings in the words before us, “Be not children in understanding”—mere boys, without deep and comprehensive views of duty. “In malice,” indeed, and all foolish and angry passions, I wish you were even like “babes” who have not yet manifested these dispositions at all; but “in understanding,” in wisdom and knowledge, in mastery of yourselves, and in calm devotedness to the great business of the Christian life, I wish you to be men—men not only in the sense of having arrived at full age, but of having attained maturity of character.

In this way the meaning of the apostle has come to shape itself to us. By being “men in understanding” he does not refer exclusively to largeness of *knowledge*—the expansion and development of the intellectual faculty—but, in connexion with this, including it, or including it in some degree, he refers to that *moral* development of both mind and heart, that maturity of the inward man, which consists in deep and just views

of truth and duty, in sobriety, earnestness, unselfishness, fidelity to conscience, brotherly love, with every other virtue which marks the condition of the “perfectly” and properly developed soul—the man who is not a babe, by none of his powers being developed at all—who is not a vain, immature youth, by the development of the inferior parts of his being exceeding that of the nobler—but who is one who has attained “full age,” by all the higher faculties, intellectual and moral, being so developed that all the inferior have been conquered and repressed; so that, while literally a “man,” in respect to wisdom and worth, he is figuratively a “babe,” as “concerning evil.”

We shall conclude by noticing some of the advantages which attend the possession of a character like this.

1. It is favourable to stability both of opinion and conduct.

One who is really not only spiritual, but a spiritual *man*, may be depended on. His intelligence is large; his views are matured; his principles are established; his habits are fixed: he is not likely to become marked by the levity and inconstancy, the changes of opinion, or the unaccountableness of behaviour, which are often seen in the ignorant and immature, the young and the superficial. This point is strikingly illustrated in the Epistle to the Ephesians—in a manner, too, which bears on several of the particulars of this morning’s discourse—in the fourth chapter, from the eleventh to the sixteenth verses. “Christ,” “when He ascended up on high, gave gifts unto men.” “He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect map*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we hence-

forth be *no more children*, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.” In this passage you will observe that the arrangements in the Christian Church, the institutions and gifts conferred upon it, are represented as established and conferred for the very purpose of training, disciplining, and developing the Christian man till he attains spiritual maturity—a maturity of knowledge, holiness, and love; and that *one* of the ends to be answered by this is, that, being no longer a child, liable to be influenced by others—to hear arguments which he cannot answer, and to have doubts insinuated which he cannot repel—he will be in no danger of being the sport of every “wind of doctrine,” or of falling under the influence either of erroneous or immoral teachers. He will have “grown up into Christ *in all things*,” and, filled by His Spirit, and established by His strength, he will be too wise to exchange light for darkness, and too experienced to fall easily into sin.

2. Manly Christian character capacitates for entering into the profounder portions of truth, and for enjoying and being benefited by the higher forms of instruction.

Preaching may be too elementary, and it may not be elementary enough. In some parts of the Church, where a very simple style of preaching prevails, there is the constant reiteration of just the three or four truths which make up what we call the Gospel. The people are thus always kept at the alphabet, or in the spelling-book, or in the shortest and easiest reading lessons, and are never introduced to the high arguments which lie beyond. In other parts of the Church, where a style of preaching more abstruse and argumentative prevails, the result is,

that theology is taught rather than religion—the preacher becomes more of a lecturer or professor going through his argument, than of a minister in the Church speaking “to instruction, edification, and comfort,” and giving to the flock its “portion of meat in due season.” The danger here is, too, that plain, elementary instruction will be neglected; and then trains of thought will be gone through, and discussions indulged in, which take too much for granted, and for which the people are not prepared. This will be like reading the higher authors before the pupils have learnt anything of grammar. The great thing is, for Christian people to be such thorough “*men*,” that they may delight in being introduced to “the deep things of God,” and may be able to benefit by the higher forms of discussion and argument. Very simple and elementary preaching is very proper, and very important in its place; but the Bible is a book which demands, both for explanation and defence, a great deal beyond that. The character and wants of the age, the popular and plausible forms of error, the ignorance in the Church, and the subtlety of the world, together with the nature, the magnitude and grandeur, of Christian truth, all demand, both in preachers and hearers, greater efforts after that “manly understanding” which *includes* in it, among other things, accurate knowledge and large intelligence in relation to all spiritual truth. Without the culture of their own minds, the full development of their spiritual faculties, a congregation will listen to the higher forms of Christian teaching, not only without benefit, but with weariness and wonder: it will be irksome and incomprehensible, because, however good and valuable in itself, it is addressed to those who are not in a condition to understand and use it. That it is not right for people to continue in this state you learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the writer says, that “by the

time they should have been teachers, they had need that some teach them *again* the first principles of the oracles of God.” He exhorts them to leave the principles and rudiments of truth, and to go on unto perfection: and he does this on the ground, “that every one that useth milk is unskilful in the Word, and is but a babe;” while “strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern good and evil,”—or, their faculties developed to understand truth and error. (Heb. v. 12–14.) In the same style he speaks in this epistle to the Corinthian disciples: “I, brethren, could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.” As if he had said: “I have much to show you which I have not yet touched; I have forms of truth and modes of argument to depict and to employ, surpassingly beautiful, and distinguished for sublimity, depth, and force: but you cannot bear them yet; you could not enjoy or receive them if you heard them. Give me the proper audience; let me have hearers who ‘in understanding are men,’ and I will undertake to lead them into all that is profound, great, and sublime in the revelation of God; and instead of their being fatigued by the demand upon them, or offended by the form in which I convey my thoughts, they shall feel refreshed and strengthened by the exercise, and find themselves wiser, better, and happier men.”

3. To be “men in understanding,” in the sense of the apostle, will correct religious taste, and elevate and improve the general character.

The fact, indeed, is, that a manly understanding would show that the taste had been corrected, and the general character improved and raised. The Corinthians pre-

ferred the showy to the substantial; they liked better to be dazzled than taught; and they liked better to dazzle than either. They lived on excitement, on petty personal gratifications, on “vain shows,” rather than in the accomplishment of useful works and great duties. Their character was factitious, flashy, superficial; they each preferred himself to the rest, and loved himself so much that he had nothing but envy and ill-temper for others. The apostle wished them to be men in understanding that all this might be thoroughly corrected. And so it will be still, if we, too, rise into the character that has been set before us. Christian men, who in some degree answer to this, are superior to dependence on flash and rhetoric, or any of the many and mean arts by which Christian teaching is often disfigured. They “hunger and thirst” after truth and goodness, knowledge and wisdom, and value most what will most enlarge their views of truth, and most efficiently aid them in duty. Having got rid of the craving for distinction, learnt the more excellent way of being great,—the extinction of selfishness and the service of love,—they will be free from those evil tempers and passions in which small and contracted souls indulge. They will delight in the cultivation of all that is grave, noble, and dignified in the Christian character, and be distinguished and known alike for the strength and the beauties of holiness. Such persons will be like babes “in malice,” for the very reason that they are men “in understanding.” Their hearts will be purified from their corrupt passions; they will have something of the “meekness and gentleness of Christ,” by having attained to the fulness of “unfeigned love.” Christians who are thus men in the Church will not be found to be otherwise in the world: they may have the simplicity and guilelessness of children, but not their weakness. They will be grave, prudent, wise, sedate; they will be

beneficent, patriotic, useful; they will “adorn the doctrine of Christ in all things;” and they will have “a good report of all men, and of the truth itself.”

4. In the last place, those who are “men in understanding” will best know how to receive the kingdom of heaven as little children.

At first sight this may appear like a contradiction, or at least an improbability. It may be thought, moreover, that the New Testament seems to demand the understanding of a child in order to the simple reception of the faith. This, however, is not exactly the case. It is not the childish, undeveloped understanding that is required,, but the feeling in the child that is the effect of this—a readiness to rely on authority, and to receive the testimony of those whom it looks up to, without questioning, hesitation, or doubt. A spirit of docility and dependence like this is the best preparation for receiving and entering into the kingdom of God. But this spirit is not, in a man, the consequence of ignorance, but the fruit of knowledge. Those who know nothing, and those who know a little, are often the proudest and most conceited, and think themselves wiser “than seven men that can render a reason.” It takes a long time before some minds are brought to a state of childlike submission: they approach it in proportion as their faculties develop, and their acquaintance with the circle of truth increases. The more they advance in the study and apprehension of science and religion, the more they become aware of the feebleness and fallibility of human thought; and they are more disposed to distrust themselves when they know much, than they were when they knew little. It requires the cultivated understanding of the man to know when he has arrived at an ultimate fact—where it is necessary to pause or stop in curious inquiries, and when it is proper to welcome the positive utterances of

authority, and to rely upon them like a little child. He who has longest studied the Gospel—who has risen into its strongest and purest light—and who, by broad, deep, and varied experience, has had his soul so schooled and taught as to have become proficient in the learning of the heart—that is the man who will have most about him of the humility of childhood, from his having found out for himself both the extent and limits of the human understanding. The most mature Christian will live in the exercise of the most simple faith. He who knows most of God will know most of himself; he will, therefore, believe when others doubt, and will distrust when others presume. To be a “man in understanding” is certainly one way of becoming a child in faith and dependence. It was not when he was either a babe or a boy that David could say, as he once sang, “Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself like a little child; my soul is even as a weaned child.” It was quite appropriate that he who could speak thus should embody the lesson of his large knowledge, and the result of his long experience, in the closing words of the psalm—“Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth, even for ever.” That such feelings and such faith may be yours, “be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”

SERMON VI.

NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

“Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and said, Men of Athens, ... as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you,”—ACTS xvii. 22, 23.

“They came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that (the) Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is (the) Christ.”—ACTS xvii. 1–3.

“After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.”—ACTS xviii. 1–4.

TAKING these passages in this order, you have St Paul reasoning, first, with idolatrous Gentiles, then with religious Jews, and then with both Jews and Gentiles together. In the course of his addresses he refers (to use his own language) to “that which may be *known of God*—being understood by the things that are made;” and to that “which God hath revealed,” and “which is *made known* for the obedience of faith.”¹ I propose to offer a few observations on the two things which obviously underlie this language. In doing this, I shall, in the first place, make some explanatory statements

¹ Rom. i. 19, 20, and xvi 26.

as to what may be understood by *natural* religion, and *revealed*, respectively; and then, in the second place, I shall show you how our several statements receive illustration from what Paul says at Athens, at Thessalonica, and at Corinth.

I.

With respect to the explanation of the terms.

1. As to what may be understood by *natural* religion and *revealed* respectively.

We exclude from consideration external religious *service*, rites, ceremonies, and so on, and limit ourselves to what is meant by the objective—that is, the truth, or truths, to be believed. Of course, religion, properly understood, includes far more than this,—if we take in those subjective mental emotions corresponding to the objects of faith, with *their* issues again, in the life and character. For the sake, however, of simplifying the subject we lay down the limitation specified.

This being understood, then we say, that by natural religion is meant, that knowledge of God, of the Divine existence, perfections, and government,—those impressions of human duty, moral obligation, and the prospects of humanity—which may be gathered from the contemplation of the works of God. These works, however, are not to be restricted to the heavens and the earth, to external nature and material phenomena; they include man himself, with his moral instincts, his spiritual faculties, and all of which he is internally conscious. Whatever truth, or truths, then, of the kind referred to, respecting God and man, which it may be possible to arrive at by the suggestions of consciousness, the perceptions of the reason, and the demonstrations of argument,—these, regarded as things to be believed, would

be natural religion; that is, a religious faith, creed, or system of belief, gathered from, and accepted as contained in, God’s first great book,—the book of nature, or of His works.

By revealed religion is meant, such truth, or truths, the knowledge of which God may communicate in some other way than through that of His works as already explained;—say, for example, in the words of St. Paul as already quoted,—what may be “revealed” to some men, “by God’s Spirit,” and through them “made known” to others, or “to all,” for “the obedience of faith.”

I give these definitions of the two things as sufficient for our purpose. I do not enter into *previous* questions. There are some connected with natural religion which I pass over; as I pass over that which disputes the *possibility* of a revelation. There is a time for everything; of course, there is a time for going into all sorts of previous questions on all sorts of subjects. That time, however, is not when a Christian minister is speaking to his charge on the ground of their common faith, setting forth things “which are most surely believed” by them, and in “the certainty” of which “they have been instructed.” We believe in the possibility of a revelation, because we believe in the thing itself and believe that we have it; and we think that there are times when we have a right to take our stand upon that ground, and to build upon it as an accepted, and, to us, solid and veritable foundation.

As to the *possibility* of a revelation, however, we may just say in passing, that we hold that to be established by the same arguments which establish the existence of God, and His creation of the world and man; or by the innate, instinctive conviction of these truths, supposing them rather to rest on that than on any logical demonstration. He that made the mind must understand its nature, and be capable of having access to it, and may,

if He please, communicate with it *directly*, and thus "reveal" to it "what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard;" things which have not otherwise "entered into the heart of man." What can be thought can be spoken; what can be spoken can be recorded; and so it may come to pass, that Divine ideas directly conveyed from the Supreme intellect to the human, may be embodied in a written book, and become the inheritance of the whole race. "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that *we might know* the things that are freely given to us of God. *Which things also we speak*) not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." "The *booh* of the Law." "The *writings* of the prophets." "The *Holy Scriptures*." "These are the true sayings of God." "Given by inspiration." they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

2. Returning to the subject immediately before us, consider, in the next place, what a revelation from God might be imagined to include. We speak, of course, as men; we refer to a revelation coming to us as such, to a world like ours, the only one with which we are acquainted. We wish to speak hypothetically; that is, without saying whether a revelation has been given or not, but, *supposing it to be possible*, then to imagine what, according to the moral condition of humanity, such revelation might be supposed to include. That such suppositions of what might be, will be suggested or coloured by what an individual believes has been, is no objection. An hypothesis is best framed after much is known—springing from the contemplation of observed facts, and tentatively applied to discover the principle on which they rest, or the final cause with a view to which they

are. In the absence of all light, with no revelation to assist thought, the probability is, that man would be unable to conjecture anything as to what a supposed revelation might include. Whether the Bible contain such a revelation or not, its teaching may be such as legitimately to suggest what may guide our conjectures; which again, as such, may be nothing the worse for being indebted to such suggestion, or for being ultimately” illustrated and confirmed by what comes out in St. Paul’s expositions of Christian truth.

Supposing, then, that all that man needed was to know what was taught in God’s first book; and supposing that he had lost the knowledge of it, or had failed to read it, or had misinterpreted its mystic characters; in such a case, all that would be required would be an accurate and authoritative exposition of the law of nature, or of the testimony and teaching of God’s works, and *this*, it is conceivable, might constitute the substance of a revelation to be made to him. His condition is one, say, of simple ignorance. He wants light—light of a certain kind, light which he never had, or did not improve and so ultimately lost. To meet that condition, the light might be given—“given by inspiration of God,” and that light might simply be the unveiling of what we call the religion of nature; man being divinely taught to read and understand all that was originally written on the universe around him, and on the elements and activities of his own being.

But matters might be worse. Not only might light be needed, but *such* light as never shone through material nature, or was inwardly reflected from the human consciousness. The condition of the race might be such that more might be required to meet it than could be heard, or was ever intended to be heard, in the testimony and the teaching of “the things that are

made." Hence it is, in the second place, conceivable that a revelation might include the discovery of certain aspects of the Divine character, and certain eternal spiritual truths, which are not to be learnt from the constitution of nature. It is not to be supposed that there is nothing in God, or in the things belonging to Him, but what has been mirrored and manifested in His works; and it is certainly possible that this world of ours might be so circumstanced as to need the knowledge of some of those hidden truths on which nature within and without is silent. A revelation, then, might include the discovery of these hidden and higher things.

But, supposing it to be possible that light, of itself, of whatever kind, is not enough to meet our case;—that no knowledge of God, or of any eternal, spiritual truth respecting Him, taught by nature, or otherwise made known, is sufficient to constitute *a gospel*,—such a gospel as *they* would require who stood in need of "redemption" and "salvation;"—supposing then, that something had to be *done*,—done by God;—that there needed to be a direct, Divine interposition in order to provide an adequate and fitting instrumentality to meet our case;—then, things being so, a revelation would include the announcement of this interposition; it would consist in that announcement,—the announcement of a comparatively recent fact, rather than in the discovery of eternal spiritual truths; or of the one through the other,—the truths as revealed and illustrated by the fact.

Such are the three things, the different Divine communications, of one or more of which it is possible to conceive a revelation to consist. We say "of one or more," rather than "of one *or the other* of which," because it is probable, if the hypothesis were realized, that the second would include the first, and the third the other two.

It is further to be observed here, that there cannot be a revelation at all without the action of the miraculous or supernatural element. This may appear in three forms.

First, in the communication to the mind of the individual of that which is received directly from God.¹

Secondly, in some outward and visible sign, confirming the message delivered, and authenticating the messenger as sent of God.²

Thirdly, in the objective truth itself made known for the obedience of faith—the act or acts constituting God’s mode of interposition,—for, supposing such to take place, the supernatural element would not be confined to inward personal inspiration or outward authenticating sign, but would extend to the essence and substance of the communication itself,—the facts to be admitted and believed.³

3. In concluding these explanatory statements, notice, in the next place, the different way in which natural and revealed religion present themselves to us, or the manner in which the human mind stands related to them respectively. Natural religion submits herself to man,

¹ The prophets were “*moved by the Holy Ghost;*” “they searched what or what manner of time *the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.*”

² “The works that I do bear witness of me.” “We know that Thou art a teacher come from God; *for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him.*” That “which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, was confirmed onto us by them that heard him; *God bearing them witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles.*”

³ “When the fulness of the time was come, *God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, to redeem us, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*” “*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.*” “For he *hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*”

and asks him to make out the truth for himself by the effort and exercise of his own faculties. Revealed religion speaks with authority, putting her message into living words, and demanding the acceptance of her dogmatic statements. In the one case we are thinkers, philosophers, each reasoning out a system for himself bound by the argument or demonstration of another, as far as we can see it and no further; in the other case we are listeners, disciples, pupils. Admitting the genuineness and authenticity of the revelation, and acknowledging the supreme authority of its author, the question is not what we demonstrate, but what we hear; not "What thinkest thou?" but "What readest thou?" In the Church we stand on different ground from what we do in the schools. With the Book before us, we do not want thinkers, speculators, men who come with their systems of the universe, to tell us how the great mystery of life has shaped itself to *them*; we want Scriptural expositors; men who will "give the sense" of the Divine Word, and teach the people "to understand the meaning." We want to have brought out and set before us *God's* thoughts—and not merely, or not always, men's thinkings about; them. Admitted the fact of a revelation,—ascertained the true import of its words,—the relation of the mind to it is that of the consulting priest listening to the response of the "holy oracle,"—the announcements are not to be questioned, but believed.

These several statements have very much the appearance of self-evident propositions, if the words "revelation," "Divine revelation," "revealed religion," are to be used in any adequate or intelligible sense. Let us next notice how all that we have said is confirmed and illustrated by St. Paul.

II.

That is to say, We now propose to notice how these several statements are illustrated and confirmed by the teaching of St. Paul *in his addresses at Athens, at Thessalonica, and at Corinth.*

1. At Athens, he is standing among men who have no revealed faith; but who, having God's first book of external nature, with their own moral consciousness and spiritual instincts, have to endeavour to read what is written upon these, and to frame for themselves a system of religious belief. How they had failed in this, both in the temple and the school, in their mythology and philosophy, we know. Any one addressing them, supposed to be in possession of the truth, must of necessity place himself on the ground they occupy, and lead them by arguments which, as thinkers, they can follow and appreciate. The apostle does this. Giving them credit for intelligence, religious feeling, and moral sentiment, he reasons with them, and endeavours to lead them to the perception and the acknowledgment of what is taught in that book of which they are students.

In doing this, he has to set forth by argument the very first principles of natural religion, especially this—the spirituality and personality of God. The argument he employs is very simple, but logically demonstrative. On the acknowledgment involved in the fact of their religiousness—that they recognise objects of worship, but keeping before their minds the idea of a Supreme Deity, the source of all things in heaven and earth, (which some of his hearers at least admitted,) he makes an appeal to common sense, in illustration not only of the incompetency of idolatry to embody this idea, but

of its obvious opposition to it. He reasons from the effect to the cause. What there is in the effect there must be in the cause; there may be a great deal more, but there must be that. "We, then," he virtually says, "are persons, intelligences, thinking beings, with spiritual affections and moral capacities. But we are the children of God,—of God who made the world and all things therein, the giver of life and breath to all men, in whom we live, and move, and exist,—a truth which is certified by some of your own poets, whose utterances you accept and approve, who, speaking of Jove, the father of gods and men, have said that 'we his offspring are.' Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. Why, these things could not represent *us*; they could not adequately show what *we* are,—what we are as men, living, thinking, intelligent beings,—much less can they be like God. If we possess spiritual attributes, and are endowed with an intellectual and a moral consciousness, much more must He be so distinguished from whom we have proceeded, and in whom we have our being. An unthinking cause of thought is a contradiction. If, then, the latter exists, and exists as an effect, the source whence it proceeded must have it in itself." It is the simple, sufficient, and unanswerable argument of psalmists and prophets, by which they reprov'd the idolatry of their day. "Understand, ye brutish among the people; and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall He not know?" "The gods of the nations are vanity and a lie." "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands; they have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears,

but they hear not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat. *They that made them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them,*”—they have denied their own moral and spiritual nature, and have sunk themselves to the level of a dead materialism. Wherefore, being what we are, and as such the offspring of God, we ought not to think that He is like unto these things, or that these things can represent Him.

In connexion with this direct, argumentative appeal to the reason, the apostle refers to several other things as truths to be received,—received, perhaps, because included in the teaching and testimony of nature properly understood,—such as the existence of one only living and true God, His creation of the world and man, the unity of the race, the providence of God—as illustrated in the rise and arrangement of nations and the constant communication of His gifts; the moral end contemplated in the constitution of things—that men should seek God if haply they might follow after Him and find Him; all necessarily involving the existence of a moral government under the Divine inspection and rule. In the application of his argument he rises into a higher sphere of thought than before, and does more than simply reason; he implies that the ignorance of idolatry (men thinking of God “as they ought not”) has in it, in consistency with the principles of a moral government, the nature of sin. There is an appeal here to intelligent moral consciousness, to which there would be a response in the bosoms of most of his hearers, from their notions of virtue and their knowledge of what was sanctioned in the services of the temple. But he went higher when he declaratively announced that God had hitherto overlooked “the times of this ignorance,” but that He “now commanded all men everywhere to repent,”—here implying

the placability of God and the efficacy of repentance; and higher still when he affirmed that the future accountability involved in the constitution of a moral system, was to be regarded as taking the specific form of God having "appointed a day in which to judge all men by that Man whom He had ordained," the solemn assurance of which was expressed in the fact that He had raised Him from the dead.

Such was St. Paul's speech at Athens, such were its direct statements and its necessary implications. Whether we have but the sketch of his discourse, whether he enlarged on its several topics and set them forth in all their consequences, or whether he intended to advance further, and would have proceeded to do so but for what seems to have been a rude interruption, we cannot positively assert. Looking, however, at his address just as we have it, it illustrates, we think, according to its fair, legitimate, and logical import, the following points as laid down in our preliminary statement:—

It shows that there is such a thing as *natural* religion in the sense that there is something to be known of God and of human duty from the things that are made, including man himself; *and, correlatively with this*, that in acquiring this knowledge, men are to think, reflect, search, study their intuitions and consciousness, have to reason their way to their conclusions, and may be reasoned *with* in respect to the very first principles of what is to be believed. It further shows that there is such a thing as *revealed* religion in the sense of God communicating to man what cannot be known by the light of nature; *and, correlatively with this*, that such things rest on authority and appeal to faith. In proof of these positions you will observe, that we have here some truths argumentatively deduced, and some positively declared; we have men reasoned with as thinkers, to be convinced

by argument, and we have them addressed as listeners, to be informed by testimony.

Further, in this address of St. Paul, we have not only natural religion and revealed, but we have the *latter* in two forms. The first of these may be found in the apostle's exposition of the teachings of nature; for that exposition, looked at in all its breadth and depth, throws such a light on the testimony of the universe to God, as gives to it a meaning which humanity had lost, which Paul himself had acquired by other means than that of independent speculation, which philosophy did not perceive, but which it was capable of appreciating when argumentatively exhibited. The second form is to be found in those discoveries of the Divine nature which are involved in God's readiness to pardon on repentance, in the authoritative declaration of this, in the call to repentance as a direct command, and in the positive announcement of the coming judgment, definitely determined upon both as to time and mode.

It is still further to be remarked that in this discourse of St. Paul's we have the supernatural element in two forms—the first in the subjective illumination out of which the apostle spoke, both in his exposition of the works, in his revelation of the character, and in his declaration of the designs of God; the second in the resurrection of Christ viewed *simply as the Divine authentication of His mission*, the assurance to all men that the teaching of Jesus, and the teaching of those commissioned by Him, respecting that day when “all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God,” and come to judgment, was to be received as true and faithful, certain in itself, and “worthy of all acceptance.” In this light only is the resurrection of Christ put in this discourse; *so far and no farther*; is it employed as either expressing or sustaining revealed truth.

2. Let us next look at St. Paul in the synagogue at Thessalonica, and notice the subject and mode of his address there. He is here on utterly different ground from what he occupied at Athens, and has an audience very differently circumstanced and conditioned. Many of the subjects which were open questions with the philosophers are settled with the Jew; many matters which might be subject to doubt, discussion, denial, inquiry in Gentile schools, admit of no agitation in the Jewish synagogue. There is no necessity for an argumentative exposition of the first principles of natural religion. The men all believe in the Divine existence, in the one living personal God, in His natural attributes and moral perfections, in the creation, Divine providence, human accountability, and so on. They have no doubt about any of these things. All sorts of previous questions respecting them have been settled long since.

Again, the congregation in the synagogue also believes in the possibility and the fact of a revelation; that men may be, and that some have been, directly and supernaturally taught of God; that they have spoken in His name, being authenticated by miracle; and that many of their utterances, committed to writing, have been preserved, and are possessed by them in the Holy Scriptures—the law, the prophets, and the psalms. They have no doubt about these things. They admit them and rejoice in them. Paul has nothing to do with any previous questions to which such matters might give rise in a company of mere philosophical thinkers. They are past all that in the firm and settled belief of the synagogue.

On these two series of subjects, then, the apostle at Thessalonica need say nothing. But there are two other things upon which he and his audience have opinions in common, so that his course is still further simplified.

In the first place, they agree in the authority to be

attached to the sacred books. They believe that they are bound by their utterances; that whatever their meaning is understood to be, *that* they have to receive. They have not to discuss or question what is said when fairly ascertained; what they have to do is to ascertain it—that is, the sense of the text—and having done so, to accept it. The two parties, the apostle and his audience, are agreed on that.

In the second place, there is a further coincidence of opinion in this, that they are alike convinced that one great object of their holy writings is to depict and make known a coming Messiah, an anointed one, the hope of their nation, the heir of the world. The hereditary religious faith of the Jew fixes the eye and heart upon this. Along all the ages, the sounding line of the prophetic Word is heard by him to be telling, more or less distinctly, of the coming One, whose advent is to be anticipated as the greatest of facts. The apostle shares this belief with them, and is here in the synagogue to speak to them on the ground of their common convictions.

With so many previous questions settled, and with all these points of agreement understood, it is easy to perceive, not only that Paul’s standing-ground is altogether different from what it was at Athens, and that his mode and address must be so too, but that what he has to say must be confined within comparatively narrow limits, seeing that so many things, uncertain or unknown to the out-lying world, are so defined and fixed in the synagogue.

In consistency with this you will find that *his mode* of argument is changed; he now reasons, not on general principles and from natural phenomena, but “out of the Scriptures.” *The subject* of his argument is changed; it is not about God, but the Messiah. And *the point of his testimony* respecting *Him* is changed; it is not His

resurrection as authenticating personal teaching, but as essential to official character.

These things lie on the surface of the statement of the historian. "Paul came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews; he went in unto them; he reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that the Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead. Then, testifying and affirming, 'This Jesus,' said he, 'whom I preach unto you, is the Christ.'"

First, then, the apostle gave an exposition of the Book recognised by him and his hearers alike as speaking to them with authority. He opened to them the meaning of the text as he now understood it, and he "alleged" that such *was* the meaning, and nothing else. In doing this he did what he might have done before his conversion, or what any Rabbi present in the synagogue might have done then; but he gave a different rendering from that of his former self, and from what would have been given by the teachers whom he addressed. He showed them that the true idea of the Messiah who was to come, was altogether different from the popular conception of Him; that, instead of being a king, in the secular and mundane sense of the word,—instead of being a leader and conqueror, uniting, as they expected, the triumphs of David with the magnificence of Solomon,—instead of this, He was to come, according to the prophets, in humiliation and tears, in blood and shame, to suffer and to die. He was to be "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" to "be taken from prison and from judgment, and cut off out of the land of the living." But He was not "to see corruption,"—for God would "show Him the path of life," and give Him "the sure mercies of David." The Christ, whenever He might appear, "must needs suffer, and rise again from the dead"

Having thus “reasoned with them out of the Scriptures,” “opening and alleging” their true import, the apostle proceeded to do a second thing, and in doing so advanced to a different and higher ground. He had shown them what sort of a Christ, according to the meaning of the Divine Word, ought to be expected; next, assuming the attitude of a divinely-commissioned messenger of God, he testified and affirmed, with apostolic authority, that He had come; that that Jesus whom he preached *was* the Christ; that “they that dwelt at Jerusalem and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets read every Sabbath-day, they fulfilled them in condemning Him; that though they found no cause of death in Him, yet had they desired Pilate that He should be slain; and when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead: and He was seen many days of them who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people.” With these, and such-like words (which we know from other recorded sayings of his in the synagogue [Acts xiii. 29, 30]), he showed to his brethren both the true meaning of their own books, and the way in which God had fulfilled the same—that as the Christ was to die and to rise again, so Jesus had died, according to the Scriptures, and, according to the Scriptures, had risen again from the dead.

In looking at the apostle’s teaching at Thessalonica, we limit ourselves to what is stated by St. Luke. He might have said much more, but he said this. But even in this it is easy to see what a difference there is between the synagogue and the Areopagus. There is nothing here of natural religion; no attempt to prove by argument the first principles of simple Theism, We have revealed

religion both in that which is the ground of the preachers argument, and in the fact which he establishes by testimony. And this fact, the resurrection of Jesus, is not referred to as a miraculous attestation of his teaching,, authenticating a judgment to come, but is exhibited as something which entered essentially into the character of the Christ as such, and belonging to the idea of Him contained in the Scriptures. It had something to do with what He was, and what He came for. The men of Athens had no Bible, no prophecies, no expectations of a Messiah; they needed to be taught the first principles of natural religion, and could not have understood allusions to that into which psalmists and prophets had inquired and searched, "who prophesied of the grace that should come, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when testifying beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." In the synagogue and among Jews everything centred in this. The great subject of discourse was a personal Christ, One who was to come for some great purpose, to effectuate which it was necessary that He should die and rise again from the dead.

We get no further than this at Thessalonica, though this is a great advance on what was announced at Athens. After leaving Athens, Paul went to Corinth. There he "reasoned" in the synagogue every Sabbath, and "persuaded" the Jews and the Greeks. He abode and taught in that city more than two years. The words just quoted, referring to the first weeks or months of his ministry, evidently include a longer time than the three Sabbath-days at Thessalonica, or the hour spent on the Areopagus at Athens. We are warranted in saying, therefore, that the Jews and Greeks in Corinth, whom he there continuously addressed and "persuaded," would be raised into a position to receive and comprehend more than we

have yet heard of the apostle’s doctrine, if more remained to be developed. Whether or not that was the case, we shall see.

3. That more did remain, and that we have the means of ascertaining what it was, admits of easy and satisfactory proof. We have no report from the pen of the historian of any discourse of St. Paul at Corinth, but we have his own account of the substance of his teaching in letters written or dictated by himself. Let us see then, by referring to these, whether anything is to be added to what we have as yet heard, to complete our idea of that system of revealed religion which, through St. Paul, “was made known for the obedience of faith.”

Little will be needed beyond the citation of a few passages. Some of them, you will observe, are singularly to the point, as supplying the place of historical statements:—“Brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel *which I preached unto you*, which also ye have received and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ *died for our sins* according to the Scriptures.” “I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellence of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ *and Him crucified*.” “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect For *the preaching of the cross* is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” “For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach *Christ cru-*

cified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one *died for all*, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again." "God was in Christ *reconciling the world unto himself* not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For *He hath made Him to be sin for us* who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

Such is Paul's own account of his preaching at Corinth. It is manifest on the face of it that there is more here than we have had before. At Athens, in addition to a discourse on natural religion, we had the resurrection of one *unnamed* as authenticating the truth of a Divine message. At Thessalonica, we had the death and resurrection of *Jesus* as essentially characteristic of the Christ of the Jews. But at Corinth, we have light so thrown on these facts as to reveal the reason on which they rest and the issues they are intended to secure. The Christ of the Jews is the Saviour of the world. He saves by "dying for us," "dying for all," "dying for our sins." According to a letter written from Corinth, Paul taught that Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." His dying and rising are the two sides of the same thing—that redemptive work which constitutes the subject of "the preaching of the cross." "God set Him forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, that He might be just, and the justifier of

him that believeth in Jesus.” What comes out from the whole of these statements is manifestly this,—That God, in Christ, and through Him, *effectuated that* on which hinges the redemption of the world; and that this was done, not by Christ’s words, teaching, precepts, example (all of which have their place), but emphatically by His cross and passion, by what He did when He died and rose again, for “He died for our sins,” and “was raised again for our justification.” It was thus that He “opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.”

If the teaching of St. Paul at Corinth means anything, it means this: and meaning this, it illustrates our third hypothesis as to what a revelation might include, and it exemplifies the third form of the possible manifestation of the supernatural element. For it is now declared that what is “made known for the obedience of faith” is neither the true reading of the teaching of nature, nor higher truths in relation to God not included in it; but it is something done, something accomplished—accomplished by the gracious interposition and the mighty power of God in the “redemption of the world by Jesus Christ.” And this being so, then the supernatural element is neither in the subjective illumination of the prophet, nor in the outward display of an authenticating sign, but in the fact itself, which is revealed and made known as the ground and substance of the message of mercy. The great miracle of the Gospel is—the Gospel!

I have thus completed what I proposed to do. I laid down certain positions in respect to natural religion and revealed: and I have shown you how they are successively illustrated by St. Paul’s teaching at Athens, at Thessalonica, and at Corinth. Much might now be added, showing the necessary results of our discussion, but there is not time for that at present. I shall con-

elude this lecture, therefore, by briefly indicating some of the things that might have been dwelt upon.

1st. We are more indebted to God's second book (Revelation) for the right reading of the first (Nature) than we are aware of. Many modern thinkers, who construct for themselves religious and moral systems out of (as they suppose) the Divine writing within and around them, would never succeed as they do but for the light which has been shed upon that writing, and the significance given to it, by the teaching of prophets and apostles. No man of this country and of this age can say that his conceptions of the Divine character and of human duty, however independent and original he may deem them, owe nothing to that Christian element which has educated society and taught it much, whether it is aware of it or not.

2d. That true reading of nature which undoubtedly constitutes part of the revelation of God to us, ought, perhaps, to lead us to see and to acknowledge that there is more meaning in the original constitution of things than we are sometimes disposed to admit. The teaching may be there, though the race once closed its ears to it "The things that are made "may distinctly" declare the glory of God," "even His eternal power and deity," though men lost the impression of it through "not liking to retain God in their knowledge." When light is vouchsafed to enable us to see what others failed to read, we only see what has always been impressed on the ample page of the Divine works, and what God meant us to learn through that medium. The light does not create the object seen; it only makes visible what as really existed in the "times of ignorance" and darkness as it does now.

3d. There may be a natural religion in the sense of certain truths being actually imprinted on God's works,

although the condition of humanity may be such that, without supernatural assistance, those truths are not perceived. In consequence of this, and of the moral condition whence the blindness proceeds, it may come to pass that men’s “foolish hearts being darkened,” they may become “vain in their imaginations,” and may “change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” Hence, while *God’s* system of natural religion is that which He has inscribed upon His works, the religion which comes to be *natural to man* is that which proceeds from his ignorance and corruption, and his apostasy from the primitive faith originally embodied in, and still uttered by, the “things that are made.”

4th. If there be a revelation in the world, it is contained in the Bible. If the Bible means what it says, that revelation culminates in the discovery of a redemption and a Redeemer—a personal Christ, who comes not merely to teach, but to accomplish,—to do something; to do that, in fact, by which salvation shall be secured to the guilty, and holiness restored to the fallen. Then, again, if words have any significance, *this* is effectuated by His death and resurrection,—facts which enfold within them those central and mighty doctrinal truths which lie at the basis of that knowledge of God, whence comes “everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.”

5th. Revealed religion being this, because this is the character of the Christian revelation—and Christianity, as this, being set forth as meant for the world, and *as* what was necessary to be done to meet its case—it follows that the religion needed by, and suited to, mankind, must include in it a Divine interposition, God doing something “to reconcile the world unto himself.”

Hence, then, no natural development of the religious faculty, no progressive growth of the species, from age to age, in light and culture, no expansion of the reason or the religious consciousness of the individual, can ever furnish that religion which humanity needs. None of these things can go beyond what is subjective; they cannot create a new fact, originate Divine action, bring to the world an interposition—a something done—done from above by God in Christ. According to Christianity, the religion to meet the wants of humanity is not something that may grow out of itself, towards which man may rise by development from within, but something which must be brought to him by some one else—must be let down "from God out of heaven."

6th. If things be so, this consequence also follows, That inspiration, the direct impartation of Divine thought—revelation, in the sense of the conveyance of Divine ideas from the supreme intellect to the human—this, however Bublimate and transcendent the knowledge communicated, would not be enough to meet our case. It is not light simply that is wanted, but life; not knowledge, but help; and hence, unless what is revealed includes in it the discovery of a mediatorial system, a Redeemer and Saviour through whom something is accomplished on our behalf, we are not furnished with what we need. No inspiration, however full and direct, no making known to us of the mind of God, to whatever extent, could make a Bible adequate to our wants in the absence of the discovery of Him "who gave himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." It is "the grace which bringeth salvation," that "teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world."

In conclusion, let it be noted that there were three

ways in which men might stand affected to the Truth, both on the Areopagus and in the synagogue. At Athens some “mocked;” some said, “We will hear thee again on this matter;” and some “believed” The same variety appeared among the Jews, putting together Thessalonica and Berea. Some “believed;” some “believed not;” some “searched the Scriptures to see whether these things were so.” It is the same still There are those who reject the Gospel,—those who hesitate,—those who believe. There may be honest and conscientious doubt. Then let there be honest, conscientious, and devout inquiry. Of course, we believe that there cannot be rejection and denial without sin. Happy are they who, however they may have had to make their way into the light through perils and darkness, get into it at last, and rejoice in the knowledge of all it reveals! Happy, too, they who, never questioning the certainty of those things “in which they have been instructed,” receive the kingdom of God as little children, and follow the good Shepherd, whithersoever He goeth!

Now, unto Him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy,—to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

SERMON VII.

SALVATION BY FIRE, AND SALVATION IN FULLNESS.¹

IN the prospect of this service, I wrote a sermon which I intended to have read. Having, however, been now occupied with the previous engagements of the day for more than three hours,—some of us with a very brief intermission—most of you not having been out of the building at all,—I feel that it would be out of the question to proceed to the fulfilment of my original purpose. Reading a discourse requires, with me, more exertion, and is far more exhausting and laborious, than my usual mode of address; while a congregation like this, suffering under an oppressive atmosphere, uncomfortably crowded together, and having already had large demands made on its attention, would, I fear, be impatient under the infliction of a formal manuscript, instead of the employment of free speech. It would be unfair, perhaps, for *either* of us to be taxed too severely in our present circumstances. I shall not attempt, therefore, to read what I had written; but, throwing my mind back on some train of thought which I may hope on the instant to recall, I shall request your attention to a few remarks, spoken with the freedom and familiarity of conversation, rather than in the style of a printed book.

¹ See note at the end of the volume.

I take, then, two passages of Scripture, and I read them in immediate connexion with each other. Looked at *together*, they present to you the subject on which I have determined for a little to speak. They will be found in First Corinthians iii. 15, and Second Peter i. 11. They read thus:—

“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

“If ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

These two passages present to us, you will observe, the *two sides of one and the same subject*. The central idea is *salvation*;—the one apostle leads us up to it from one point, the other from *another*; we examine both, and we find that we are put in possession of these two views of the same thing—“*salvation*” “BY FIRE”—and “*salvation*” “IN FULNESS.” I propose to expound to you the whole matter; not by preaching from the two passages now read, but by going over *the previous trains of thought with which each is connected*, and thus endeavouring to ascertain its exact sense.

I.

The first passage from the Epistle to the Corinthians is the conclusion of a somewhat extended illustration,—that is, of an *argument* put in the form of a figure or similitude. This sort of speaking and writing is of great use, and is often employed by St. Paul. An *illustration* is not a mere prettiness—an ornamental phrase, that might be left out without detriment to the train of thought,—it is something which really *lights up* that

train of thought itself, and enables the reader or hearer to *see* the aim, as well as to feel the force, of the logic. An argument may be demonstrative,—it may thoroughly establish the position maintained,—but it may not at first, and simply as an argument, be fully apprehended; when, the understanding having done its work, passion and genius shall crown the whole with some vivid illustration, which shall make it stand out with a distinctness that shall never be forgotten! It is one great Faculty of the mind holding up a lighted torch to the workmanship of another. The apostle was a master of logic,—a hard, severe reasoner, who at times went on for a good while exercising and addressing simply the understanding; he was a fervid and feeling man, however, with a large, glowing, burning soul in him, and hence he frequently puts his argument into the form of something that seizes the imagination of his reader, or he illustrates it by the force and flashings of his own. You have an instance of this in the case before us. He wants to convince the teachers and ministers of the Church at Corinth of the importance of care, devotedness and fidelity, in the fulfilment of their work; and he does this through the medium of an analogy, or an extended figure, addressed to the imaginative faculty, but adapted to pierce through that to the reason and the conscience. He calls the Church "God's building." He speaks of having, "as a wise master-builder," "laid the foundation." He represents the ordinary ministers of the Church as builders building on that foundation. He supposes that they may do their work differently: one building with "gold, silver, and precious stones;" another, with "wood, hay, and stubble." He warns every man,—every recognised official builder,—to take heed "*how* he buildeth;" and he grounds this on the fact that every man's work is one day to be "tried," or tested, "by fire;" that "the fire" shall bring

out and show, with respect to every man’s work, “of what sort it is;” and that then, each shall have appropriate praise or blame;—“if a man’s work abide, he shall have a reward:” “if any man’s work be burned, he shall suffer loss; yet he himself may be saved, but *so as by fire.*”

There is a difference of opinion among learned theologians as to what it is that the builders build into the edifice. Some suppose that by Christ being the foundation is meant the doctrine respecting Christ, and that the gold and silver, the hay and the stubble, are, respectively, true or false *doctrines*, taught as portions of the Christian system. Others think that by Christ being the foundation is meant, His being personally the object of faith, “to whom coming, as unto a living stone,” men are to be *personally* “built up, as spiritual stones, into a spiritual house;” the “gold and silver,” the “hay and stubble,” in this case representing, respectively, true or false *professors*, united by the ministry to the visible Church. I incline myself to this latter opinion; but it so happens, that the point and force of the apostle’s argument, as I wish to expound and exhibit it at present, would, for my purpose, be precisely the same, *whichever* of the views you might choose to prefer.

By what I have already said, it will be seen, that I take the one set of materials to represent what is good,—the other the contrary. There is a question about *that*, too, among commentators; but, without regarding it, we shall assume the Tightness of the natural impression that the words would make on the common mind. Ordinary understandings would generally, I should think, take “gold, silver, and precious stones,” to signify the *true* in respect to doctrine, or the *good* in relation to character: and that “the wood, hay, and stubble” stood for *the false* of the one class, or for the *bad* in the other.

"Without arguing the matter, we shall adopt, and proceed upon, this impression.

Two individuals, then, are supposed by the apostle to be alike ministers—ministers officially,—and alike spiritual and true men. This latter idea must be understood, for, in the first place, he does not accuse either of them with wishing to lay any other foundation—he only charges them to take heed how they build upon that which is laid: and, in the second place, even *he*, you will observe, who loses everything at last, is yet *saved*;—and this, you are aware, could not, by possibility, be supposed to occur, except on the supposition of his having been, previously, a man of sincere and genuine faith. These two persons—as individuals, alike Christian, and as ministers, equally recognised—proceed to the work given them to do, "the edifying of the body of Christ,"—or the building up of the visible Church, by the addition to it of those who profess to come, by faith, to Him who is set forth as its foundation. These two persons, the apostle proceeds to suppose, may do their work—the same work, or ostensibly the same work—after two very different fashions. The one may build on the foundation, and into the rising walls of the edifice, nothing but what is congenial with the properties of the one and the destiny of the other: all his materials are solid and substantial,—adapted to durability, intrinsically precious: he has a great and just idea of what is to be done,—a house to be built in harmony with the fact of its standing on a living and Divine basis, and to be so constructed that it may rise and grow into "a habitation of God through the Spirit" But the other man, whatever might be his personal truth and sincerity, so blunders in his official sphere, and in relation to his official work, that he actually builds into the building, "wood, hay, and stubble,"—chaff and refuse,—as if these

were materials worthy to be put on a spiritual foundation, or fit to constitute a Divine temple to be filled and beautified by the Divine presence! Somehow or other, the man's ministerial life is a perpetual mistake. There is a terrible defect about his understanding, or his earnestness,—his vigilance or his sagacity,—his knowledge of men,—his idea of the Church in its properties and its end,—his notion of the way in which a great and Divine work is to be done! Year after year, he goes on, building away,—and building, it may be, with some diligence and some complacency: really thinking that he is doing his business with tolerable success, and erecting what will stand for the Master's use and his own honour! “I have laid the foundation;” “another buildeth thereon;” “*one*” buildeth “gold, silver, precious stones;” —“*another*, wood, hay, stubble.”

You are next to suppose, that while this process is going on, and the two men are thus busily employed in doing their work, it is not obvious, either to others or themselves, *how* they are doing it. The materials, it must be understood, may, in both cases, appear very much the same;—there may be an external and formal resemblance, with an intrinsic difference so essential and so vast, that the one shall be solid as gold and gems, and the other insubstantial as straw and chaff. A day, however, is coming, says the apostle, which will test the nature of each man's work, and ascertain and reveal the sort of materials he has added to the building. “Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.” Now, I quite admit, that this may have a very good sense as applied to persecution. Persecution is a “fiery trial” It tests and tries the reality of men. Out of it, some come “as gold that has been tried in the fire;” by it, other

some, in respect to their profession, are scorched and perish; they are the stony-ground hearers, likened by the Lord to "grass" that fades "as soon as the sun rises with his burning heat," for when troubles or persecutions arise, "by and by they are offended." While admitting this, however,—admitting that the fire that is to try the work of the two builders may refer to persecution,—we prefer to take it in a higher sense, and to regard it as an allusion to the ultimate revelations of the last day. That those revelations may be such as to surprise even the bad, we learn from our Lord himself. Some, when charged with specific defects, are represented as asking, "*when* saw we Thee naked or athirst, hungry or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?" and others, whom He says He will indignantly reject, are made to refer to their expectations and their claims by enumerating their doings,—“have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works?” If, then, the bad may be surprised, in this way, by the discoveries of the judgment, much more may the good,—the good, who are really sincere men, but weak, inconsistent, ignorant, or indiscreet. We purpose, therefore, taking the passage as referring to the final appearance of the Master; that "the fire" with which He himself "shall be revealed" shall penetrate and "reveal" everything else;—when men and ministers, with all their works, must undergo the public scrutiny of Him whose eyes, even now, are "as a flame of fire;" when He "shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the intentions of the heart, and when every one shall have praise of God,"—or blame.

Imagine, then, that you see the finished building standing before you, on their separate and respective portions of which the two builders have bestowed their

labour. Imagine that the time has come when the Great Architect, or Supreme Master-builder, is going to test each man's work; and, however violent the next supposition, imagine that He is going to do this by applying fire to the edifice; and finally imagine, that the two builders are looking on from a little distance, and are waiting to see the result and the revelation of the momentous experiment. Each knows, it must be supposed, his own work—whereabouts it is, and where to look for it,—and has his eye fixed upon it intently. The fire is lighted: it seizes the structure; it spreads and rises, and the whole fabric is enveloped in the flame. On some portions of the building it makes no impression; the materials are incombustible; they cannot be burnt; and not only so, but the fire actually reveals in them properties and perfections which were not known, or not suspected, to be there; they not only stand the test, but they glow and sparkle in the midst of the flame with the flashing lustre of precious gems! The man who is looking on, and who recognises in this portion of the edifice his own work, is not only gratified by finding that it “abides,” but is astonished at the discovery that it is a diviner thing than he had dared to hope! “*He has a reward;*”—a reward in himself,—in the blessed consciousness that fills his soul; and a reward from the Master, in His expressed approbation and assigned honour. “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

But now turn and observe another part of the building, and notice in connexion with it the spectacle of the man who recognises it as *his*. Instead of resisting the action of the flame—“abiding,” in spite of it, and exhibiting, in addition, splendour and beauty—instead of this, it is “devoured,” and perishes! It emits, at first,

a portentous smoke;—it is involved in blackness;—anon, suddenly the flame breaks out, and the whole mass is consumed as in a moment! The terrified builder is looking on, and sees the catastrophe. His work is "burned." The revelation of its character stuns him as by a blow. He did not suspect it, or not to the extent to which it is "made manifest." *He has "to suffer loss:"* the loss of all the labour of a life; the destruction of his work,—its utter annihilation; loss in himself,—in the extinction of his hopes, and the dreadful disappointment that sweeps like a hurricane through every region of his soul;—loss, in relation to those expressions of approval, and those circumstances of honour, which, in the other case, flow from the gracious lips of the Lord, and accompany the servant's admission to His joy. Nay,—while you keep looking at the spectacle which these several particulars suggest, an additional phenomenon consummates the picture. The flames have leaped from the building to the builder! He is in danger of being destroyed along with his work. He who could attempt a divine thing in so undivine a manner as it turns out his work has been done, must have a good deal of mere chaff, and straw, and stubble in himself. To that, then, the fire now flies; on that it fixes; he is involved in smoke, and scorched by the flame; he is ready to give up all for lost—even himself; when, the loving hand of its compassionate Master, seizing him as it were by the hair of the head, lifts him up, out of the midst of his terrible environment, and lays him down in safety by His side! He is like a man snatched, as by miracle, from a burning house; and who, awaking from unconsciousness, and from remembered terror, finds himself *alive*—but nothing more!—his property is gone; his house is consumed; his very clothes are burnt off his back; his body itself is scorched and

disfigured;—but he breathes and lives! He feels this. He comes gradually to the conviction of its certainty; and this one blessing, though with “the loss of all things,” is sufficient to fill him with a deep and thankful, though silent joy! Thus it is with the builder before us: “His work is burnt;” he “suffers loss;” “*but he himself is saved*,” yet—so as by fire.”

Such, I take it, is a fair and honest exposition of this argumentative illustration of St. Paul. If it means anything, it means just what we have brought out, in this attempt “to give the sense, and to cause all of you to understand the reading.” And now, at this point of transition from the one side of the subject to the other—in passing from Paul’s standing-point to Peter’s—we might give utterance to a good many suggestive sentiments, which what we have been looking at must have already awakened in every deep-thinking soul here. It will perhaps be better, however, to reserve these till we have the whole subject fully before us. We can then gather up into one series of concluding remarks the practical lessons which the two apostles combine to teach. Waiving, therefore, for the present, the doctrine and uses of this great and pregnant Corinthian illustration, we shall make our way to the other aspect of our twofold picture by one necessary connecting remark.

Let it be noted, then, that this parable of the builders, while it undoubtedly addresses itself, first and chiefly, to official men,—to those who sustain the ministerial office, and whose work is the actual “edifying of the Church,”—does yet contain in it a *general principle*, which is applicable to every individual believer. Every Christian is in himself a temple, “a temple of God,” as well as a separate or single stone in the general edifice. He has to build up, on the foundation of faith, all that is holy in personal character. “Other foundation can no man

lay," as the inward basis of *Christian* virtue, "than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Religious faith—faith which accepts a personal Redeemer and a personal redemption—is the support and groundwork of Christian excellence. That excellence, however, is reared and perfected by sore labour and slow degrees. "Let every man," therefore, "take heed *how* he buildeth;"—after what model and with what materials. The aims and purposes, the motives and ends, which influence the soul,—the walk and conversation, the practical habitudes that appear in the life, all that properly constitutes *character*, the character of the inward and the outward man,—*this* is the building which individual Christians have to labour to erect. Now, it is perfectly obvious, that there may be great differences in different men as to the idea they entertain of what they are to do, and the proper methods by which it is to be done. In the materials that constitute personal character, as in those that compose the visible Church, there may be the solid and the durable, and the chaffy and the worthless. There may be the gold and silver, the precious stones and resplendent ornaments of a Divine virtue; or there may be the wood and hay, the straw and the stubble of an earthly life. I do not mean that by these, respectively, the saint and sinner, the true Christian and the hollow hypocrite, may be distinguished; but that *an actual and sincerely believing man* may be so ignorant, so careless, so low in his standard, and so practically inattentive to his "high calling," as either to be satisfied with what falls far short of religious goodness, or intentionally to build his allotted work with foreign materials and untempered mortar—not only without being aware of his mistake, imagining all the time that he is acting consistently with his duty and profession, but, in some cases, actually regarding with highest estimation, and accumulating with hugest labour,

what the first spark of the light of eternity will burn to ashes! Just as it is incumbent, therefore, on the official builders to take care, in their relations to others, that they teach nothing but the true, and sanction and encourage none but the good, so is it incumbent on the private Christian to take care, in relation to himself, that he do the same: that is, that he have just views of what it *is* that is to be "built up" on the foundation of his faith as "holy living," and that he strenuously endeavour to embody and realize this Divine "idea," in the positive habitudes of his daily life. And still further: just as in the end, the work of one builder will "abide" and he "have a reward," and that of another will be "burnt" and he "suffer loss," so also will it be with individual Christians, according as they may be found, at the day of reckoning, to have traded with their talents with intelligence and skill, or to have misunderstood, or abused, or buried them in the earth. When the Lord is revealed at the last day, the event will be productive of various feelings even in the circle of the *saved* themselves! Some will rejoice with instantaneous exultation, and be "found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless," while others "will be ashamed before Him at His coming," awake to apprehension, and be "saved as by fire." Proofs and illustrations of these statements may, however, with more propriety, be adduced afterwards; at present we content ourselves with laying down the position affirmed—that the parable of St. Paul respecting ministers involves in it a *general principle* applicable to every individual believer. This is sufficient for our present purpose; and will be seen, if I mistake not, to be amply sustained by the teaching of St. Peter. To his standing-point, and to that side of the subject which he presents to us, we will now advance.

II.

"If ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "*If ye do these things:*"—What things? The things enumerated in the previous verses. Here, then, as in the former case, we are thrown back on the context, and must attempt a similar rapid exposition of the apostle's argument, in order to bring out the force of his conclusion. The "things" referred to are the matters contained in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth verses, which read thus:—"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." In a few brief words, we must endeavour to give you an outline of what we have here, and show you how it connects itself with the subject before us.

Begin, then, by noticing, as a sort of preliminary position,—but which it is essential to the right understanding of the passage that you should keep in view,—that the apostle is addressing *Christians*;—persons whom he describes, in the first verse, as those who "have obtained like precious faith with us,"—that is, with himself, "a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ." Peter, then, is not "preaching the Gospel;" he is not making known to the ignorant what they have not heard, or urging on the wicked and impenitent what they have neglected; he is not proclaiming pardon, mercy, reconciliation, and so on, to the miserable and the lost; he is contemplating persons of another sort, and doing a different kind of thing altogether. He assumes that the persons he

addresses are believers,—that they have faith,—“like precious faith” with himself;—they do not need, therefore, to have the Gospel “preached” to them, made known, pressed on their acceptance, or they themselves to be “besought” and entreated “to be reconciled to God.” They are past all that. They have heard the Gospel; have believed it; and are recognised as partakers of that faith in “the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,” to which, in Scripture, the justification of the sinner is attached. Hence, you will observe, they are not exhorted to *have* faith,—or to “add” faith to anything. They have it; and, as having it, they are exhorted to “add” to it *all the other things* that the apostle enumerates. That is to say,—to recur to the figure which has hitherto been before us in Paul’s arguments,—faith being laid, in the individual soul, as the “foundation” on which a Christian life is to be erected, every believer is to build upon it the virtues and excellences of that life. Each of these is as a separate stone which is to be added to the structure. All Christians are “builders” here. They have to do a work for themselves which ministers can only *help* them to do,—which none whatever can do for them. Every one of you must be the real fabricators of your own character. Let each man, therefore, take heed “*how* he buildeth.” The work you are engaged in will one day be examined. It will be tried and tested; and it will then be seen whether you have built on “the foundation” of your “faith,” “gold, silver, precious stones,”—or “wood, hay, and stubble.”

What those materials are, which will constitute the solid and the enduring in Christian character, the apostle goes on to explain in those verses in which he specifies the attributes of personal excellence, which Christians, “with all diligence,” are to “add to their faith.” Those

verses have already been read. Supposing them to be lying before you, accept a rapid elucidation of their meaning; and let your eye and your mind go with us as we glance over the picture, and look for a moment at its several parts.

"Add to your faith, VIRTUE." Now, this word "virtue," you easily see, cannot be taken here in the sense which it bears in ordinary use. As a general term, it is employed to designate *all* excellence;—here, it is only *one* excellence out of many. It must stand, therefore, for something distinct and specific. It does so. It stands, according to the exact import of the original term, for "force," "energy," "manly strength." It describes a readiness for action and effort; the disposition and the power of strenuous achievement. Faith is a combination of sight and trust; "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen:" it opens to the reason the beauties and splendours of the Divine and the Infinite; and it leads the soul to perfect repose in Omnipotent Love. The dangers on the side of its *exclusive* exercise are mysticism and indolence: the indulgence of Divine contemplation,—as if the mind was made for nothing but to be absorbed in looking upwards to spiritual truth; and the indulgence of such trust in God—"fore-ordaining whatsoever comes to pass" and "working all things after the counsel of His own will,"—as renders forethought unnecessary, and power impossible, and action unimportant, and God himself the sole and exclusive *agent* in the universe. It may be all very pleasant to get away from the rough road of daily toil, or from the anxieties and the struggles of the battle of life, by getting into some monastic retreat to indulge in the delights of heavenly meditation,—or by spending hours upon hours in reading and prayer and religious exercises, leaving, piously, everything to God,—everything

belonging to ourselves or families, society or the Church. Not so, says the apostle. Christianity is not a system of spiritual luxury; it does not preach *flight* from the world, but *conquest* “This is the victory that *overcometh* the world, even our faith.” Religion is not to be the business of life,—it is to make all the business of life religious. Up, then, and be doing. Work. You *can* work. God has made you capable of voluntary action. You are “partakers of the Divine nature”—of that nature which originates and plans, wills and accomplishes. God works *in* you and *with* you; but *you* work; the volitions and the performance are alike yours. “Add,” then, “to your faith”—*force*. Be strong. Have manly energy; and let it be manifested by promptness, and decision, and resolute action. It may show itself in courage,—in professing the Gospel amid surrounding difficulties or impending persecution; or by the invincible determinations of a strong will; or by planning and attempting great things; or by fulfilling the daily duties of life—the little concerns of your little sphere—with conscientious fidelity. “*Whatever* thy hand findeth to do, *do* it,”—do it “with thy might.” Nay, *because* thou hast faith, have action. He only who believes greatly can dare greatly. He who believes in nothing but what he sees in the material world, and what he feels of physical sensations, may consistently lead a poor and ignoble life. *Thou* art called “to glory and virtue.” What you believe respecting your nature, God’s love, Christ’s redemption, the heavenly inheritance, the harvest of which time and life are the seed-field—all this forbids you to be satisfied with anything low, indolent, or mean. It is a great thing to be born a man;—greater still to be re-born, and thus to become a son of God. “Be ye followers of *Him*.” “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” That is our prerogative; cease-

less, uninterrupted activity. "Be not weary in well doing." "Quit yourselves like men." Partakers of "like precious faith" with apostles, "add" to that faith resolution, courage, energy like theirs.

"To virtue, knowledge;"—that is, *practical wisdom*; just judgment, intelligence and discretion, to direct force. Knowledge here does not so much mean enlarged apprehensions of spiritual truth; the reason—exalted and purified by the light flowing and falling upon it from revealed objective realities—"comprehending" more and more the meaning of the "mystery" "in which are hid," or deposited, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." It does not mean this; but rather the instruction and culture of the understanding, which has to do with terrene and tangible matters; the proper apprehension of the possible and the right; and the wise adaptation of means to ends. Strength and force, resolute purpose and daring energy, are to be presided over and directed by large knowledge. Without this, with the best intentions a man may blunder in all he does; may waste his powers in attempting the impossible, and be distinguished for nothing but for indiscreet and indiscriminating zeal. Ignorance is neither the mother of devotion, nor a skilful and effective doer of work. As contemplation and action must go together, so also must action and intelligence. "With all thy getting, therefore, get understanding." Cultivate, continually, contact and acquaintance with all that is practical and preceptive in Scripture; seek to obtain clear notions of the Divine will; try to form a just estimate of your talents and obligations, your station and opportunities; endeavour to understand the wants and demands of the age you live in,—what, at any time, is "the present truth" and the pressing duty; and, in this way, so regulate the impulses and efforts of your inward force, that you may not ultimately "labour in

vain, nor spend your strength for nought.” By this union of “energy” and “wisdom,” standing together on the basis of “faith,” there will come to be within you the harmonious co-operation of great powers, principles, and habits; high aims, true thoughts, sound judgment, rectitude of purpose, strong impulse, practicable plan, indomitable perseverance, tact to discern “time and opportunity,”—all issuing in a wise and intelligent course of action, fruitful in noble deeds, and crowned with frequent success.

So far, for what relates to *doing*;—to the energetic discharge of active duty. All that has been hitherto inculcated might be obeyed by an angel,—by every moral and spiritual nature in the universe of God. To such “faith” in Him and His attributes, the principles of His government, the immutability of His laws, and the revelations of the future, as is exercised by innocent and unfallen beings, they have to add “force,” and to force, “knowledge.” This, indeed, is their revealed character. They are literally described as “great in might,” and emblematically represented “with the face of a man,” and as “full of eyes,” to express their possession of high intelligence. They are thus capable of wise and wonderful achievements. Men, however, are not angels, though they are capable of rising to the same sphere of unclouded thought, divine vigour, and spiritual action. In the meantime, they inhabit “an animal body,” with its acute susceptibilities of pleasure and pain,—their whole nature dislocated and disordered, which religion itself only imperfectly and progressively rectifies,—and hence the propriety of the next two injunctions, which peculiarly bear on *human* modes and manifestations of goodness.

“To knowledge, temperance:—and to temperance, patience.” These two virtues have relation to life as a

scene of mixed enjoyment and suffering; enjoyment and suffering, not, of course, with exclusive reference (or even mainly) to the *physical* susceptibilities of pleasure and pain, but to everything that touches our wonderful nature at any point—regales the reason, gratifies sensibility, lacerates the heart, ministers to emotion of any sort, producing, respectively, agony or rapture. We live in a world full of the beautiful, we are surrounded by all that is calculated to please; there is flowing towards us, on all sides, much that is adapted to communicate delight; and there are within and about us, and spread as it were over the surface of our being, exquisite sensibilities, instincts and impulses, which gladly inhale this atmosphere of pleasure, and often leap up to welcome the joy! In respect to all this, then, we want "temperance;" that is, self-government, self-control; a regal power to limit or resist. If, by this power, affection and emotion are not regulated and restrained, the two virtues already illustrated will be unattainable, or, if attained, might be rendered nugatory. A man devoted to mere enjoyment—whether of the gross, animal sort, or of refined, voluptuous emotion, sentimental or religious—will have little relish for the pursuit of *knowledge*, moral or intellectual,—little anxiety "to dig for it as for hid treasure," or to listen to the lessons of Divine wisdom. An abandonment to mere passive impressions, and these of an indulgent, luxurious sort, saps and destroys all moral *strength*; wastes and wears energy of character, or prevents its development; rendering the man utterly incapable of high aims, resolute purpose, strength of volition, and perseverance in accomplishment. Knowledge being neglected and strength *loot*, *faith* itself, if it was ever possessed, may come to be eclipsed or extinguished too: it may get faint and weak, or corrupted and diseased; it may cease to look at the spiritual at all,

or may be perverted and transformed into the instrument or minister of a licentious religionism! There is room, then, you will observe, with respect to every part of our nature, for the regulating control of this virtue of temperance. Body and mind must alike be subject to it;—and the mind in relation to *all* its affections, the human and the divine, the heart, the intellect, the spiritual sensibilities,—for, in every way, without vigilant observation, we are liable to be seduced and drawn into sin.

But the same nature, and the same constitution of things, that render “temperance” necessary, expose us to that which requires “patience.” We are surrounded by evil as well as good, and are called to suffering as well as joy. The one is perhaps the necessary shadow of the other, in such a world and with such a nature as ours. We are liable to pain, because of the *kind* of pleasure we enjoy; while our susceptibility to the pangs, and our exposure to the possibility of evil, are generally in proportion to the richness of our constitutional structure, and the greatness and number of our providential possessions,—the one giving acuteness to feelings of all sorts, and the other presenting a broader mark to the poisoned arrows of calamity or death. It is not necessary to enumerate the varieties of human sorrow;—pain, poverty, vicissitude, disappointment, withered hopes, blighted affections, terrible bereavements, humiliating disease, sudden desolation, mental anguish, with all the other “ills that flesh is heir to,” and with those added that are peculiar to Christians, or peculiarly felt by religious men. There is nothing for it but to submit and bear; or to bear *up*, and to oppose to suffering a store of determined *passive* force, in the form of the “patience” inculcated by the apostle. Yet, not altogether “passive” is this virtue; at least, not in the sense of mere dogged, stubborn submission. It is

not this; nor is it indifference, or anything whatever destitute of intelligence, piety, and love. "Patience" stands opposed to pride and insensibility, levity and thoughtlessness, on the one side; and, on the other, to querulousness and discontent, depression and despair,—to a man's feeling exasperated against Providence, or even against himself. "My son, *despise* not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither *faint* when thou art rebuked of Him." Feel, when thou art under the Divine hand—or give way to feeling—neither too little nor too much. *God* is serious in inflicting the evil; by thee, therefore, it ought to be seriously and thoughtfully received. But, "He does not afflict willingly," nor willingly "grieve the children of men;" He does it for our profit;—and, therefore, "lift up the hands that hang down," and "let not your heart be troubled;" despair not, "prisoner of hope;" trouble may "continue for a night, joy will come in the morning." "Light is sown for the righteous in darkness." In this way, "patience" is to have its "perfect work,"—a patience wise, trusting, filial. Cheer up, my burdened brother. A little longer, and thou shalt rest. In the meantime, toil away. Bear bravely what God appoints,—take quietly what thy sins deserve. "Even Christ pleased not himself." "*He* also suffered." Thou, too, mayest be "perfected by suffering," and find hereafter that thy "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory." "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

"And to patience, godliness." At first sight, the mentioning of this virtue just at this place seems hardly natural. In looking at the order in which the different attributes of character are named, and in looking for the *reasons* on which that order itself rests, one is rather

surprised to find “godliness” put where it is. For a moment, it appears to us as if it would have come better at the beginning or at the end of the entire series; and the question occurs, whether indeed it is not included in that “faith” which lies at the basis of the spiritual structure. I am much mistaken, however, if both these primary impressions may not be rightly put aside, and their place taken by second and sounder thoughts. “Godliness” and “faith” are not identical; and though, in a certain general sense, the one may be said to be included in the other, seeing that “godliness” cannot exist without “faith,” yet they are not *so* involved as to preclude their being clearly separated and distinguished, and placed, if needs be, with some space between them in a series like this. Faith is godliness in its principle, as light in the reason: godliness is faith in its actings, as love in the heart. The one flows from, and is the utterance and development of the other. Godliness is faith *alive*; and not only alive, but active; not only looking and thinking, but feeling, speaking, doing, and thus infusing into all outward and visible performance a moral element that makes virtue holiness. Now, on this account it is > that I think there is great propriety, nay, beauty and emphasis, in “godliness” being introduced after the mention of “temperance” and “patience,” and in its having to be carefully connected with these. “Temperance” and “patience” are forms of virtue to be met with often in worldly men, and which spiritual men are in danger of displaying on mere natural principles. Self-denial, self-government, and self-restraint,—brave, calm bearing of evil, patient submission to what is inevitable,—these things are, in some sort, but the ordinary attributes of manly virtue. A proud feeling may swell the heart as an individual is conscious of the one or the other; and mere secular motives, motives originating

and terminating in *self*, may lie snugly at the bottom of both. The stoics of old—philosophers, soldiers, statesmen—did, as a part of their philosophy, cultivate these virtues; and a poet of our own day, reasoning on purely natural principles, says, or sings,—

"Unless *above* himself he can
Erect himself,—how poor a thing is man!"

Fearing, then, we may almost suppose, that Christians might learn to be temperate and patient rather as taught by worldly philosophy than as actuated by Divine faith; rather as men that properly respected their own nature than as *religious* men who reverently regarded the Supreme will, the apostle interposed the idea of "godliness," just where it stands, to suggest the importance of *all* virtue, as displayed by the Church, being filled and animated by a spiritual principle, and especially those particular manifestations which, in outward seeming, men of the world can so closely approach.

The circle of duty seems to be getting complete. "Energy" and "knowledge"—motive force and practical wisdom; "temperance" and "patience"—masterhood of self in two noble forms;—these elements of heroic action, of regulated joy and uncomplaining endurance, based on "faith" and beautified by "godliness," would seem to make provision for almost all the excellence that can be demanded of humanity. The individual builder, who has "built himself up on his most holy faith" thus far, has surely succeeded in erecting an edifice that must be shaping itself into something like completeness! It is rising rapidly, let it be admitted, and is putting on the appearance of a well-proportioned and ample structure; but it wants something yet, and something important to finish and perfect it. It might not, I think, be extravagant to say, that all that has been mentioned

might, in some degree, be required of an individual if he were living in the world *alone*. Take Adam before the formation of Eve; think of him as a mature moral intelligence, existing as an isolated, solitary man; and suppose that that state of his had been greatly extended;—it is true, that there are many forms of life and action possible to *us*, of which *he* would have been incapable, but *in principle*, “faith” and “energy,” “knowledge” and “temperance,” “patience” and “godliness,” might all have been exercised, and have been “knit together” into the fabric of his personal virtue. But men are not living *alone* now. Goodness in us is not only to be divine and personal, but is especially to have a social and human aspect. We are not solitary, either as belonging to the general race, or as standing within the sacred limits of the Church. The apostle, therefore, having inculcated the principle of “godliness” to purify and elevate all mundane virtues, proceeds to show how that same principle may find for itself issue and utterance more directly divine. “Your heart,” he seems to say, “having been lifted up by what I have enforced, and by what you have done; lifted up to the high heavens, and laid, as it were, in filial trust, close, for a while, to the heart of God; out of that infinite fount of love, let it drink in all that it can, according to its power and capacity of reception, and then, when it returns again to this lower sphere, let that love, with which it is thus laden, come forth in two streams: let one flow into the Church, and find its proper direction there; and let the other flow *the world over*, visiting, in its various gushings and wanderings, men of every clime, colour, and condition, of all lands, and of all languages—To godliness, BROTHERLY KINDNESS; and to brotherly kindness, CHARITY.”

“Brotherly kindness” is the love of the brotherhood,

"the household of faith." It is the fraternal or family affection of Christianity which unites together, or ought to unite, all those who profess to regard themselves as "heirs together of the grace of life." Christians are represented as the "sons and daughters of God Almighty;" as "members one of another;"—as, "in the Lord," "brothers" and "sisters;"—as united *in Him* from whom "the whole family in heaven and in earth is named;"—as constituting His "Body," and as so pervaded by a common consciousness and a common sentiment, that "if one member suffer, all the others suffer with it, and if one member be honoured, all the others rejoice with it" The feeling that comes next to the love of God is, or ought to be, the love of Godlike men. This is expected in the Church as a natural result; it is inculcated upon it as a primary duty. "In Christ," so far as thorough interest and sympathy are concerned, natural and artificial distinctions are superseded: "there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free; but Christ is all and in all" He makes each like the others, by making all like himself. He requires, therefore, mutual recognition and love;—*family-love* where there is family-likeness. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "Let him that saith he loves God, see to it that he love his brother also." "Brotherly kindness" may be shown by solicitude for union among all Christians—the mutual recognition and intercommunion of Churches; and by earnest endeavour to help forward whatever seems likely to secure such result. In private intercourse, it is to be shown by little

rather than by great things,—by what is the spontaneous outcome of habitual feeling, rather than by acts which are done from a sense of remembered duty. It is to make itself felt as a perpetual presence; a thing cheerfid and genial as light, but which is not thought of, noticed, or spoken about, unless something should suddenly disturb or interrupt it, like a dark cloud deforming the day. “Brotherly kindness” is the “charity” of St. Paul. It is the “love” that “suffers long and is kind;” that is destitute of envy, vanity, and pride; that, is not selfish, suspicious, or petulant; and that will remain and be honoured when the most coveted and splendid gifts and distinctions shall have passed away. It will show itself great by small services, by sincere respect, by unaffected courtesy, by little attentions, by readiness to help, by true sympathy and solid assistance, by charitable judgments, by candid construction of motive and purpose, by loving speech,—and often by still more loving silence! It has a heart “to devise liberal things,”—and a hand to accomplish, and a tongue to encourage;—service for many and intercessions for all.

“And to *brotherly kindness*, CHARITY.” Charity here signifies “philanthropy,”—universal love; the love of humanity, of all mankind, as distinct from, or additional to, the peculiar domestic affection of the Church. Lest “the love of the brotherhood” should degenerate into a selfish and sectarian thing—a narrow, exclusive, unamiable sentiment,—the apostle directs that it is to flow beyond the walls of the sacred enclosure, or rather to have added to it another sentiment that will do this, and that thus the Christian is to acknowledge in every man one that has claims on his soul and service. This love towards men,—of men, *as men*,—the entire race, as it exists immediately in the neighbourhood of the Church, or fills “the habitable parts of the earth” in all lands—

is not, as a Christian sentiment, to be a bit of barren though beautiful idealism,—a vague, philosophic glow of "fraternity,"—a feeling that utters itself in no deeds of valiant endeavour to better the world, but only in grand, eloquent talk,—talk, too, it may be, about anything but mens *highest* interests, or even in flat contravention of such. It is not to be this; but a really deep, earnest, intense thing, as to its nature; and a real, effective doer of work, as to its expression. Observe how the apostle would seem to teach that his own burning love for his friends was to be the model and measure of theirs for *mankind!* "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and *toward all men, EVEN AS WE DO TOWARD YOU.*" Remember the high standard of the Master when He would inculcate universal benevolence—not only saying "go and do likewise" when He had illustrated the "philanthropy" of the good Samaritan, but telling His disciples of the love of Him "who makes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and His rain to descend on the just and on the unjust," and then adding, in relation to this, "be ye therefore perfect, *even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*" Christian "philanthropy" is to be like "the kindness and *philanthropy* of God our Saviour;"¹ a philanthropy that compassionates the *worst* miseries, would lovingly accomplish the *highest* service, and spares not expense to secure the result "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all." "God, our Saviour, will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;" for "Christ gave himself a ransom for all, to be manifested

¹ Titus iii. 4. Φιλανθρωπία, rendered "love [of God our Saviour] toward man."

in due time.” In consistency with all this, we have, in addition to those benevolent injunctions which bear on the charities of the present life—the “clothing the naked,” “feeding the hungry,” “visiting” “the widow,” “the fatherless,” and “the sick,” “giving to him that needeth,” and extending help of all sorts, as to physical things, to every human being that may require it, recognising him as a “neighbour,” and admitting the claims of a common humanity—in addition, I say, to all this, we have the constant inculcation of both *prayer* and *effort* for the conversion of the world,—the spiritual good of the people we live amongst, and the salvation of all that are afar off. “Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom *shine ye as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.*” “I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks, be made *for all men.*”—“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord *may have free course*, and be glorified, even as it is with you.” “Love the brotherhood;—*honour all men.*” Recognise, everywhere, in every individual member of the race, the partaker of a nature the same as thine own. “For *him*” too, “Christ died.” “God has made *man* great, by setting His love upon him.” Value and reverence, then,—love and serve—MAN, *as man*, the world over. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” And “He is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” Love, then, as God loveth;—think of men as He thought; let them all know what He did, and what Christ is doing,—Christ the righteous “Advocate,” who, “because He ever liveth to make intercession, can save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.” Try to contri-

bute to His predicted "satisfaction,"—for He is "to see of the travail of his soul, and to be satisfied." If it be possible, let "every man," at last, be "presented perfect in Jesus Christ;" or, if not, endeavour at all events to "save some." "To godliness, *brotherly kindness*; and to brotherly kindness, CHARITY."

Such is the edifice which every individual Christian, as a wise, diligent, and honest workman, is to build up on the "foundation" of his "faith." It is wonderfully comprehensive, and exquisitely beautiful, this enumeration of virtues,—this catalogue of the materials, which, being put together according to rule, shall stand forth a noble, symmetrical, divine thing;—a thing, so to speak, that shall seem a fitting abode for a heavenly inhabitant, the becoming embodiment of a divine life. The series, you will observe, begins with "faith" and ends with "love;" it thus touches, at one extremity, all that is revealed of God and the infinite; and, on the other, all that belongs to the world and man; while, between the two, are placed in their order whatever can be required for practical goodness—for the various utterances of a manifold virtue;—for the personal and the relative, the active and the passive, the divine and the human. These, then, are "the gold, silver, and precious stones," with which Christians are to construct what they build on their faith in the form of *character*. There is nothing of "wood, hay, and stubble,"—chaff and refuse,—here. Hence you are prepared for the further announcement, that, in the end, there will be nothing about those who thus build, of "salvation by fire." Salvation by fire I salvation with difficulty! salvation after something like terror and tears! *No: "if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for SO AN ENTRANCE SHALL BE MINISTERED TO YOU ABUNDANTLY into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* The "add" in the

fifth verse, and "ministered" in the eleventh, are both parts of the same verb; as if it were said, "add" to your faith these virtues in this world, and God will "add" to them—or to you because of them—"an abundant entrance" into that which is to come. Or, as the word has an allusion to the joining together, and the leading up, in majestic order and beautiful harmony, of those who constitute a chorus or dance, the idea expressed might be thus rendered: Be careful to cultivate and display, and to lead forth, as with constant gladness, in harmonious order, in all their becoming grace and beauty, those virtues that are to attend upon and adorn a religious life; and, at the close of thy course, thou shalt be met by an angelic choir, who shall hail thy approach to the divine land with ready gratulation; who shall gather about thee as an attendant company of heavenly forms;—while all those that surrounded thee on earth (the Christian graces) shall go with thee,—a radiant train of glorious associates;—thus shalt thou "enter into the joy of thy Lord,"—with choral symphonies and solemn pomp,—as one whom He shall "delight to honour!" Or you may take another illustration from a vessel returning after a long voyage, and being received and welcomed by expectant friends. She has been, let us suppose, absent for years;—has been toiling and trafficking in every sea;—touching at the ports and trading in the markets of many lands: she is approaching at last her "desired haven"—the harbour from which she set out,—whence loving thoughts went with her as she started on her perilous way, and where anxious hearts are now wishing and waiting for her return. She is descried in the distance:—the news spreads; all is excitement; multitudes assemble; pier and quay, beach and bank are crowded with spectators, as the little craft pushes on, and every moment nears her destination.

There she is!—worn and weather-beaten, it is true; covered with the indications of sore travail and long service, and with many signs of her having encountered both battle and breeze. But all is safe. Her goodly freight is secure and uninjured; her profits have been large; the merchandise she brings is both rare and rich. She is coming along over a sunny sea,—leaping and dancing as if she were alive. Her crew are on the deck, and with straining eyes and palpitating hearts are looking towards the shore. A soft wind swells the sails; the blue heavens are bending over the bark as if smiling on her course, while the very waves seem to run before her, turning themselves about as with conscious joy, clapping their hands and murmuring a welcome!—How she bounds forward! She is over the bar! She is gliding now in smooth water; is passing into port; and is preparing to moor and to drop her anchor for the last time!—While she does so, there comes a shout from the assembled spectators—the crowds that witness and welcome her approach—loud as thunder, musical as the sea! Gladness and greeting are on every hand. Eloquent voices fill the air. The vessel has received "AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE;" her crew have been met with sympathetic congratulations—are surrounded by eager and glad friends—hailed with enthusiasm, embraced with rapture, and accompanied to their home with shouting and songs!—How different it would have been had she come in a wreck! or had she struck on a rock, lost her cargo, and her crew have been saved with difficulty and peril, only getting to shore "on masts and broken pieces of the ship," and reaching home naked and destitute,—with life in them, but nothing more—*and all this*, as the result and consequence of some grave neglect—some ignorance or incapacity, carelessness or presumption, which attached to them *blame* on account of the disaster.

Even in this case, indeed, they would have reasons for gratitude—deep gratitude that they were saved at all—Stripped as they were, their friends would welcome them with love and joy; but pity and sadness would mingle with that welcome; congratulation itself would sound like rebuke, or seem undeserved; and the poor mariners would require time to be reconciled to themselves.—Such a difference, we are justified in thinking, may exist at last in the circumstances and feelings of the “saved” from among men. There is “salvation in fulness”—and there is “salvation by fire.” There is the “abundant entrance” into the kingdom of God; and there is the getting in with something like “difficulty.” One man may be conducted to his “joy and crown” through thronging multitudes, amid outstretched hands and reverberating hosannas, and along the great public thoroughfares of the city; while another shall advance with hesitating step; be glad to get an entrance without observation; be met by no congratulating crowds; creep stealthily through some unfrequented street to his undistinguished abode;—tremulous with a thankful though shaded joy that he is saved at all! “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.” But “every man’s work shall be made manifest, of what sort it is. It shall be revealed by fire,—for the fire shall try every man’s work.” “If a man’s work abide, he shall have a reward.” “If a man’s work be burned, he shall suffer loss.” “The Lord is at hand.” “Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth;” that “we may assure our hearts before Him;” and that, “love being made perfect, we may have *boldness in the day of judgment*;” otherwise, not “being found of Him in peace,” we may have to be “*ashamed*”

before Him at His coming? "Well done, good and faithful servant,—thou shalt be ruler over ten cities."—Mistaken man! who didst labour abortively in all thou didst;—*thy* work must be "burnt;" thou must "suffer loss;" but "thou thyself shalt be saved," yet—"*so as by fire.*"

III.

Having now completed the exposition of the subject, according to the two sides of it which the two apostles respectively disclose, I shall draw towards the conclusion of the whole matter by enumerating some of the things which the views we have illustrated should suggest or enforce.

1. In the first place, you should admit, I think, and impress upon your souls, that what we have advanced *must* be true—first impressions to the contrary, or doubts and difficulties from other quarters, notwithstanding. That such doubts and difficulties may be felt by many, we have no wish to conceal. We have put the subject, in both its aspects, rather more strongly perhaps than is usual, though not more so, most assuredly, than the plain meaning of the Word warrants. Very possibly, however, some who have never thought of anything but "justification by faith," "eternal life" as "the gift of God," and correlative subjects, may be startled and scandalized by what, at first sight, may seem to be contrary to their views of truth, or out of harmony with their habits of feeling. But, if the passages I have expounded do not mean what they *say* (which is all I have brought out of them), what *do* they mean? If they mean what they say, that meaning is a truth; as such, it must be in harmony with all other truth, whether we can perceive that harmony or not; and, with the

like condition, simply as a separate piece of truth, it is practically binding on the conscience of the Church. I firmly believe in justification by faith,—in the pardon of the sinner on the ground, exclusively, of Christ’s glorious redemptive act. A thing, this, purely gratuitous; in itself incapable of degrees; admitting, therefore, of no modification in different individuals in consequence of differences in *them*, but conferred upon all alike, in virtue of their union by faith with Him whose work is the Divine reason for the blessing being bestowed at all. There is no doubt about all this; but depend upon it, whether you can see it or not, there is a harmony between this justification by faith and a judgment by works; and—whether you have yet found it or not—there is a principle, somewhere, on which that harmony can be demonstrated. In some way or other, there is “a prize” of our “high calling,” as well as “a gift” of God “through Jesus Christ.” There is “a crown” in relation to which some may “*so* run” as to “obtain,”—and some so, that another shall “take” it. There is a being saved—and nothing more; saved because *on* the foundation; saved, as it were, with difficulty, like “a brand plucked from the burning;” that is,—“so as by fire:” and there is a being saved “abundantly;” saved—and something more; saved and distinguished,—distinguished, because *to* the foundation has been “added” *that* which the Master will delight to recognise and honour.

It may not be easy to understand this. It maybe difficult to reconcile the second thing with the first, or with much that would appear to be the teaching of Scripture. How different, it may be said,—how much more *comforting*,—the parable of Christ in which He illustrates the grace and sovereignty of the Lord of the vineyard! He who can “do what He will with His

own," is there represented as giving the very same reward to those who had served only one hour, as to those who had gone through the toil of twelve, and had "borne the burden and beat of the day." Very true. Let me warn you, however, that going to the parables is rather dangerous, unless you are accompanied by a well-instructed and trustworthy guide. You will find in them, I am afraid, far more that it will be difficult for you to reconcile with the popular idea of gratuitous justification, than what will illustrate it; and far more, certainly, corroborating and confirming than appearing to oppose the doctrine of this discourse. I quite admit, that the parable of the "penny" does, at first sight, seem to oppose it. But that of the "talents," of "the faithful and wise steward," "the unjust steward," and several others, directly sustain us. The fact is, no parable is meant to teach everything. Even as a whole, the parables are not intended to reveal *the Gospel* properly so called; while, as to some views which have often been associated with it, as if belonging to its very essence, the pith and point of certain of the parables are dead against them. Look at that of the unforgiving servant. His debt is freely remitted by his Lord,—answering to gratuitous justification; he goes forth exulting in the consciousness of his new condition—"the grace in which he stands," and in which he is permitted to "rejoice;"—but, acting inconsistently with it, he is summoned again to the august presence; his pardon is revoked; it is abrogated and annulled; his Lord recalls the benefit conferred; *unjustifies* him, so to speak; reimposes the debt, and orders him "to be delivered to the tormentors till he has paid the uttermost farthing!" Now, I am not going to discuss this subject at present, nor to expound my views of the principle on which the parables must be explained to make them perfectly tally with Evangelical teaching;

but such a principle there no doubt is, whether we have succeeded in finding it or not. So, in relation to our previous remarks, we have only to repeat, that whether or not you see the harmony between the views we have advocated and the admitted doctrine of justification by faith, you *must* conclude that there *is* such harmony,—that there cannot but be a principle somewhere that reconciles the two things together,—for that the views advanced are expressly taught in the passages before us is a thing that admits of no denial; being taught,—taught by inspired, apostolic men,—they are true; as true, they must be in unison with all other truth; and in common with everything else that is a part of truth—God’s truth—they are binding alike on our reason and our conscience;—have a right to a place in our system of belief, and a right to rule in our daily habits with whatever practical force there may be in them.

The fact is, that different Churches, and different schools of theology, are in danger of holding their characteristic principles in a way that exaggerates them; they are not seen in their proper dimensions, from not being looked at in their just relations to other truths, Revivals and Reformations have too frequently been merely reactions against particular errors or prominent abuses. They have led often, and very naturally, to people running to the opposite extreme of what they saw to be wrong,—as if they were then sure to be right. While restoring and establishing a lost truth, men get so exasperated against the error they oppose, that they lose sight of some other truth of which that error may be an exaggeration. Popery was a great mechanical apparatus for the formal manufacture of Christian people. Ritually infusing spiritual life; sustaining and regulating, purifying and advancing it by various devices, all empirical; always contemplating its masses and

myriads as Christians,—their virtues as *Christian* virtues,—their failures as spiritual defects,—they and them, therefore, to be all contemplated and treated in this light, both in the present world and another,—a vast system of error was the consequence, developed at last into, impudence and fraud. Against this, the Reformation protested, and on one side took the shape of the re-assertion of the doctrine of justification *by faith*,—opposing this to priestly ritualisms, to secular morality, to desert and merit in every form. In doing this, it is not to be denied, there was a danger that the Reformation should lose sight of what *was* a truth—the *sinner's justification by faith, notwithstanding*,—namely, the *Christian* life of the justified man; the relation of that life to the rewards of eternity; the intrinsic and recognised value of its virtues, as contrasted with the worthlessness of "works of law" done *with a view* to justification itself. The danger, it must be confessed, was not wholly escaped, nor have the consequences been slight or few. An almost exclusive attention has been given to one thing (a great truth), to the forgetfulness of another thing (equally a truth). Hence the difficulty felt in tolerating certain ideas and expressions—which, nevertheless, are simply the utterance of "the mind of the Spirit"—on the worth and the rewardableness of that virtue which is the outflow and actings of a real, healthy, divine life. It may be difficult, but depend upon it it is not impossible, to find some ground of reconciliation between the doctrine of justification by faith and that portion of truth which underlay the error, against which we embodied our protest in the revival and re-assertion of "the doctrine of a standing or falling Church."

2. After expounding the parable respecting the builder?, we advanced the statement, that, though it referred primarily to official persons, it involved a principle applicable

to the entire Christian community. We reiterate this. We would now, also, especially observe, that, in respect to “salvation by fire,” there must be a sense in which the subject should bear upon and admonish us all. There can be no doubt that a great many professing Christians— are neither more nor less than stuffed figures. They may make a great show, be of large dimensions, and have even much repute,—and yet they may only be pieces of manufacture,—things “made with hands,”— very well proportioned to the eye of the observer, skilfully coloured, artistically dressed, and mechanically moved! Such people are nothing *but* “wood, hay, and stubble;” they are composed entirely of base materials,, and are destined to vanish into smoke and blackness,, when “fearfulness shall seize the hypocrites,” and “fire” shall purge the Church. Others, again, are true men— with a real, throbbing, spiritual life in them—who, as guilty, “have fled for refuge to the hope set before them;” who, through their faith, are *on* the foundation, and *from* it, and *because* of it, are, as sinners, “looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Very good this, as far as it goes. Unfortunately, a great many never get much further. They get to the foundation,— “other than which no man can lay,” which is “Jesus Christ;” the faith which unites them to Him is a foundation in themselves, on which is to be built the beautiful fabric of the Christian virtues; but they build nothing— upon it at all,—or nothing but “wood, hay, and stubble;” or the materials of their character are so heterogeneous that it appears to consist of a strange mixture of the valuable and the worthless. Christian professors with enormous means, do nothing; with great influence, they never exert it for great ends! with talents for service, they let them lie unimproved; or, having only one talent, they bury and conceal it because they have not ten!

What strange practical inconsistencies are to be seen on all sides! What questionable conformity to the world! What subjection to fashion! What luxury and display! What liberties of speech! What keenness in business,—so *very* nigh to taking an advantage,—imposing upon ignorance, or overreaching the unwary! What clutching, and covetousness, and hardness of heart! What terrible justice in some people! In others, what explosions of temper! In most, what a want of harmony and entireness; and in many, at times, what strange apparitions of even the old animal life! Yet, along with all these diversities of defect, or in connexion with most of them, there shall be unquestionable proofs of the men having a firm standing on "the foundation;" and there shall be manifest in the entire structure of their habits, several portions of solid masonry, and, mixed with the mud and rubble they put into it, a good many valuable and precious things!

Now, what is to be done with such people? It is no use their going to heaven as they *are*. There will be no admittance into the upper world for their mere lath-and-plaster embodiment of the Divine; and when that portion of themselves is destroyed, what will there be left? It *must* be destroyed, for instead of a "meetness" it is a disqualification "for the inheritance of the saints in light." How, then, is it to be got rid of? Is there a *purgatory*, through which they can pass on their path to Paradise, and have their earthy accretions burnt out before they appear in the world of light? I don't think there is. It is not, however, so unnatural an idea that there may be such a place, for something of the sort would really seem to be sadly wanted! Purgatory, you will remember, is for *the good*. That is the proper idea of the place. The word itself involves this. You may destroy what is worthless, or you may transform it; you

can only *purge* what is in substance valuable. The bad, then, are consigned to simple punishment—punishment of such a nature that it is *itself* an end, having no object beyond itself; the imperfectly good are subjected to a severe disciplinary process, to be purged from the adhesions and stains of sin that cling to them to the last, and unfit them for the immediate presence of God. This is the Popish notion of Purgatory. I don't believe in it. I don't believe that Scripture reveals to us such a third world. At the same time, as I have already admitted (and I care not what advantage may be taken of the admission), I do not think the idea so very unnatural; and I further confess that I do not see how many Christians are to get into heaven, or how they could enjoy themselves in it if they did, without undergoing *some* time, and *some* where, such a process as the purgatorial idea embodies and represents. Even at the last day, when Christ is revealed, and when some of His people are “ashamed before Him,”—in a very brief space of time—in “the twinkling of an eye,” in accordance with the rapidity of some mental processes, it *may* be that they shall have such a sight of the past, and suffer so much, and be so corrected in their views and feelings by the revelations and the experience of that moment, as to be *thus* relieved from “the wood, hay, and stubble” that are in them, and find themselves “saved,” though it may be “as by fire.” But, however this may be,—and I offer respecting it no positive opinion,—I am quite sure that, *in general*, God provides for the inconsistent, and for the worst sorts of the imperfectly good, a very severe purgatory *here*. The whole of the disciplinary chastisement of His providence is of this nature. Trials and afflictions which at once test the character and improve the man are like a purifying fire, out of which he who suffers may ultimately emerge as “gold refined.”

By means of these, there is often a fearful conflagration in the soul—a burning up of the straw and refuse which Christians have foolishly wrought into their character, from the destruction of which they come forth sadder, it may be, but wiser men.

The constant phraseology—the almost unvaried imagery—of Scripture respecting the Divine chastisement of the good, corroborates these remarks. Even in this world there is a difference between corrective discipline and condign punishment. The impenitent are “punished;” the wicked are “destroyed,” they are “overthrown as in a moment,” they are utterly “consumed with terrors;” or, they are “let alone;” they “have their portion in this life;” they “have no bands in their death;” yet, “in the sanctuary of God men may consider their end,” and understand how they were “set in slippery places.” But “whom the Lord *loveth* He *chasteneth*;” “now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby;” it is “for our profit, that we may be made partakers of His holiness.” “The fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, but the Lord trieth the heart.” “He shall sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver” is purged, “that they may offer unto God an offering in righteousness.” “Think it not strange respecting the fiery trial that is to try you.” “*Now*, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise and honour and glory *at the appearing of Jesus Christ*” “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which God hath prepared for them that

love Him.” The very worst judgments inflicted upon the Church—the fires kindled among the people at Corinth in consequence of their unworthiness, their almost impious desecration of sacred things—are represented as of a purgative and reformatory character. “For this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” But, “if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.” If we would ourselves pull down or burn out “the hay and the stubble” we have built on the foundation—or, still better, not use it at all,—we should not need the hand of God to destroy it. “But when we *are* judged, we are chastened of the Lord *that we may not be condemned with the world.*” Now it is not to be denied that this Divine interposition may be deferred till near the close of life. The purgative “judgment” may not be designed to send the man back into the world again, that he may there show, by “the beauties of holiness,” how God has “purely purged away his dross, and taken away all his alloy,” but be just intended to secure his safety, *that he may not be “condemned”* with the lost. Many a proud, secular, self-willed, ill-regulated Christian, is suffered to go through an outwardly prosperous career, and to get towards the end of it, without having suffered what might humble and purify him. But it may come at last. There is many a one amongst us respecting whom the wise and thoughtful will sometimes say, “If that man be what I believe he is,—one with ‘the root of the matter in him,’—then, if there be truth in the Bible, or a God in heaven, he will not be suffered to die, till by some terrible purgation he is freed from the sins that have disfigured his course, and have so long darkened his Christian profession; till, by the blazing up of some internal fire that shall consume the rubbish he has been gathering for years, he get such an astounding revelation

of himself as shall operate upon him like a second conversion, and fit him for the society of the upper world—in which world, as a publicly recognised member of Christ, he must learn to be something very different from what he has been here." And thus it has often been. In a single week—in a few hours, it may be—men have gone through a little eternity of anguish! Light has penetrated the mind, and fire has fallen on the heart. The "hay and stubble" have been burnt up. The process has been exceedingly dreadful; but it has had its effect. The man has been reduced to his proper dimensions, and been made to see and to know himself. He has had to groan for a time amid smoke and darkness, preyed upon by remorse and agitated by terror. Things have at length cleared about him; he has ventured to hope—and has died hoping, but nothing more—in some cases hardly that! He has been "saved,"—but "so as by fire." Partial relatives and inexperienced observers have been scandalized or astonished at what has been seen. Wiser men have looked on without surprise, even thankful and glad, accepting the judgment as a sign of sonship, and feeling that the real wonder would have been if the erring man had been *suffered to die* without experiencing all that he endured!

3. In reflecting on the present subject, you must guard against mistake. Observe, then, in the next place, that, with respect to the honours and rewards of those who shall obtain the "abundant entrance," it is not to be supposed that they can be, in their nature, anything external. They cannot be conferred except on the worthy. They can only be worn by those that win them. The words of our Lord to the two ambitious disciples, express, not so much limitation of power, as the law of propriety. "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, *except* to them for whom

it is prepared,”—those, of course, who are prepared for *it*. Whatever the glory may be that shall invest the loftier orders in the world of light, it will be something that shall flow, as by natural sequence, from the previous spiritual condition of their minds. Omnipotence has its limits. It cannot do what is physically impossible; even in cases where physical impossibility does not exist, it may still be limited, from the moral necessity of its actings being regulated by higher laws. Hence, mere power *could* not, perhaps, confer heavenly distinctions on minds to whom they would be uncongenial; or, as wielded by wisdom, it would not—or would not if it could—employ itself in creating such congeniality. The same law will rule in heaven that we recognise here—the law that makes it impossible to enjoy any outward conspicuous honour that does not harmonize with the soul’s internal consciousness. Nothing is more painful than praise secretly felt to be undeserved. Gratuitous forgiveness, with whatever that of itself involves, can be gladly and gratefully accepted *by the sinful*, because it is given to and received by them *as such*. But to be hailed and welcomed with a “Well done, good and faithful servant,” would be felt to be a mockery, if goodness and fidelity had not been previously cultivated and displayed. To any one burdened by an opposite consciousness crowns and kingdoms could give no pleasure. All spiritual and moral laws are universal and eternal; and, if we can feel the force of that already referred to, in a world like this, in which honours seem to fall on some by mistake, or to be stolen by others from their rightful proprietors, much more may we expect it to be felt hereafter, in the world of truth, reality, and light. Let us deeply ponder, then, the practical inference—that nothing we have said can, when properly understood, foster or excite a spurious

ambition. The wish for the distinctions, whatever they may be, which shall attend or constitute the "abundant entrance," can only be gratified by your being *now*, in principle and achievement, or at least in sincere purpose and effort, *that* which you are anxious to be on high. The saints in heaven, of every degree, will be what they are, in some sense or other, as the natural outgrowth and divine development of what each in reality was upon earth. He who is to shine "as the brightness of the firmament," must, in the present life, by some essential goodness, be "a partaker of the glory that is to be revealed." Probably, as we have hinted, it is not within the power of God to make it otherwise; we might almost assert that it is certainly not His intention to do so. There is no way that we can conceive for the desire of future distinction to be fulfilled, but by being distinguished now for a divine, uniform, and comprehensive virtue. And even this, it must be observed, must be the result of the love of the virtue itself, and not of the desire for its ultimate reward. "The army of martyrs"—the heroes of one world, the nobility of another,—they who stand in the front of the throne, "with white robes, and palms in their hands," in consequence of having "come out of great tribulation"—would not have been there if they had not suffered *because it was not within them to do otherwise*; it was impossible for them to deny themselves; to be false to their Lord, or to the "Divine nature" of which they were "partakers." They could not help doing as they did; *they* thought nothing of any "recompense of reward;" they had it in themselves even when they suffered,—in obeying unconsciously, or without calculation, the laws and instincts of their spiritual life. "Therefore are they before the throne." It is their proper place. They never thought about securing for themselves a position of honour, but

they *were* honourable. They would not have asked to be set down on the right hand or the left of their Lord; they would have shrunk from the thought of far inferior distinctions; but they were inherently in possession of that “meetness” for distinction to which the high places in Paradise belong. They were not *made* noble on their arrival there; they *were* noble even upon earth. Others may have also “resisted unto blood,” or have even “given their bodies to be burnt;” but, being without love, “it profited them nothing:”—it was not the involuntary and uncalculating “obedience of faith.” The labourer is worthy of his hire. The Lord’s labourers shall have their wages; but they must do His work from other motives than the thought of the wages. The service must be felt to be reward in itself, or there will be that wanting in their spiritual condition which would make them *capable* of reward hereafter. You shall be paid,—no fear of that; but you must not be constantly anticipating a world’s Saturday night. The predominance of this idea would vitiate your character, or prove that it was altogether vitiated already; it would reduce your subjection to Christ to a miserable bargain; your obedience, to a price for an expected advantage; the distinctions of heaven, to things that might be bought,—in principle this, something approaching to *his* sin who thought “the gift of God could be purchased with money.” Imagine for a moment a man receiving the medal of the Humane Society for having risked his life in saving his mother! But fancy, if you can, his having thought of the medal before making the effort, and being *induced* to make it by the prospect of securing it! You shrink from this idea with instinctive abhorrence; you feel that an unreasoning filial impulse is what you want to see in a son; that the action of this will bring its own reward; that nothing external need

be added where it is, or could confer honour where it is not. Consider it well, and you may find here a principle applicable to our present subject. Heaven, depend upon it, is not what you are to *get*, but what you are to *be*; and what you are to be in the upper world must be the outgrowth and fulness of what you are here. It may not be easy to understand the doctrine we have been attempting to develope; or not easy to make it intelligible. The fact is, there are some things, especially in the depths of the religious life, which can only be understood by being experienced, and which even then are incapable of being adequately embodied in words. "O *taste* and *see* that the Lord is good." The enjoyment must come before the illumination; or rather the enjoyment *is* the illumination. There are things that must be loved before we can know them to be worthy of our love; things to be believed before we can understand them to be worthy of belief. And even after this—after we are conscious of a distinct apprehension of some spiritual truth—we can only, perhaps, answer, if required to explain it, in the words of the philosopher to whom the question was put, "What is God?"—"I know, *if I am not asked.*"

4. The subject must be protected from abuse. There is a spurious contentment, as well as a base and spurious ambition. I can easily conceive that some one might reply to some of our statements,—and reply with apparent edifying humility,—"I am a poor creature, with nothing to boast of, and nothing to glory in. 'God be merciful to me a sinner;'"—the first words of my religious life shall be my last. I wish to die loathing and rejecting my own righteousness, spurning my virtues a& well as my sins, that I may appear naked in the presence of God, as a poor sinner saved by grace! Salvation!—that is a blessing so great, so unmerited; it comprehends

in itself so much, simply *as* salvation and nothing more, —that I shall be content if I obtain it, though I may secure nothing besides! Let me only get into heaven and feel myself safe! Even if I enter by the obscurest path, and can only be permitted to stand behind the door, that will be enough. It will be more than I deserve. I shall be thankful to all eternity if I am only saved,—saved even ‘by fire;’ ‘salvation by fire’ will be sufficient for me.” Now all this may be either sheer ignorance, or miserable affectation. It may look like humility—and it may *be* humility; but it does not necessarily follow that it is. The speaker may be a proud, sanctimonious bigot, who arrogates to himself the Divine regard, and leaves the rest of the race to “unconvenanted mercy.” The whole thing is founded on a mistake of the nature of the Gospel. Such people as the individual before us conceive of the Gospel simply as an expedient for saving them from hell, not as an instrument for making them like God. Its grand object they can only think of as future, and external to themselves, not as something to be accomplished *now* in the developed virtues of a subjective life. The speech we have just heard embodies feelings that are very dangerous. It seems to imply that for a man to be securely on the foundation is enough; that to have the belief of this is what is important; personal safety is the one thing needful! Now, this may not only lead to great carelessness in respect to character,—to a neglect of the virtues which are to be “added” to faith, and the use of “wood, hay, and stubble,” in their stead,—but it argues a low, base mind, utterly unworthy a loving Christian. The Redeemer of the world is the Sanctifier of the Church. The Saviour of the Sinner is the Model of the Saint In each case, the one relation is auxiliary to the other. Justification is a means to an end Christ died

not merely that *you* might be "saved from wrath," but that *He* might be "glorified in you." Nay, as His, He has given you talents to be employed in His service; He has appointed you your work, and promised you your reward; He has spoken pregnant and wonderful words of what He will give to the faithful at the last day—the distinction and honour with which they shall be crowned! Yet for all this, you are so absorbed with the mere idea of future personal safety, that you care nothing for a present godlike life; nothing for the honour of Him to whom you profess to be so much indebted; nothing for a working, painstaking fidelity in trading with the talents with which He has entrusted you; nothing for "the prize of your high calling," which *He* tells you to "let no man take!" It is enough for you if you are only saved! Like the indolent and ignoble at school or college, if you can manage to "get through," *that* will satisfy you; if you can contrive "to pass," let those that choose labour to be distinguished, and by steady and "patient continuance in well doing" "seek for glory, honour, and immortality." Why, even among us, such distinctions as we have now referred to are not in themselves intrinsically valuable; they are valuable as proofs of what an individual *is*, and of what he has been. When righteously conferred, they are but the public apocalypse and the public recognition of the inner man. This is the principle on which we have explained the predicted honours of the upper world; but this is just the thing you seem incapable of comprehending.

Understand, then, that indifference to securing the "abundant entrance" is, in reality, indifference to spiritual character; it is a willingness to obtain deliverance from suffering, with carelessness in respect to God-likeness. It is a poor, vulgar, grovelling selfishness; a meanness of soul, indicative of a base, inferior nature.

It may be worth your consideration, however, that heaven itself may not prove to you quite what you expect, on the supposition of your only being saved “as by fire.” That you will be thankful for being saved at all, we have no doubt,—nor that the event will deserve your thankfulness. Still, it may not be right that you should be content with the prospect of such a consummation, nor certain that it will perfectly satisfy you at last. It is well that salvation by fire is possible; and true that salvation by fire is a mercy: but it *may* be true also, that, for such as you, salvation by fire will be a disgrace! With your knowledge, privileges, talents, profession, you *ought* not at last to be saved with difficulty;—you ought not now to be content with the thought of it;—you may not find hereafter that it is without consequences that shall occasion you regret. “If any man’s work be burned,” though “he himself may be saved,” *“he shall suffer loss.”* In the present life, at any rate, your avowed condition may certainly come to have serious results. You may “suffer loss” in a variety of ways. You may have to endure chastisement which you might have escaped. Throughout your course—in approaching the close of it—at your last hour—many may be the deprivations to which you must submit. Nor is it quite clear that you may not carry with you, into eternity itself, the marks and scars of your perilous purgation and miraculous escape! We are too much in the habit not only of equalising everything in heaven, but of hesitating to transfer to it our present nature, consciousness, and experience. It does not follow that it shall not be heaven to a poor, careless, inconsistent man, who “suffers loss,” and is “saved as by fire;” but, neither does it follow that he shall not be conscious of something like shame, from feeling that his position is not what it might have been. He will possess too much not to be

blessed; but he may have got to it by a process the recollection of which, for a long time, may shade his gratitude with a dash of regret.

5. The subject ought to teach us a lesson of love. "If any man build on the foundation wood, hay, stubble, his work shall be burnt; he shall suffer loss; but—*he himself shall be saved!*" Let us think of this; and let us thank God that, in spite of much with which we may be offended in religious systems and religious communities, there may be true souls and loving hearts belonging to them all. In some places they may "teach for doctrines the commandments of men," and darken the Divine Word "by their traditions;" in others, there may be serious speculative errors held in connexion with essential truth; many are the mistakes in respect to the real nature of religion by which people may be misled, so that their solicitude and diligence may come to be expended on the veriest trifles,—their lives consumed in gathering and accumulating chips and straw, while they are taught to think that they are all the while "laying up treasure in heaven" and are daily becoming richer and richer "towards God." Look at that poor Catholic girl, there;—doing her penance, and counting her beads; repeating her "aves," and saying her "pater-nosters;" lighting a candle to this saint, or carrying her votive offering to another; wending her way in the dark wet morning to early mass; conscientiously abstaining from flesh on a Friday; or shutting herself up in conventual sanctity, devoting her life to joyless solitude and bodily mortifications! She is imagining, perhaps, that she is piling up by all this a vast fabric of meritorious deeds, or at least of acceptable Christian virtue. She may expect on account of it to hear from the lips of her heavenly Bridegroom, "Well done, good and faithful" one; "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "Thou shalt walk with me in

white, for thou art worthy.” *We*, however, believe that “she labours in vain and spends her strength for nought;” that she is building with “wood, hay, and stubble;” and that the first beam of the light of eternity will set fire to her worthless structure, and reduce to ashes the labours and sacrifices of her whole life! Be it so. Her “*work* may be burnt;” she may “suffer *loss*;” but *she herself* may be mercifully “*saved*.” In the midst of all that mistaken devotedness to the gathering and amassing of mere lumber as materials for building up a divine life, even in connexion with the strange fire of an erring devotion flaming up towards saints and Madonnas, there may be in her soul a central trust in the sacrifice and intercession of the “one Mediator,” which shall secure the salvation of the superstitious devotee, at the very moment that she witnesses the destruction of her works. The illustration is an extreme one. I purposely select it because it is so. The greater includes the less; and this large demand on your charitable sympathies, if you respond to it, will be felt and acknowledged to involve a principle applicable to inferior degrees of error,—to other forms of mistaken zeal, of uninstructed religiousness, of ritual infatuation, and even of defective practical behaviour. Let us never forget that we owe love to all men; and, though we owe none either to their doctrinal errors or their moral defects, it may yet happen that some, in spite of both, may be worthy of our love. They may be “living stones” on “Christ” “the foundation,” though not cut and squared according to the pattern used for ourselves; and they may have within them, as the foundation of their character, “like precious faith with us,” in spite of the errors of judgment or education, of crude perception or tyrannous circumstance, which may have led them to disfigure what they build upon it. They will have “loss” enough at last; add not to

their deprivation by withholding from them now your charitable love.

"Let no man *beguile you of your reward*, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels."—"Why are ye subject to ordinances—touch not, taste not, handle not,—after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body, but only to the dishonourable satisfying of the flesh." "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe and know the truth." In all great systems of superstition and fraud, there must have been some persons, some time or other, who deliberately and consciously helped to construct them; and, very possibly, there must always be some who, "speaking lies in hypocrisy," continue the delusion. There is no doubt, also, that every individual is under an obligation "to take heed *what* he hears;" "to *try* the spirits,, whether they be of God;" and thus to *guard* against the danger of being so "led away by the error of the wicked" as to fall with them into the pit of destruction. Admitting this, however, there will still be numbers, in almost all sects, so circumstanced as to deserve to be the objects of a comprehensive charity. There may be ignorant victims of artful heresiarchs, and poor slaves of priestly domination, who, born and trained in the midst of influences mighty to mislead, are not to be excluded from the chance of salvation because of the errors they receive for truths, or the puerile frivolities they mistake for duty. In the first of the passages just quoted, it would seem as if the apostle shaped his admonitions in

exact conformity with the doctrine we have learnt from him in this discourse. Bad men are supposed to be in the Church attempting to pervert the minds of the faithful, and to bring them into bondage to frivolous superstitions; to voluntary humility, worshipping of angels, invocation of the dead, ritual niceties, macerations, celibacy, abstinence from meats. The men are hardened, false, unscrupulous, and might “deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.” The disciples are exhorted to take heed and to beware of their teaching, lest they should be “*beguiled of their reward.*” Paul regards those whom he exhorts, as Peter regarded those whom he addressed, as partakers “of like precious faith” with himself; but he thinks it possible that they may be so seduced as to be set to work on mere “wood, hay, and stubble;” to waste their time on profitless objects, and thus to be in danger of finding at last that they had *lost* the crown that might have been theirs; and that, *though* “saved,” and admitted to the kingdom, it was without that “reward” of which they had suffered themselves to be “*defrauded.*” How wonderful will be the revelations of the judgment! “The last will be first, and the first last.” Some of the adherents of an orthodox creed will be lost for want of a true “faith;” some of the victims of error and superstition *having that*, shall be among the “saved,” though they may lose something which if better instructed they might have attained, and see destroyed what they were taught to value. Let us distinguish between systems and persons—things and men. The true and the good may be occasionally included in the false and the pernicious. If God’s people are to “come out” of Babylon, they are supposed to be in it; nay, for a time, both in it and of it; and it is surely competent to charity to think some of them may be in it now, and may even die there, not hearing, or not comprehending, the command to depart.

6. Two words, addressed respectively to Christian men and to those who are living in impenitence and sin, may fitly conclude this protracted discourse. The subject should leave on the minds of the faithful a deep sense of the greatness of "the work given them to do." They have not only to avoid obvious sin, to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke;" they have to "increase and abound" in active virtue; to be "holy in all manner of conversation." To advert to the figure so often referred to, they have to build up, on the basis of faith, the cumulative excellence of Christian character; and they have to see to it, not only that they labour assiduously, but that they make use of the proper materials. To young Christians I would specially commend the subject we have been discussing, in all its manifold lights and aspects. It is an incomparable blessing for a man "to fear the Lord from his youth;"—to be quickened by the Spirit, and made intelligently the subject of the faith of Christ, in early life; and thus to begin the formation of habits, and the structure of the character, on the firmest foundation and after the highest model. Many have to lament, "Thou makest me to possess the sins of my youth;" happy is the man who creates for himself no such inheritance. "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even "the chief." It is well to know that the man steeped in guilt, and hoary in iniquity, may be converted and turned from the error of his ways, and "obtain mercy" through "the blood that cleanseth from all sin." But it is not necessary to be a great sinner to need mercy, and never desirable to defer for a day attention to duty, or to widen the distance between ourselves and God. It is better not to commit sins than to have them forgiven. Innocence is preferable to repentance,—an unspotted conscience to one purified from

previous guilt. There is quite enough in the disease of our nature, and in the fact of our daily and customary transgressions, to render it impossible for any to be saved but through the atoning sacrifice and the sanctifying Spirit. But there are sins which many men have never committed—sins which are pardonable, and are often pardoned; yet no wise man would wish to exchange the consciousness of innocence for the hope of indemnity. So, I affirm, with respect to other sins, less heinous,—it is better to be kept from them than to have them forgiven. It is better to begin life in the service of Christ; to lay early the Divine foundation of religious faith; and to build on it from the first the solid edifice of holy character—than to be brought at the ninth or at the eleventh hour, with wasted time and prostituted talents, with burdened conscience and broken energies, to the Cross that might have been reached before; to yield but the dregs of existence to God; to spend the residue of life with regret for its beginning, or to leave it with a trembling and hesitating hope, having done none of the work for which it was conferred. “Preventing grace” is as worthy your solicitude as forgiving mercy. He who is “wise unto that which is good, and *simple concerning evil*,” is better than he who has known and fathomed “the depths of Satan,” though he may have “risen” from them “with Christ” into the life of God.

Let the young then, especially, consider well their great advantage with respect to the duties we have been attempting to teach. Let them begin at once. As early disciples to the Lord, and presumed to be possessed of religious faith, let them diligently “add” to it the different virtues inculcated by St Peter. In their conscientious prosecution of this great work, let them guard at once against indolence and mistake; against doing

nothing, and doing wrong; against adding worthless materials to the building, or foolishly "pulling it down with their hands." To give way to anything that violates the conscience and burdens the heart, is to do this. God can forgive the sins of His children, but they may find it difficult to forgive themselves. The wound of a great sin may be healed, but the scar long remains upon the soul. The consequences of transgression in relation to eternity may be cut off by the intervention of the accepted sacrifice; but its consequences *here* have often to be endured while life is prolonged and memory lives. We have heard much of the awful nature of "sin after baptism," and of its only alleviation being a baptism of tears. While they who so speak practise the rite in relation to infants, and thus make it inevitable that no actual sin shall be committed except such as must *be* after baptism, their conduct and their teaching would seem to be a mixture of folly and cruelty, insincerity and deceit. Applied, however, to the case of those who have been fully instructed in the knowledge of Christ; who have been regenerated by a higher regeneration than baptism, and are intelligently in possession of the elementary principle of a Divine faith and of spiritual life; there is something in the representations to which we have referred which should not be altogether disregarded. Let no Christian be indolent or careless,—negligent of duty or tolerant of sin,—because blood hath been shed to remove guilt, and "a fountain opened" for uncleanness and iniquity! And let no man think that it will be all the same if he is saved at last, whether or not he was practically conversant with all evil. Happy is the man "whose iniquity is forgiven and whose sin is covered;" but happier he, who, "kept back from presumptuous sin," free from and "innocent of the great transgression," is planted, from the first, "by the rivers

of water,” and “brings forth his fruit in due season”—each stage in the journey of life distinguished by the virtues appropriate to it. It is in this way, usually, that the most solid and symmetrical characters are formed, or the most durable and best proportioned edifices built. To do anything great, however, there must be put forth great effort, industry, and skill. The Christian virtues are not self-sown: they spring not spontaneously even from the soil of a regenerated heart; they require care, culture, and time. Nothing durable is raised suddenly: nothing Divine is by chance or accident. The structure that shall stand the testing flame, and present, from the midst of it, its beautiful proportions and lustrous magnificence, being built according to the plan of the Architect, and composed of marble, gold, and gems,—*that* is not a thing to be the work of a day, or to be left to itself without thought and assiduity on the part of the builder. Hence it is, that while we press on all the grand moral of our whole discourse, we press it especially on the youth of the Church, since in their case the ground is clear and the day before them. Observe how with the work to which Peter exhorts, he associates the idea of the necessity of laborious and painstaking perseverance: “Therefore *give diligence* to make your calling and election sure;”—“giving *all* diligence, add to your faith virtue.” “If these things be in you, *and abound*; so shall an entrance be ministered to you *abundantly*.” It is not only the possession of Christian goodness to which the apostle exhorts, but the possession of it in large and ample proportions; and to secure this, not only diligence, but “all diligence,” is required and demanded. The neighbourhood of the first of the two passages constituting our text is studded with terms illustrative of what we have been attempting to enforce: “We are labourers together with God. Ye are God’s building. Let every man take

heed how he buildeth. Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it. It shall be revealed by fire. The fire shall try every mans work, of what sort it is. If a man's work abide, he shall receive a reward. If a mans work be burnt, he shall suffer loss. Ye are the temple of God. The temple of God is holy; which temple ye are. *Let no man deceive himself.*"

And let no sinful and impenitent man depart hence without attending to the lesson he should carry with him. If even the imperfectly good,—men with real, spiritual life in them, of true faith, but defective character,—if even *they* are to be exposed to punishment for their errors, what may be expected by the dead "in sin,"—those who have no faith at all—and whose character instead of being imperfectly good is essentially evil, consisting of unbelief, impenitence, and crime? "*If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*" If some of the good are to be saved with difficulty, how can the bad be saved at all? If it be something terrible to be "scarcely saved," what must it be to be utterly lost? If for a man to "*suffer loss*" is represented as so awful, what must it be for him "to lose his soul"? "Judgment must begin at the house of God; but, if it first begin at us, what must the end be of those who obey not the Gospel of Christ?" It is terrible to have to endure some purgative discipline intended to save us from being "condemned with the world:" more terrible must be that condemnation itself! Painful is the process of cutting and amputating to preserve life,—piercing into the flesh to root out that cancerous core,—plucking out the eye, or taking off the arm, lest some deadly taint should pervade the system and paralyse the heart; but more painful and tremendous must it be, to be "delivered to the tormentors" to be "cut asunder,"—to be

cut off, body and soul, from the regions of the living, and to be for ever consigned to “the congregation of the dead.” It is a fearful thing to be saved “as by fire”—to be plucked from the flame as a brand from the burning; but it must be a more fearful thing to be *burnt*, to be left in the flame, and not snatched from its devouring environment! It will be awful to be seized upon by the flaming minister of the Divine displeasure, and, instead of being purged by it from superficial defects, to have “utterly to perish in your own corruption!”

May the great and loving God, in His infinite mercy, avert from all present such a terrible result! May “the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;”—may they “repent and turn themselves from all their transgressions, that so iniquity may not be their ruin.” And if any are present who not only “lack those things” of which we have been speaking, but who, though “once enlightened, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost and the powers of the world to come,” have, through the drugs and devices of the Devil, become “blind, not seeing afar off, and have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins,”—may they, too, have “repentance given them unto the acknowledgment of the truth,” and, “escaping from the snare of him by whom they have been led captive, may they awake up again unto the will of God!”

SERMON VIII.¹

THE DIVINE LIFE IN MAN.

“The washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”—
TITUS iii. 5.

*“Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed
day by day.”—2 COR. iv. 16.*

THE first of these passages has received at least three different interpretations.

The word rendered “washing” might be translated “laver;” that is, a vessel in which water is contained. Hence, the “washing” or “laver” “of regeneration” has been taken to mean, or to refer to, baptism. Those, however, who take this view, differ in their interpretation of the phrase itself in its bearing on baptism; and this difference affects its relation to the second phrase, “the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” and alters the meaning of that. The one class of interpreters say, that “the laver of regeneration” refers only to the external rite, ‘the outward and visible sign,’ and nothing more; and that “the renewing of the Holy Ghost” stands for ‘the inward and spiritual grace,’ typically signified by the rite. The rite shows that a purifying change is *required* by

¹ This sermon, and the four which immediately succeed, constitute together a short course on one subject.

humanity,—a cleansing from pollution and sin, a *new state* of mind and heart; the “renewing” indicates the *nature* of that change itself, and refers to the agency by which it is wrought. There is no other connexion between the two. The one is a visible, material emblem of a spiritual thing; the other is that spiritual thing itself. As to when the one succeeds (or precedes) the other, in any given case, or is ever experienced or realized at all, that is a question which the text is not supposed to touch.

Another class of interpreters say, that the baptismal rite, while it is an ‘outward and visible sign’ of a spiritual thing, is also “the washing of regeneration,” because in it, and through it, the spiritual thing itself is conferred. The individual receiving the sign is subjectively regenerated, or ought to be so regarded, and is rightly and properly so regarded, supposing the sacrament to be complete, seeing that that includes both things—the ‘outward sign’ as one part of it, the ‘inward grace’ as the other. In this case, “the renewing of the Holy Ghost” is not the spiritual reality typified or conveyed by baptism—the “regeneration” connected with the rite is *that*—but it is the *after-growth*, the subsequent maintenance and development of that new and Divine thing which, in the baptismal regeneration, is begun.

A third class of interpreters differ from both these in one respect, while they agree with the second of the two in another. *They* say, that there is no necessity, either theological or verbal, for supposing that there is any reference in the passage to baptism at all. With them “the washing of regeneration” *means* the washing of regeneration—the change of nature, the inward transformation of the soul effected by the influence of the Spirit of God, irrespective of any immediate or instrumental connexion with the baptismal rite, though it

may be symbolically shadowed forth by it,—irrespective even of the fact as to whether the individual had been baptized at all, seeing that the inward reality might be received though the outward sign had not been administered. "The washing of regeneration" being thus regarded as descriptive of the *beginning* of spiritual life, "the renewing of the Holy Ghost" is taken to mean the continued or repeated acts of gracious influence by which that life is invigorated and preserved. It is in this last particular, you observe, that this third set of interpreters agree with the second of the other two. In putting aside the allusion, or supposed allusion, to baptism, it differs from both.

Without entering into the discussion of the baptismal question in any of its aspects, or making any further reference to it, we propose to take up the second phrase in the first passage prefixed to this discourse, in the sense which has just been attached to it, and, connecting it with the idea suggested by the second passage, to make it the subject of a brief illustrative argument, and the basis of a practical appeal. We must first, however, bring out, and set clearly before you, what we understand to be the combined teaching of the two texts, as that is to be the ground of our subsequent remarks.

By "regeneration," then, we understand the commencement of the life of God in the soul of man; the beginning of that which had not an existence before: by "renewal," the invigoration of that which has been begun; the sustentation of a life already possessed. The impartation of life is one thing; its support another. Its "renewal" does not mean its reanimation after dying out, as the light of an extinguished lamp may be renewed—but, that the life itself is supported and preserved; that there is the revival of exhausted energy, the supply of the waste and decay occasioned by the wear and tear

of whatever expends or tries its powers. The subject may be illustrated by the analogy of natural life. When a child is born, we do not say that its life is renewed, but that its life has begun; its visible existence starts from its commencement. *Having* thus started, it then needs to be sustained and fed; the living being requires nourishment and invigoration in the form of food and rest. Even the strong man, worn and reduced by care and toil, by the battle and the burden of each day, is conscious of weakened and wasted energy, and needs the constant and regular renewal of his strength. All this is obviously analogous to the inward and spiritual life of man. It has its *beginning*. In “the washing of regeneration” the new life commences. *Having* begun, it needs to be supported and preserved. And not only so; but exposed to injury, liable to be weakened and depressed by the perils that menace and the labours that belong to it, it needs to be refreshed and recruited, strengthened and revived. That is effected by “the renewing of the Holy Ghost,”—the flowing into the soul, through “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,” of the varied gifts of that Divine agent by whom the life itself was imparted at first.

In the second prefixed passage, or text, we read, that “though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” By “the outward man” is meant the body—the body with its physical, organic, natural life. “The inward man” is not the soul merely—the spiritual part of our constitution as distinct from the material—it is *that*, as impregnated with, animated by, that new and Divine life which belongs to the regenerate. There is obviously underlying the double statement the idea of the analogy already referred to, that the one life and the other, the natural and the Divine alike, require to be sustained by appropriate and

adequate supplies—supplies suited to the nature and necessities of each. But, in addition to this general idea, there are two others in the passage, more or less distinctly expressed, which, being brought out and noticed, may still further prepare the way for the work we have before us.

Observe then, first, that the apostle suggests the idea of *daily* renewal: "the inward man is renewed *day by day*." This language not only implies that daily or regular renewal is needed, but that it can be had, and that it is the will of Christ that it *should* be had. There is a daily waste of spiritual energy, which makes necessary to us a daily renewal. Duty and service, even when willing and joyous, fatigue and exhaust, though they may strengthen the principles which they call into play; just as bodily toil exhausts, though it may strengthen the muscles that are most used. Of course, in the case supposed—the exhaustion consequent on duty and service—the weakness and fatigue belong rather to the "outward" than to the "inward" man, or, so far as they affect the latter, are occasioned, so to speak, by the Divine "treasure" being as yet in an "earthen vessel." But the Christian is not only called to duty and service, which may in one sense invigorate, while in another they exhaust; he is exposed, in the figurative language of Scripture, to slips and falls that may maim and bruise; to the galling fire, at times, of an adversary armed with flaming darts; in some places, to a poisonous atmosphere, the inhaling of which may be seriously prejudicial to spiritual health: in short, to temptations which may suddenly take him at an advantage; to perils and dangers which he may not always pass through unhurt. All this occasions a sense of exhaustion, which needs to be met by a fresh supply of Divine strength. But this state of things is what *ordinarily* belongs to our Christian

course—or in principle at least does so: it is therefore to be always remembered, and habitually prepared for and provided against, as the effect of it may be expected to be constantly felt. Every new day brings with it its duties and its dangers; its demand for service, and its exposures to peril. The grace of yesterday will not do for to-day; the strength of yesterday was needed for itself, and was expended, we may hope, in doing whatever the day required. It will not be possible to meet the demands of a new morning in the wasted condition in which the man may have been left on the preceding night. Hence the force of the apostle’s expression, and its beauty also, in presenting us with the idea, not only of the renewal of the inward man as a general truth, but of his renewal “*day by day.*”

But a second thing is suggested by the phraseology of the passage under consideration. “Though our outward man perish, the inward man is renewed;”—that is to say, “the outward man” (the bodily life), needing to be supported and sustained by appropriate nourishment, has always had, and continues to have, his energies recruited by food and rest; yet, in spite of this, he “perisheth.” The tendency to decay is stronger than the power of invigoration. A time comes, in the case of every individual, when the body loses more than it gains, expends strength (and *vitality*, so to speak) beyond what it gets back; and thus, while it is kept alive, and has a certain portion of waste made good, the process of decay goes on at a greater rate than that of renewal; and hence it “perishes,” or keeps gradually declining, and must one day die, and so cease and determine altogether! Not so, however, is it in relation to “the inward man.” He is “renewed,”—always and adequately renewed,—“day by day;” or, he *may*, at least, be thus sustained, ample provision being made for it The Divine life in

man grows stronger and stronger with the advance of years—in spite of the decay and dilapidation of "the earthly house," and in opposition to its tendency to inevitable dissolution. The great point of difference between bodily and spiritual renewal is this,—that, in the one case, the antagonist principle surely and steadily advances, and must ultimately prevail; in the other case, the antagonist principle is overborne and counteracted, so that the process of renewal goes on unaffected by age or time. Hence, it may come to pass that when a Christian dies, or, in the language of Scripture, "departs,"—departs "to be with Christ,"—he goes hence, spiritually speaking, a stronger man, more vigorous and healthy, fuller of life and power than he ever was before! The "outward man" *cannot* be so renewed as to "live always;" to "continue for ever, and not see death." But the "inward man" *is* so renewed, or may be. It was "the good pleasure" of Him "who created him," to place him under the law of progression, development, perpetuity, "according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." *That* life is "life eternal." It is the will of God that he that hath it should not only retain it, but have it "more abundantly;" that he should keep continually "growing up into Christ in all things,"—his path being "like the light of the morning, shining more and more unto the perfect day." The spiritual day is not *meant* to have a night—hardly a meridian—for it is to run parallel with the days of eternity. Its glow and glory, its radiance and sunlight, may keep on increasing and augmenting to the last, and then be continued in the upper world. The "way" of God's saints is "a way everlasting." The water of which they drink is "living water," and is intended to be within them as "a well," or fountain, "springing up into everlasting life." "The incorruptible seed" of which

the soul is born, and which is within it the root of those “fruits of holiness” which it brings forth,—*this* is not meant to “spring up in a night,” and in a night to die; to flourish and expand under the influence of “the dew of the morning,” but to fade and fall when “the sun rises with his burning heat.” It is not the Divine purpose that the inner life of the man who is “like a tree planted by the rivers of water” shall only for a short summer be verdant and fruitful, and then pass away and be seen no more; but that “as a teil tree and an oak, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves,” it shall bear “fruit even in old age,” and then, “full of sap,” be transplanted to the garden of God above, to flourish for ever there—fixed and rooted by “the margin of the river of the water of life.”

This brief exposition of the two passages lying before us is sufficient to show that there is a Divine life in man—a life which begins in “the washing of regeneration;” is sustained and preserved “by the renewing of the Holy Ghost;” and is intended, by Him who confers it, to be perpetuated for ever. The fuller, or at least further, development of the subject, argumentative and practical, will be pursued in a short series of discourses, to which what we have advanced this morning may be considered the introduction.

SERMON IX.

REGENERATION AND RENEWAL.

“Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth.”—JAMES i. 18.

“Every one that loveth is born of God.”—I JOHN iv. 7.

“Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love.”—I PETER i. 22.

IN our former discourse, after stating that we proposed to deliver a short series of discourses on the Divine life in man, we set forth the particular aspect of the subject that would more especially engage our attention. This we did by a brief exposition of two passages from St. Paul: “The washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” “Though our outward man perish, the inward is renewed day by day.” The general truth coming out of these statements we found to be this:— That the Divine life in man was the result of the action or influence of the Spirit of God; that it begins in “the washing of regeneration,” and is preserved and sustained by “the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” and that, “day by day.” Other points were noticed, but these were the combined central ideas educed and set forth. They present to us that aspect of the subject which is to be kept in view in our subsequent remarks.

We now propose to enter into a brief argument, explanatory and illustrative of the doctrine as we have now stated it, which will be preparatory to the presentation and enforcement of its practical uses. As authoritative and guiding lines, adapted to direct our thoughts, to sanction and sustain our conclusions, we have prefixed to this discourse the passages just read from the apostles James, Peter, and John. Three men, these, of singular eminence among the apostles; all of them “seemed to be pillars:” the first was the president of the Church at Jerusalem, the other two were peculiarly favoured by the Lord during His life. “Being dead, they yet spake,” and *so* speak that their words are words “which the Holy Ghost teacheth,” and in relation to spiritual truth are to be accepted as at once authoritative and final. “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth.” “Every one that loveth is born of God.” “Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love.”

In advancing to our argument, we lay down as a preliminary statement, that we accept the fact of Divine influence, or the work of the Spirit of God in man, on the authority of Scripture; and that we can believe the fact, and rejoice in it as a glorious and blessed assurance, though we may have no notion as to how it is to be explained. The *possibility* of the thing no one can doubt who believes in the existence of God and the creation of man. These being admitted, it of course follows that He who made the mind must understand its nature, and be able to have access to it if He please. The *probability* that He should thus seek to influence it for good is sustained by every consideration that would lead us to expect any merciful or beneficial interposition on His part at all. The *certainty* of the thing we hold to be ascertained by the express declarations of Holy

Writ, in which is made known to us that kind of interference on our behalf which God has been pleased to institute in the economy of Redemption. In the discoveries of the Gospel, "the Holy Spirit" is revealed to us as distinctly as "the Christ." The work of the one *in* man is represented as being as important and necessary as that of the other for him. "The washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," stand out in the record as distinctly as that "God has given to us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son." Still, it may be no more possible to explain how it is that the living Spirit operates on man, than it is to explain how the death of the Christ operates on God. In both cases the facts or doctrines may be received and held, and the mind may derive benefit from the belief in them as such, and yet it may be beyond its province and its powers to comprehend or explain the mode of their operation.

While we thus admit, however, that our belief in the reality of Divine influence is just the reverent reception, by faith, of an inexplicable spiritual fact on the ground of competent authority, it may yet be allowable to offer a few general consecutive suggestions, which may possibly help our apprehension of that aspect of the subject now before us, namely, the *renewal* of the Divine life in man.

1. Notice, then, in the first place, the two things which Scripture connects with the beginning of that life,—connects with it, as instrumental cause and immediate result. The renewal of a thing, when that thing is a mental state and spiritual condition of the inner man, will most likely bear some resemblance to its mode of origination. The renewal, therefore, of the mind by the Holy Spirit may be something of like nature with the process through which it was awakened

or quickened into life at first. Now the two things which are prominently associated with regeneration are *truth* and *love*;—Truth, as the instrument through which, or along with which, the Divine influence is exerted; Love, as the result which fills and takes possession of the soul, and makes it “a partaker of the Divine nature.” “By His own will begat He us *by the word of truth*.” “Love is of God; and every one that loveth *is born of God*.” In raising man from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, the Holy Spirit makes use of the truth, to flash light into the soul and to awaken love in the heart. These two things are the root of, or comprehensively include, all others. Truth reveals to the man, and sets impressively before him, everything it becomes him to know essential to his salvation. It unveils to him, himself, sin, God, Christ, mercy, the way to the Father, the welcome awaiting him, the grace promised, the power of the Cross, the “Advocate” on high, and so on. This—“the word of truth”—spiritually impressed and made influential by the Divine Agent that wields it, calls forth contrition, faith, hope, inspires joy and peace, with other soothing and animating subjective results, of which the issue is love,—love to God and man. This is the essential element of the new life, the pulsation that proclaims its presence and power; and it becomes, or constitutes, that central fountain of good in the soul whence can issue all holy affections towards heaven, and all the required virtue of earth. For truth to come to man, “not in word only, but also in power, and *by the Holy Ghost*;” and for the love of God to be “shed abroad in the heart *by the Holy Ghost*,”—for this to be done, is for him who is the subject of it to be “regenerated.” He is now animated by what is above nature, foreign to the flesh—not born of it or belonging to it

He is raised into a higher sphere as to his inner life, and has instincts and aspirations congenial with it "The washing of regeneration," in its scriptural completeness, is the result of the "cleansing of the Spirit and the belief of the truth,"—these two things being the divine and the human side of the subjective process. That process is as the entrance into a new world He who experiences it is "born again," "born of God;" and he that is born of God "loveth Him," and loveth what is like Him. Those, then, who have "obeyed the truth—through the Spirit—unto unfeigned love," are God's children, whether the change was effected by a sudden conversion in riper years, or by the gradual increase of light and love, the secret, imperceptible insinuations of the Spirit, in the course of their being brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

2. Observe, now, the actings and influence of truth and love when the spiritual life is healthy and vigorous.

Truth and Love are two of the strongest, if not the two strongest, things in the universe. It is easy to see, therefore, how, constituting the elements of man's spiritual life, they constitute also the secret force, the inherent power and strength, out of which his *practical* daily life must be wrought. Reason enlightened by faith—faith instinct with the knowledge of the truth "spiritually discerned,"—these enable an individual to apprehend, objectively, all duty of all kinds. He can look at everything in the light of heaven; see, as they are only to be seen in that light, the hideousness of sin and the hollowness of the world; the devices of the devil and the deceitfulness of the flesh; the grandeur of duty, the beauty of obedience, the heroism of self-denial, the attractiveness of humility, forbearance, brotherly kindness, with everything else that Divine illumination can reveal or make manifest adapted to

secure constancy in goodness. In the same way, in a heart warmed with the love of God, sensible of its obligations to redeeming mercy, emptied of self, its enmity or repugnance towards the holy and the pure expelled or overcome, taught to hate not only the presence but “the appearance of evil,” “filled with unfeigned love of the brethren,” in charity with all men, and with its “affections fixed on those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God,”—a heart in this condition is fitted to supply impulse and energy for “whatever the hand findeth to do.” It is a central heat, whose glow and fervour animate and inspire the active faculties of the soul, prompting them to aim at the accomplishment—and instrumentally imparting the competency to accomplish—those things which come in the form of Christian obligation, and which the regenerated man, as such, is supposed to *see* through the exercise of his enlightened understanding. In two words,—by Truth, the mind perceives and apprehends all duty; by Love, it is impelled or drawn towards what it perceives.

When the inner life is in this healthy condition, the representations of Scripture come to be realized, in which are set forth the subjective blessedness and the visible results of what is meant by “sanctification.” It may then be said of the Christian man, that “the word of Christ dwells in him richly;” that he is “filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;” that “he walks worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;” that he “puts on Christ,” and “grows up into Him in all things.” That as he “lives by the Spirit,” he “walks

in the Spirit," is "led by the Spirit," and finds that "to be spiritually minded is life and peace." In him it is seen that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance;" and that he habitually thinks of, and resolutely follows, "whatsoever things are true, just, pure, lovely, and of good report:" such a man feeds on the "milk" and "meat" of the Word; eats of "the hidden manna;" drinks of "the still waters;" lies down "in the green pastures;" and is filled and satisfied as with "marrow and fatness." He is daily "anointed as with fresh oil;" his "cup runneth over;" his path is in the sunlight; "the wicked one toucheth him not." He is "kept in the love of God." He "abides in Christ." He "grows in grace." He is "in the fear of the Lord all the day long;" and, "waiting upon Him," he morning by morning "renews his strength."

3. Observe, next, the change for the worse which may come over the mind.

The nature of that Divine life which the Spirit of God awakens in man being, as we have seen, the power of truth combined with the fire of love, it is obvious that its increase and growth, its manifestation in such forms as have just been enumerated, will be in proportion to those two things retaining their sway, and being enlarged in compass and power. But here it is to be noted that what we really mean by the wear and tear, the depression and exhaustion occasioned by the Christian's contact with the world, his work and warfare in the present life, consists just in the unconscious or the sensible diminution of these two things. The great moral trial of the spirit, against which we have to be on our constant guard, may be briefly summed up in this—our liability to allow heavenly things so to withdraw from observation as to lose their power to influence, by becoming dim and distant, and being forgotten; and the tendency of

earthly things to come forward and take their place, and so to attract and absorb the affections of the heart. In other words, for the light of faith to get clouded and eclipsed, so that spiritual perceptions are less clear, and Divine things cease to be realities; and for Divine love to get lowered in temperature, to lose its influence as the source of action, and to leave the heart to be taken and possessed, or trodden down, by secular attachments. The pressure of business, the distracting character of many occurrences in common life, inevitable vicissitudes, prosperity, disappointment, the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, fulness of bread, anxiety for the morrow, home satisfactions, domestic disquietude, science, literature, politics, sudden disturbance, seasons even of tranquil and uninterrupted joy,—all these things, and whatever else goes to make up our daily life, may, if not carefully watched, become temptations; they may injure the life of the soul by diminishing the force of those principles in which it consists. Of course, everything that is a peril to the spirit may become a means of safety and strength,—as all temptation that is successfully resisted, all manly effort put forth in either work or warfare, tends to the invigoration of our spiritual manhood. But the tendency of things to become the occasion of sin, or the possibility of their so acting or being allowed so to act as to injure the inner life, is also a truth, and it is that aspect of the subject with which we have at present to deal. Matters get so low at times that, so to speak, truth ceases to be true; that which was loved ceases to be lovely. The moral judgment loses its sensibility and insight, and becomes darkened and prejudiced. God and duty, holiness and sin, are not seen in the clear light in which they were wont to be perceived. The heart sympathises with the apostasy of the reason; the love of the world gathers strength and strives for pre-eminence;

the worse makes head against the better; and thus, at the termination of the heat and battle of the day or of the week, the man may find, when he retires to look impartially on himself, that his spiritual life has greatly deteriorated—the light that was in him being almost darkness, the love that was in him being "ready to die."

4. Now, by "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," or, as the apostle expresses it in another place, "the renewing of the mind," we understand that this deteriorating process is counteracted and stayed, and a healthy spiritual action set up. Truth is cleared of its obscurations, and regains its position in the bright and luminous atmosphere of faith. The love of the Father purifies the heart by crushing the reviving love of the world. The inward man has his eye purged from what darkened and enfeebled it, and looks again, and looks steadily, with intelligence and approval, "*not* at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen;" while the affection that had cooled is again enkindled, or its warmth revived, and is fixed afresh on its proper object. By "the inward man" being "renewed," is thus for him to receive a fresh "supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ," as "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him," and as the source of that love which at once "fulfils the law and endures all things." Hence, "the eyes of his understanding are enlightened;" "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart;" the loins of the mind are girt up; it is "strengthened with might," "clothed with power," and ready, from the spiritual invigoration it has received, for the new calls of a new day,—a fresh start in the journey, or another struggle in the battle of the Christian life.

5. The last thing to be glanced at here, is the question as to the manner in which this inward renewal is effected—the way in which the Holy Spirit produces

this spiritual revival of the life of God in the soul of man.

We cannot explain what the work of the Divine Spirit, properly speaking, *is*. Perhaps we are more competent to say what it is *not*. We speak of Divine *influence*, and to conceive of that, we recall, it may be, the language of Scripture, which seems to liken it to the descent of rain and dew; or we think of the expression, “the demonstration of the Spirit and of power;” or we seize on, and give substance to, the figures of “the sword,” “the rod,” “the hammer:”—the “sword of the Spirit” that pierces the heart; the “rod” in the hand of the Divine agent that touches the rock; the “hammer” that breaks and rends it. But we are in danger of getting material associations from these and similar figures of speech, and of imagining that there is something in the operation of the Spirit on the human mind analogous to direct physical agency. We must be careful, however, not to do this; for we may be quite sure that whatever Divine influence is, it is not, and cannot be, anything partaking of the nature of force, or inconsistent with our constitution as rational and voluntary agents. It is not *inspiration*, and therefore it is not the conveyance to the intellect, immediately and directly, of that truth by which it is to be enlightened. I suppose it might be affirmed that the Spirit of God, in His regenerating and sanctifying action on the soul, reveals or imparts no new truth,—impresses on the reason no idea that is not already in the written Word; nor does He employ any that is there apart from the instrumentality of that Word heard or read. Whatever may be the nature of the Spirit’s influence on the affections of the heart, we may safely say that they, too, are awakened by the power of the Truth, and that, stimulated by the action of Divine light thus reaching them through faith, they

are warmed and developed into a deep and earnest living force. There may be truth in the intellect separate from its regenerating power on the soul; light in the reason without the corresponding love in the heart; but there cannot be the transforming and regenerating effect, nor the intelligent kindling of holy emotion, without the truth and the light first. There may be little truth, and feeble perception of it; but truth and the light of it there must be. Now, the influence or work of the Holy Spirit is that movement—whatever it be, or however exercised—which gives truth its regal and penetrating power, and kindles through it the fire of the affections. It does not put into the soul the truth itself. Seed is sown in the earth; it has in it a secret vitality, a hidden life-power; to develop that, to make it shoot forth, there needs the influence of the sky—the morning dew, the daily sunlight, the genial shower, the invigorating breath of heaven. *It is sown by the agency of man*, but it is quickened and matured by the power of God. Man casts it into the ground; it groweth up "he knoweth not how;" but this he knows, that it is "God that giveth the increase." "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works!—the earth is full of Thy riches! Thou waterest the hills from Thy chambers. Thou causeth the grass to grow; Thou makest it soft with showers, Thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, and Thou renewest the face of the earth."

The remarks now made have an important bearing on the awaking and commencement of the spiritual life; but we employ them at present in relation to the renewal of its energies when relaxed or weakened, and to the process of their daily invigoration. All the points consecutively touched upon in this brief illustrative argument may be thus summed up: For the inward man to be spiritually renewed means, in the highest

sense, for the Truth that is in him to recover again its lost ascendancy, and for his Love to be re-animated through the sunlight of that truth. For this to be done effectually, it must be the “renewing of the Holy Ghost,” or the action of the Spirit of God on the mind and heart,—not, however, by immediate new revelations, or the exertion of anything like direct force, but by some secret unexplained influence on and through the portions of Truth already in the soul. For this renewal of the inward man to be “day by day,” is, for the requisite action of the Spirit to be constantly at work, counteracting the flesh, the world, and the devil; disposing the man to meet their assaults or insinuations by adequate resistance, and especially putting forth a re-animating power when the Divine life has sunk and waned from successful temptation or human infirmity. For this to be expected—daily expected and daily enjoyed—would seem to require, according to all that we know of the Divine mode of procedure, the careful, conscientious, and regular employment of appropriate spiritual means and appliances, which belong to the sphere of human agency, and are within the reach of every individual. To point out what these are, and to illustrate and enforce other cognate matters, will be the business of future discourses.

SERMON X.

PRINCIPLES TO BE REMEMBERED.

“Keep yourselves in the love of God.”—JUDE 21.

“Be filled with the Spirit.”—EPHES. v. 18.

IN two discourses already delivered, we have directed your attention to the Divine life in man. We accepted, on the authority of Scripture, without attempting to question or explain it, the fact of Divine influence,—the operation of the Spirit of God on the mind and heart. The *commencement* of spiritual life was traced to “the washing of regeneration,”—or simply to “regeneration “properly understood. The *preservation* of that life—its revival and renovation when weakened or depressed—was referred to “the renewal of the Holy Ghost,”—that is, to the continuance or repetition of those gracious acts of Divine influence by which the soul is awakened into life at first. We set forth the truth in a series of consecutive remarks that wove themselves into a brief illustrative argument. To this exposition of the doctrine we now propose to add a number of practical suggestions. These will include the statement of some guiding principles, which ought to be admitted and remembered; and the recommendation or enforcement of certain means and appliances, by the use of which the

blessing in question—that “renewal” of which we discourse—may be secured.

We lay it down, then, as a first principle, that Christian men ought never to forget that the continuance and vigour of their inward life does actually depend on “the renewal of the Holy Ghost.”

I enter into no discussion of the question whether it be possible for the spiritual life, once given, to be lost or extinguished. I avoid this, partly because I will not be drawn aside from practical matters to vexed and subtle speculative inquiries, and partly because they who hold that the Divine life cannot be lost, believe this *because* they believe that it will not fail to be preserved and sustained by the Holy Ghost—by that daily renewal or “supply of the Spirit,” to which we refer. On all hands the principle is admitted, that that life which God gives God must maintain; and this is all that at present we wish to press home upon you, as a truth never to be lost sight of. He that “live& by the Spirit” has to “walk by the Spirit,”—to walk, not merely according to His will, but as sustained by His strength. The work of the Spirit *in* man (as was formerly remarked) is not only as real and important as the work of Christ for him; but it is as much required to *keep* alive as to *make* alive—to preserve the life as to impart it. The Holy Spirit has not only to visit, or draw near to, or touch the soul; He has to “dwell” in it, to “abide” with it, to make the heart His home, the body His temple. If He be “grieved” or offended,—if He withdraw or depart,—the spiritual life droops and languishes; just as all nature would do if the sun were to be protractedly eclipsed; just as the earth would suffer if the heavens withheld the dew and the rain. We are well aware that all instructed and thoughtful Christian people will assent to this; they will admit the

statement of the truth as such; what is wanted is, that it should be felt as a fact,—that it should be realized by the reason and the heart, and thus become the basis of various forms of practical procedure.

Many people in certain sections of the Church undergo, at one time of their lives, great anxiety as to whether they are converted,—whether they have experienced a spiritual change, so that in them a Divine life may be believed to have been begun; but they do not seem to feel, or to manifest, a continued and corresponding anxiety as to the growth and increase of that life, about the commencement of which they once thought so much. Others, brought up under different influences, may have been very serious and devout previous to their first communion, or their first approach to the table—as they respectively express it; but they may not have thought much or deeply of the engagement since, or remembered or recalled their sacramental obligations. Others, again, who are very anxious when they unite themselves to a church, cease to be anxious as to how they live in it;—indeed, some would seem never to know much of that anxiety at all. With many people the great point seems to be, “to have a name to live,”—that is, to be thought of and recognised by others as spiritually alive, and to get such a persuasion about themselves; but not to guard, foster, and nourish the life thus recognised—to keep it uninjured, and to increase its strength, health, and activity. Now, we wish to impress upon you the importance of this maintenance of the spiritual life; and still further, of the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit to that end. The “washing of regeneration” cleanses the soul; “the renewing of the Holy Ghost” must keep it clean. The one gives, the other preserves; the one originates, the other continues; the one “lays the

foundation,” the other “builds thereon;”—and not only builds, but beautifies and adorns, ornaments and embellishes, if the work keep advancing,—and repairs and restores, meets injuries and supplies defects, as such modes of action may be required. The point to be pressed is, that to effect all this, in the spiritual life, habits, and character of a man, that Divine Agent who begins the work must be looked to as the source of the requisite and necessary influence. The first great secret in the concerns of the inner life is for this to be felt as a fact and realized as a power, and not merely to be assented to as a truth and professed in words.

The thought that should come next to this primary persuasion of the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit for the support and renewal of the religious life is this,—that the possession and enjoyment of this influence is not merely a privilege, but a duty.

This may seem to be rather strongly put. To some it may be an alarming and startling statement. It will appear to be inconsistent with certain accepted and settled points in their system of theology, and even to be contradicted by some of the analogies under which spiritual influence is frequently set forth. The statement may greatly annoy and disturb others, from its menacing aspect towards certain notions favourable to indolence and indulgent to sin. If grace is necessary to goodness,—and if a man cannot give himself grace, and if God does not, or will not, because He dispenses or withholds His Spirit according to His sovereign pleasure,—why, upon these premises it is not difficult, if a man wishes it, to construct an argument that shall prove to a demonstration that if he has not the Spirit he cannot help it. Divine gifts being favours, which, according to the volitions of another mind, may or may not be conferred, it is of course not in the power of

man to control them. It may be an advantage, a distinction—*fortunate*, so to speak—for an individual to enjoy a copious supply of Divine influence, but as to its being a duty or an obligation for "the soul to be as a well-watered garden," you may as well talk of the farmer being accountable for the quantity of rain which the heavens give to the earth, or for the frequency and regularity—or the irregularity—with which it falls!

In spite of such reasoning, however,—plausible as it may seem, convincing and unanswerable as it may be thought,—we hold to the position, that for a Christian to have the Spirit, in the fulness of His strengthening and renewing influence, is a duty, and that for him not to have it is a sin. We might, in fact, take the like ground in relation to man as man,—that is, to man as sinful, without God, unconverted, unchanged, *dead* if you like, in sins and trespasses. It would be possible to show that he is accountable even for that,—held, and justly held, to be blameworthy for not being "born from above," or for remaining destitute of the very beginning of spiritual life. There is such a thing as resisting the Spirit; refusing to be drawn; hardening the heart; loving death;—all which may be so interpreted as to make it entirely the fault of the unconverted themselves that they have not been made the subjects of a Divine change through "the washing of regeneration." Such a view might be corroborated by all those passages of Scripture which speak of God's readiness to save, His willingness to pardon, His *un*-willingness that "any should perish;" and which embody and enshrine the tender lamentations of the Divine solicitude over the sinful and the lost—that while "*He* would have gathered them, they would not." It is not, however, with this that we have to do at present. Even if it were to be admitted that a converted, or Christian man, had no more to do

with his second birth than with his first; that he was as little concerned in the one as in the other,—and that human responsibility is as much out of the question in what relates to the commencement of the spiritual life as it was in respect to the creation of the world, or would be in that of a new planet,—even, I say, if this were to be admitted, it might still be true that, *being* born,—*having* had conferred on him the new nature involved in the possession of spiritual life,—he has been raised into a new sphere of religious responsibility, and is to be held accountable for the *condition* of that life,—its strength or weakness, its growth or decline.

The fact is, and it is one which all Christian men should deeply ponder, “the supply of the Spirit,” the copiousness or deficiency of Divine influence, is very much regulated by settled laws. The Spirit being once possessed, His subsequent donations are not matters of accident or caprice, or of mere arbitrary sovereignty. There are always reasons for their being given or withheld, not only in the secret depths of the mind of God, but in the character and life of the individual, and in the condition of *his* mind in its relation to spiritual things. The very same general principle pervades both spheres of the Divine administration—that of Providence and that of Grace. We are born into a conditional world; we are re-born into a conditional church. In both, one thing depends upon another. In each, everything has its price. The law is, that the stipulated condition being complied with, the thing sought to be obtained is got. This is the general, and ought to be the generally understood, constitution of things, with which both as men and as Christians we have practically to do. In Providence, certain principles, habits, states of mind, courses of conduct, have their appropriate results; in the spiritual life, certain principles, habits,

courses of conduct, states of mind, have *their* appropriate results too,—in each case their gracious reward or equitable punishment, an issue at once fitting and inevitable. This is the general law, the constituted rule, of the Divine procedure, though there are many—apparent, and perhaps some real, deviations from it. Exceptions, however, will never be used by a wise man as guiding materials in the exposition of a *law*, or as the grounds of its practical application. He will not depend on *them* for what is to determine his line of action, or to regulate his anticipation of results. In both natural and spiritual things it is worse than folly to live by calculating on the accidental and exceptional.

These general remarks would admit of much direct Scriptural proof. It may be well to quote a few appropriate passages.

Our general position is this: that Christian men, men with a Divine spiritual life in them, are to be held accountable for the *condition* of that life. The enjoyment of holy influence, by which this inner life is nourished and invigorated, is to be regarded as a thing which very much depends upon themselves. To have it is their privilege and duty; for them *not* to have it is their sin,—or perhaps we should say is connected with sin; proceeds from it as an effect, as its inevitable punishment, and is the expression towards it of the Divine displeasure. Observe, then, how all this is involved in the following passages: "Be not drunk with wine, but be ye filled with the Spirit." To be "filled with the Spirit" is here made as much a matter of practical admonition, and is therefore as much regarded as a duty, as not to be "filled with wine." Again: "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." It might seem strange to speak to a man so, in respect to physical ability; to say to him, "Be strong in body; have

vigorous health;” and yet we know very well that there is a sense in which this might be done on the most rational grounds and with the utmost propriety, because we know that it is possible for men to ruin their health, to waste their strength,—and that there are means, also, by which men may ward off what would weaken, and thus preserve and increase their bodily vigour. It is just that idea, spiritually understood, that lies at the root of this apostolic admonition. But we have the apostle sustained and illustrated by the prophet. Let us listen to Isaiah as the expounder of St. Paul: “The Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary;” He is the Almighty,—the strong God, whose prerogative it is never to be conscious of fatigue or exhaustion. Hence, “He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.” But how is this Divine act wrought out? Not directly and absolutely, without respect to the moral condition and the mental attitude, so to speak, of those on whom it terminates. “*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.*” Others “may faint, grow weary, and utterly fall;” but *they* “shall mount up on wings as eagles; shall run and not be weary; shall walk and not faint.” When the apostle says to the Corinthians, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed to the day of redemption,” He not only implies that He can be grieved,—and grieved by those in whom He dwells, and who have received from Him a mark of highest spiritual significance,—but he of course further implies, that they would suffer if they grieved Him: suffer from His displeasure; from Holy Love pained and offended; be deprived of His strengthening influences; chilled in their affections, darkened in their light and joy. It was thus that some did suffer in the Corinthian Church, in consequence of “grieving the Spirit of God,”

through abusing and profaning holy things. "For this cause," says St. Paul in another place—"for this cause many are weak and sickly among you." Their spiritual health had waned and wasted; they were reduced and debilitated through the want of adequate spiritual sustenance. But they were themselves answerable for this; their sin had intercepted the supply on which they were dependent, and hence the lamentable results.

But St. Paul rises into a more terrible strain of rebuke and warning, when he addresses some of those same Corinthian Christians thus: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Again: "Quench not the Spirit." "Stir up the gift that is in thee." In these passages, the inward life, and that on which its power depends, are likened to fire. By one course of action, a man may do that which shall be like pouring water on the flame,—he may "quench" it; by another course of action he may do that which shall be like letting in the air, fanning the flame into greater brightness, or even like feeding the fire with fresh fuel—he may "stir it up." All the passages in which Christians are admonished "so to walk, as to please God;" so to live and pray, that "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," may fill their souls; "to put off the old man, and put on the new;" to "put on Christ;" "to be renewed in the spirit of their minds," "that they may be strengthened with might in the inner man;"—all these and such like admonitions proceed on the principle we have laid down, that a high condition of spiritual life is not merely a felicity for which Christians are to be thankful, but a consequence and a result with which their accountability is concerned; that poverty of

blood in the inner man, his being “weak and sickly,” are not misfortunes for which he is to be pitied, or the appointments of a sovereignty to which he must bow, but are sins and defects, or the consequence of such, for which “he is to be blamed.” The same lesson is taught when the prophetic promise of the outpouring of the Spirit, and the picture of its blessed results, is immediately followed and coupled with the condition, “for these things will I be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.” Our Lord enforces the same truth when He tells us that “they that ask, receive;” and that our Heavenly Father “will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.” More solemnly still, He says, “*Abide in me*: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” “Without me,”—separated from me,—“ye can do nothing;” therefore, “abide in me.” In harmony with, and corroborating all that has been advanced, are the striking advices of Peter and Jude: “Beloved, seeing that ye know these things, beware, lest being led away by the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness; but *grow in grace*, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” “Beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith, looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and praying in the Holy Ghost, *keep yourselves in the love of God.*”

In spite, however, of these plain and forcible declarations of Scripture, there are those who may not be convinced by them, but who may cling to and insist on the notion that the loss of spiritual health and robustness may be owing to causes entirely beyond the control of the individual, for which he is not responsible and ought not to be blamed. Recurring to the analogy between the health of the body and that of the soul, they would say,

"While it is to be admitted that a man may be accountable for his physical condition up to a certain point,—that he may injure himself by abstinence or excess, by refusing food, or giving way to riotous living,—by neglect of exercise, by toil and watching unrelieved by relaxation and rest,—yet all this only holds within certain limits; with his utmost care he cannot ward off the encroaches of disease, or be accountable for his condition in every respect and at all times. He may pine and languish without knowing why; he may be struck by paralysis or inflamed by fever; the strong man may be shorn of his strength, and may be reduced to helplessness; instead of being physically 'renewed' 'day by day,' he may get weaker and weaker, and this so manifestly by the visitation of God as to be referable to nothing but to what may be called Providential sovereignty. The same thing surely may take place in respect to the inner life; or rather, it may in that be more confidently expected, seeing that, in the spiritual sphere to which it belongs, God acts with more absolute and uncontrolled sovereignty—'giving no account of any of His matters;' doing 'His pleasure,' and 'working all things, according to the counsel of His own will' There may be grounds and reasons in the mind of God unknown to, and unfathomable by us, and altogether distinct from anything involving human responsibility, whence may come alterations and vicissitudes in the soul's health—the loss of tone and vigour, and other symptoms of spiritual decline. It may be a trial, an affliction—something to be submitted to—which a man may mourn over, but in respect to which he is *not* to be blamed."

Now, in reply to this, we should at once say, that while we are willing to admit that there may be causes out of the reach of the individual that may affect the

condition of the inner man—certain peculiarities of temperament, original infelicities of structure and constitution, which, independently of anything moral, may depress the spirits, relax energy, weaken faith, destroy hope, and impede the action of the religious affections,—while we admit this, and admit, therefore, that there is room for such a thing as *innocent* spiritual ill-health—a certain range within which, in respect to the higher life, men may be “weak and sickly,” in the same way as they often are in respect to bodily ailments—yet there is one thing to be taken into consideration, in which the law of spiritual life differs from the law of natural life, and differs so much that, instead of the one resembling the other, it might rather be argued that there would be contrariety. In natural life there is from the first the principle of mortality, the seed and secret presence of death. The life is conferred on the condition of its being recalled. Man is born to die; we die daily. Of death itself, all kinds and degrees of infirmity and sickness are the precursors and heralds—the instinctive type, the premonitory prophecy of what is to come. While the body is constructed to last for years,—so formed that, properly used, it may go on in strength and activity for a long time,—it is *not* meant to be eternal; it carries within itself the source and principle of its own decay. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that man should be liable to the workings and outbreaks of this principle, and that, with all his power to preserve health and keep himself alive, there should be limits to that power, and, consequently, that he may become feeble and relaxed, sick and diseased, without blame. The fundamental law inherently belonging to natural life provides for this; but the fundamental law of the spiritual life is the opposite to this. In spite of all that can be done for the “outward man,” as we had cursorily to notice in our

first discourse, he "perishes," and must perish; nothing could prevent it but a direct miracle. The contrary to this, however, is the law of the life of the "inward man." That life is graciously intended to be *im*-perishable; it is capable of growth and renewal to the last; the light in which it "moves and has its being" is to keep increasing to the "perfect day;" the source of it is to be a fountain, whence it is to gush forth and spring up everlastingly; its seed is incorruptible, and is essentially and inherently antagonist to death. Now, this being the law, and this the nature of the spiritual life, infirmity and disease are not intended naturally to belong to it; they have not the same part to act, the same purpose to serve, that physical disorders have in relation to that which is given to be recalled. Hence, from this one circumstance, on this single ground, a state of things may most obviously arise which may make the recipient of spiritual life far more responsible for its healthy condition than man, as man, may be responsible for *his*. In respect to a life meant for incorruption, intended for immortality, given with a view to its becoming an everlasting inheritance, there is not the same scope for the sovereign infliction of disease as there is in relation to that inferior life, which is subject from the first to the law of death, and to death itself as *ta* what is inevitable. The principle, then, on which spiritual life is conferred being that of perpetuity, it is therefore that of health; and hence, if ever it is found to be debilitated and diseased, we may be quite sure that, as this is inconsistent with the will of the Donor and the law of the gift, the cause—except in very special cases—must be looked for, not in the sovereignty of God, but in the sinfulness of man.

SERMON XI.

THE CLOSET AND THE WORD.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”—COLOS. iii. 16.

“Every one that asketh receiveth. ... Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.”—LUKE xi. 10, 13.

LAST Sunday we made an advance towards the *practical* issues of what had been previously exhibited as *doctrine*. We proposed to lay down one or two points, which Christians ought to admit and remember; and then to mention and recommend certain means and appliances, by the use of which the Divine life in man may be preserved and strengthened, or revived and renewed. The first of these objects we in some sort accomplished in our last discourse. We now, therefore, advance to the second,—to the indication and enforcement of some of those means by the employment of which Christian men may secure those spiritual influences on which the condition of their religious life depends.

Let it, then, in the first place be observed, that much may be done by keeping the mind and heart in contact with truth, and by seeking through prayer that Divine influence on which the power of the truth depends. Every idea in this comprehensive and general statement grows out of the positions which we endeavoured to

establish in our previous argument. On the authority of Scripture, we accepted the fact of Divine influence without presuming to question or pretending to explain it. That influence, however, we went so far as to say was not anything of the nature of direct force,—like the hand of God touching and moving the planets; but was something that became potent through the medium of thought—true, Divine thought, enlightening the reason and stirring the soul. We further stated, that that Divine thought, which is instrumentally used by the Holy Spirit, is not communicated to the mind which He enlightens and quickens by it, *directly* and immediately from himself, but is the truth contained in that Word which has already “been given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” This being the case, that Word needs to be heard or read, or a knowledge of the truth it contains acquired through ordinary means, that it may thus become available,—able to be used by the Divine Agent for the effectuating of His ultimating purpose. The material, so to speak, on which we specially concentrate the action of the mysterious force in this subjective process, is *the truth*; it is that, which by the Spirit is made to penetrate as light into the intellect, revealing the objective to faith; and to purify and change the current of the affections, directing them towards all that is comprehended in duty. The apprehension of Truth, spiritually discerned, and the energy of Love divinely evoked, constitute the essential elements of the inner life. Both processes depend, for continued action, on the influences of that Divine Agent, who at first reached, through the Word, the reason and the heart; which influence, after once being brought into play, is dispensed according to settled laws, one of these being “the prayer of faith.”

Out of these positions—each of which, with other correlative points, have been already discussed—naturally issues the practical rule we have just laid down. If the Divine life implies the power and activity of Truth and Love,—if it is promoted by their mutual and united action, or their action and reaction on each other,—if the Holy Spirit uses the truth which is found in the mind, but does not directly put it there,—and if that secret influence by which He makes the truth effective to life, and by which also He opens and adapts our religious nature to the attraction of the truth itself, morally disposing us to receive its impression,—if *this* is to be obtained or increased by being asked for,—is actually suspended on its being besought,—then the obvious, practical conclusion from all this is, that the mind should be kept in contact with the truth, and that influence supplicated which at once gives truth an active power over the soul, and gives to the soul what might be termed a passive power for the full and vivid reception of the truth.

As by the truth we mean, in scriptural language, “the things which have been freely given to us of God,” the spiritual discoveries and communications of Holy Writ,—what has been “made known to us” by “holy men, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,”—made known for the express purpose of being employed by the Spirit in His actings on the inward life of man;—we are of course to be understood as recommending you to keep your minds in close contact with all that the Bible reveals to faith. Time, however, would fail us, if we attempted to descend to minute particulars; to show how the Bible may be at one time simply and devoutly read, at others intellectually and carefully studied; to develop its uses as the object of solitary thought,—as the minister of the family,—or as

the centre around which a number of Christian people may socially gather for the promotion and enlargement of their scriptural knowledge, by the mutual interchange of their views and impressions; to inquire how far the truth contained in it is to be sought from it directly and exclusively, or through the assistance of other books intended to elucidate it; by what rules other kinds of reading are to be regulated; their effects guarded against, encouraged, or purified. In the same way, time would fail us if we attempted to notice the several topics that might be discussed in referring to prayer;—at what times, and to what extent, it should be attended to; how far the general duty, and the general necessity, may admit of being modified by particular occupations, by pressing circumstances, by customs and habits inseparable from the condition of modern life; how best to regulate the hours of an evening, or of an entire day, which a devout man will sometimes set apart (like Cornelius of old) for very special spiritual engagements, various and protracted,—for reading the Scriptures with ampler range than usual; and for a longer period "continuing in prayer, with all perseverance." In the same way, it would require much time to refer particularly to public worship; to insist on the importance of seeking that previous "preparation of the heart" which brings the soul into harmony with the anticipated engagements; which fits it for listening to the Divine voice addressing it through the lesson of the day,—enables it to make the public prayer, whether free or liturgical, while common to all, its own special, individual utterance, and on which it in a great measure depends whether "the ministry of the Word" shall become the means of food and refreshment, consolation and strength, or, however edifying, pungent, or spiritual in itself, be to the hearer only as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

All these minute, though not unimportant considerations and questions, we pass by, and keep to the broad, general rule which we have laid down. Leaving the exact or modified application of it to the sagacity and self-knowledge, the consciousness and experience of each individual, we return to and repeat our original statement. If, then, you would grow in the Divine life,—if you would secure the necessary renewing of the Holy Ghost, day by day,—the first rule is, that you must keep the mind in contact with the truth, and keep the channel of Divine influence open by prayer. Different modes of doing the same thing may best suit different people; but one way or another, the thing must be done. Contact with the world,—conversation and intercourse with different minds in various states of opinion and feeling,—books, newspapers, magazines, reviews, many of them purely secular, most of them partially false,—business-distractions, political excitement, social dissipation,—these, and a thousand other things in the doings and details of daily life, may obscure the light of truth, shade spiritual objects, pervert the moral judgment, sophisticate the conscience, and thus create a necessity for a fresh infusion of that element in which all Divine things stand fully revealed! Go, then, and seek for that, in the way through which it was obtained by psalmists and apostles —“meditating in the law of the Lord,” letting in the light of the “Word of Christ,” *thus* reviving the forms and images of spiritual truth that had got eclipsed. But, as truth itself needs to be wielded by a Divine hand; as the heart gets cold when the head gets dark; as the affections are wounded and chilled by error, as well as estranged or perverted through the insidious influence of the world; and as, for this deeper element of the inward life, you need the action of the Spirit *with* the truth,—pray for that; for it is to be obtained by prayer. Time

may press, and toil may call—or toil may have fatigued,—but thanks be to God, you are not to be heard for your much speaking, but for your earnest speech. A little prayer may bring a large answer, and bring it soon, if sincerity and faith give it wings. A short word may be made long enough to span the distance between earth and heaven, if it be struck off from a living heart.

It is not possible, I am well aware,—in an age of steam and lightning, railways and telegraphs; of fever, and hurry, and competition,—in times of crowding and movement in all directions, in which the slow and inactive are not only pushed and elbowed aside, but tripped up and trampled upon by the swift and strong;—in such times, it must be acknowledged, it is not possible for modern Christian men to do as their fathers did, who, without interruption, could get many a long, quiet hour for devout reading and religious thought. Christians of to-day—most of whom are obliged to be exposed to the heat and to engage in the battle of business—have to act in respect to the water of life, very much as Gideon's best and bravest men acted in relation to the brook that crossed their path. They felt that they could not lie down to take a full draught of the refreshing stream; they had to be content with taking a little in their hands, throwing it on their lips, and then standing ready for pursuit or conflict. "There is a river, the streams of which make glad the city of God." But city-life, even in the city of God, is a life of action and effort. It is possible to turn resting or lying down by "the still waters" into a spiritual luxury, to the neglect of the sterner calls of daily duty. The only way, perhaps, by which these calls can be met now by Christian men, as Christians ought to meet them, is by throwing into brief but frequent spiritual exercises, the energy and earnestness with which they lay hold of their ordinary

occupations. In this way, the busiest man may be able habitually and successfully to follow out the rule we are laying down—seeking for “the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” by the mind being constantly kept in contact with the truth by which he works,—and by that “prayer of faith” being habitually offered, by which his effective agency is secured. A single text, fastened on the mind of a morning, may animate and guide during a whole day. An ejaculatory aspiration thrown out on entering the counting-house, or when passing along a street, may strengthen the hands to lay hold of work, and steady and “keep the feel” in the way—“the way of God’s commandments.”

The ordinary work of the Christian life consists in the union of great principles with small duties; motives drawn from heaven presiding over the little concerns of earth. In the same way, but in reverse order, Christian privilege consists in small services securing a large reward; in short efforts after goodness—but frequent, earnest, habitual—being followed by such liberal and uninterrupted accessions of strength, that the man daily “grows up into Christ in all things.” Illustrations of the law involved in this stand round us on all sides. Every one knows that it is by constant, repeated little acts that things are kept right. Daily dusting keeps the house clean, daily ablutions the body pure,—though there is sometimes occasion for special appliances in both respects. Everything in nature, everything in life,—from gardens to governments,—soon shows the growth and accumulation of evil, if evil be not checked and repressed by little acts of work and watchfulness sedulously repeated. In the same way, the mind is kept free from what would darken or deprive it,—knowledge is at once retained and increased by the daily devotion of small portions of time to reading and thought. The artist’s eye retains its

correctness, and his hand its cunning, by no day being allowed to pass "without its line,"—without the expenditure of some labour however little, or some exercise of taste or skill. The same principle holds with everything else;—languages, science, mathematics, music,—various employments of hand and head,—all are kept up by acts, —small in themselves, taken individually, but great in effect because constant and regular,—as all may be speedily lost, or very seriously affected for the worse, by these acts being protractedly remitted. *The principle applies to the Divine life in man:* a little daily reading of the Word; a little fixed, earnest thought; short but frequent and fervent prayer; the weekly rest, with its break and pause stilling the noise and whirl of the week; the Sabbath solemnities and the Sabbath leisure, with their larger opportunities for spiritual culture;—these are the things which, being constantly and conscientiously used, will keep the realities that are unseen, before the eye of the reason, through the clear shining of the light of faith, and at the same time will give to them a calm and steady supremacy over the affections of the heart. This is the life of God in the soul of man; and this is the way, or one of the ways, by which men may retain and increase it by living habitually near to God. He who thus lives, lives "on that flesh which is meat indeed," and on "that blood which is drink indeed." He is fed as with manna from the heavens, and refreshed as with water from the rock. He cannot be weak, for God "strengthens him with strength in his soul;" he cannot be poor, for "durable riches," "the riches of glory in Christ Jesus," are his; he cannot "walk in darkness," for he is one of the "children of the day." He has light in the intellect, and love in the heart;—whereof "his heart is glad, and his glory rejoiceth." He is led "in the paths of righteousness;" he runs,

wrestles, resists, pursues, as the case may be, or the call come;—but, though often fatigued, and sometimes faint, he is never disheartened, for he always finds that “as his day is, so is his strength,”—or so at least are his means and opportunities of renewing it. Constant wear is met and counteracted by constant watchfulness; weekly exhaustion by Sabbath refreshments. The sanctuary, at times, unveils again, and gives power to what the world may have well-nigh hidden. The closet lets in glimpses of the sky, which frees the soul from the attractions of earth, by detecting afresh its impositions and falsehoods. And so it comes to pass that in spite of oscillations, and slips and falls, the progress of the soul is steadily onward. The outward man may gradually be “perishing,” but “the inward is renewed, day by day.”

SERMON XII.

WATCHFULNESS AND WORK.

“Look to yourselves, that ye lose not those things which ye have gained.”
2 JOHN 8 [*marginal reading*].

IN addition to keeping the mind in contact with truth, and the channel of Divine influence open by prayer, much may be done by wise practical precautions,—by thought and skill directed to the protection from injury of what is gained through devout waiting upon God. Those, then, who have received “the washing of regeneration,” and who habitually seek, through the Word and Prayer, the daily “renewing of the Holy Ghost,” must be very careful to guard against whatever would be injurious to the spiritual condition, the health and vigour, of the inner man. Self-knowledge, self-observation, the discovery and observance of constitutional peculiarities, a prudential regard to them in what is done or permitted,—these and such like means have an important bearing on a man’s keeping in play and power “the things which are freely given to him of God,” in which the life of the soul consists.

With respect to the management of the body, and the preservation of health—“what to eat, drink, and avoid”—it has become a proverb, that, in respect to himself,

every man at forty is either a fool or a physician. In fact, long before that, a man *ought* to be the one, or he will be in great danger of becoming the other. By a little self-observation, by necessary experience, men understand not only by what things they, in common with all the world, may have life preserved and strength increased; but they may further understand what, from constitutional causes, is specially to be avoided as more or less dangerous to themselves. A wise man knows what sort of care it becomes him to take, as to diet and exercise, to preserve health, to guard against the return of past complaints, or to escape the peril of new dangers. In the same way there are certain things which Christians ought to know are universally to be shunned as injurious to the spiritual life *in all*; there are certain other things which each may find out for himself are dangerous to *him*, though others may be able to touch them without danger. To be practically consistent with a professed desire “to grow in grace,” and to enjoy “the daily renewal of the mind by the Holy Ghost,” a man must be careful to carry out in action what will be revealed to him as to these matters by the combined light of Scripture and experience; and what in the closet will, in his best moments, be the subject at once of purpose and prayer. Every act must of course be avoided that has in it anything approaching to actual sin,—for by sin “the Spirit of God is grieved,” and to offend Him on whom the life and health of the soul depend, is to wound and poison them at their very source. If an individual previous to his conversion, or to the purposed or professed devotion of himself to God’s service, has been the servant of the Devil in any distinct specific form, consistency requires, if he would protect and strengthen his new life, that he should keep far away from all places, persons, and circumstances, by which

old tastes might be revived and old habits renewed. If from any unhappy peculiarity of constitution a man is apt to fall into sins of the tongue, or sins of the temper—is liable to be seduced by the excitement of sensibility or the impulse of appetite—in these, and similar cases, he is required to be on his guard against whatever would draw him near to the region of danger, and to “watch and pray *lest* he should be tempted.” Not only is there poison to the inward life in the darker sins of the flesh and of the spirit,—in whatever is gross and sensual on the one hand, and in what is revengeful or malignant on the other—in impure speech as associated with the first, and in the angry word or foul purpose prompted by the second,—but in other things, less thought of and less blamed, there may secretly lurk a fatal power, deadly and destructive to our better nature. Pride, vanity, thoughtlessness; careless or unkind speech; indolent reverie, and mere mental trifling with time and thought; love of dress; small though felt discourtesies; excessive devotion to light literature,—these things, and such as these, require to be guarded against by those who would cultivate and preserve a high condition of spiritual health. They *will* be guarded against by every practically wise man, who has had any experience in the religious life, and who, through that experience, has sorrowfully learned the greatness of the power of little things—the permanency of the power of transitory impressions, to wound and weaken that new and holy nature within him, which is as tender and delicate as it is divine, and which may be injured by the mere breath of the tempter, as well as by being subjected to the rude force of his hand or foot.

Practical wisdom in guarding against injury to the spiritual life is particularly required in relation to those things which may not so much be evil in themselves as

evil in their excess, or evil or questionable in the view of others. It would open too large a subject to attempt the discussion of the question, How far a Christian is required to abstain from what may not be injurious in itself, out of regard to the opinion or feeling of others. There can be no doubt that in some things the Church has a good deal to suffer from the tyranny of the weak. The ignorant and prejudiced, the contracted and infirm, generally expect that *their* weakness, ignorance, and infirmity (under other, and of course finer, names) are to give the law to the strong and the free; and that no one ought to do, either what they cannot do, or will not. I certainly think that it is the duty of the strong “to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves;” but I also think that it is the duty of the weak to become strong, and not to need to be pleased by being allowed the selfish luxury of putting restraints on the liberty of others. While I say this, however, I will further say, that that Christian who feels that he could gratify some taste, or allow himself some liberty, not only without injury, but perhaps with benefit, but who, for the sake of others, in condescension to their weakness or ignorance, *abstains*—abstains, not from cowardice from the fear of man, with internal hankering after what he gives up, and secret swellings of contemptuous indignation against the tyranny of opinion: the man who abstains not with these feelings and in this way, but—without a murmur, with ready alacrity, with considerate affection, with a real and sincere desire to do others a benefit by denying himself a pleasure,—to save their feelings, though he may deem them mistaken,—pleasing them “for their good,” though he may think that they might have realized that by seeing to it themselves: whoever acts thus, with these views and in this spirit, will most assuredly find that the small sacrifice

which he thus makes will *tell* with great and perceptible force on the vigour and health of his own virtue.

I will only add a third rule, which may be accepted and looked at as the *positive* side of the one we have been illustrating. It may be put thus: To retain the action of that glow of light and love which, being secured by meditation and prayer, is protected and guarded by self-watchfulness—to retain and *increase* this, while it is of course essential to maintain a uniform practical consistency of life, it may be observed that it will also be found of great and eminent advantage to acquire the *habit*, not only of doing what is right to be done, but of doing it with a conscious purpose and intention of pleasing God.

John Wesley used to try to impress on his soul this solemn thought,—“At every moment of my life, I am either pleasing or displeasing to God.” There is a truth in this, though it need not interfere with the consolatory conviction that the safety or standing of a Christian “in Christ” is not affected by those defects and failures in filial obedience for which, as a child, he is taught to ask for daily forgiveness. With men “in their sins,” God, as a righteous moral Ruler, is “justly displeased,”—displeased in such a sense, that their *relation* to Him needs to be changed, through penitential trust in *Him* in whom, and in whose redemptive work, He is “*well pleased*.” Men, as believing men, accepted and beloved “for Christ’s sake,” may, as sons, while retaining their privileged relation as “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,” yet be pleasing or displeasing to their Heavenly Father, from the completeness or defects of their Christian character. There is something very stimulating and encouraging in the thought, that we can do that which shall actually “*please God*.” A sort of secret, unutterable blessedness seems to spring up out of

the conviction. It not only gives importance to all duty, but it throws a light and a glory upon all. In the same way it is terribly painful to think that it may be said of us, as it was said of David,—“the thing that he did *displeased* the Lord.” Parental displeasure does not mean rejection, casting off, disinheritance,—but it is painful to think of it, nevertheless. To have grieved a father is a thing full of anguish to a loving child, when he realizes the fact and the result of his disobedience, though it may not affect his actual position or his ultimate prospects. One of the attributes of the Divine life in man consists, it is to be admitted, in *this*—that it leads to the uniform and constant doing of those things which “please God,” from a sort of secret instinct, without the *active* consciousness of any thought about it; but such thought must have been present and influential, at one time or other, as the basis and source of the unconscious tendency. Hence we think that it may be found of great and inestimable advantage to fall in with the suggestion just made, of acquiring the habit, not only of doing what ought to be done, but of doing it with a conscious intention of pleasing God. This purpose may be carried into everything. Being thus carried, it may make everything a means of grace,—for everything is that, which calls into exercise or is done under the influence of spiritual principles. In this way, the course recommended may turn the ordinary engagements, and even the weariness, the vapidity and vexations of common life, which might otherwise fatigue or fret the soul, into instruments and activities of positive good, into what may promote, in the inner man, growth and vigour and healthy development

Right action, and action rightly directed, is of vast importance in securing and retaining those sacred influences on which a healthy condition of the soul

depends. True thought and lively feeling are to be cultivated, as we have seen; but much depends on their being followed up by something positive in the form of practical achievement. Nothing is so injurious to the growth and robustness of spiritual character, as a man's being the mere subject of passive impressions. Mental familiarity with truth—pleasant excitements of emotion, devotional rapture, admiration of the beautiful and heroic in duty,—these things, if not associated with, and vigorously followed up by, a purposed and persistent practical virtue, actually do harm. They are the intoxication of the soul; its pleasant indulgence, not its strength. There is great delight in sacred song—the fruits of sanctified poesy, enshrined in those touching hymns in which the Church is everywhere now so rich; in devotional writings whose direct aim and tendency it is to stimulate spiritual emotion;—these and such like instrumentalities may be made to bear on our better life w^{ith} the most animating and blessed results. This can only be, however, in accordance with what we have just advanced,—that passive impressions, subjective excitements, must be associated with appropriate *action*. Feeling, as well as faith, however lively it may seem, "is dead, being alone." If barren of practical results, it will become diseased; it will be a sickness that will debilitate, it will neither be a source nor a symptom of health. Let a man, then, go forth, day by day, from whatever refreshments of feeling he may indulge in, to the rough work of actual life; let him go with a contented cheerfulness to whatever business or calling God has made his; let him determine in all things to do the right, and to do it unto God; let him stedfastly set himself to be conscientious, true, faithful, and loyal, in word and deed, to duty and to Christ; let him sometimes pause in the course of the day, just to cast a look

on some gush of light that will come at his call from the truth that is in him, to offer an ejaculation, to realize the nearness and observance of God, and to give for the moment a distinct consciousness to his intention to please Him; let a man do this, and he will find that the world itself will be to him a church; the streets of the city as the aisles of a cathedral; his worldly life, a spiritual worship; his business engagements, the service of a priesthood! Daily work, thus discharged, however mean or sordid it may seem in itself will be to Him to whom it is done, fragrant as altar incense, melodious as the voice of a psalm! He who thus lives will most assuredly find that the expenditure of the forces of his inward life in such a manner will not only prove the means of their preservation, but will tend to the *increase* of their vitality and vigour; just as the exercise of any set of muscles in the human framework will brace and develop them, and augment their power.

If in addition to this practical fulfilment of ordinary daily duty,—this doing the will of God from the heart, and doing it “unto *Him*,” this finding out that all service, however humble, has its Divine side, and so approaching and touching it on that;—if in addition to this, a man deliberately does something which involves inconvenience—something which requires the giving up of some anticipated enjoyment, the infliction and endurance of some self-denial; if he does this purposely to serve another, to soothe sickness, to cheer solitude, to console age, to help the fallen, to visit the neglected, to remember the forgotten, to show respect to virtuous poverty, or any other thing which, being done, shall do good and give pleasure, but which could not be done *at that particular time* without something of self-sacrifice,—if a man will occasionally do this, he will find that all that is spiritual within him will be lifted

up, irradiated, confirmed and increased, refreshed and regaled, by such acts! In every case, conscientious practical activity tends to preserve the inward fervour of the soul, as that fervour again moves and prompts to further activity. The inward and the outward act and re-act upon each other. Neither of the two—both being essential parts of our double life—is sufficient of itself. They cannot live or flourish alone. They must not be divorced. Each fades and withers, without its associate. Action will not be spiritually beneficial, unless it is inspired by what the soul receives through the study of the Word, the light of faith, and the power of prayer;—thought and devotion, the clear perception of truth and duty, and the emotions of the heart in relation to both,—these are not enough, as we before intimated, unless they are combined with the practical endeavour to *be* what is admired, and to *do* what is approved. The prayer of the morning must be the precept for the day; and the duties of the day must expand into praise at the evening sacrifice. In this way, song and service will go together. They will blend into one. Faith and works will mutually strengthen and illustrate each other. "The washing of regeneration" will be followed by "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." That renewing will be a renewing "day by day,"—not only the recruiting of expended strength, but a constantly increasing and accumulating power;—so that the pregnant saying of the wise man shall be fulfilled and realized in its highest possible spiritual application,—"the righteous shall also hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger."

SERMON XIII.

THE LAW OUR SCHOOLMASTER.

“The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”—GALATIANS iii. 24, 25.

THE Galatians were the descendants of certain emigrant Gauls, who settled in lesser Asia some few generations before the time of Christ. There were Greeks mingled with them, and there were Jewish sojourners “scattered”¹ in the country. In the “Churches,”² therefore, there might be both Jews and proselytes who had embraced the Gospel; but the probability is, that the greater number of the disciples were converted idolaters. When St Paul proceeded into Galatia, on his second great apostolic journey, his preaching was attended with remarkable success. He was received “as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus!”³ “The barbarous people showed him no little kindness.” They would have “plucked out their own eyes and given them to him,”⁴ if it had been possible. They neither “despised” *him*, nor “rejected” his message, on account of “the temp-

¹ 1 Peter i. 1. ² Gal. i. 2. ³ Gal. iv. 14. ⁴ Gal. iv. 15.

tation which was in his flesh"—the physical infirmity, whatever it was, which, in the estimation of more cultivated communities, made "his bodily presence weak, and his speech contemptible."⁵ There seems to have accompanied his labours much of what he calls "the *demonstration* of the Spirit." So vivid and realizing were the convictions of his converts, that, "*before their eyes, JESUS CHRIST was evidently set forth, crucified among them*" They believed, and "were blessed with believing Abraham." They "spake" of this "blessedness." They "received," and rejoiced in "the adoption of sons," being "all the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ."⁶

The Galatians were a rude and unlettered people; impressible too, vivacious, and somewhat volatile. Their situation and circumstances kept them from intimate intercourse with others, and prevented their having much acquaintance with the religion and literature of other parts of the empire. They were thus liable to be imposed upon by strangers. Soon after St. Paul left them, they were visited by some of his countrymen—men from the same distant, mysterious land, descended from the same distinguished ancestry, and professing attachment to the same faith. These men secured the confidence of the recent converts, and then insinuated that the apostle had taught them an imperfect Christianity. They strongly affirmed that there was a previous system of Divine appointments which nothing could annul; that what God had once instituted must stand for ever, retaining alike its obligation and its virtue; that He had given the law, and that, therefore, "except they were circumcised," and "kept the law," they "could not be saved."⁷ They did not deny that

⁵ 2 Cor. x. 10. ⁶ Gal. iii. 1, 9; iv. 15, 5; iii. 26.

⁷ Acts xv. 1 and 5.

what St. Paul had taught them was true; but they asserted that he had not taught them the whole truth. The Galatians were, at first, probably much perplexed. The new missionaries, however, “zealously affected”⁸ them, and very soon succeeded in their object. They wrought upon their feelings, and “constrained them to be circumcised.”⁹ They prevailed upon them to unite *their* teaching with that of St Paul; to become, in fact, *Jews*, in order to secure the full benefit of the Christian redemption. In addition to submitting to the peculiar initiatory ordinance of Judaism, the Galatians “observed days, and months, and times, and years;”¹⁰ they attached great importance to ritual formalities, and they thought, in their simplicity, that they could not but be safe, since they possessed in combination the securities alike of Moses and of Christ. It was a new form of the old feeling—“Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing that I have a Levite to be my priest”¹

In this state of things the apostle addressed to them the Epistle before us. He reprobates their conduct as a retrograde movement, and denounces at once the agents and the opinions by which they had been misled. By many arguments he endeavours to inform their judgment, and to correct their mistakes. Among other things, he asserts the principle embodied in the text. What his opponents had done with Christianity, *he* does with Judaism. He does not deny that it was a true and Divine thing; but he limits its importance, authority, and use. “The law is good, *if a man use it lawfully.*”² “The law was *our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christy* that we might be justified by faith; *but, faith being come, we are no longer under a school-*

⁸ Gal. iv. 17. ⁹ Gal. vi. 12. ¹⁰ Gal. iv. 10.

¹ Judges xvii. 13. ² 1 Tim. i. 8.

master." "The heir, so long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world; but when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."³

In the prosecution of the discourse we shall endeavour to explain and illustrate the apostle's statement, and we shall add to the exposition such general concluding remarks as the subject may seem appropriately to suggest.

A preliminary remark, however, must be first offered on the import of the term "law." This word is of constant occurrence in the writings of St. Paul. It is supposed to denote either the *moral* law—the exposition of human duty, what is universally binding upon man as man; or the *ceremonial* or Levitical law—the peculiar institutions of the Mosaic ritual. Undoubtedly, the word has, in the New Testament, these two distinct senses. There is truth too, perhaps, in the statement, that it is mostly used in the first sense, in the general reasonings of the Epistle to the Romans; mostly, in the second, in the particular argument addressed to the Churches of Galatia. It is used, however, with so much latitude of meaning, that it is not always easy to determine, in particular cases, what it may or may not include.

Its import in the text might appear to be capable of being soon decided, from the circumstance that the law therein referred to would seem to be represented in the apostle's argument as having a beginning and an end.

³ The text, and chap. iv. 1-5.

When speaking of the promise to Abraham, he remarks, in the 17th verse, “this, the law, *which was four hundred and thirty years after*, cannot disannul.” And in the text he says, “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but *after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*” In these two passages the law referred to is bounded and limited in respect to its duration. We are told when it began, and when it ceased. But *moral* law cannot be thus spoken of. Its *principles*, at least, are eternal. “Its seat is the bosom of God.” It flows from His perfections and nature, as light from the sun. As soon as ever moral intelligences exist, they are under law by an inevitable necessity. It overshadows and surrounds them; it presses upon them on all sides, like a vital atmosphere; it is inherent in their relations to their Creator and to each other—and is so, because of the previously existing, the everlasting and immutable, attributes of God. Hence, moral law can never cease. Angels and men must ever be under it. It is necessarily as extensive as intelligent nature, as eternal as the Supreme. A law, therefore, that can be spoken of as having had a beginning and an end *in time*—that “was” [or began to be] ages and centuries “after” the creation of man; and that came to a termination, as a ruling power, at a subsequent period—that certainly must be something very different from what we have just described. But *that* would seem to be the something intended in the text.

There is great force in this argument; and yet, perhaps, it does not quite dispose of the question. At any rate, there is a sense in which moral law, as well as the ceremonial, may act as “a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ;” and without including this in our conceptions, it is at least possible that our views of the Gospel

might be imperfect. The word law, then, might be supposed to stand, in such statements as the one before us, for the Theocracy, the entire Hebrew system considered as a whole, which included in it, not, indeed, the *beginning* of moral law,—for that was in the world from the first moment of Adam's conscious existence, and was always understood and felt to be in the world—but which did include a peculiar expression and utterance of it, the tendency of which was, in concurrence with the object of the ritual institutions, to prepare the heart for a higher state of spiritual life and action than what could be produced by the mere "*shalt nots*" of legislative authority.

This point, however, may possibly come out more clearly in our subsequent reasonings. In the meantime we proceed to the illustration of the subject awaiting us.

II.

It may be thus stated:—The Divine dispensation given through Moses, which included in it, in the form of stern command, the inculcation of moral duties; which had running through it the tones of a deep-sounding prophetic word; but which more especially consisted of a wonderful system of rites and ordinances, itself at once a parable and a prophecy,—this dispensation was "a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But, after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

The apostle, you observe, speaks in a figure. He addresses the understanding by presenting a picture to the fancy. The picture, it is supposed, is not so much that of a schoolmaster, as we understand the term, as that of a *child-guide*—a person, usually a slave, who had

the charge of the boy out of school-hours; who watched over his safety and behaviour, and who led him, at the proper times, from the house of the parent to the school, and there left him with the teacher who conducted or perfected his education. We should not despair of making something even of this, if necessarily confined to it; but we shall not err, I think, if we include in the figure the idea which the word used by St. Paul (*pedagogue*) has come to stand for *with us*—that, namely, of a schoolmaster, properly so called. At the same time, in consistency with the literal and primary sense of the term, the idea may be that of the teacher of an infant or preparatory school, rather than of one for more advanced scholars.

1. Consider then, in the first place, the condition of Humanity, and the ultimate purpose of God respecting it, as these may be represented in connexion with the figure employed by the apostle.

We ought not to confine the text to the Jews exclusively. It deserves to be considered whether the Jew is not always to be regarded as the type of Humanity, and whether, *in him*, the whole race was not treated with and trained by God. Any particular nation can be spoken of as if it had a consciousness stretching through a thousand years. It can be looked at in its infancy and youth, its manhood and maturity; as learning lessons, outliving its former self, and exhibiting in its knowledge, laws, and social condition, the results of its efforts and experience. In the same way the Church, by coming into possession of the entire Scriptures, by being trained in the study of their successively developed dispensations, and by looking at the last in connexion with the light gradually emitted by the preceding, enters into the experience and passes through the tuition of all. Abraham, “the father of the faithful,”—not of the Jews only, but of Christians also,

his "spiritual seed,"—was a typical or representative man, in whom was set forth, for the study of humanity, *the principle* on which God intended to deal with it. Afterwards, the posterity of the patriarch became this model or type, and was put through its peculiar discipline, not merely for its own sake, but for ours, "on whom the ends of the world are come." All men, in fact,—at least all by whom the Bible and Christianity are received,—are to learn to contemplate themselves as included in the Hebrew people, and subjected to the processes through which it passed. Humanity is the son of God. It is the child of His affections; created in His image; and born, so to speak, to the inheritance of His blessedness. It was legally disinherited by the apostasy, and became, moreover, gross and sensual, with but little about it of the son of a King. Yet the heart of the Father was set upon it, and He purposed that it should have its inheritance restored. With this ultimate purpose in relation to the *fact*, was another in respect to the *mode*—that the restoration should be an act of pure *favour*. And with this determination there was a third, *to secure the end proposed by the second*, namely, that the principle through which the restoration should be obtained should be *faith*. All these ideas are distinctly expressed by the apostle in the Epistle to the Romans, and expressed in connexion with that typical or representative conception of Abraham to which we have adverted. "The promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. ... *It is of FAITH—that it might be*—by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all."⁴

⁴ Rom. iv. 13, 16.

It is to be remembered, then, that the Divine purpose respecting man always contemplated, as its ultimate object, what was spiritual;—a spiritual inheritance, spiritual renovation, return to a happy, conscious, spiritual sonship;—a spiritual development of the religious faculty, so that, directly looking upon and apprehending the Divine, man might come to stand face to face with pure truth. It pleased God, in His sovereign wisdom, to conduct man very gradually to his high destination. In language sanctioned by the figure in the text we might say, that man, in his infancy and ignorance, rude and sensuous, little more than a bundle of appetites, strongly affected by external things, but utterly incapable of apprehending pure unembodied truth,—man, in this his childhood, *could not be made to understand* what was purely spiritual and needed to be spiritually “discerned.”⁵ He could no more rise, all at once, and by a single step, to the apprehension of heavenly things—to conscious contact with them, through the exercise of an inward spiritual perception—than a child could thus rise to the mental condition of an educated man; or the mind of a clown become like that of an astronomer, understanding and admiring the science of the stars. Hence the form which “the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man” took. He fixed, as it were, a far-off future period, at which the human race should attain its majority; by the time it reached this, it was to be able to understand itself, its destination, the nature of its inheritance, the principle on which it could be reinstated in it, with all involved or correlative truths; and, *to prepare it for this*—gradually to develop its spiritual faculties, to train it for what awaited it in its manhood—*he put it to school*; he placed it “under tutors and governors,” that by a course of preparatory discipline it might have “its senses

⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

exercised," and not be "unskilful in the word of righteousness," when it arrived at its "full age."⁶ The school was the Mosaic dispensation, the schoolmaster was the law. But the Jewish people were the representatives of the race. *In them*, "we all had our conversation in time past." We lived with them at the same school, and learnt with them the same lessons. The teacher did for us what he did for them. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith," "to the end that the promise might be sure to *all* the seed: *not to that only which is of the law*, but to that also *which is of the faith* of Abraham, who is the father of *us all*."

2. The "heir," then, it is next to be observed, "as long as he was a child," was at school. He was "in bondage under the elements of the world."⁷ He was "under *authority*,"—the authority of a somewhat rigorous master, who sought to prepare him for higher acquisitions by confining his attention, and binding him down, to the "rudiments" of things. The methods adopted for his instruction were such as befitted his condition and his age. Children cannot have presented to them pure intellectual conceptions. They must first learn the import of external signs. They must learn language and letters. They must put together syllables and words. They must see thought through the medium of form, or learn to think of what is moral and spiritual by facts, parables, pictures, or such like appeals to the imagination and the senses. Ideas must be apprehended by being embodied and clothed; by becoming, as it were, capable of being looked at and touched. The young mind is first familiar with the visible symbol. For a time, it mistakes it for the substance; words to it are things—stories are facts. By and by the inward meaning of what has been learnt comes to be

⁶ Hebrews v. 13, 14. ⁷ Gal. iv. 3.

understood. The outward ultimately falls off, or loses its primary aspect and uses; and the *man*, with his fully developed and perfected faculties, is in immediate contact with the abstract and the spiritual;—he then feels as if he apprehended it, and could reason about it, or at least meditate upon it, without the aid of either words or signs. “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” *Then* I saw “through a glass, darkly,”—“feeling after “truth as reflected from a mirror, or presented in a parable; *now* I look upon it “face to face.”

At school in the wilderness, and through the subsequent period of their wonderful history, the Hebrew people were subjected to such methods of teaching as were adapted to their then condition, and preparatory to their coming of age. Among such methods were the following:—

Prophetic intimations were given of things and persons. “At sundry times, and in divers manners,” separate pieces of truth were figuratively given out: these were to be gathered up and put together, like a dissected map or drawing; the whole was then to present such a representation of what was *ultimate*, that, though the ultimate itself might not be anticipated from it, it might be understood and recognised when it came.

A large picture-book was put before the scholars in the splendid objects of the Levitical institute. The series of things included in this was like a series of prints arranged in order, bound and gilded, and spread before the young wondering eyes of a number of children. The altar, with its fire and blood; the laver, with its purifying contents; the sacrifice, with the penitent putting upon it his sin, or lifting his eyes and his hands to heaven; the priest, in his garments expressive of humiliation, or in his gorgeous robes of “glory and

beauty;" the tabernacle itself, or afterwards the temple; the altar of incense, the lights, the shewbread, the holy of holies, the vail, the mercy-seat: these things, with others that might be specified, were all like so many significant objects vividly portrayed on the several leaves of an immense picture-book. By familiarity with them, the minds of the learners were gradually to open to the spiritual idea contained in each; or were to be prepared for apprehending it when, "in the fulness of time," it should be revealed; when, in its own grandeur, and according to its own nature, it should stand forth without the aid and accessories of a ritual embodiment.

In addition to this, the young pupils were required to *do* things, which constituted another process of emblematical teaching. Besides the voice of the moral precepts commanding and forbidding with authoritative severity,—a voice that seemed to be ever issuing from amid the darkness and thunders of the mount of God,—there were other injunctions, merely ceremonial, the neglect of which brought with it the sense of sin and the necessity for atonement. Various circumstances, constantly recurring, were felt to defile;—involved consequences in their nature punitive; which, again, could only be removed by appointed purifications. There were burnt-offerings and sacrifices, washings with water and sprinklings of blood, days of general and public solemnities, and seasons and acts of individual service; with particular periods of thanksgiving and rejoicing, when friends and families sat down and partook together of a feast with God! By all these things, there was the constant inculcation of great lessons. Ideas were suggested, less or more distinct, of law, sin, exposure to punishment, moral impurity; the necessity of something out of themselves on which to trust; an atoning sacrifice and an officiating priest; the application of something

having cleansing efficacy,—the result of all being, acceptance with God as pardoned and reconciled. These, however, were but “the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image (or substance) of the things.”⁸ “The law made nothing perfect,” but, by the lessons it taught, and as its scholars improved under its teaching, it was “the bringing in of a better hope.”⁹ “It was a figure (or parable) to the time then present, in which was offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, *as pertaining to the conscience*; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them *until the time of reformation.*”¹⁰ The schoolmaster embodied his spiritual lessons in material forms, and sought to lead to the science of the soul, through the treatment of the body. It was like children playing at being men; like a number of boys imitating the usages of mature life—apprehending and trying, punishing or pardoning, their prisoner; or making a feast, and supposing themselves to be eating and drinking in the presence and with the participation of their parents and friends. The whole thing, as a system of teaching, was lowered and accommodated to the apprehensions and capacities of the pupils of a primary or preparatory school.

3. The last thing to be noticed is, that these lessons of the schoolmaster constituted and became a preparation for the Gospel. “Christ was the end,” or scope, “of the law.” It pointed to Him in all it did, taught, or enjoined. The process of learning, however, on the part of its pupils, was similar to what occurs in ordinary education. The mind of a scholar opens very gradually to that of the teacher. From not in the least suspecting his object, it comes to have some vague idea of it; as the faculties are developed, and lessons are multiplied,

⁸ Heb. x. 1. ⁹ Heb. vii 19. ¹⁰ Heb. ix. 9, 10.

it is better understood; at length, everything is revealed, or seen in a new light, through the facts and occurrences of mature life. It is thus that men look back on many a lesson they learnt in their boyhood without understanding,—the spirit and meaning of which they only discover by the interpretation of subsequent events. As we supposed instructed Christians to go through the experience of the Hebrew people, we must further suppose the Hebrew people to pass forwards, by a continued consciousness, into the Christian Church. We give, in our argument, a oneness to Humanity. We conceive of successive generations of men living on, growing and advancing, *as an individual*. Let it be observed, then, that just as a man, when he is of age, may have arrived at views sufficiently defined to fit him for entering on his new career, and yet may have much to learn, and may learn much all his life after, that may be necessary to increase or modify his insight into the instructions and lessons of his youth; so the Church, at "the fulness of time," might have been sufficiently prepared for the revelation of the spiritual meaning of the law, and yet very much might remain to be learnt *in its after years*. The illustration would be stronger, and perhaps more exact, if we took the case of a child passing from one school to another,—from the forms and modes of preparatory teaching, to those adapted to more advanced pupils. As Christianity and Judaism are one religion, the Jewish Church and the Christian are one Church; and hence, what may be *now* apprehended by the developed faculties, and understood according to the mature insight, of the one, is to be regarded as that form of truth which has been arrived at, and is possessed, by the other.

The map which the young pupil had to study, and which to him was that of an earthly land,—the land secured by promise to Abraham and his seed,—is found,

as he continues to look and learn, to expand into the idea of a higher region, and to associate itself with another race! The Patriarch becomes the heir of “the world;” his inheritance changes into a “heavenly country;” the heirs of promise cease to be limited to his seed “through the law;”—they are “not the Jews only,” but “the Gentiles also,”—all, everywhere, and throughout all time, who are “of the faith “of believing Abraham.¹ ... The pieces of prophecy respecting Messiah, when all are put together, compose a figure so unique and mysterious, that it would seem to suggest opposite ideas, and to warrant contradictory expectations. It stands invested apparently with inharmonious attributes, and is spoken of in ways antagonistic to each other. There is something about it not to be confined to the limits of a nation, nor connected with temporal sovereignty or secular successes; and yet there is the constant employment of language partial to the Hebrew people, and indicative of mundane magnificence!—King, priest, prophet, martyr;—conquest and defeat; triumph and tears; songs and sovereignty; stripes and blood—pieces thus cut, as it were, out of different figures, irreconcilable, as it would seem, in attributes and fortune, have to be gathered up and put together by the severely tasked pupil of the law. The enigma at length finds its solution,—the strange, mysterious picture, its reality, in the Person of a suffering, yet conquering Messiah,—who redeems the soul from sin, beautifies the Church with salvation, defeats the spiritual Adversary of the race, and opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers!—who “is made of the seed of David according to the flesh, but declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;”² who “makes Himself of no

¹ Rom. iv. 13; Heb. xi. 8, 13–16. ² Rom. i. 3, 4.

reputation, takes upon Him the form of a servant, is found in fashion as a man, and humbles Himself to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;"⁵ but who "sees not corruption, nor is left in the place of the dead;"⁴ who—exalted at length to "the right hand of God," "angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to Him," "in *His* name," everything being destined to bow the knee, "in heaven and in earth"⁵—lives and reigns, "from thenceforth expecting, till His enemies be made His footstool."⁶

With new views of the central figure, so much the theme of prophetic song, and the object of national desire, the whole of the Levitical system undergoes a change. It comes to have an intention, to be looked at as constructed for a purpose, which gives to it a deeper and diviner significance than was at first suspected. Priest and sacrifice, altar and propitiation, cease to be realities; they are understood to be only shadows and signs of what was to be found, substantially, in the Person and work, the acts and offices of "the great High Priest of our profession." The tabernacle and temple seem to enlarge their proportions, as if to become a fitting sphere for the presentation of such a sacrifice, and the services of such a functionary, as are conceived of now. The Earth is the court in which death is inflicted; the overhanging sky is the mysterious veil; and high heaven, the dwelling-place of God, is the holy of holies!⁷ The only sacrifice is understood to be that of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;"⁸ the virtue of those which sanctified only "to the purifying of the flesh," or to the conferring of an external and ritual absolution, is seen to typify "the blood that cleanseth

³ Philip, ii. 7. ⁴ Acts ii. 31; and xiii. 37.

⁵ Eph. i. 20; 1 Peter iii. 22; Philip, ii. 9, 10. ⁶ Heb. x. 13.

⁷ Heb. ix. 24. ⁸ Rev. xiii. 8.

from all sin,”⁹—which purges the conscience, and literally reconciles man to God.

The pomp and splendour of the temple service fade away like a holiday procession; its songs and anthems come to symbolize diviner joys than they ever could impart. The infliction of death on unconscious animals, with their throes and contortions under their sharp but transitory suffering, sink into something like fictitious agony, and have to give place to the terrible reality of *His* mighty and mysterious anguish whose “soul was made an offering for sin.”¹⁰ The purifications and washings, the cleansing of the body by water or blood, enjoined by the law, prepare the way for the evangelical announcements of the “fountain opened for uncleanness,” and of “the laver of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.”¹ The feast, which on special occasions was furnished by the sacrifice, when the Worshipped and the worshipper appeared to unite in social communion,—to constitute a family, in its Head and members pervaded by sentiments of mutual affection, reciprocal confidence and hallowed joy,—this is superseded by the spiritual reality of “the adoption of sons;” by the knowledge of the truths, “He is our peace;” by “whom we have received the reconciliation;” “being justified by faith, we have peace with God;”²—by the fulfilment of the promises, “If any man will hear my voice, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me;” “If a man love me and keep my words, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him;”³ and by the conscious, subjective realization of “The peace of God shed abroad in the heart,”—“the peace of God, which passeth all under-

⁹ 1 John i 7. ¹⁰ Isaiah liii. 10. ¹ Zech. xiii. 1; Titus iii 5.

² Gal. iv. 5; Eph. ii. 14; Rom. v. 11, 1.

³ Rev. iii. 20; John xiv. 23.

standing!"⁴ "The Law had the *shadow* of" all "good things,"—pardon, purification, filial joy, but it could not confer them as a substantial and permanent possession. "It could not make those that did the service perfect."⁵ "It made nothing perfect."⁶ "The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin."⁷ There was still "a conscience of sins."⁸ There was "a remembrance again made of sins every year."⁹ It was "as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite."¹⁰ But now, *in Christ*, "blessed are they that hunger and thirst, for they are filled." A sense of spiritual satisfaction, a certainty of inward bliss, pervades the soul and dilates the heart. The prophetic word is fulfilled—"In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make *unto all people* a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees,—of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. ... And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and *He will save us*; this is the Lord: we have waited for Him, *we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.*"¹¹

With all this comes a new and ennobling sentiment of obedience. The moral law is not now heard as uttered in thunder, or engraved on stone. It is no longer a dread of the terrible "*shalt not*" that drives to obedience, or depresses under the consciousness of breach and deficiency. There is not the strange, inward confusion arising from the admiration of the ideal of the commandment, with the prostrating feeling that the commandment itself gives vitality and vigour to what

⁴ Rom. v. 5; Phil. iv. 7. ⁵ Heb. x. 1, and ix. 9.

⁶ Heb. vii. 19. ⁷ Heb. x. 4. ⁸ Heb. x. 2.

⁹ Heb. x. 3. ¹⁰ Isa. xxix. 8. ¹¹ Isa. xxv. 6-9.

inflicts death!² Law, as law, can do nothing but enjoin the right,—and then—justify on perfect obedience, or condemn on proved violation. A *sinful* man, hearing the law and nothing else, or hearing it more distinctly, and with a more corroborating consciousness, than the provision for relief is perceived in its intention or experienced in fact, *can* only despair and die. Strength withers with the extinction of hope; effort is vain, when performance is impossible. But “what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [hath accomplished.] [He] condemned sin in the flesh; *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.*”³ The law was weak, because corruption was strong; and corruption was strong, because the sense of guilt could not be removed. In proportion, in fact, to its anxiety to realize the ideal of virtue, and its spiritual insight into the inefficiency of ritual observances, Humanity, while under law, was disheartened and bewildered, and was thus made to long for deliverance and light. Sometimes it felt goaded and exasperated, and became desperate and reckless, from the feeling of its helplessness. “When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”⁴ The Gospel brings hope to the despairing and life to the dead, by its ample arrangements for both pardon and strength; by its atoning Sacrifice and its sanctifying Spirit; by its interposition on our behalf to put away sin, and by its provision in us for terminating its dominion. As a sinner, justified through faith in the redemptive work of the Christ, and, as a believer, made the partaker of a Divine life by being born of the Spirit, man can have

² Rom. vii. 22, 9, 10. ³ Rom. viii. 3, 4. ⁴ Rom. vii. 5.

his "fruit unto holiness;" obedience becomes possible, because it may be of another sort, and is to be presented for a different object, than when attempted to be wrought out "under law," and for legal purposes; imperfect, but sincere, it is acceptable to God as the result of what He *has* done, not as the ground of what He *is* to do; the law itself can be loved and delighted in, when it thus ceases to prescribe the terms of acceptance; and works can be produced of an evangelical perfection, when they are to be measured by their motive rather than their amount, and when "the dispensation" of the Spirit, "day by day," gives that "grace," which is "sufficient"—sufficient alike for the production of the feeling that loves, and the impartation of the *power* that pursues, "all holy conversation and godliness."⁵ "The grace of God which bringeth salvation," teacheth and helpeth as the authority that threatened never could. "The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus maketh free from the law of sin and death."⁶ "We are delivered from the law, that we should serve in newness of the spirit, not in oldness of the letter."⁷ The spiritual man acts, not from the thought of external command or of external denunciation. He is a law unto himself. The impulses and instincts of "the Divine nature," of which the saved are "partakers,"⁸ make duty a necessity, labour a delight, obedience a spontaneous service, conformity to the law a privilege and a joy!

We do not pretend that the lessons of the schoolmaster, the play-work and pictures of the preparatory school, succeeded in producing in *any* of the pupils a full or clear apprehension of what was "to be brought to them" in the succeeding economy. We do not even say, that

⁵ 2 Corinthians xii. 9; 2 Peter iii. 11.

⁶ Titus ii. 11, 12; Rom. viii. 2.

⁷ Rom. vii. 6. ⁸ 2 Peter i. 4.

all the pupils had their views and faculties so enlarged and developed as to feel dissatisfied with their circumstances and condition, to outgrow the forms of primary instruction, and to be inspired with a wish to advance from the "rudiments" to the "fulness" of things. We do not even assert that there were *many*, when "the time appointed by the Father" came, who were intelligently prepared for it,—ready to welcome the interpretation it brought of what they had been learning, as those who now "in understanding were men," though long time and much labour might still be required to perfect their acquisitions. We do insist, however, that there was a design and a tendency in the lessons of the "law" to awaken, in the more thoughtful, a suspicion that there was something wanted, and something to come; that this suspicion *was* awakened; that it increased and deepened as time advanced, though it was often vague in itself, mistaken in its presentiments, a sort of voiceless,, inarticulate longing of the soul. We further insist, that "when God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," there were not wanting those who were so advanced by the preparatory teaching as to be competent to grasp, after a few lessons in the higher school, the great idea of the New Dispensation. We readily admit, however, that, comparatively speaking, they were not numerous; that many, "by the time they ought to have been teachers,, had need of some to teach them again what were the first principles of the oracles of God."⁹ The light, at first, and for a considerable period, "shined in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."¹⁰ It was not till the Church had been some time in possession of its restored inheritance, and after years of experience

⁹ Heb. v. 12. ¹⁰ John i. 5.

had cast their light on the lessons of its youth, that it rose to the full apprehension of the truth—the whole truth—which had been sketched and foreshadowed in the lessons of the law, and was embodied in Christ and the Gospel substantially.

In our remarks, therefore, just completed, on the manner in which the teaching of the law constituted and became a preparation for the Gospel, we have not confined ourselves to what it did in its own day, and for its own pupils as such, but have taken our illustrations from the exposition of its meaning by the more advanced of the New Testament writers;—that is, from the manner in which we find the subject presented, after the supernatural facts of the New Dispensation, the revelation vouchsafed to the apostles, and the experience of the apostolic age, had cast their light on the symbols of the past, and gradually unfolded, for the instruction of the Church in all coming time, the depth of meaning and largeness of view with which the early discipline of its minority was conducted. Flashes of the light that was to distinguish its manhood sometimes darted across its early path; vague hopes, dumb, unformed wishes would spring up, which it could not fully interpret to itself; deep throbbings and searchings of heart agonized and oppressed it, when it fell occasionally into earnest thought about duty and sin; and often was it aware of sudden and sometimes passionate longings after a higher life and more spiritual conceptions, than the schoolmaster appeared to inspire or teach. These remarks could easily be sustained by quotations from the Psalms—the record and utterance of the inward life of the ancient Church—and from the more profound and spiritual portions of the prophets. It might be shown, too, how in the lifetime of Christ, He not only laid, in some of His mysterious and wonderful sayings, the basis of that interpretation of

the law which we have endeavoured to expound, but hailed those who had so far profited under the lessons of the schoolmaster as to see the difference between the ritual and the spiritual, as “not far from the kingdom of God.” The kingdom of God has come. It is important to be in it;—it is more important to have it *in us*. “The kingdom of God is *within* you.” “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” “The law and the prophets were until John.”¹ Standing between Moses and Christ,—looking to the receding shadows of the one, and anticipating the advancing manifestation of the other,—the Baptist gave the key-note of the coming age, when he cried to the penitent population of Judaea, “Behold *the Lamb of God*, which taketh away *the sin of the world*.”² “He must increase; I must decrease.”³ *And if he was thus to fade,—“than whom there had been none greater,”*⁴—whoever and whatever had preceded him must. “The law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But, faith having come, *we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*”

III.

Such is the exposition, as it seems to us, of what the apostle teaches in relation to the development of the idea of the Law in the doctrine of the Gospel,—the bursting of the preparatory figure into the ultimate spiritual fact. The fundamental principle and general import of the whole scheme may, for our next object, be thus briefly put. All have sinned.⁵ Sin is the violation of law.⁶ Law, taking its course, works out for the sinner, by way of natural consequence, death.⁷ Future punishment is

¹ Mark xii. 34; Luke xvii. 21; Rom. xiv. 17; Luke xvi. 16.

² John i. 29. ³ John iii. 30. ⁴ Luke vii. 28.

⁵ Rom. iii. 23. ⁶ 1 John iii. 4. ⁷ James i 15.

not an infliction, but a result; not a thing added to sin by external power, but flowing out of it by inevitable necessity. The pardon of sin, therefore, is not merely oblivion of offence, but annihilation of consequences. It requires a direct and positive interference with the great system of fixed law. If law is not to take its course, and still more, if a result is to be brought about directly the reverse of what would be natural? something must be done, and done in the form of what is super-natural. This something was done, by "God sending forth His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for a sin offering." The redemptive work of The Christ,—a miraculous interference with the system of natural law, but one so conducted as to be essentially in harmony with the principles and spirit of that system itself,—this introduced such a new action into God's moral government, that "whosoever believeth in Him," hath "everlasting life."⁹ "He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."¹⁰ The spiritual and eternal future of every sinful man, who is penitent and believing, can not only be cleared, so to speak, of the consequences of sin, but replenished, as it were, with something analogous to the results of obedience. Man, the disinherited, is brought back and re-established in that for which he was made; or, his lost and forfeited inheritance is restored. All is done, too, as originally planned. The Divine purpose is accomplished, the Divine promise fulfilled. It is "of faith," and "by grace." It is the one, that it may be the other.

Now, of this spiritual system, the Jewish economy was a figure; for its being revealed and understood, it was a preparation. After the revelation came, it ceased to have importance or use. Then, it was a thing that was

⁸ Rom. iv. 5, 6.

⁹ John iii. 36.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. v. 21.

“done with;” its mission was accomplished. Yet, it was *this* which the Galatians were required to receive!—the superseded rites and ordinances of which they were taught to practise I—to practise and regard as the actual ground of their spiritual redemption!—for it was affirmed, that, “except they were circumcised and kept the law, *they could not be saved.*”¹

The condemnation of this error was, on the part of St. Paul, strong and vehement. His opposition to it, and to its abettors, was intense and implacable. He speaks of both in a way which betrays the inward discomposure of his spirit, while it expresses the indignant opposition of his reason. There are earthquake and hurricane, battle and blows, in his burning words. He assigns, too, in this letter of his, many of the grounds on which he placed and justified his censure. Both these things may be briefly adverted to.

With respect to the way in which he expresses himself, the following points may be noticed. He begins by saying, that he felt such confidence in the truth and importance of his interpretation of the Gospel,—having learnt it “not of man,” nor received it “by man,” but “by the revelation of Jesus Christ,”—that “if an angel from heaven “were to preach any other, he would not only not believe him, but would brand him with an “anathema.” He repeats the statement, to show the vehemence of his convictions.² ... After thus confronting with a defiance, and something more, a supposed spirit from the world of light, he proceeds to say that he *had* done what was next to this,—for he had “withstood to the face” a God-inspired man! When such an one so far forgot himself as to appear to countenance the errors denounced, “he was to be blamed”—and Paul blamed him. The apostle stood up for the

¹ Acts xv. 1, 5; pp. 250–1. ² Gal. i. 1, 8, 9.

simplicity and spirituality of the Gospel, against what was a practical implication of the necessity to the Gentiles—the importance to men as men—of the external and done-with ritualism of the Jew.³ ... In addition to this, he threw his reasoning into the form of an allegory, that would shock and exasperate the minds of his opponents. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh. But he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage—and *answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children*. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. *We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. We are not the children of the bondwoman, but of the free*. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so is it now. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? *Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.*"⁴ There was terrible severity in all this;—a withering contempt which we, with our feelings, can hardly comprehend. To make Hagar and Ishmael—the bondwoman and her slave-child—a type of the Jew, and Sarah and Isaac of the Christian Gentiles, would seem to those pointed at by the parable as if a sacrilegious hand had torn down the vail of the temple, and exposed the holiest of all to the common gaze;—or, rather, as if the unclean and the uncircumcised had been introduced within the sacred precincts as their proper place, and the very priests of

³ Gal. ii. 11, &c. ⁴ Gal. iv. 21-31.

God thrust out—“as if they had not been anointed with oil!” ... Consistently with this daring defiance of the national opinion, this contemptuous mockery of Jewish pretensions, put in the form of that allegorical logic in which Paul was so thorough a proficient, and the force of which on the Hebrew mind he so well knew,—in consistency with this, he ever represents the believing Gentiles as the seed of Abraham; tells them that the blessing of Abraham comes on *them*; that theirs is the promise and the inheritance through faith; that circumcision is nothing, and may be worse than nothing; that “the Israel of God” is not now “the concision” as he calls them in another Epistle, but those who walk according to the rule that “neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” “*We are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, who rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh.*”⁵ ... Still more; not content with argument in disproof and censure in denunciation of error, he imputes motives; he charges the seducers of the Galatians with what is base, cowardly, and corrupt, in the feelings by which they were actuated. “*As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.*”⁶ They are mean, time-serving souls; they dread the loss of status and caste among their own countrymen; they shrink from the consequences of a bold and decided avowal of Christ; and they seek a narrow, sectarian triumph in *you!* ... His whole being at last becomes excited with indignation; his

⁵ Gal. iii. 29, 14; vi. 15, 16; Phil. iii. 2, 3.

⁶ Gal. vi. 12, 13.

breast, as it were, heaves; his brow darkens; his feelings explode; and the flash and the thunder-bolt leap forth in the form of something like an exterminating curse: "I would they were even cut off which trouble you"⁷—excluded from the Church of Christ, or struck dead by the hand of God!

Now it certainly should be something very serious that would warrant feelings like these, or that would justify, even in an apostle, such a mode of conducting religious controversy. Let us notice then, next, how he justifies it to himself. In the course of his animadversions he states, formally or incidentally, some of the grounds of his judgment and procedure.

The error he denounced was opposed by him on such grounds as the following:—

1. It was a species of blasphemy against the Divine fact which constituted God's method of reconciliation—His mode of interference with the system of natural law, through which its violators were to be rescued from its necessary results,—and, as such, it shocked the apostle's love and reverence for Christ. It roused a sort of sacred resentment against those who would do Him dishonour. "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."⁸ "In the fulness of time," at the proper and appointed period, "God sent forth His Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." And yet they are *not* redeemed by Him, but by the law itself under which they were! He has effected nothing. The stupendous facts of the incarnation and the life of the Son of God; the agony and the sacrifice,—the garden and the cross; have been to no pin-*pose*! Things have not advanced. We are only where we were before. There has been no "fulness of

⁷ Gal. v. 12, 10. ⁸ Gal. ii. 21.

time;” no “crisis” of the world.⁹ For anything that has been done, Christ need not have appeared. If the law saves now, it could have saved before. The Only-Begotten has been “given,”¹⁰ “set forth,”¹ “manifested,”² and especially has “died,” “in vain!”

2. It was a species of apostasy from Christ, whatever might be their verbal profession of belief; and it thus shocked and was resented by his love for man. “Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing,—Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law: ye are fallen from grace.”³ If you depend for acceptance with God, for pardon and righteousness, on outward ritualisms, you abandon the only process divinely appointed,—that which alone is adequate to secure the result. Before Christ came, the figures of the law had a relative value and a preparatory use: but if, after He is come, they are still depended on, they are then looked to as realities, as things which are substantial, final, and efficient, and *He* is rejected to whom they were to lead!

3. The thing was an absurdity in itself, and as such it shocked his understanding. If, “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, they believed in Christ that they might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law;” and yet, if they *returned* to the law, and “built again the things that they destroyed”—attempting to “establish their own righteousness,” instead of continuing in “the righteousness of God,”⁴—they became transgressors in more senses than one; they violated a recognised spiritual law, and they outraged

⁹ John xii. 31. ¹⁰ John iii. 16. ¹ Rom. iii. 25.

² ¹ John iii. 5, 8. ³ Gal. v. 2, 4, 5.

⁴ Gal. ii. 16–18; Rom. x. 3.

the principles of common prudence and common sense. They acted like men who had left a mud cottage that stood upon the sand, and had taken shelter in an edifice of solid stone built high upon a rock; and who, *after* that, and in order to be safe from a dreaded inundation, actually went back to the thing they had abandoned, or encouraged others to trust themselves to it! The apostle saw an absurdity in this deserving the contempt of his understanding, mixed with a cruelty that at once roused and wrung his soul.

4. It opposed the idea of advance and progress, intellectually considered, and it was thus inconsistent with Paul's hope for Humanity. He did not deny that what lie opposed was good once,—in its proper time, and when "used lawfully." But, independently of the spiritual aspects of the subject already noticed, he felt that there was a preposterous incongruity in the thing, even if innocent, when viewed in connexion with the manhood of the race. Humanity when a child was "under a schoolmaster;" it was taught the forms and "rudiments" of things; it had "to speak as a child, and understood as a child;" but "when it became a man," it outgrew, and was to cast off, its childish employments. Hitherto there had been progress; increase of light; things guessed at in the darkness, or dimly seen through mist and shadows, had come to be distinctly apprehended and revealed; spiritual faculty was brought into direct and immediate contact with spiritual truth; and, after *thus* "knowing God," were they "to turn again to the weak and beggarly elements" of a superseded dispensation!⁶ To shut the inward eye against the Divine forms of the good and the true, presented by the facts of the evangelical economy to. reason and faith, was to cease to be "men in understanding;"—to be absorbed in the

⁵ Gal. iv. 9.

ceremonies and formalities of external religion as if *they* were all important, was to go back to the playthings and primers of the child. It was inconsistent with the growth of Humanity,—an insult to the nature that was rising to the position for which God intended it, whence it was to look “not on the things that are seen, but on the things which are not seen,” using as its instrument that faith which gives nearness to the distant, impression to the spiritual, substance to the promised, reality to the unknown! The whole thing was like confining a grown-up man to his thumbed and worn-out grammars and spelling-books, his lessons on objects, and his pictorial forms, instead of permitting him to advance to the heights of true science;—and that, moreover, in the very presence of professors appointed to carry on and complete his education,—furnished, for the purpose, with the results and revelations of the last and more perfect experiments and discoveries!

5. It was a yoke put upon the neck, a burden bound on the shoulders, of the Gentiles; and, as such, it shocked the apostle’s respect for liberty, and offended and roused his spirit of independence. The apostle revered Love as well as Truth; he was loyal to both; and could as soon have been a martyr for one as the other. He admitted a difference between essential truth and secondary opinions; he made allowance for confirmed habits and old associations; he recognised the sacredness and the rights of conscience, even when the judgment might be uninformed or mistaken: hence, he allowed to different parties in the Christian Church the full enjoyment of their separate convictions, but he forbade one to attempt lording it over others,—and especially did he resist the raising into importance, and the imposition on the conscience, of what was manifestly indifferent by being merely external. While the end of one dispensa-

tion and the beginning of another remained in contact, mingling together their respective influences, so that two elements were in some degree active at the same time, he admitted that some might conscientiously observe their accustomed formalities, provided they kept them in their proper place,—using them only as helps to what was higher, and as helps *to themselves*,—not putting them in the place of essential truth, and, especially, not attempting to force their observance on those who neither saw them to be obligatory, nor felt them to be beneficial. Even if no error of a more serious nature had mingled with that teaching of and attachment to externalism, which the apostle had to contend with in the churches of Galatia, he would have resisted the attempt to give it importance and to impose it as necessary,—from his love of fairness between man and man,—from the rights which he recognised as belonging to every individual soul,—and from his comparative indifference to the merely ceremonial and secondary in religion. “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. ... Why dost thou judge thy brother? The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”⁶ With this most catholic feeling towards the conscientious on all sides, it was perfectly consistent for the apostle to

⁶Rom. xiv. 4-17.

resist the *imposition* of ceremonies simply as intolerance. Hence his call and counsel to the Galatians, “*Standfast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*”

6. It was an attempt to perpetuate a national distinction, and to keep up the supremacy of a particular people, and, as such, it offended the apostle’s philanthropy, it ran counter to his convictions of the design of the Gospel, the purposes of God, the oneness of the race, and the equality of nations. The Jew had been honoured by having been made the representative of Humanity for a special purpose; but he was reluctant to return to a level with his fellows when that purpose was fulfilled. He had sustained peculiar relations to God, and had been distinguished by much that placed him apart; he could not comprehend that all this was only to make him the medium of benefiting *the race*,—that its object was ultimate in relation to *it*, and not immediate in respect to himself,—and that, therefore, when the proposed object was attained, his function would cease. He could not brook this. He would not understand it. He was determined to retain what he thought a perpetual distinction, and not the sign of a temporary, though splendid service. He wished to continue the separation between himself and all the rest of God’s great family; or if there was to be any approximation, it must be by the Gentiles becoming Jews! Jew, as he was—of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin—“a Hebrew of the Hebrews,”—this notion roused, as it were, the apostle’s *humanity*; it stirred and agitated the strong, general affections of his great soul; it was met by the resistance of his reason and his faith—by the light which the healthy instincts of the one had received from the grand idea of the other. “Ye

are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; ye are all one in Christ Jesus."⁷ "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more."⁸ Though *He* was "of the seed of David;"—by genealogy a Jew, that He might be the Messiah ("for salvation is of the Jews"),—now that He is "declared to be the Son of God with power," and "appears in the presence of God for us,"—and not merely for *us*, but for all mankind—for "He is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world"—henceforth, we know Him *as a Jew* no more. He is of no nation, for "He died for all." He is the representative of none of the individual families of earth, but of the whole race,—entire Humanity. As through Him, in His aspect to *us*, "the love of God toward MAN appeared," so through Him, in His aspect toward God, *man*, believing in that love, may approach.⁹ "The hour cometh when neither in Jerusalem, nor yet in this mountain, shall men worship the Father." "In every nation, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, incense shall be offered to Him, and a pure offering." "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." The world is redeemed. The Christ of God was "a ransom for all." "In Him let the Gentiles trust." All nations are equal; every place is a church; every man, a man!

7. It interfered with the impartation of the gifts of the Spirit; and, as such, it grieved the apostle, on account of his anxiety for the holiness of the Church.

⁷ Gal. iii. 26—28. ⁸ 2 Cor. v. 16.

⁹ Heb. ix. 24; 1 John ii. 2; 2 Cor. v. 15; 1 Tim. ii. 4—6.

“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”¹⁰ There is more in these questions than at first sight appears. Connecting them with what has already been noticed—the virtual apostasy and “falling from grace” involved in the maintenance of the denounced errors—they convey the idea not only of absurdity of conception, but of relinquishment of advantage. They are intended to insinuate, that the Galatians not only could not receive the Spirit by the law, or be made perfect by the flesh, but that—*going from the higher to the lower position, the privileges of the higher would be forfeited by the change.* “If ye are circumcised, Christ can profit you nothing. Christ has become of no effect to you.” In the same way, on the like condition, the *Spirit* “can profit you nothing.” He, too, has “become of none effect.” “Ye are fallen from grace.” Grace and Truth, the Spirit and Christ, are associated together in the mind of St. Paul. Receive one, and you receive both; reject one, and you forfeit the other. The Spirit is “received,” His gifts conferred, in connexion with belief in the verities of redemption. “He glorifies *Christ.*” Place dependence on external ritualisms, and He departs! You may make “a fair show in the flesh;”—it is “a show,” and nothing else,—a mere parade of empty formalities! Pardon and holiness; reconciliation and renewal; the beginning, the middle, and the end of an inward, spiritual, Divine life;—these, with other important correlative things, all being associated by St. Paul with *that* which the Galatian error would displace, it is not surprising that it was encountered by him with such a vehemence of resistance, and such an emphasis of rebuke. “The law was a schoolmaster;”—nothing else.

¹⁰ Gal. iii. 2, 3.

It was "to bring us to Christ;"—nothing more. Christ being come, we are no longer under the schoolmaster; to put ourselves under him is to deny *Him* to whom he led, and to lose the blessings to which he introduced us.

IV.

Having thus added to the exposition of the apostles doctrine, proofs of the vehemence with which he assailed the errors that subverted it, and a survey of the grounds and sources of that vehemence,—we shall now conclude the whole discussion, by slightly sketching a few of the thoughts it is calculated to suggest, in relation to some of the many subjects on which the principles elicited may seem to cast some glimmerings of light.

i. The subject has important bearings on one of the forms of modern scepticism,—one which directly relates to the distinctive element of the religion of man, as generally understood, and which *is* that of the Christian religion in particular,—the possibility and hope of *the forgiveness of sin*. Poetry and sentiment feel no difficulty about this. To them, indeed, sin has hardly an existence. What is so denominated they term frailty,—error,—anything that may seem to reduce it to nothing. If it *is* anything, they think of it as something that may be passed over with the utmost facility,—as if pardon was an act which it would be absurd to think could ever be withheld. The voices of the flowers, the bland smilings of the blue sky, the soft breathings of the spring, the music of the woods, the murmuring of the sea, the eloquence of the stars, with a thousand other forms or expressions of the beautiful, are supposed to teach that the beneficent Maker of them all is not of a nature to be severe or rigorous, and that under His gentle and loving

rule, man, weak and imperfect, limited in capacity and liable to err, can have nothing to dread. A little penitence—a personal cry, or the prayer of a priest—as the conclusion even of the tragedy of a life, will put everything straight!

It is but a poor philosophy this, however popular;—a very slender and superficial hypothesis for the interpretation of the system of this great universe, which, whatever it is, thing or person, matter or mind, does seem at least as if it was in earnest, and did its work with something like seriousness! A deeper philosophy has taught another lesson to certain more patient and more logical thinkers. *They* say—that, according to the established and everlasting laws of the great system of being, *there can be no forgiveness of sin at all*. Sin, they insist, is not so much an offence against Divine feeling, as a violation of Divine order. Once committed, from whatever cause,—ignorance, error, frailty, or anything else,—it becomes a *fact*;—and God himself can never cause it to cease to be a fact. As a fact, a done *thing*, it must have results by an inevitable necessity. It is taken up, so to speak, as so much material, by the great system of fixed law, and certain moral results are worked out from it, and cannot *but* be worked out, unerringly and for ever! Forgiveness, it is seen, on this hypothesis, cannot be the mere change (if such change were possible) from offended to an opposite *feeling* in God,—the utterance, as it were, of kind words, and the exercise of compassionate sentiment,—it must be *the annihilation of results*;—the actual *doing* of something; the severance of cause and effect; the cutting off, or the making provision for the cutting off, of consequences, which, through the action of settled laws, would infallibly flow, by way of necessary effect, from an ever-operating cause. It would, in fact, be a miracle. It would be a direct interference with the

processes of nature;—that is, it would be something super-natural. But anything supernatural is not to be expected. Consistently with just views, therefore, of the system of nature, there is, and can be, no hope of *the forgiveness* of sin.

This conclusion is maintained both on the hypothesis which excludes, and on that which admits, the existence of God. On the principle of Pantheism, which is essentially atheistic, there is nothing we can reason about *but* the universe;—the universe with its mighty and immutable laws everlastingly going on, working out their necessary results,—having within itself no provision for their being evaded, and no Divine presiding Personality over or external to it that can come in, and, by supernatural interference, arrest its processes. Even on the hypothesis of such Divine Personality, the conclusion is the same; for it is then to be considered, that the all-wise and omnipotent Originator and Framer of the system of things, as He must be supposed to have constructed the best possible, so He can never be expected to interfere with it. Things must take their course. It is right that they should. Nothing is to be looked for but that they are to go on uninterruptedly and for ever. A miracle is an absurdity. Nothing of the sort can ever have taken place in the physical system, or ever will. As to expecting it in the higher form of supernatural interference with the *moral* system,—a miracle in relation to *it*,—the annihilation of moral results,—in other words, the stoppage of the action of moral laws, the dissolution of the connexion between cause and effect where *they* are concerned,—the thing is as impossible as the idea is ridiculous. No; God—admitting or supposing Him to exist—*cannot* forgive sin. What arrogance, indeed, it is to ask Him to do so, when it is considered what it involves! To ask—that He should interfere

with the order and working of the infinitely beautiful and everlastingly fixed laws of the universe for *you*,—for your individual benefit!—that *you*, an atom, a shred of entity, that might be ground to nothing and never be missed, might escape something that you fear!—*that* something, too, being neither more nor less than just the natural consequence of your own acts! After sowing one thing, you wish to reap another;—which cannot fee, except by some direct, that is, miraculous, interference with the system of nature. You have the face, then, to request, the modesty to expect, *this!*—for this is really what you ask and expect, whenever you pray for the forgiveness of sin!

It is *not* to be expected. Law will roll on, without heeding your cries, or consulting your safety. It would be *wrong* if it were otherwise. As you have sown you must reap. You made your choice, and you must abide by the issue. There is nothing for it but to submit and to endure. It *may* be, perhaps, that, in the course of time,—a period equal to something like a little eternity,—it *may* be, that changes may occur, *in* you or about you,—or some new action of law may be evolved,—so that results may get attenuated, or may be rectified or absorbed through some natural provision not known at present; and, if so, you might possibly work your way back to your lost position, and gain a place, not indeed among the innocent or perfectly virtuous, but yet among amended and purified natures. This, however, will not be *forgiveness*;—there will be nothing *done* for you; no arresting of processes, or annihilation of results, by merciful interposition. You will *evade* nothing. Everything will have to be borne, and gone through with, *according to law*. You will thus arrive at the end you now pray for,—which you preposterously want to reach by a single step, or to be carried to by a Divine

act—you will arrive at it, in due course and by the orderly action of the system itself,—the system of immutable, eternal law. There is not much hope, however, of *this*. It can only be suggested as a remote possibility. For, though in the system of nature there is a medicinal provision—an inherent tendency to reparation and recovery, a new action set up, when injury is done to the body by departures from or transgressions of physical law; and though there are many external agencies, designedly curative, that can be brought into play, and that act in obedience to properties naturally inherent in them,—yet, this provision, in both its parts, is effective to a very limited extent; while nothing is more obvious, prevalent, and appalling, than the tremendous sternness, the direct, unfailing and unflinching precision, with which Nature works out death and destruction to those who dare to trifle with her laws, or who stand in the way of her advancing chariot. Analogy would suggest that, in the moral system, any original curative provision must be limited too. There are not wanting indications of something of the sort,—healing processes in disorders of the soul; inherent tendencies to moral recovery—external appliances that may be medicinally ministered to minds diseased. But the sphere of both is very narrow; their power, in many cases, utterly impotent;—their action, it is to be feared, when apparently successful, often only deceptive,—for it is doubtful whether it does not result from insensibility and forgetfulness; and it is next to certain that the very first discovery of the future state will be, that nothing can be forgotten—nothing unfelt. No, there is no hope at all of forgiveness of sin;—and very little for expecting that its consequences may ultimately wear out. If you are in harmony with the Train of established Law, as it rushes forward on the straight line natural to it, well and good;—it will carry

you safe, and carry you for ever;—if you stand in the way, or lie across the rail, it will go over you and crush you to atoms! The system is not to blame for this, nor the Maker of the system. It would have worked out good for you, if you would have let it. You would not, and you must take the consequences. The catastrophe is perfectly natural, and cannot be helped.

Such is the mode of reasoning adopted by intellects somewhat more robust than those of poets and sentimentalists, who see no difficulty in God’s setting aside, or breaking in upon, the established laws of the universe, at any moment, and on the slightest occasions! Forgiveness,—that is, a direct interference with the great system of being, the annihilation of results, or the prevention of what *would* result by natural consequence if things took their course,—in other words, a positively supernatural *act* on the part of God;—this is regarded by the sensitive and superficial as so simple and easy an affair, that they can expect miracles to be multiplied without limit;—for, on their system, a miracle must be wrought, a separate Divine act interpose, in each individual case. With the philosopher, on the contrary, forgiveness is so difficult *because* it must mean—if it means anything—this interference with the established, and this exertion of the supernatural, that he denies the possibility of the thing altogether, and sees no rational ground for expecting it. Now, the *premises* on which this train of reasoning proceeds we hold to be indisputable; and, on the hypothesis either of there being no God—or that the universe is God—or that God never has worked, and never will work, a miracle—the conclusion is as inevitable as the premises are just. The system of Nature, which *is* a system of general, fixed, immutable law, working out results with infallible precision—this system makes, and can make, no provision for the forgiveness of sin,—and

it makes only a very limited provision of a curative kind for the counteracting of offences committed against itself. But this, which is the ground taken by the philosopher, is precisely that which is taken by the Gospel. The Bible, both in the preparatory prescriptions of Judaism, and in the ultimate revelations of Christianity, assumes—the fact of a system of fixed natural law,—admits the premises of the unbeliever respecting it, and accompanies him in his reasonings up to a certain point,—but, arrived there, it parts company, proclaiming itself authorized to deny his conclusion. When the philosopher says, and says, possibly, with sadness and tears,—tears wrung from him by the force of his relentless logic,—“I see no hope of the forgiveness of sin; properly understood, it would involve a miracle—nothing less; a supernatural interference with established law; I can see no ground for expecting *that*.” Christianity replies, “But *I* can, and *I do*; I come to announce exactly that thing which you feel to be necessary. I admit and corroborate all that you say about the operation of law, the nature of sin,, and the perfect naturalness of the punitive result. I, too, teach that the punishment of sin is in the sin itself—*from the first*, and by inevitable necessity;—that God has not to *add* it to the transgression by external power;, that he has to *do* nothing to inflict it. Things just take their natural course. ‘Lust having conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, being matured, bringeth forth death.’ Sin is pregnant with Death, from the first moment of its own being,—the sinner himself, by the same act, being the parent of both. You are right, too, about the eternity of sin, considered as a thing done. It is a fearful thought, but,—once a fact, it is a fact for ever t Taken up into the great system, it must be wrought out into everlasting results, *if something is not done to stop and counteract it*. There is no adequate *natural* pro-

vision for this. ‘If law could have given life, righteousness would have been by law;’ had it been possible to provide restorative agencies, equal to the demand, as an inherent part of the original system, they would have been there. But it could not be. Hence the necessity, as you say, for such a direct and positive interposition on the part of God, as amounts to the supernatural or miraculous. You say rightly that forgiveness includes something *done*, not merely felt or said,—something involving an interference with the established laws of the moral universe. I come, then, for the express purpose of proclaiming to the world, that that something *has* been done! My mission is to reveal a redemption and a Redeemer;—a work wrought, an undertaking accomplished. ‘God sent forth His Son, *to redeem them that were under the law*, that we might receive the adoption of sons.’ ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ True, ‘the wages of sin is—*death*.’ but, ‘this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. I come expressly to meet your demonstrated necessity. I admit the demonstration; I require my adherents to bow before it. It is *then* my office to make known the Divine fact—the miraculous interposition—which your philosophy tells you is required, but of which, instead of teaching the possibility, it can only teach you to despair.”

In this way Christianity might be supposed to speak, in reply to the reasonings of the disciple of Nature. It admits the premises; but denies the conclusion. It listens to the demonstration, and observes how imperatively it forbids hope;—it then announces itself as that very thing, which is at once seen to be necessary and set aside as impossible! We cannot pursue the subject further. We confine ourselves to the broad fact of

supernatural interposition, without entering into other questions. We only notice, in passing, two things:—first, that the interference with the system of law, which the Gospel reveals, is one so conducted, as not only not to injure the principles of the system, but to be in strict harmony with its spirit and working. "We do not make void the law through faith. God forbid; yea, we establish the law." "Christ Jesus,—whom God hath set forth, as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness in the remission of sins, that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Second: the redemptive act being accomplished; the miracle once wrought by the offering of the body of Christ "once for all;"—provision is made for the forgiveness of sin, not by the repetition of a miracle in each individual case, but by the introduction, so to speak, supernaturally, into the constitution of things, of such a new curative element that, whoever is brought under its influence, or into harmony with it, by repentance and faith, obtains the blessing it is intended to secure, by way of necessary consequence. One great act of supernatural interference once;—*after* that, the communication of its results according to a fixed and settled arrangement. This is the New Testament explanation of the Gospel, so far as it condescends to add any explanation to its simple and authoritative announcement of facts. It is an explanation that falls in with an acknowledged philosophical course of thought. It meets the admitted emergency in the only way in which Reason sees that it *must* be met, if met at all, though it has no belief or hope of its being so. Now the idea of this necessity for something to be *done*, an actual Divine interposition, in order to meet the condition of Humanity,—*this is just the one great lesson which the schoolmaster embodied in all the forms*

of his emblematical teaching. It pervades everything,—everything in map, prophecy, and picture-book. To impress it on the heart was the object of the previous preparatory discipline through which the Church went in its Hebrew stage,—the accomplishment of that object being, the production of a state of mind ready to apprehend, to recognise, and confide in, *the Divine miracle itself*, when, “in the fulness of time,” it should be wrought and revealed.

ii. Such is the theory of the Christian writers, whether Christianity itself be true or not, or whether the apostles rightly understood and correctly expounded it. The theory, as such, is consistent and complete; and it is certainly at least a singular circumstance, that it should take its stand on the very ground selected by some whence to assail it,—that it should look with them into the infinite and the future, from that point,—acknowledge the difficulty there seen,—and then, to meet that difficulty, propose the very thing which *they* say is required, but which they themselves cannot hope for, since they know of nothing in the universe competent to supply it. But, while it is thus curious that some of the latest demonstrations of philosophy—which have been received, if not announced, as if they were new and startling discoveries—while it is curious, that they are just the things which have been taught to the Church as first principles for three thousand years,—which were embodied in the rude pictures of its primer, and expounded in the writings of its sages and masters, the accomplished professors of the College of Apostles;—it may be further observed, that, on the supposition of the mere human origin of the Hebrew and Christian systems, other very singular results come out. One or two of these may be noticed.

No one who has a right to have an opinion, or to be

listened to in expressing it, will pretend to question the fact of the existence among the Jews of their Levitical system at a very remote period, even if, in all its completeness, it should not be thought as old as the time of Moses. Nobody, either, can doubt that this system did, in the first century of our era, receive that spiritual interpretation which is contained in the New Testament, and especially in the writings of St. Paul. There is no doubt about the mere fact of such and such books, Jewish and Christian, and such and such ideas, being in the world. All this is admitted;—the matter of denial is, that they had anything more than a human origin. This denial it is now customary to entertain, or to profess to entertain, along with feelings of great respect for the so-called sacred writers; for the men as earnest men, and for their book as the most earnest of books. No one is to be charged with imposture or fraud. Such a thing is not dreamt of for a moment. The *men* were true,—though all that they taught was false;—false, considered as so much supposed objective reality, and false as to its having any origin higher than themselves. The hypothesis is something like this:—The writings of the Old and New Testaments are the utterance and embodiment of the inner subjective life of the Hebrew race. Thus and thus was it, as these books in their own style relate, that the great mystery of the universe shaped itself to their conceptions. Thus and thus they thought about the visible and the invisible, the heavens and the earth, God and man, the infinite and eternal, duty and sin, guilt and forgiveness. Throwing their internal impressions into the form of a splendid ritualism, and associating this with rude myths of flaming mount and supernatural voices that gave to it a Divine origin and descent,—thus and thus it was, that this singular people at once made palpable to themselves, by visible

objects, their subjective ideas of spiritual truth, and indicated the profound earnestness of their souls by their full persuasion of heavenly guidance. At a subsequent period, stimulated by the recent appearance and extraordinary character of an illustrious individual,—to many of his contemporaries a great prophet,—to even modern unbelievers a person singularly gifted and singularly virtuous,—the best, if not the wisest, of men;—thus and thus it was, in the second portion of their writings, that this same people, or large portions of them, with certain powerful minds as their leaders, threw *their* strong subjective conceptions of spiritual truth into the supposed facts of the history of Jesus, and the Christian interpretation of the Jewish ritual,—an interpretation which attributed to it a previously prophetic design, and superseded it by an asserted supernatural fulfilment. The impression of the greatness, and the memory of the transcendent virtue, of Jesus, so deepened and grew in the minds of His contemporaries, and of those who were immediately affected by them, that there came at last to be no adequate mode in which this deep feeling, and these sacred and reverential memories, could be bodied forth, but in an imaginary miraculous record of His life,—in something superhuman being associated with His person,—and in the extraordinary notion of His having in some way given a reality to the spiritual idea of the old law. At first sight, this hypothesis may seem startling. Get familiar with it, say its advocates, and it will soon be seen to be the most obvious, the most natural, and the most perfectly philosophic and satisfactory solution of all the admitted phenomena, that can possibly be conceived. The advantage of the thing is, that, in this way, the facts and doctrines of the Hebrew and Christian systems can be so accounted for, as at once to save the character of their authors, and to do away

with the necessity of admitting, in either system, any particle of a supernatural element.

Without dwelling on the extreme improbability of this,—this making into honest and truthful men, persons, by no means fools, who *professed* to record actual miracles, and *pretended* to direct intercourse with heaven,—without dwelling upon this, let us allow for a moment the hypothesis referred to,—let us accept it as the solution of the facts,—and then notice, briefly, one or two of the things that would seem to result from it.

1. In the first place, it must certainly be conceded, that, taking all the facts,—the way in which the several pieces constituting what we call the Bible were composed,—the sort of book they make when put together—the connexion between the two series of writings, and the two supposed religious dispensations—taking these and kindred things, and looking fairly and honestly at them, it must certainly be conceded, that anything parallel to such facts is not to be met with in the history of the world. True or false, the Jewish and Christian religions are the most wonderful things of which there is any account in the records of the race. What an extraordinary people that Hebrew people must have been, who in the wilderness commenced, and in subsequent ages perfected, a ritual system embodying in its significance some of the profoundest truths afterwards to be demonstrated by logicians and philosophers,—and who did this by no Divine or supernatural assistance, but simply from the impulses of their own inward religious life, which struggled to express itself, and which found utterance in this way! How wonderful that this rude people should go on, perfecting their ideas and multiplying their myths, till they took a new form in the history of Jesus, and in the spiritual or transcendental interpretation of the old ritual system which that intro-

duced! What a marvel it is, too, that the whole thing should have been so constructed, and so carried out, as to seize on the human mind *beyond* Judaea,—to subdue the most cultivated portions of the race,—to supersede all other myths, theologies, and philosophies, with which it came in contact,—and to be spreading in the world, as a regal power, to the present day!

2. But, while this general fact is a presumption of something singularly powerful in the genius of the Hebrew people, it should be next noticed, that the extraordinary nature of the Christian *interpretation* of the Hebrew ritual is itself worthy of specific remark. The idea of taking the tabernacle or temple, the altar and priesthood, with all the accessories of the ritual service, and giving them a significance—finding for them a design and a reality that should at once fill the earth and reach up to heaven!—think of *that*. After the prophecies, or supposed prophecies, which for ages had stirred the national heart, filling it with splendid anticipations of a regal and conquering Messiah,—after He was supposed to have come, and then to have departed, and to have so departed as to have disappointed the hopes cherished to the last by His immediate followers;—after this, what an idea it was, to turn the very fact which shattered their expectations into a fulcrum on which to fix an engine that should move the world! What an intrepid and sublime *daring* there is in the thought of Messiah the Priest being placed in the foreground of Messiah the King!—the wide earth the place of sacrifice, the cross of ignominy the altar of propitiation, the upper world the holy of holies—the way into it being opened and sanctified by the resuscitated Eedeemer, who passes through the veil of the visible heavens, as into the interior of a temple, “there to appear in the presence of God for us,”—for *us*, for Humanity, and for the accom-

plishment of those spiritual objects which humanity spiritually needs! However the truth of all this, objectively considered, may be denied; the whole thing rejected as fanciful,—as being nothing more than the imaginative forms in which strongly excited and fervid minds threw their conceptions of spiritual things, from their inability to find for them fit expression and adequate embodiment in mere language;—however this may be, it must certainly be admitted that there is a stupendousness about the theory—a magnitude and a magnificence, that should lead to the recognition of it as of something to be classed with the creations of genius!

3. But, in addition to this, let it be observed, that the time to which the origin of this interpretation is to be referred deserves remark. One of the rules or laws of the Hebrew ritual system, one of the prescribed conditions of the Schoolmaster, was, that the system itself which he framed and established could only be carried on at a specified spot, and by a particular class of men, capable of proving the inheritance of their functions by pure and legitimate descent. If the people were removed from the Holy City, it was impossible for the Levitical service to be continued; if they were dispersed and scattered abroad, their return hopeless, and especially if the sacerdotal tribe were to lose its purity or identity, the *revival* of the service would become impossible too. The system would of necessity cease and determine. Now, it is at least a singular circumstance; that the Christian interpretation of this Jewish system should have originated just when it was about to be politically abolished; when events were on the wing which were destined to grind Israel into powder, to blow the people to the four winds of heaven "like the dust of the summer threshing-floor," and to lay the Temple in ruins, not leaving one stone upon another "that should not be

thrown down.” It is singular this, either on the supposition that the interpretation was broached before these events could be anticipated, and by those who could influence none of the causes whence they grew; or on the supposition that it was hit upon after or about the time of their coming, and was just that form of thought which the circumstances and catastrophe suggested to a number of highly excited and earnest souls. On any supposition, it is a most marvellous coincidence that, exactly at the period when Judaism must necessarily fall as a practicable system, capable of perfect and legitimate action, there should *happen* to arise a new mode of thought and interpretation by which a hidden significance was discovered in it, its great idea found and developed, its departure provided for,—itself, as it were, immortalized by a Divine apotheosis at the moment of its martyrdom, transformed from body to spirit, raised from earth to heaven, associated with the interests of the race—the highest interests of man as immortal, liberated from local and national limitations, and made large enough to embrace the world!

Certainly, these Jews must have been a most remarkable people. They stumbled strangely upon the most extraordinary things; taught them in the most extraordinary manner; and were as lucky in the periods as in the character of their inventions—for they hit, singularly enough, on the most felicitous moment at which to change or advance their conceptions;—felicitous for the character of their old faith; and felicitous for the adaptation of their new modes of thought to the condition of the race in advanced spiritual insight and enlarged general sympathies! From Judaism and Christianity, from their origin, substance, connexion and identity, we may, if we please, exclude the supernatural; we may go on to deny the possibility of a miracle at all: I am afraid, however,

if we do so, we shall only change one difficulty for another, and find perhaps "the last to be worse than the first" We shall get rid of miracles as the work of God, and have to admit things which will seem something like miracles in men. We shall have a miracle of human genius, instead of one of Divine power;—a prodigy of earth and nature, instead of an actual "sign from heaven!" All things considered, it will be found, I suspect, that to admit the Divine origin of our religion makes a much smaller demand on our credulity than to accept the hypothesis to account for its existence suggested by philosophic naturalism. Waiving, for the moment, higher motives, we might say, That as men, we are believers for the credit of our understanding; as, if we were Jews, we should be disposed to become believers for the credit of our ancient faith.

iii. The subject before us, viewed in all its aspects and relations, suggests thoughts on other matters, agitated more immediately within the precincts of the Church. From the statement of the apostle respecting the preparatory character of Judaism; the grounds of his objection to the seducers of the Galatians; his strong and indignant feeling against them;—from these things, much may be gathered that will cast light on many of the forms of error among ourselves.

1. In the first place, it is very obvious that Paul's views involve the condemnation among Christians of every approach to a human priesthood, to ceremonies and ritualism, to symbolic teaching, external gorgeousness of worship, with anything else that would be a retrograde movement towards the primary lessons, the rude typical forms, of the displaced and superannuated schoolmaster. Poperies, Puseyisms, and modern apostolical Churches, —with their sacerdotal pretensions, their sacramental efficany, their ritual formalities, and revived supersti-

tions, their appeals to the senses, their applications to the body for the good of the soul,—their exhibitions of a number of full-grown men like a parcel of great boys dressed up and playing at being priests;—all these things are frowned upon and exploded by the reasonings of the apostle. His continual cry is, “Be not children in understanding,”—“in understanding be *men*.”¹ “The heir *when he was a child* was under tutors and governors,”—“in bondage” to the first “rudiments” of things.² “Faith being come, *he is no longer under a schoolmaster*.” “How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?”³ These were “the shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ.”⁴ “Ye are complete in Him.”⁵ “Let the word of Christ, therefore, dwell in you richly, in all wisdom,” and “spiritual understanding.”⁶ “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; I thank God I baptized none of you!”⁷ “There is one Mediator between God and man.”⁸ “He offered up himself;”⁹—not often,—but “once for all.”¹⁰ He is “the High Priest of our profession.”¹ There is no priest besides. His sacrifice cannot be repeated, and will never need to be repeated. “He has obtained a more excellent ministry,” than those “priests who offered gifts according to the law,—who served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things;” “by how much also He is the Mediator of a [new and] better covenant” “In that He saith a new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.”² It *did* vanish away. It became useless; it lost its significance; it was superseded and put aside as a thing that was

¹ I Cor. xiv. 20.

² Gal. iv. 1–3.

³ Gal. iii. 25; iv. 9.

⁴ Col. ii. 17.

⁵ Col. ii. 10.

⁶ Col. iii. 16; i. 9.

⁷ I Cor. i. 17, 14.

⁸ I Tim. ii. 5.

⁹ Heb. vii. 27; ix. 14.

¹⁰ Heb. x. 10, 12, 14.

¹ Heb. iii. 1.

² Heb. viii. 4–13.

"done with, that that which could not be shaken might remain."³ Every attempt to make Christian ministers into priests; to give them a place between the people and Christ, as He stands between the people and God; to ascribe virtue to their acts, instead of attaching importance to instruction; everything like trying to address the eye instead of the understanding, by turning worship into the "histrionic;" the notion that holy Christian "mysteries" are things to be *done*, instead of things that are *taught*; attempts to lead the people to depend on what can be performed *for* them, or *by* them, instead of cultivating their reason and conscience, and raising them to the manly apprehension of the spiritual;—all this is out the modern form of the Judaizing errors which the apostle met with his indignant condemnation.

2. In connexion with this, it might be suggested in passing, that the opposition of St. Paul to these false teachers proves the importance which he attached to true thought. Type and ritualism, and all that belonged to the old forms of external religion, were only important as a preparatory discipline to the knowledge of *truth* and the exercise of *faith*,—and when men were to be saved by "believing," it is not surprising that importance was attached to *what* they believed. It was not the mere mental act that was to benefit them, but *through it* the objective reality apprehended. Whatever the latitude we may be disposed to allow for diversity of sentiment, we cannot but feel that there are some things which Christianity insists upon as essential,—on which correct views are required as duty,—and which are to be held as truth based on authority, rather than as opinion formed by reasoning. Strange as it may appear to say so, we have no doubt that the mere annunciation of the importance of true and right thoughts, was, in itself, one of

³ Heb. xii. 27.

the greatest blessings which Christianity brought to the world: it raised the slave, the abject, the despised and the forgotten, to a level with their lords, teaching them that *they* too were men.

3. It must not be overlooked, that the apostle's conduct and teaching, as they appear and speak in the Epistle before us, show how, in his estimation, the Gospel may be abandoned, and its benefits lost, not only by positive denial, but by spurious additions. Far more was involved in the ritualism of the Galatians than they at all apprehended. They had not given up what they had at first learnt, but they thought that they could supply its deficiencies! Their departure from the doctrine of justification by faith was constructive, rather than declared. But Paul condemned, with as strong-emphasis, what *hid* the Cross as what actually removed it. The lesson is worth noticing, for it is needed still.

4. It might, in the last place, be observed, that the teaching of the apostle, with all its resolute and rigid severity, is consistent with the spirit of true Catholicism, as it includes the inculcation of brotherly forbearance where Christians differ in subordinate matters. As we have already seen, the Jew was permitted, in consideration of his training, his old associations, the habits of his youth, and the customs of the fathers, to retain the practice of certain peculiarities to which he was attached—He was to remember, however, that they “profited nothing” *as to his acceptance with God*; and he was forbidden to *impose* them on the neck of the Gentile. There is surely a lesson for many here, yet to be learned long as it has been rolling and echoing through the Church! Different Christians may have their opinions and preferences in favour of different forms of discipline, matters of order and modes of worship. Let each, by all means, enjoy what he prefers, and hold to that of

which he is persuaded. The *form* of the fold is not the source of the life, nor essential to the security of the sheep. *His* sheep they may be,—all belonging to the one flock,—and all alike loved and watched over by the one Great Shepherd, though they may be gathered into pens framed after a somewhat different fashion. Let none identify Christ's Church with the persons exclusively congregated within the visible framework of their own. Let them not depend on any external peculiarity, and count themselves "the temple of the Lord" for *that*, however much they may believe it to be right, and feel it to be useful; and let them not deem conformity to it, by other Christians, absolutely essential to real discipleship. Above all, let none either desire or dare to force their peculiarities on the consciences of others; to urge them upon them by ghostly or ecclesiastical terrors; to bribe their adoption of them by secular inducements; or to extort support from the unpersuaded and resisting, or even from the convinced, by secular authority. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink,"—forms and externalisms; "destroy not with thy meat those for whom Christ died." "Now walkest thou not charitably towards thy brother." "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. *But it shall not be so among you.*"⁴

iv. Lastly: let us "examine" ourselves, "whether we are in the faith," and whether we are acting in conformity with it. Have we practically gone through the experience and discipline of the preparatory school? Have we learnt the lessons, still in effect taught there by the Master? Are we conscious of having come to the manly apprehension of spiritual truth;—and are we bringing forth "the fruits of the Spirit" whose quickening

⁴ Matt xx. 25, 26.

influence accompanies that truth, and nothing else? More particularly: Has the Law, in the sense of the Prophetic word, led us to Christ as the subject of its testimony;—are we thus Christians *at all*? Has the Law, in the sense of the Levitical Institute, led us to Christ as its substance and fulfilment;—are we thus, *as* Christians, in the possession and enjoyment of Evangelical belief? Has the Law, in the sense of moral requirement, been seen by us as enshrined in the heart of Christ,—as the tables of old were enclosed in the ark, and covered by the mercy-seat;—are we Christians in the acceptation of seeing in the mind and example of Jesus the model of character? “Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,”⁵ have we been changed into the same image, so that that image is reflected from ourselves? God’s miracle of mercy, by which, in the Person of the Christ, He comes in between sin and its *results*, is intended and adapted to operate also on the spirit of the sinner. It is to transform *him*, as well as to prevent the evolving by law of the consequences of transgression. It is to bring every one who comes into union with *it* into harmony with the principles of the violated system,—to lead him to delight in its grand object, and to live as conformed to its original demands. Are we then “created in Christ Jesus unto good works?”⁶ Has “the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus made us free from the dominion of sin and death,”⁷ and taught us *so* to walk, that, after a nobler manner than was possible before, “the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us?”⁸ In conclusion: Are we as large and catholic in heart as we may profess to be evangelical in creed, and as we may hope that we are blameless in behaviour? Do we love every man who bears upon him the impress of The

⁶ 2 Cor. iii. 18. ⁶ Eph. ii. 10.

⁷ Rom. viii. 2. ⁸ Rom. viii. 4.

Master, whether he reflect our own image or not? To love those who are of "our" opinion, and of "our" Church, is but another mode of loving ourselves as mirrored in *them*; but to love those *who do not* reflect our individual lineaments, but who do exhibit the likeness of the Lord,—to recognise that likeness, to rejoice in that conformity, to acknowledge them as brethren, in spite of the fact that "they follow not with us,"⁹—*this* is the spirit of true Catholicism, the genuine expression of that charity which is of more account than splendid talents or miraculous gifts. Amen.

⁹ Mark ix. 38.

SERMON XIV.

THE CREED OF ST. PAUL.

“I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”—I COR. XV. 3, 4.

IN the prosecution of this discourse, I shall first state the principle of interpretation on which our subsequent remarks will proceed, and by which they may be modified: I shall, in the next place, bring out from the text, and set forth, what, on the principle explained, will, we think, legitimately be found in it: the whole may be concluded by an observation or two suggested by the subject.

I.

Our first object, then, is to state—perhaps to explain, illustrate, and defend—the principle of interpretation which we mean to apply to the text.

Some years ago, one of the writers in a then noticeable series of tracts, advanced this position,—or used words to this effect: “It should be remembered, that it is only by accident that we have, in the writings of the apostles, any *distinct* statement of Christian doc-

trine." This assertion occasioned, at the time, in some quarters much excitement,—indeed, a great outcry. It was thought to be something very terrible. Certainly the word "accident" in such a connexion is most inappropriate, and, in fact, offensive. The opinion, too, which the assertion was intended to support,—our dependence on unwritten tradition for a full and definite Christian Creed,—is one which, as Protestants, we should of course condemn. Being well considered, however,—steadily and thoughtfully looked at,—something very like a truth may be found lying within these strange words;—something, too, which it may perhaps be important for us rightly to understand, and constantly to remember. This may be seen, we think, by recollecting the origin, character, and object of the apostolic epistles.

With the exception of the Epistle to the Romans and that to the Hebrews, both of which partake of the nature of set disquisitions, each of them assuming, more or less, the appearance of orderly and systematic arrangement,—with the exception of these, the apostolic letters are very informal. They are not so much adapted directly and simply to explain to a stranger what Christianity is, as to indicate and make him feel what *it must have been* in the apprehension of those to whom the writings would be intelligible.

The Gospel was preached before it was written. When the preachers of it began to write, they did not so much write *it*, as write *about* it: for they wrote to people that believed it;—who had it in their minds as knowledge—who did not need to have it announced to them, or explained, but only to have it *referred* to as something already understood. For several years the Gospel was diffused as a system of truth,—and Churches were established upon it, and grew up holding it, as so much distinct and distinctly defined objective belief—without

its having been committed to writing, and without the possibility, therefore, of any one learning it from written books.

I speak only of *the Epistles*—as it is with them that we are at present concerned—when I say, that the earliest apostolic writing which we have could not have been written *earlier* than twenty years after Christ’s ascension, and that, so far as the writer was concerned (Paul), it was not written till more than half of his apostolic career was past. Previous to this, the Gospel was in the Church as a tradition;—or as a deposit in the hands of the apostles; or, so far as revealed, as so much common public thought. It was taught by word of mouth;—it was received as reported and explained by those who preached it; its facts, doctrines, beliefs,—its ideas of the Divine, the Spiritual, the Future,—all existed in the mind of the Christian community without their being formally set forth in any systematic, apostolic writing,—or in any apostolic writing at all,—such as the Epistles, at least, of which we now speak.

Then—after twenty years from the ascension of Christ, and after more than the half of Paul’s apostolic labours in vocally publishing the Gospel was over,—after this, when he began to write, his writings, for the most part, were *called forth from him*, so to speak, by local circumstances;—they were required, or occasioned, by something that might seem temporary or accidental. I do not hold that there was anything *accidental* in the matter; but it is simply a fact, that the letters were *occasioned and called forth* by events and circumstances, which the apostle noticed *in writing* from not having opportunity to speak, or not choosing to wait till he *could* speak, by the living voice. His writings must be looked at, therefore, in the light of this fact, and interpreted according to the relations which he and those

whom he addressed stood in towards each other. You will observe, then, and mark this important position,—that, in the apostolic epistles, Paul does not write to persons *ignorant* of the Gospel,—he does not write for the purpose of *preaching it* by the pen;—he does not write for the purpose of *formally explaining it*;—but he takes it for granted, and speaks of it as a thing already existing, as so much known and admitted truth, in the minds of those to whom he writes. Hence, the Gospel is not, properly speaking, *revealed* to those persons; declared as a new thing; or elaborately and minutely set forth, as for the information of those who knew it *not*. It is referred to; appealed to; language is employed which *involves* it. All the phraseology is such as indicates that there is something *underlying* the phraseology;—something which the writer and the persons addressed mutually and perfectly well understood,—but which strangers must in a great measure *infer*. Such and such *words*, we say,—such and such phrases and allusions,—used by and passing between these people, can only be accounted for on the supposition of such and such *ideas* being common to both—being held, believed, understood, and, after such and such a fashion, apprehended on both sides. The previous verbal teaching of the man who now writes, which had formed and moulded the faith of the people written to, *must*, we say, have included such and such statements, *or*, these written terms never could have been thought of;—they would not have been wanted, and they could not have been employed. Above all other kinds of writing, letters (such writings, that is to say, as St. Paul's) need to be interpreted on the principle now advanced, that is, on the implied existence, on both sides, of knowledge beyond what may be distinctly stated in the writing itself; which knowledge would make the writing perfectly intelligible to those who

received it; and which will have to be admitted, assumed, or somehow made out by others, if it is to become intelligible to *them*.

It may be worth while to illustrate this, by referring to a passage or two bearing on something of no doctrinal importance, something out of the range of theological ideas,—“The cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee.” “Trophimus have I left at Miletum, sick.” The apostle, you observe, does not *say*, in so many words, that he had been at Troas and Miletum. He does not *inform* Timothy of the fact, as of a thing which he did not know. He does not *state* the matter as he might have stated it to a stranger, who was utterly ignorant of him and his movements, and to whom he wished to *communicate* the knowledge. He does not do this;—yet, without his doing it, it is easy to see that the words must be interpreted *on the hypothesis* that, underlying the words, there was the fact that Paul *had been* at the places mentioned, and that Timothy knew that This fact being known alike to Paul and Timothy, the words of the one would to the other be natural, sufficient, and perfectly intelligible; and to *us*, too, if we admit the fact, their import is obvious. If, however, the fact should be denied, *then* the words must be explained *on some other hypothesis*. That is to say, words obviously implying that Paul had personally been at Troas and Miletum, would have to be explained as *not* implying any such thing; and it would have to be shown how he could say that he had left things at one place, or separated from persons at another, without there being any necessity for supposing that he had personally been at either of them. This illustration will show what we are aiming in these remarks. We mean to say, and to affirm, that, just as the historical fact referred to must be understood as lying beneath the texts now quoted, so,

in many other texts in the epistolary writings of St. Paul, facts and doctrines,—great and momentous ideas,—not themselves distinctly stated, must be understood as lying beneath the phraseology he employs,—either for that phraseology to be justified in itself, or for us to have any adequate notion of the way in which it must have been felt and understood by those to whom it was originally addressed.

I am well aware that these views may be regarded by many as somewhat questionable, perhaps dangerous. It may be thought that if they do not lead us to overlook, or to undervalue, the really distinct and positive statements of Scripture, they may foster the habit, and lead us to depend on the vague issues of inferential reasoning. I am not, I confess, alarmed by this. That *kind* of inferential reasoning for which we contend is by no means the questionable thing that some think it. Besides, it is a necessity, a simple matter of fact, that our study and interpretation of the apostolic letters must be conducted with the aid of it, whether we are willing to say so or not. Of course, it is to be borne in mind that these letters must be taken *as a whole*; that it is not from a separate passage, or a single document, that we can learn everything; that it must be by the comparison of passage with passage, and of epistle with epistle,—the putting together of all that bears on each topic in the different productions,—that we can hope to make out, in its perfect fulness and exact form, that underlying substratum of thought on which the language of the Epistles rests,—which was in the Church before they were written—and which, in every one of them, is assumed to be known. In perfect consistency, however, with this admission of the necessity of collecting, from every part, the entire sense of the whole Scripture, we beg to remark, that it may at times be exceedingly useful to take an isolated

passage,—to notice the peculiarity and pregnancy of its terms, and to mark *the implications* which they suggest. Kindred passages will, for the most part, need to be referred to, to confirm, complete, temper, or modify; but, from some separate and single statement, we may often obtain very striking and important results,—the discovery, it may be, of fixed points, of logical limitations, or guiding lines.

I am willing to hope, that it may not be without its use for us to illustrate the principles and canons of this first division of our discourse by the form into which we shall now throw our remarks on the words before us. “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For *I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures!*”

Our principal business will be with the third and fourth verses; but we shall probably touch, at one time or other, the entire context. In dwelling upon the verses indicated, our object will be to show, *from what they express*, what they *imply*. Looking at what is plainly on the surface, we wish to point out how much must be understood, and cannot *but* be understood, as lying beneath, to give substance and significance to what is said. These implications will be examined and illustrated, only so far as they relate to *two things*: First, *to the apostle himself, as a religious teacher*,—what he professed to be and do: and, Secondly, *to his idea of the sort of Religion which Humanity needs, and how it is to be obtained*, as indicated by what he did.

II.

In proceeding to the development of these several matters, it may be permitted us to observe, that you cannot but notice, at the very outset, how strikingly the whole passage before us, reading from the beginning of the chapter, illustrates the foundation-fact on which the whole of our preliminary discussion proceeded. All along, the apostle refers to what the Corinthians *knew*; to what he had "*preached*" among them; what they had "*received*," and "*believed*," and "*in which they stood*." This personal, oral teaching of his, of which he reminds them, had commenced about five or six years before, and had continued for about two years;—for three or four years he had been absent from Corinth. During the whole of that time, the Corinthians, so far as we know, had not in their possession a single apostolic writing, except, it might be, copies of the Epistles to the Thessalonians, which Paul wrote from Corinth soon after his settlement there, and with which his course of sacred authorship began. Though the Corinthians, however, had no Christian *books*, they had the Christian *truth*. They had no New Testament, but they had the ideas it was one day to contain. They had no *written* Evangel, but they had the Gospel itself;—they "*knew*" it, and "*believed*" it. Paul appeals to that knowledge and belief. He refers to the fact of his vocal instructions and living ministry. He reminds them of what it was he had "*declared*" and "*delivered*" to them, namely, "*that the Christ died for our sins*," and that, after being buried, "*He rose again from the dead*."

This statement, then, well considered, will be seen, we think, to *imply* much, and that very noticeable, in relation to the apostle himself *as a religious teacher*. It casts light on his own conceptions of his office, his personal

pretensions, what he had to do, the sort of knowledge he professed to impart, and so on.

In the first place, it is very obvious from the words before us, that Paul, standing up to teach, did not profess to be a *great thinker*. He claimed nothing on that ground. He might have had great thoughts; he may have been a person of consummate ability,—of large genius, wonderful originality, profound insight, high culture; one who had long and deeply meditated on whatever was perplexing or interesting to man;—but he came with no pretensions resulting from all this, or resting upon it. He was not a philosopher who had reasoned out a system of truth; who had penetrated, or thought he had penetrated, into the unseen; had discovered the secrets of the universe, or could explain the mystery of life. He made no pretensions to any such thing. He did not invite men to listen to what, in his thinkings about the world and man, he had *arrived at*, as to the Divine existence, perfections and government,—moral duty,—religious worship,—a future state,—or any other of the great problems which had exercised the human mind in all ages, and upon which so many theories were to be met with in his own. He did not come forth with *his* theory. He did not take his stand among his fellow-mortals who were everywhere asking for some solution of those things, and say,—“Listen to *my* solution. I will tell you how these matters have come to shape themselves to *me*, as *the result of frequent and prolonged thought*.” He did not do that. Great thinkers, or men professing to be such, or taken for such, have been always very much in request, and they no doubt have their place and their use. As a Christian teacher, however, I wish you to observe, that Paul did not pretend to be one of these, nor, in his apostolic character, is he to be *accounted* one of them. Whatever might be the strength of his intellect,

the largeness of his knowledge, his habits of thought, his earnest grappling with the mysteries within and the mysteries without him, he never pretended to have made any discoveries. He did not come forth with something of his own;—a religious and moral system, which he was ready to teach,—to argue out, or to argue *for*; which he presented to the human understanding, and was prepared to urge upon it by the powers and forces of logical demonstration. He took what might be thought far lower ground than this. His, apparently, was a humbler vocation. He said that he had to speak about *some one else*;—he had something to say respecting *Him*. He had not to utter his own thinkings, but *to tell what he had been told* about this Person. His pretensions went no higher than this;—his great anxiety was to do *that!*

But, in the second place, Paul not only did not come as a *thinker*, professing to have discovered, by native force, the spiritual system which underlies all visible and human things;—but he did not even come simply as an inspired prophet, to whom the true and the spiritual *had been revealed by God*. What he professed was, not that the eternal and the invisible had been unveiled,—that the secret of existence and the wonders of the universe had been made known to him, by the Spirit of inspiration,—and that he was commissioned to teach what he had thus learned. It was not this that he said. He did not claim attention because he had been made the recipient of so much *thought*,—thought, which had directly passed from the Divine Intellect to his own—and which would make men wise and knowing in relation to all *truth*. He did not say that he was in possession of certain authentic discoveries of *eternal and spiritual relations and facts*;—or that he was entrusted with Divine messages, commands, or promises only—things which could be conveyed from the mind of God to the mind of a prophet, and then by

him *put into ivords*. No: he said that he had to speak about other matters, and after another fashion altogether. He had to make known the Christ,—the Anointed One,—the Sent and the Messiah of God. He had to speak about *a person*; some one that had actually lived in the world; whose appearance had been a recent, visible reality,—but whose coming was a Divine act. He had to speak of *this*;—that is, the putting forth of power on the part of God, in sending a Christ into the world,—not merely the impartation of knowledge by sending thoughts into an inspired soul. You cannot but see, that the words of the text tell us all this, as plainly as anything can;—not in so many words, but by necessary and inevitable implication. Paul, then, when he stood up as a religious teacher, neither professed to be a great original *human* thinker;—nor merely to have received, *by prophetic illumination*, a discovery of eternal, spiritual *truth*. It was not of the *eternally true* only, but of *the recently miraculous* that he had to speak;—not merely of Divine discoveries, but Divine acts; not thoughts, but things; not what had been conveyed to him as intellectual entities, but what had been embodied in a personal Messiah. He had to preach *Christ*, not Christianity. The word Christianity he never heard;—Christ as a Person he knew. Of *Him* he spake;—declaring and testifying, in the words before us, “*that He died for our sins, and rose again from the dead.*”

But a third thing is to be noticed here,—one that necessarily springs out of the apostle’s statement as to *what it was that he had to say about Christ*. Paul, we have shown, did not come either as a human thinker, or merely as an inspired prophet; but as one who had to direct men to the Christ of God. I wish you now to observe, that in telling us what he had to say *about* Christ, he did not set *Him* forth as a *thinker* or a *prophet*.

He was not himself a philosopher; nor was he the pupil of one. He did not say that he had learnt, from a great master of thought, a wonderfully arranged system of truth, which he was ready to teach *as his*. Nor did he say, that the Christ he spoke of had had *revealed to Him*, by the Spirit of God, all possible or necessary *knowledge*;—that He was commissioned to *teach* this;—that He *had* taught it;—that he, Paul, was in possession of it,—a Divine system of thought,—great ideas, originally in the Divine Mind,—then in Christ's, by direct inspiration,—now in his, from his having learnt what Christ had taught. This was not Paul's way of putting the thing. It plainly appears, from the words of the text, that what he had to tell about Christ was, not what He had *spoken*, but what He had *done*; not what He had *thought* or what He had *said*,—but what He had *accomplished*. Paul did not carry about with him copies of Christ's discourses to give to people, or repeat and rehearse them in his own, as if *that* was the thing he had to do. It was not what *Christ* had preached that *he* preached;—but *Christ himself*,—what He *was*, and what He had done. Not what He had *told* His hearers *in words*,—but what He had *effected* for the world *by His work*;—not what He had revealed of truth to the human intellect, but how He had acted, and what He became on man's behalf;—not what He had uttered and taught *while He lived*, but what He had done and accomplished *when He died*. Nothing can be plainer than that this is Paul's own account of his office. It is involved in the text,—in every line and in every letter. He had not to speak—or not mainly—of one who thought, taught, instructed, lived. It was not Christ the Thinker,—the Speaker,—the Prophet;—the utterer of parables, the giver of precepts, the revealer of the unknown;—one who spake as having authority;—who

exemplified in himself the character He drew;—whose words it behoved all men to hear. That might be, and it was; but it was not Paul’s great object, or not his first, to tell men this;—to let them know what Jesus had *said*. He did not call upon them *to listen* to Christ; but, so to speak, *to look* at Him. They were not to be instructed by His reported utterances,—but benefited by His personal acts;—not so much to believe *His words*, as to believe in *Him*. The substance of Paul’s testimony was, that the Christ died, and rose from the dead;—that He died for our sins,—was buried, and revived; “was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.”

III.

In this way, then, if I do not greatly err, you can see what the apostle’s language implies in relation to himself,—in what light it places him before us as a religious teacher. He teaches, he says, not his own thoughts,—not any great human conceptions; nor does he teach only *God’s* thoughts,—any great Divine conception. He directs the attention of the world to a *person*—a Christ—an anointed one;—a Person, too, raised up and sent forth to *do* something; not simply to speak, but to act. And then he tells us what it *was* that He did and became. I now advance to this. I shall take the two parts of Paul’s statement, and make a remark or two on each; and we shall see, I think, from the subject-matter of his teaching, what his idea must have been of the sort of religion that Humanity needs. “I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ *died for our sins* according to the Scriptures; and that, on the third day, *He rose again*, according to the Scriptures.”

First. "*The Christ died for our sins.*" I do not see how this language can mean anything less than that Christ *died to destiny* our sins; to put them away; to deliver us from them;—that is, to *secure* their forgiveness; to annihilate, as it were, both them and their results,—what their results to us *would* be if they themselves were not cancelled. This, then, is what Paul had to testify and affirm,—“the Christ of God *died for our sins*” But now, mark what that *implies*. It implies,—that the forgiveness of sin, according to Pauls teaching, is not simply a matter of *kind feeling* on the part of God, flowing forth on a *change* of feeling in man;—but that it required that something should be *done* to put away sin;—and that that something *was* done when the Christ “died” on account of it. Whatever, then, Paul had to teach as to repentance, reformation, prayer, on the one side,—love, compassion, mercy, on the other; he had, nevertheless, to teach *this*,—that the forgiveness of sin depended, besides, *on something else*,—that something else being *an external fact*, a thing done, done by Christ. “He died for our sins.” It was not, observe, that the possibility of forgiveness, or Gods willingness to forgive, was *announced* by Christ in words, as a Divine message,—a revealed truth,—a thing made *known*;—but that the thing was *secured* by Him,—secured by what He *did*;—it was rendered possible, or it was facilitated, or it was provided for, *by this*. As to *how* the death of the Christ answered this end; why it was required, and in what manner it operated; whence its external necessity, whence the inherent secret of its power;—that is not explained here, nor are those questions at present before us. All that we say is, that the text implies—and can have no meaning short of this—that the forgiveness of sin, man’s deliverance from the burden and the results of it, *turned* on the occur-

rence of a *fact*,—the fact of the death of the Christ of God.

Hence, then, you will observe that what Paul taught was not, and could not be, any of the following things. It was not a pure, Philosophical Theism. It was not simply,—“God,—man,—nature,—law,—Supreme will,—benevolent purpose,—*all right*,—right for everybody.” It was not that. Nor was it a Poetical or sentimental Theism:—“God,—man,—nature;—love—beauty—trust—song; *all safe*, or very few having anything to fear.” It was not that Nor was it a pure, simple, Christian Theism:—“God—man—law—sin; a great prophet; a loving message;—a verbal assurance;—something said, taught; uttered in words, confirmed and ratified by miracle and martyrdom; a declaration and promise; repentance on one side, securing, of itself, forgiveness on the other.” It was not that. It was not these, or anything like these things. It might include something belonging to them all, but in itself it was something more. It was the assertion of a Divine *act*, not merely the assurance of the Divine *disposition*;—a work done, not a thing said;—something transacted, not uttered;—something embodied in a person and a fact, not merely breathed forth and clothed in speech. It was a *supernatural* something,—something done by God in raising up and sending forth a Christ; something done by the Christ as the sent of God. It was the manifested might of a Messiah,—not merely the word or wisdom of a prophet, however inspired, and whatever he might reveal!

You know how all this could be enlarged upon; how it could be further developed and fully confirmed by the quotation of other Scriptures. You know how other passages bring out, in its different aspects, the truth implied in this; how they cast light upon it, and in

a great measure explain it—the ground of its necessity, its mode of operation, the nature, vastness, and variety of its results; and so on. You know that in the apostolic writings the fact before us is to be met with everywhere. It pervades every important statement; it starts up from every page; it stands forth in all lights and under all circumstances; it subordinates to itself, lays hold of, touches and colours everything. The Christ is "the Lamb of God;"—He "takes away the sin of the world;"—"He is set forth a propitiation to declare God's righteousness in the remission of sins; that, through faith in His blood, men might be saved, and God be just and the justifier of him that believeth." "He who knew no sin was made sin for us;"—"in Him we have redemption, through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." But we do not enlarge on all this. It is not our object to discuss the doctrine of atonement and sacrifice. All that we have to do, is to show how inevitably and necessarily the words of the text involve and imply it. Whether the thing be true or not,—whether the first Christians were right or wrong in teaching and believing it,—it must unquestionably be admitted, that the language of the New Testament *rests upon* it as the *mutually* understood and recognised belief of the preachers and the people of the first age. As a religious teacher and guide, it appears, from his own statement, that Paul directly addressed himself not so much to the intellect as to the *conscience* of Humanity, He came to men assuming that they *had* a conscience; and, with that, *a consciousness of sin*. He took for granted that they had, and could put together, the ideas—God, law, transgression, penalty, *fearful looking for of judgment*. He came to this consciousness. He said

to men—“You know that you have sinned; you know, also, that, deep down in those souls of yours, there is *this* sort of feeling:—‘Sin is wrong doing in us; to punish sin would be right doing in God.’—you know that;—and you know that you are oppressed and terrified by that consciousness,—for you cannot tell how God can *do* right, and you escape what you deserve for doing wrong. *I* can tell you. Not only can I assure you that it *may* be; but I have to announce to you, that something *has been done* that it *might* be. The Christ of God was raised up, and sent into the world;—He was sent to do that thing,—and He did it. He did not come to speak merely, but to act He lived, and spoke, and taught, indeed,—but His great business in the world was *to die*;—to die ‘for our sins.’ And He did thus die. And now, ‘through Him, all who believe’ can have their sins forgiven, and ‘be justified from all things;’—and, ‘being justified by faith, they will have peace with God.’”

Second. “*Christ rose again from the dead.*” All that these words involved and meant, as used by Paul; all that they would suggest to and call up in the mind of an instructed Corinthian convert,—cannot be ascertained or conjectured *simply from the words themselves*. The bare words—“Christ died, was buried, and rose again,”—especially if *Christ* be used as a personal name, and not as an official title,—these words, *in themselves*, say no more than what might have been said about Lazarus. It was as true of Lazarus as of Jesus, that “*he* died, was buried, and rose again.” In the first part of the statement, however, there is a clause which could not be applied to Lazarus;—it could not be said of him that he died “*for our sins*;” though it could be said, that “*he* died, was buried, and rose again.” But besides this, you will observe, that both in the first and the

second part of the statement, there is an expression which could not be applied to Lazarus. It could not be said of him (confining the observation to the second clause), that he rose from the dead, "*according to the Scriptures.*" But that is what is said of Christ; and this, of itself, is sufficient to show, that some great peculiarity attached to *His* rising from the dead. This presumption is strengthened by the circumstance, that His resurrection was the resurrection of the Christ of God, the sent Messiah; it was probably, therefore, the *continuance* and completion of what, as the Christ, He did, or began to do, when "He died for our sins"—which also was "*according to the Scriptures.*" This we know to be the right view of the matter. The two things, "dying for our sins," and "rising from the dead," are parts of a whole,—the two sides of one subject;—both belong, and both are necessary, to the complete idea of that "Gospel" which Paul "delivered" and "declared." Here again, then, you observe, the objective truth which Paul taught and set forth, as that out of which was to come, and by which was to be originated and sustained, a religious life in man—*this*, in the *second* aspect of it, as in the first, is something *done*;—a supernatural, divine *act*, not merely a divine message. A work of God's hand; not merely a word from His lips or an emanation from His intellect. A positive display and interposition of *power*;—not the utterance, merely, of thought:—"I delivered unto you that which also I received, how that the Christ, having died for our sins, and been buried,—*rose again from the dead*, according to the Scriptures."

What Paul would involve in this expression; what he associated with the fact of the resurrection of Christ; what he taught as included in it, and flowing from it;—the intimate connexion it had with every part of the

Church’s religious life,—its development and progress in the individual soul,—its anticipated consummation in the whole body;—these things, I acknowledge and confess, are not to be inferred from the statement of the text *taken by itself*,—though I can quite conceive, that *they might all have been suggested by it* to a Corinthian Christian, who, *for two years*, had listened to Paul’s spoken instructions. I must here, then, be permitted, from an obvious necessity, to refer to some of the aspects and relations of the resurrection of Christ, which are brought out in *other* parts of the apostle’s writings. I shall do little more than repeat a few passages, or only with a brief or occasional comment.

By His resurrection, Christ is said “to have been declared to be the Son of God, with power;”—“He rose again from the dead, because it was not possible that *He* should be holden of it.” He rose, but not like others, to be exposed again to the stroke of death;—“death had no more dominion over Him.” He rose “to die no more.” He came forth from the grave to inherit an exalted, glorious, immortal life. Again: having died for our sins,—or, in the explanatory words of other Scriptures, “having been set forth as a propitiation,” “that He might *put away sin* by the sacrifice of Himself,”—He *rose again*, that He might pass through the vail of the visible heavens, as the High Priest passed into the holy of holies; that He might “appear in the presence of God for us,” and complete there the presentation of His sacrifice;—and there “He ever lives to make intercession.” Again; having been raised from the dead, He is further raised “far above all things;” “above every name that is named.” “All power is given to Him in heaven and in earth.” “Angels and principalities and powers are made subject to Him;” and “He is to reign till all things are put under His feet.” Again: being exalted,

"He received gifts for men;" He shed them forth; more especially He sent the Holy Spirit,—the convincer and reprover of the world—the comforter and sanctifier of the Church,—to be with us for ever. In connexion with this, it is to be observed, that the resurrection of Christ, His restored and exalted life, touches, in various ways, and at all points, *the spiritual life of Christian men*. Christ's resurrection, for instance, is typical of man's new life; for, as *He* was raised from the dead, so *we* are to walk "in newness of life"—"as those who are alive from the dead" too. Then, His *present condition*, consequent on His rising from the dead, is to be felt as a motive to spiritual-mindedness;—"if ye be risen with Christ, set your affections on things above, where He is,—not on things on the earth;—mortify your members that are on the earth,—for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." The raised, exalted, living Christ is to be the life of our life, the source of our holiness; even as the dying Christ is the death of our sins. Believing in Him, He lives in us. "The life that we live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us." He is said to "*give* repentance and remission of sins." He is "called upon," answers,—helps,—saves; "His power is made perfect in weakness;"—"His grace is sufficient for every need." The Church "grows up into Him." By "the supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus" it is solaced and sustained;—"the inward man is renewed day by day." Because Christ lives, the Christian lives;—lives now, and shall live hereafter. Still further. The resurrection of Christ is at once the pledge and model of our own. His present condition of glory and blessedness is that to which we are to be conformed. "To them that look for Him He will come again." "He will change their vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." "They

shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is.” “So shall they be ever with the Lord.” Now, “every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” “I declare unto you, brethren, the Gospel,—as I delivered it unto you,—how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He *rose again*, according to the Scriptures.”

Such were the two sides of the objective truth which Paul taught; the reception and influence of which was to originate and sustain the religious life of man. It was thus he met the necessities of Humanity; thus he brought to it light and guidance. He exhibited a Person—the Christ of God, Of Him he asserted two things,—that “He died for our sins,” and “rose again.” By the one fact he met the condition of men as they are burdened by thoughts of the past; by a sense of sin and conscious moral degradation. By the other fact he met them as they are groping after the divine and the eternal—stirred by vague longings and aspirations after a better life. The one brought peace to the desponding; hope to the guilty; life to the dead. The other *nourished* that life; purified, exalted it; provided for its becoming the source of “all holy conversation and godliness”—the commencement of that which, progressively perfected here, would be finally consummated in the virtue and blessedness of the upper world. To these two things, which the apostle asserted and testified of Christ, everything in theology, religion, and morals,—everything belonging to spiritual truth, human duty, hopes and prospects,—may be referred. God, law, sin, penalty; Divine government, future retribution, merciful arrangement; with all kindred and correlative truths, gather round the *first*: spiritual life, sonship, salvation; access to God, worship, song; favourable help; religious virtue, light in darkness; hope in death; faith apprehending

and laying hold of "the things not seen;"—these, and all similar beliefs, experiences, and affections grow out of the second. Well considered, it ceases to be wonderful that Paul should compress into these two things the sum and substance of all he taught; that through them he expected to meet and to help humanity; to infuse into it a spiritual and divine life,—“the life of God in the soul of man.”

The general result of all that we are supposed, in this discussion, to have learnt and illustrated, of the *form* and *matter* of Paul's teaching, may be thus stated. It would seem, in the first place, that, according to St. Paul, the religion needed by Humanity is of such a nature, that no individual man can possibly attain unto it, by speculation, intuition, independent thought, or any other exclusively *subjective* process; for it must include in it something *done*—done on man's behalf; something *external*, therefore, of which he can only acquire the knowledge by testimony. Further, it would seem that, according to Paul, the religion needed by Humanity is not a thing which men *as a species* can attain unto, by the gradual increase of light and knowledge, the advance of discovery, and the progressive development of the religious faculty from age to age; and this for the same reason—the reason already assigned—because it must include in it something *done*; because, what Humanity requires is not simply the discovery of spiritual relations and eternal truths, but the occurrence or accomplishment of an event or fact, by the actual interposition of Divine mercy. Hence, the religion of Humanity must result from faith in *what is brought to it*, and cannot rest merely on *what it reaches* by its own independent investigations and efforts. Still further—to put the matter in another light—we learn from what Paul did and taught, that, according to him, the world needed, in order

to its really having a religion worth the name, something more than *revelation*;—more than Divine speech, Divine discoveries of the spiritual and the true. Inspiration was not enough. Seers and prophets, however illuminated and however endowed, could not meet the case. The greatest thoughts from the intellect of God would not do. More was required than visions of the Almighty; messages from heaven; communication or response from the holy oracle; or anything that could be spoken, or that required only to be put into words. It was necessary that there should be *miraculous acts* as well as *inspired speech*: a Christ of God, empowered by Him to *do* something,—not merely a Teacher sent from God with something to *say*. According to Paul, the supernatural, the miraculous, must not only be admitted in religion, but it must be admitted *not* as *evidence* merely—God’s seal to the truth or importance of what the human speaker says—but as belonging to the very essence of the objective truth to be believed; the Divine facts which are themselves to be reported and set forth. It is not—as it is sometimes put—that *Paul* works a miracle to confirm and establish some great saying, discovery, or promise which he attributes to God;—no; he has to testify of the miracle which *God* wrought,—the wonderful supernatural thing which *He* accomplished, when He interposed in our behalf in the person of Christ, and clothed truth and promise in the facts of the Redemption. The grand miracle of the Gospel is the Gospel itself—that “*God sent forth His Son as a propitiation*,” that “He was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing to men their trespasses.” *That*, with us, is the region of the miraculous and the supernatural. If God threw a burning mountain into the sea, of course there would be waves and wonders at the shore, altogether different from the natural and ordinary course of things;

but the grand miracle would be the central *fact*,—the descent of the mountain from the Divine hand. Signs and wonders, following the steps of apostolic men, and appealing directly to the eyes of observers, we quite admit; but the great miracle was out of sight; it was that which *itself* constituted the object of faith. Perhaps the material signs and wonders could not but follow, by some mysterious law, from the occurrence of the redemptive spiritual facts of human salvation; but, whether or not, *those* are the facts in which Paul teaches us to see the supernatural element as it most strikingly belongs to the Christian system. "I declare unto you the Gospel;—that *the Christ died for our sins*;" and that "*He rose again from the dead*."

IV.

We have thus endeavoured to ascertain and to set forth what, as it appears to us, the apostle's language involves or implies; we cannot but think that what has been advanced must of necessity be admitted as lying beneath it,—constituting, so to speak, the substratum of thought on which it rests. The passage is but one instance among many of the fulness and pregnancy of the Divine Word. Leaving, however, what has been said to your individual judgment, but commending it to your thoughtful consideration, we proceed to the general observations with which we proposed to conclude the discourse.

1. It is worthy of remark, we think, how, in the text itself, and in the neighbourhood of it, there occur many manifest and most striking proofs of *the deep conviction which the apostle had of the vast importance of what he taught*. These can at present be but rapidly glanced at, or simply indicated, though they would well repay a large

amount of thought and attention. They may be seen in such points as the following.

In the first place: the apostolic testimony respecting Christ—what Paul had taught the Corinthians at first, and of which he now reminds them—is described by him as constituting, in a very emphatic manner, THE GOSPEL (ver. 1,2). It was that by which men were to be “*saved*.”⁹¹ *They were to receive it, and abide by it, and keep it in memory. It was “the good news,” “the glad tidings,” “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” It was the import and essence of “the ministry of reconciliation.” It was God’s method of saving the world,—not Paul’s idea merely, or any one else’s, of a way to be saved. “I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you;—by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you.”*

In the second place: the apostle assigns to the things mentioned in the text the highest and most important position, considered relatively to the whole of his teaching (ver. 3). This is equally true whether you take the phrase “first of all” as indicating *order*, or expressing *quality*. Whether St Paul means, that the subjects referred to were taught first in the order of time,—or were taught as the first, the chiefest and weightiest things, which he had to teach,—comes very much to the same result. In either case, a distinct and fundamental importance is attached to them. This feeling of the apostle, this implied import of his language, may be illustrated by the account which he gives, in the beginning of the Epistle, of the way in which he commenced and conducted his ministry at Corinth. “I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, *and Him crucified.*” “The Jews

require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but *we preach CHRIST crucified*, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ *the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*" (Chapter ii. 1, 2; i. 22-24.)

In the third place: the apostle intimates that what he taught had been the subject of *two* revelations (ver. 3, 4). It was what was "*according to the Scriptures*"—the old Testament prophecies, which men spake "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" and it was "*that which he had also received,*"—the knowledge and import of which had been divinely revealed to him. Paul claimed to be "an apostle (Gal. i.), not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead." "I certify you, brethren, that *the Gospel* which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it—*but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" This Gospel emphatically consisted of the great central fact that "Christ died for our sins." In declaring and announcing it St Paul tells us that he "preached Christ crucified;" and in doing *that*, he seems now to say to us that he did *this*;—He set up the cross and called the world to assemble round it; he then opened, and, in one hand, held up the previous revelation, the prophetic Bible;—with the other he pointed to the high heaven, the dwelling-place of God; then,—at once "reasoning out of the Scriptures," and speaking as a divinely commissioned "apostle"—he asserted that God had "*revealed to him*" His Son, who, on the cross before which he stood, had "died for our sins;" and that this fact was the fulfilment and realization of what had been "*spoken before,*"—which was "written in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms,"—what *they* meant who prophesied of

“salvation” and of “the grace that should come unto us,” when, “by the Spirit of Christ which was in them,” they “testified beforehand *the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.*” There might be things which the apostle regarded as indifferent; secondary matters of little or no moment, respecting which it was enough for every one to be persuaded in his own mind; but *that truth* could not but be felt by him to have an essential and intrinsic importance, which was at once the subject and the substance of two revelations,—which thus stood out, visible and luminous, in the lights that shone upon it from the former Church and the upper world.

He who thus felt and reasoned must have had the most profound convictions of the truth and importance of what he taught. No one can wonder, after weighing his words, at those other utterances of his, which now and then came flashing and flaming forth, revealing to us at once his steady and exultant confidence in the Gospel, and his indignant hostility against those who corrupt it. “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, unto every one that believeth.” “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “If any man—if an angel from heaven—preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:—circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, per-

secuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But 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: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Nor should it ever be forgotten how emphatically and constantly the apostle represents the same fact and the same truth which provides for the forgiveness of sin, as the source and instrument of deliverance from its dominion. It reconciles to God, and it makes like Him. It excites love to duty, and loyalty to law; it renders obedience possible and attractive; it supplies motives, aids and facilities, grace to help and power to pursue, making work pleasant and service song. "A man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. Do we then make void the law through faith? *God forbid; yea, we establish the law.*"—"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit!*" "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, godly, in this present evil world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*" "I can do all

things through Christ which strengthened me.” “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are *the enemies of the cross of Christ*: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.”

2. Our second general observation may refer to the central Figure before us, the living Personality, to the facts connected with whom the apostle attributes such unspeakable importance. Everything in Christianity centres in the Christ,—is suspended on what He did, on what He is, on what He is doing, and on what He is to do; on His “coming in the flesh,” “the decease which He accomplished” when “He died for our sins,” His “rising from the dead,” “His ascending up on high,” His “appearance in the presence of God for us,” and His coming again, the second time, “without sin unto salvation.”

The language of the New Testament in relation to Christ,—the way in which He seems to have been regarded by the primitive Church,—the feelings of which He is the object,—the hopes and expectations of which He is the centre—all this is very wonderful! It is often made the subject of question and controversy, as to what

the idea of the Christ was which, existing among and held by the first Christians, would account for the language they used respecting Him. Was He a human being like ourselves, only distinguished from us by His virtue and wisdom, and by the way in which He was miraculously endowed by God?—or was He "*the Son of God,*" in *such* a sense, that He can be the object of worship without infringing on the unity of the Divine nature, or giving the glory of God unto another? There is no denying that isolated texts present great difficulties on both sides; but, *the general aspect* of the New Testament,—its usual tone and current phraseology,—are perfectly astounding on the supposition, or hypothesis, that He was merely one of the human race;—*one*, however illustrious and distinguished, in the general aggregate of the sons of men. If that were the case, it would not be inappropriate or profane to say that Christianity became, in the age of the apostles and *by their means*, and that it appears *throughout their writings*, as a mere system of hero-worship. It is trust in, love to, adoration of—*Saint Jesus*;—which, if He were nothing *but* a saint, is just as offensive to right feeling, and as much sinfulness and idolatry, as the worship of the Virgin. If "Jesus," "the prophet of Nazareth," was, in Himself, nothing more, His followers soon made Him something else,—and as "the Christ," He became virtually a God to *them*. This, it is admitted, was the case. But it was merely, it is said, the result and outgrowth of the impression made by His sublime virtue. It was of the nature of a mythical illusion; the subjective exaggeration of what could not be thought of without wonder! The gigantic stature of the virtue of Jesus towered so high above everything in the world, that it threw forward a deep shadow, or rather a dazzling lustre, on the Church, the influence of which nourished the

growth of ideas of His divinity,—His priesthood and sacrifice,—His exalted glory and heavenly dominion,—which in time made Him, by a sort of poetical licence, the devout object of love and reverence, dependence and prayer;—which, too, we may see beginning, in the very first age, to tinge and colour the language even of the apostolic letters! I abide, however, by the language of those letters. I accept the views of the person of the Christ which must underlie that language, if it is to *mean* anything equal to what it *says*. “The Christ” of God must have been something more than “Jesus the prophet;” something more than the man of Galilee. He is not a *saved man*,—but the “*Saviour*” of men. He is not a *part* of the Church, “a member of the Body,”—but “the Head” and “Lord” and Ruler of the whole. *He* needs no “mediator” through whom to approach God;—but “no man cometh unto the Father but by *Him!*” The New Testament Church, as we see it and hear it in the written Word, looks up to Him;—loves and trusts, serves and prays; is replenished by His grace (or *thinks* it is!); lives by His life; and at death commits its spirit into His hands. The Church in heaven is *before* the throne;—He is *upon* it. He never worships there. He does not head the great company, the saved from among men,—sympathise with their feelings, share their services, and lead their songs I Never. Yet He ought to do so, if He is one of themselves. Nay, the more He was distinguished by prophetic gifts or official nobility when He was on earth, the more might we expect to see Him distinguished for His gratitude in heaven. The New Testament representation of things—both as it regards the feelings of the Church in the apostolic age, and the supposed employment of the Church on high—is one which is broadly and palpably irreconcilable with the idea of the simple

humanity of Jesus. On this hypothesis, there are expressions in it painfully revolting to what would *then* be correct and proper Christian feeling. There are many difficulties connected with the idea of the divinity of the Christ; but, great as they are, that idea is a positive relief—a welcome refuge from the mere saint-worship which, without it, Christianity becomes. I am willing to accept it, with all its mysteriousness, as it saves me from attributing to the primitive Church, and saves me from seeing in the Church in heaven, what, without it, I can only regard as of a piece with the prostration of apostate Christendom before the shrines of the Virgin and the saints.

3. The last observation we submit is this:—that the subject of discourse, as it has been placed before us, may teach us all some important lessons in respect to Christian teaching and Christian truth. Our religion rests on facts;—especially on the great fact of a Personal Redeemer and Mediator; an external Christ, who “died for our sins.” We are bound down to the testimony of Scripture concerning Him. It is not our province, nor ought it to be our ambition—in the Church, that is to say, and in relation to religious truth—to be great thinkers, —inventors and masters of the original and the new. We are pupils, learners,—the readers and students of a Book which speaks with authority. Our subject ought to be to have our thoughts just what God’s thoughts are, as He has set them forth in His own Word. In proportion as they are this, will they have in them a Divine originality and an inherent greatness. When we look at Pauls teaching in the passage before us, we cannot but feel that there was a true philosophy, as well as deep piety and faith, in good men of olden time crying out, “None but Christ,”—“None but Christ.” Our fathers were far more philosophical than they knew, when they

used to insist on having "Christ preached," "held forth," "lifted up," as if every minister was a Moses standing and pointing to the brazen serpent;—or a John the Baptist exclaiming continually, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Every topic, every particular truth or duty, is to be looked at in its relation to Christ, and in the light shed upon it from the Cross. *He* is the great revealer of all that is of deepest interest to us. But the revelation, the unveiling, the setting forth and the casting of light upon the truth, is effected far more by the *meaning* of His *acts*, than by the import of His *words*.

SERMON XV.

RATIONALISM AT CORINTH.

“Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?”—I COR. XV. 12.

“THE thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new ¹ It hath been already of old time, which was before us.” In these words the Wise Man expressed himself, three thousand years ago, in relation to what was passing around him; much of which, it was probably thought, was unprecedented, of modern origin, and altogether peculiar to the “times then present.” Far more appropriately might such language be employed by us, and—though some might not think so—especially might it be employed in respect to many of the religious phenomena of the day. The age is one of questioning and controversy. Everything seems unsettled, or likely to be. Schools and parties within the Church are contending with one another; the Church, as a whole, has to sustain the attacks of “those that are without,” and on many points is at open war with them. The state of things is such, that many tender devout souls sorrowfully lament it, sighing for what they deem the golden

age of Christianity, when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul;" when they worshipped daily "with one accord," and "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers."

The truth is, however, that this state of things was of extremely short duration. It was soon broken in upon, and was in many ways rudely interrupted. It was very beautiful while it lasted; but it was beautiful as the condition of infancy or childhood is so, as contrasted with what belongs to the inevitable phenomena of adult life. If the non-existence of differences of opinion—if the absence of disputation and controversy—are essential to the "golden age" of the Church, the apostolic age can certainly lay no claim to such a character. Murmurings, estrangements, errors, heresies,—fierce verbal contentions,—letters filled with controversial argumentation in defence of the Faith, or in repudiation of departures from it,—these are the sort of things which we meet with almost everywhere, in the first Churches, and the apostolic age.

With our views of the Divine inspiration, and consequent authority, which we cannot but attach to God-commissioned men,—and with our belief in the occurrence, "in the beginning of the Gospel," of supernatural attestations to the truth,—all this is very wonderful. We can hardly account for—hardly understand it. It seems to us difficult to imagine how any one witnessing a miracle wrought by an apostle, could "resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he *spake*," could reject his message or doubt his words. Still more difficult is it to suppose that *we* could have thought or done what, under the eye and in the presence, so to speak, of inspired men, some of those whom such men had themselves taught, thought and did.

The fact was, or would seem to have been, that, in spite of the miracles which attended the birth and gathered round the cradle of Christianity, which accompanied it as it first went on its way through the world, and which authenticated its heralds as the *sent* "servants of the Most High God, who showed to men the way of salvation,"—in spite of this, the truth promulgated did not so come, and was never intended so to come, as to take forcible possession of the mind, or to subdue men to itself as by mere power. It was never meant that by resistless and overwhelming sensible demonstrations the world should be taken by storm, doubt or denial being rendered impossible. The Gospel from the first acted as a moral test to all to whom it came. It put to the proof their honesty, sincerity, earnestness. It was always first received by the good and devout,—by those who had in them something in harmony with itself; or it stirred the soul, and then met such as, "moved by fear," or "resolutely bent on eternal life," were thus prepared to welcome the good news. If men were morally aroused, or if they were sincere seekers after truth, or really wished to do the will of God, Christianity would take them by the hand, speak to them in tender and loving tones, lead them into the light, "show them the doctrine," and cause them to perceive and know "that it was of God." If, on the contrary, they were sensual, indifferent, volatile,—vain in their reasonings, proud, presumptuous, touching with rude and unhallowed hands sacred and divine thoughts,—scorners, mockers, disposed to find reasons for denial or rejection,—to such the Gospel would say—in the sense of spiritually revealing—*nothing*; it would maintain a dignified silence; would "let them alone," and suffer them to be self-deceived. Its pearls were too precious to be exhibited where they would only be

trampled upon and despised. If men, instead of being open to conviction, willing to listen, ready to inquire, only wished to find grounds for unbelief, provocatives to laughter, they might find them. The wisdom of God should seem to them "foolishness;"—the power of God, as wielded by His servants, capable of being attributed to the devil, or regarded as "the sleight of men and cunning craftiness" whereby they deceived. "The truth as it is in Jesus" should be unperceived and unfelt, and the evidence involved in a supernatural sign as easily resisted, as it is now to assume the utter impossibility of a miracle at all.

This same law evidently went with the believer of the Gospel into the Church. That divine thing, that "sacred deposit," which was enshrined in the intellect and the heart, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," could only be preserved, secured from injury, and retained as a possession, by the man keeping himself, or being kept, in harmony with it. If the Christian was not prayerful and vigilant; if he did not "walk in the Spirit," and "grow up into Christ," and seriously cultivate "all holy conversation and godliness;" if his moral tone got relaxed and lowered, either by his falling into "sins of the flesh," or being "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,"—the light within him would become darkness, his perception of truth less clear, his hold of it less firm; he would be open to influences antagonistic to it, be liable to be seduced by false teachers, or might welcome misconceptions originating in himself. This moral law, conservative of stability in "the apostles' doctrine," is strongly expressed in St Paul's admonitions to Timothy; "Neglect not the gift that is in thee,"—"that good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost;"—"holding faith and a good conscience,

which" (*the good conscience*) "some having put away, concerning *the faith* have made shipwreck."

The recognition of what is involved in these statements enables us to understand, in some measure, how the Gospel could be resisted though God himself "bore witness" to its ministers; and how it could be lost or corrupted after "coming" to a man "not in word only, but also in power." There could be rejection in the world, and error in the Church, because in both cases the truth stood towards men in the relation of a moral test,—of earnestness in the one case, of consistency, vigilance, fidelity in the other. Besides which it is to be remembered that the Gospel, especially as developed in Christian teaching, would wonderfully stimulate the powers of its disciples; it set forth openly, and even brought down to the common mind, and made the property of workmen and slaves, many subjects, or its own apprehension of them, which had occupied the reason of man in all ages,—which came into contact or comparison with philosophical conclusions and popular beliefs; and it could not but be that some of its adherents would gradually be drawn to attempt a coalescence of the one with the other, to the injury of their first religious convictions. That this occurred, we know. It gave rise to that argumentative character of some of the apostolic letters which to some thinkers is so surprising,—so unlike the form which any direct revelation from God might be expected to assume. To a devout mind, however, the Divine wisdom may be seen in it, educing good out of evil, turning the early rise of error in the Church into the occasion of permanent advantage. In consequence of it, the apostles had to "contend earnestly for the faith once (for all) delivered to the saints;"—to explain and defend what they had "received" and taught St. Paul, especially, was led to expose the first departures from the truth, and

those who broached them, by arguments adapted to meet many of the general principles which lie at the basis of all error, whatever the diversified forms it may take in different places or in any age.

Most of these introductory remarks receive illustration from the contents of this First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. We have to do at present, however, only with what comes before us in the text, and in some of the verses before and after. Looking at the portion thus indicated, we have, you will observe, three things:—In the first place, we have a representation of what the Corinthian Church was originally, under the teaching of St Paul, in respect to its religious belief. Connected with this we have, secondly, a reference to what some of its members had become by reasoning themselves into error. In the third place, we have the error into which these Corinthians had fallen met by argument, in order to the restoration of their primitive belief. The apostle aims at bringing them back from their second state of mind to their first, that, so to speak, their first and *third* thoughts might be the same;—a thing that, which is often the very best that can happen to a man, either in intellectual speculation or religious inquiry.

I.

In respect to the first point to be noticed—the primary religious belief of the Corinthian Church—it is unnecessary to do more than to remind you of a few of the particulars which were set forth with some minuteness only last Sunday. The apostle, you observe, at the beginning of the chapter, reminding the Corinthians of “the Gospel which he preached to them,” says, that in doing so he said *three* things,—things which may be thus put:—

In the first place, he set forth a fact,—namely, that

the Christ whom he made known "died, and rose again from the dead." He affirmed this. Christ, who was put to death by the hands of men, was made alive again by the power of God. Such was the fact, wonderful as it might appear; miraculous, supernatural, as it undoubtedly was One of the first things St. Paul did, and one of the chief, was to assert this.

In the second place, he accompanied the statement of the fact with some of the proofs on which, as such, it rested. He referred, by name, to persons who had seen Christ after His resurrection. "Some" of them had "fallen asleep;" but "the greater part" were yet alive, and could be produced as maintaining their testimony. Christ, "after dying and being buried, rose again," and was seen "of Peter," "of James," "of the Twelve," "of above five hundred brethren at once." "Then of all the apostles." "Last of all," he added—speaking doubtless with marked emphasis, and peculiar solemnity—"last of all, *He was seen of me!*" He referred, of course, to the circumstances attending his conversion. He always maintained that he had then "seen the Lord;" had heard Him speak; and that, through the influence upon him of that Divine manifestation, and the grace accompanying it, he had been changed from a persecutor to a saint. It was thus that he was called to the apostleship; he became associated with the twelve in their high commission, and from that time they had all, with an entire unity of belief and purpose, affirmed constantly the same thing—"that Christ died, was buried, and rose again from the dead." "Whether it was he or they," who at Corinth, or anywhere else, made known the Gospel of Christ, it mattered not; for all concurred in their testimony respecting Him.

But involved in this procedure there was a third thing, which admits of distinct and separate mention.

Having stated and established the *fact*, he exhibited and taught the *doctrine* which it enshrined. As in the case of our Lord himself there is in the outward and visible form an incarnation of the Divine, so in His dying and rising again there was embodied a divine idea, which gave to the mere fact a special and momentous significance. “Christ died for our sins,”—and, in connexion with that—in continuance, and as a part, of the whole transaction—“He rose again from the dead.” Without this being understood, the moral meaning of the event could not be perceived. Both the one and the other of its parts were “according to the Scriptures;”—were, that is to say, a fulfilment of prophecy, and, as such, the revealed and appointed means for the accomplishment of God’s merciful purposes in relation to humanity. “Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

Such were the three things which the apostle “declares” that he did when he “preached the Gospel” to the Corinthians, and he appeals to their personal recollections in corroboration of his statements. He affirmed a fact; he sustained it by evidence; and he set forth its meaning. But what he “delivered” to them in doing this, he said he had “received;” that is to say, received “of the Lord,”—received by direct communication from Himself,—and that, too, both as to the reality of the facts, and in respect to their doctrinal significance. As we told you last Sunday, Christ’s death and resurrection were set in the light of two revelations—the prophetic word, and the apostolic inspiration. In respect to the latter of these, St. Paul says in another place, “I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but *by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” (Gal. i 11, 12.) In respect to the former, he was placed in the

same position as the other apostles, whom, "after His passion," the Lord instructed, saying—"All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." (Luke xxiv. 44-47.)

But—anticipating the special subject of this discourse—some of you may be thinking that, in all we have referred to, no mention has been made by the apostle of his having taught "the resurrection of the dead." In respect to that, then, I submit two remarks. In the first place, judging from the general impression of the New Testament, so far as it bears on the question, it would seem to have been the habit of St. Paul always to connect, in his elementary teaching, the resurrection of believers with that of Christ; so that, with him, any reference to the one truth necessarily involved the other. They to whom he was now writing knew this. They were perfectly aware, moreover, that he always, so to speak, contemplated the Church as placed between the two great facts of the first and second manifestation of the Lord;—His coming in the flesh, in humility, tears, and blood, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and His coming again in glory and power, "without sin unto salvation." From the one, the Christian believer drew his spiritual life, through "the preaching of the cross;" the other was the object of that "blessed hope," which led him to anticipate "the grace to be brought to him at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The two things were so associated together in the mind of the apostle, that an allusion to either implied both. In the second place, it

should be remembered that the two epistles to the Thessalonians were written by St. Paul during his residence in Corinth, and the first, at least, in the early part of it. Now, if there is any one thing more than another that distinguishes these letters, it is their constant reference to the ultimate future of the Church, and that in connexion with its risen Lord. The time is to come when "*the dead in Christ shall rise,*" and when the living shall be changed; so that whether Christians then "wake or sleep," they will "live together with Him" "*who died for them!*" Having "turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God," the Thessalonians thus "waited for His Son from heaven," "*whom He raised from the dead!*" It is utterly inconceivable that, at the time and place when and where he wrote these letters, the apostle's public teaching would not overflow with constant references to the vital subjects which employed his pen. Those who had listened to his words, as for months and months he reiterated and amplified what filled his thoughts and stirred his soul, needed no reminding that the first truth, "Christ's resurrection," carried with it the second, the resurrection of "them that are His." We may be quite sure, "without controversy," that *both* were distinctly included in the statement "*so we preach, and so ye believed.*"

II.

We learn, however, that, after having "as a wise master-builder" thus "laid the foundation," there were those who at length came to build upon it the "hay and stubble" of erroneous opinion. If he and others thus preached, and continued to preach, "that Christ rose from the dead," "how is it," he indignantly asks, "that there are some among you who say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" There were men, then, at

Corinth, who denied the doctrine of a general resurrection. It is no matter who these men were,—whether Jews or Gentiles; it is enough to know that the resurrection of the dead was denied;—that it was denied by members of the Church (for this is implied in the phrase, "some of you"); that it was denied, therefore, by men who retained their standing as professed Christian believers,—denied in spite of the constant preaching that "Christ rose from the dead," and of their acceptance and belief of that fact as the ground of their being reckoned among the disciples.

The form which the new opinion took among those who embraced it, must have been one of a very positive character. It was based, doubtless, on an assumed impossibility. The thing in question *could not be*. It was repugnant to reason; utterly irreconcilable with the nature of things. It was scientifically incredible. "How are the dead raised up? with what body do they come?" Questions, these, which may be regarded not as the inquiries of the curious, or the cry of an oppressed spirit, respecting an admitted wonder; but as suggested objections believed to be fatal to the thing itself. The resurrection of the dead! How is it ever to occur? In what way, or by what means, can it be accomplished? No one knows—none can tell. What conception can be formed of a thing physically impossible? It is a mystery surpassing belief; on no rational grounds can it be allowed in speculation or looked for in fact. Such, from the nature of the case as it lies before us, must, we are warranted in saying, have been the ground on which, in the minds of its advocates, the proclaimed opinion stood.

We are disposed, however, to think that the Corinthian objectors did not stop here. Remaining in the Church, and bound to recognise, in some sense or other, its known and acknowledged belief, they most likely did

what some men like-minded did at Ephesus (2 Tim. ii. 17, 18). Abandoning the doctrine of the resurrection in its literal acceptance, they retained it in a figure; they transformed it from a future fact to be one day seen, into a present experience now to be felt. They held that “the resurrection was passed already.” It was something inward and subjective. It was a spiritual change; a quickening of the moral consciousness; the rising of the soul from the death of sin into the life of God. *That* was the “resurrection.” It was behind the Church, not before it. This could be understood: it was something possible in itself; agreeable to reason; something, in fact, of which they had the evidence in themselves by what they had passed through. But, as to the future literal resurrection of the dead, their revivification after having ceased to live, after having been buried, or burnt, reduced to nothing, utterly decomposed, virtually annihilated,—for *this* to be was just a palpable incredibility, and they put it away from them as such! In spite of this, however, they continued in the Church; and, if there had then been an “Apostles’ Creed,” they would have stood up and repeated it; have bowed at the name of Jesus, and gone through the formula with serious countenance and edifying devotion. By the slight change (*meant* or *made*) of “the body” into “the dead,” in the last clause but one, they would have brought the article into harmony with their belief, and felt that they could utter it with the sublime consciousness of honest men: “I believe in God the Father Almighty, ... and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, who ... suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. ... The third day He rose again from the dead. ... I believe in the Holy Ghost, ... the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of [*the dead*], and the life everlasting.”

Such, then, was the error which some in the Church at Corinth had embraced, of which St. Paul lamented the prevalence, and which he set himself to refute and dispel. It is observable that he did this, not "by using boldness as an apostle of Christ,"—putting it down with a strong hand by simply condemning it, or by a bare but authoritative declaration of the truth. He took this ground with respect to moral inconsistencies, and threatened those who had fallen into them, "to come to them with a rod," if they were not abandoned. But here he meets the evil by argument. By a process of reasoning, he seeks to bring to right views those who had "erred from the truth,"—erred through reasoning downwards till they first doubted and then denied it,—misled by "vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called." His argument is what is called an *argumentum ad hominem*. It is an appeal to men on their own principles. They believed one thing, they denied another thing; but the belief of the first carried with it the second, the denial of the second destroyed the first. An argument this, which would not be felt by philosophers who denied both things, but which, in respect to the men in question, admitted of no reply, and was adapted to excite the most serious apprehensions. As an appeal to their understanding, it convicted them of inconsistency and absurdity; as an appeal to their faith, it revealed to them issues which they had not considered and did not foresee. Putting together the different topics which the Apostle rapidly touches,—looking at their combined force as linked together in his cumulative argument,—the result would seem to be this, That the error combated, if logically carried out, would just destroy Christianity altogether,—destroy it in its Facts, its Doctrines, its Hopes, and its Evidence.

III.

1. “Christ was preached that He rose from the dead.” That fact was insisted upon in the first announcement of the Gospel; it continued to be insisted upon in the teaching of the Church; it was constantly recognised in its ordinary worship. The objectors in question believed it. Because of this belief, as has been intimated, they had their place in the Christian brotherhood. But—they denied the resurrection of the dead; and denied it on the ground of its involving a physical impossibility. They rejected, perhaps ridiculed, the idea;—taunting those who entertained it with questions about it which they thought unanswerable. But, replies the apostle, you will observe this, that if the resurrection of the dead is impossible in the general, it is impossible in the particular. If it cannot be true of the many, it cannot be true of the one. If no one *can* rise, no one can *have* risen. Therefore “Christ is not risen.” The two things stand or fall together. You cannot hold the one, and deny the other. You may reject both,—you may go to that extent, if you like,—but you cannot stop half way. You cannot say yes and no at the same time, and about the same thing. Carry it out, on one side or the other, fairly and fully. “If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.” On the ground you take, there is no escaping that alternative. To be consistent, you must accept it and say so. If true, then “our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain:” we set forth a nonentity (a vain thing), and a nonentity you believed. If, on the other hand, it is a fact, and is accepted by you as such, that “*Christ* was raised from the dead,” then there is no difficulty in the way of the resurrection of the dead, and there need be none in your

believing it. What God has done once, He can do again; what has occurred in a single instance must be possible in all. If, however, there is no resurrection of the dead as a fact to come, there can be none to be believed in as a fact past "Christ did not rise." Your science, reasonings, philosophy issue in that The ground-fact of our religion disappears.

2. But this is not all. There is, says the apostle, another result that takes you a step further. If the dead rise not, Christ is not risen; but if Christ is not risen, then *there is no Christ*; there is neither a Christ nor a Gospel in the world! "The Gospel which I preached unto you, which ye received, and by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you," is this,—that Christ, the Sent and Anointed of God, "died *for our sins*," and, having done this, "rose again from the dead." It was not simply that He rose from the dead, but that He rose *in connexion with His* dying for our sins. The two things are inseparable. We taught both. Each was shown to be "according to the Scriptures." The two are one, or are the parts or sides of one primary, central truth. If one falls, the other falls. If Christ did not rise "according to the Scriptures," He did not die "according to the Scriptures;" then He did not die "for our sins;" then there is no Christ,—no Redeemer and no redemption,—no Gospel to be "received" or "preached!"—there never has been a gracious Divine interposition to save the world; to secure, through a Personal Mediator, the death and resurrection of a Christ—the forgiveness of sin. The doctrine we revealed as enshrined in the fact vanishes if the fact itself disappears. If the "dead rise not, Christ is not risen;" but if Christ did not rise,—rise to ascend up on high, and "to appear in the presence of God for us,"—then He did not die "to put

away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” If so, “then is our preaching vain, and your faith vain,” *in another sense*; not only as being concerned with a nonentity, but as being *ineffectual*,—ineffectual for any ultimate, spiritual purpose. Therefore “ye are yet in your sins.” Your faith is powerless to deliver you from them, because no Christ could be set forth on whom it might terminate, and the benefits of whose intervention it might secure. If Christ did not rise “to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers,” then He did not die to come in between the sins of believers and their necessary consequences. If, therefore, you are even outwardly reformed,—as some of you are, having turned from the grosser sins of the flesh in which you formerly indulged,—you are “yet in your sins.” In them, so far as *guilt* is concerned. *That* can only be removed by One “who died for us and rose again;” but if the dead rise not, Christ did neither the one nor the other,—therefore “*your sin remaineth.*” There is no Christ, “through whom can be preached to all nations”—or to any nation, or to any individual—“repentance and remission of sin.”

3. But this involves another issue. “If the dead rise not, Christ is not risen; if Christ be not risen, there is no Christ; but if there *is* no Christ, then there never has been one: therefore, *they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished!*” It is by a “Saviour”—a dying and rising Christ—that “life and immortality” are secured and revealed. Our doctrine is, that “in Adam all die;” by the first man “came death.” By “the second man,”—the “Lord from heaven”—comes “the resurrection of the dead.” If it is ever “better” to be “absent from” than “in the body,” that can only be by being “present with the Lord.” But if “the Lord Christ” never was “manifested,”—dying, rising,

ascending to heaven "to prepare a place for us,"—there is no heaven for any one to enter; no "Lord" to whose "presence" we can go! As a Christian teacher, I have nothing to do with philosophical speculations. I argue not for the immortality of the *soul*, but for the immortality of the *man*; and that, not as an opinion sustained by reasoning, but as a truth revealed by God. "This is the record, that He hath given to us eternal life, and *this life is in His Son.*" They that "die in the Lord," being "absent from the body," may be "present with Him." Quickened and animated now, by that life of which He is the source, *they* may "desire to depart, and to be with Christ" But if there is no Christ, and never has been one, there can be no reality either in their experience or hope. Intelligent persuasion as to the state of the dead, and assurance for ourselves in the prospect of dying, are alike demolished by the action of the error which you have embraced. They that "have fallen asleep in Christ," fell asleep under a delusion. They believed in vain;—they were the subjects of a faith which rested on nothing, and led to nothing. Whatever might become of them as men, as believing men—"looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life"—they have entered into no such immortality, and never will.

4. But still further: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen;" and "if Christ be not risen, *we are found false witnesses of God*"—false witnesses for Him, or on His behalf;—"because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ; whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." I told you when I came to you that I did not come as a thinker,—as one having a theory to exhibit I did not preach opinions. If I had, my opinions might have been false, and yet I myself have been a true man. My

moral integrity would have been unimpeachable, however wrong or erroneous my views, if I sincerely believed and honestly expressed them. "But, when I came to you, I came not with the excellency of speech or of wisdom." I simply and plainly declared a fact; I delivered a testimony. I told you what had been witnessed; what *I* had witnessed; what, in common with the rest of the apostles, I and they had alike seen. We professed to state "what our eyes had looked upon, and our hands had handled." If our testimony was not true, then we were not true; and our testimony could not be true, "if so be that the dead rise not." But if *we* were true, our testimony was true. If "in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom," we "made known unto you" that which "we had heard with our ears," which we "had seen" and "received," then what we said was "the truth, and no lie." "We are not mad;" we "speak forth the words of truth and soberness." We are perfectly awake as to "what we say, and whereof we affirm." We are either true, and our testimony true; or if our testimony be false, we are false. There is no third alternative. We have neither followed "cunningly devised fables," knowing them to be such; nor are we the dupes of a sincere but deceptive enthusiasm. We will neither plead guilty to an ingenious myth, nor consent to have our character saved at the expense of our understanding. "If Christ did not rise,"—if He was not seen alive, touched and conversed with "after His Passion,"—they who affirm that they saw Him are not to be believed. Nor ought they to be believed "if there can be no resurrection of the dead,"—for what they declare to have been done could not have been done. They affirm an impossibility. And they affirm that *God* did it!—that He did what He did not do; "that He raised up Christ, whom He raised not up." This pretended "testimony"

could not, under the circumstances, be a mistaken opinion, an innocent mental error. It was a falsehood. We told a lie. We were "false witnesses,"—false witnesses *for God!*"—the God of our fathers, whom we had been taught to reverence as "the God of Truth;" by whom "words" and "actions" are "weighed;" whose "eyes behold" and approve the "upright;" and who "hates every false way!"

In this way the apostle argued against the error in question. It is no matter whether his reasoning was addressed to the objectors, as we have put it, or, as some think, was meant for the benefit of the sound part of the Church. In either case it comes to the same thing. It may now be observed that, so far, he has been meeting the scientific objection by arguments which, on what the objectors themselves admitted, directly overthrew it, and which, therefore, as directly established the reasonableness of the popular belief. But two other considerations are thrown out, in the course of his remarks, which are somewhat of a different character. They are not direct proofs, from any admissions of others, of the possibility of the thing denied; but proofs only of the strength of conviction with which some believed it. Such a conviction, however, evinced as it was by correspondent acts, was not to go for nothing. Its depth, potency, and practical issues manifested the sincerity and earnestness of the men who held it. This proved the sufficiency, in *their* estimation, of the evidence on which it rested. To them it must have been strong enough to compel belief; and, all things considered, this might suggest the presumption that it justified it. An argument of this sort is an appeal to modesty and common sense,—to moral considerations which ought to have their weight with considerate and reflecting men.

The parties whom the apostle calls into court, or puts forward to express their convictions, are, on the one hand, certain Christian believers whose earnestness of faith was shown in a somewhat singular manner; and, on the other hand, himself and the rest of the apostles, and all who, like them, submitted to persecution and suffering, giving up everything, and ready to give up life itself, for the faith of Christ, and the hope of the Gospel. In neither case could the conduct of the parties be accounted for, except on the recognition of their strong belief in the resurrection of the dead. In his own case, and that of his colleagues in the apostleship, St. Paul would of course maintain that, circumstanced as they were, or claimed to be, in *them* the belief carried with it, or ought to be felt to carry with it, a strong presumption of the truth and certainty of the thing believed.

The first witnesses produced were those who practised “baptism for the dead;” men who, if there was no resurrection of the dead, could give no account of their practice, and certainly could get nothing by it. Out of the thousand and one interpretations of what is meant by being “baptized for the dead,” we accept that which seems the only one cognate to the apostle’s argument. This refers the practice to the belief that some who had died without baptism might be benefited by survivors being baptized in their name,—*personating* them, so to speak,—receiving the rite as their proxies or sponsors,—and thus putting them, by a representative act done on their behalf, into such a relation to the Redeemer and the Church as would secure their being accounted members of Christ, and through Him entitled to eternal life. The apostle does not say that he shared the opinion, or approved the practice; he seems rather to separate himself from the parties in question; but he does say, that on no ground whatever could the thing

done be of any advantage to the dead, "if the dead rise not," nor could it minister any comfort to the living, except on their personal belief in the resurrection of the dead. The implication is, that if the convictions of fellow-believers are to go for anything, here is a proof how strongly some held the denied doctrine,—so strongly, indeed, that they professed and proclaimed it in a way peculiar to themselves,—*additional* to the ordinary confession and general usages of the Church. But in doing this, they not only sustained but strengthened the presumption that the Church's belief must be the result of very satisfactory evidence; and that that belief included not only the admission of the *possibility* of a resurrection, but the persuasion of its absolute certainty; and still further, that the life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel, and that only, is the immortality of Humanity.

The conduct of the apostle himself, and of those who sympathised with him, involved a still stronger proof of this earnestness of conviction. He was content to hold his life as by a thread. He stood "in jeopardy every hour." He "died daily," He "took joyfully" persecutions and sufferings which he could only liken to being worried by "wild beasts." As he says, in another place, he habitually felt himself to be like those in a gladiatorial "spectacle" who are "set forth last, as it were appointed to death." Life, viewed from a human standpoint, was in his case darkened and eclipsed. "The world was crucified to him, and he to it." He and his colleagues were accounted and treated "as the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things." But he was not only willing to have it so, he "gloried in it;" he "took pleasure in reproaches, persecutions, distresses, for Christ's sake." But such conduct was irrational and meaningless "if there was no resurrection of the dead,"

no future life; the exclusion of the one involving, in his present argument, the exclusion of the other. As a wise man, a man of common sense and ordinary human susceptibilities, he could not and did not regard suffering as an end *in itself*. It could only be good as submitted to for the sake of goodness,—to stimulate others in the pursuit of the Divine, to strengthen in himself a God-like virtue, to fit and capacitate for a higher sphere of ultimate perfection. But "what advantage" could it be to him if none of these ends were answered?—and none of them could be answered if men, even Christian men, were only "like the beasts that perish,"—if life absolutely led to nothing. There was no Divine thing—nothing capable of being raised into the Divine—either in himself or others; nothing to be wrought upon by the example or the endurance of suffering. If men are mere animals, they might as well accept their position and act as such. "If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." Evil and suffering there must be; they are inevitable, and must be endured; but *voluntary* martyrdom,—the deliberate choice and acceptance of a sort of life which blots out the sun, darkens the world, makes every day as the day of death, or one only of tears and blood,—this is irrational and absurd, human nature being constituted as it is, if that be all; if there is nothing Divine in humanity now, and nothing before it but blackness and night "If in this life only we" who suffer for Christ "have hope in Him," a hope that must perish with ourselves,—only that, and nothing else; if that which animates us is visionary and unreal—that for which "we count all things but loss,"—we are "of all men" in the world "the most to be pitied." We not only sacrifice everything for nothing, but the subjective result, as we fancy, to ourselves,—the sublime virtue which we suppose is promoted within us,

—why, even that is a dream and a delusion! We are not made for it; we are not God-born, and cannot be God-like, if we were only created to perish;—and that is all, "if there be no resurrection of the dead."

In this way, in effect, St. Paul appeals to his own conduct, and to that of others like him, as a proof of the depth and intensity of their convictions in respect to the certainty of a future life. Now, in *him*, with his ability to take sober and discriminating views of things, "after the manner of men,"—views free from the exaggerations of an unreasoning enthusiasm, or the impulses of a sentimental ideality,—this conviction, joined to his constant, cool, and unvarying assertion that "he had seen the Lord," knew that *He* had risen, and that as the Head of the race,—a personal persuasion like his, one so conditioned, ought to go for something more than mere sincerity of belief. His asserted experience gave a character and weight to his words that made them a "testimony;" his consciousness of his veracity as a witness, and his confidence in the hopes that animated and upheld him, justified to himself the grand burst of feeling with which—waving off the sophistries of science, and presenting the truth as the explanation of his conduct—he uttered what embodied, in one pregnant sentence, the two ideas which had all along been interwoven into the texture of his argument: "But now *is Christ risen from the dead*, and BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEEP."

IV.

Having thus attempted to exhibit the apostle's argument, both in its direct and indirect bearings, we shall now conclude our exposition of it by mentioning some of

those practical issues which his statements and reasonings would seem to involve.

1. It may be noticed, in the first place, that, according to St. Paul, any one denying the possibility of the future resurrection of the dead must, to be consistent, deny the reality of the resurrection of Christ. The result, indeed, would most likely be the denial of the possibility of a miracle at all; but certainly it would involve the denial of that which, in the view of the apostle, constituted the ground of all Christian belief, rightly understood. There is a form of thought in the present day, akin to that of the Corinthian errorists, but not so absolute, nor logically chargeable with the same issue. This is the denial, not of the possibility of the resurrection of the dead, but of its likelihood. Miracles are not denied; the resurrection of Christ is admitted and received; but then it is thought that the peculiarity of His character and office, His august relations to humanity, and especially His never having “seen corruption,” constitute altogether something so unique, that *His* resurrection may be regarded as by no means incredible. But the state of the dead—the ordinary dead—the buried, the decomposed, the generations of men whose temporary “earthly house” has been *so* “dissolved” as to have utterly ceased to be,—*that* surely is such as to do away with any parallel between them and Christ. Hence it is thought that “the resurrection of the dead” may be understood according to what St. Paul’s own words would appear to mean, when he contrasts “the earthly house of this tabernacle” with the anticipated “building of God” (2 Cor. v. 1). He seems to say that he looks forward, not to his being “unclothed” simply, but “clothed upon” with the “house which is from heaven.” Supposing that the apostle, in thus speaking, refers to the dissolution of the body by death, and that the soul, instead of being

"found naked," is at once to be furnished with a spiritual vehicle suited to its higher mode of life, *that* would be the resurrection, this new vesture the resurrection-body. All that is included in the most splendid descriptions of the visible "fashioning" of the members of Christ according "to the likeness" of His glorified humanity might thus be realized and fulfilled, without its involving so startling an idea as the literal resurrection of the dead,—especially if defined, as in the Creed, "the resurrection of the body." Now, this is certainly not the error which the apostle withstood at Corinth; it may be held, as we have explained, in connexion with much which that logically excluded. It must be confessed, however, that the probability is, it would not have been accepted by St Paul as the proper Christian form of the truth. He would most likely have given another meaning to that utterance of his which is its sole support; would have made it refer to his strong realization, at the time he wrote, of the sudden "change of the living" at the appearance of the Lord, and his wish for—perhaps his anticipation of—the fulfilment in himself of that "blessed hope," instead of his having to undergo the disrobing of death. That a future resurrection, as a Christian doctrine, was to be received in its simple literality of statement, St. Paul, I think, would have urged, not only by repeating his own words, "Christ is risen," and that "as *the firstfruits of them that sleep,*" but by using language similar to what he once used on another occasion, "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth."

2. But there are those who would accept the issue of the apostle's reasoning,—would give up the fact of the resurrection of Christ, as well as the expectation of the resurrection of the dead,—still, however, retaining their

standing in the Church, and professing to have a religion pervaded by a Christian element. To such, I think, St. Paul would say, “You may have a religion—a religion gathered from the beautiful in nature, and the attractive in Jesus; from the beneficence of God, and the tender and winning words of Him whom you regard as the greatest of prophets; you may thus have much to touch the heart and win the soul;—themes for eloquent discourse, subjects that you may clothe in poetry and express in song; but you cannot, properly speaking, have the religion of a sinner,—the faith and hope of him who feels the need of ‘salvation,’ of a ‘Redeemer’ and ‘Mediator,’ who comes to reveal ‘the Father’ by ‘*dying for our sins.*’ There are elements in the faith whose central objects are the cross and the sepulchre, a Christ ‘delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification,’ of which any religion denying the fact of Christ’s resurrection and the divine meaning of it ‘according to the Scriptures,’ must be destitute.”

In thus speaking, let it be understood that we advance or advocate no particular theory as to what is called the atonement,—no special explanation of the *nature* of those “sufferings of the Christ” out of which springs “the glory that follows.” Wise and devout men have ceased to dogmatize on the mode of the Messiah’s mediatorial action, and are content simply to accept the fact. They are somewhat tired of so-called “philosophies” of the “plan of salvation.” Forms of thought, indeed, and modes of expression respecting the work of Christ, once regarded as sacred and binding, have very much ceased to be heard, or are heard in the distance as they are passing away,—heard as sounds comparatively faint and few. Even modern explanations, confining everything to the subjective in Christ, are to some as unsatisfactory as the old gross mercantile theory. The latter they reject

because it can be understood;—its sharp points are distinctly enough perceived, and, in proportion to their distinctness, are felt to expel from the Gospel everything like grace or favour, making it to consist only of the stern and unabated exactions of justice, and that, too, twice over. The former they do not so clearly apprehend;—explanations are heard which seem to need to be explained, a theory advanced requiring to be divested of mist and metaphysics if it is to stand out in clear and tangible outline; and so they cannot grasp it: but, not liking to condemn what is not understood, they may be said perhaps neither to accept nor deny. For myself, I confess, I am not disposed to attach much importance to any explanation or theory of Christ's redemptive work, though I accept it as a fact,—believing it, as such, not only to be distinctly revealed, but so set forth as to demand devout and absolute recognition in the form of trust and dependence. Very strong expressions, it must be allowed, occasionally occur in Scripture respecting it[^] involving apparently ideas, more or less defined, of its essence, nature, and mode of operation. These each must interpret for himself, all having an equal right to hold their individual conscientious convictions. But no Church, or school, or system,—and no representative or advocate of any system,—has a right to insist on the admission of a particular human explanation of the revealed fact, in addition to the acceptance, as a divine thing, of the fact itself. The how, and why, and wherefore may be inscrutable, or but partially intimated, and yet the thing, as a reality, may stand out before the eye of the mind as clearly as the literal cross stood out before the bodily eye of one who witnessed the crucifixion. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "Whom God hath set forth as a propitiation, through faith in His blood." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us

from all sin.” *How* it does it is not explained; but the promise, or assurance, is distinct and intelligible—the assurance of the faithful and loving God, on whom and on whose word our faith and hope ultimately terminate—that “whosoever believeth in Him,” who “died for our sins,” shall not perish, but have eternal life.” To refuse to trust the Divine assurance until we know all about the fact to which it is attached, is to wish to be saved not by faith, but by the understanding—not by simple dependence on the word of Him who did what *He* saw to be necessary, fitting, and sufficient, but by confidence in our own apprehension of the way in which what He did *was* this. The rejection of human explanations of the redemptive work of Christ is not the rejection of the fact; but the rejection of the fact would, in the estimation of St. Paul, be the rejection of that which is an essential in the religion of sinful humanity. Hence his solemn asseveration as to one of the issues of the Corinthian error in the argument we have been examining; and hence, too, this second practical lesson of ours, constituting, as we think, a natural and necessary deduction from that argument

3. Another thing taught us by St Paul’s reasoning on the subject before us is this—that there is no possibility of upholding the honesty and integrity of the apostles as witnesses, unless their testimony be received as true. They meant what they said; affirmed it in its absolute literality, and as men in the full possession of their faculties. Attempts are sometimes made to compliment the apostles as noble, upright, high-souled men,—but *with a reserve*; a reserve which turns the fine-spun speech into an insult, as if one should bow down before another, reverently to kiss the hem of his garment, and then rise up to smite him on the face! To profess to respect the sacred worthies, and yet to deny all that is

miraculous and supernatural in their statements, is to do this. A mistake, the reverse of that into which some fell who denied the resurrection, is attributed to the apostles. Ephesian and Corinthian errorists, as we have seen, changed an objective truth into a subjective experience. Paul and his associates changed *their* mental impressions into external facts! They are not to be blamed. They were overpowered and mastered by the ideas that possessed them. Their fervour was like the inspiration of genius; but the forms it assumed in seeking to utter itself are no more to be taken for actual facts, than the dreams of Bunyan or the imaginary incidents of "Paradise Lost."

We have seen how Paul would have dealt with this theory by the way in which he took up the common sense position, that, "if God had not raised up Christ," whom he and his colleagues affirmed and "testified" that "He *had* raised up," they were "false witnesses:"—nothing else, and nothing less. Let me illustrate this point by a story, which, I dare say, will be new to some of you. One night, at Corinth or Ephesus, Paul, after having preached to the disciples, was walking leisurely home. He was followed by two men in such earnest conversation that they did not observe him, though they were close upon him. He could not help overhearing what was passing between them "as they communed together and reasoned," like the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. The Christian meeting-house was open to unbelievers (1 Cor. xiv. 23), and the men had been there. "The manner of communications they had with one another, as they walked," was of this sort:—"Yes; I do go sometimes, and look in upon that singular assembly. I have once or twice witnessed very strange scenes. But whatever some of the ordinary speakers may be, Paul—their great leader, whom you saw to-

night—is certainly a man of wonderful powers, with a great glowing earnest soul in him. He often refers, indeed, to one Jesus as having been raised from the dead, and even seems to be under the singular hallucination of having himself seen him. But, apart from that, there is such elevation in his views, and such force in his appeals, that I listen with admiration, and am sometimes strongly excited by his fervency." After a short pause, the speaker resumed: "Even with respect to his affirming the resurrection of Jesus, that I think may be explained without at all affecting his mental integrity, or honesty of purpose. It would seem that the remarkable individual referred to was regarded by many as a great prophet. After a short course of public teaching, during which his profound and lofty utterances produced a deep impression on a select number of his followers, he was suddenly arrested, and was actually crucified as a malefactor, with all the preliminaries and accompaniments of infamy and disgrace. The immediate consequence was, that his disciples were utterly disheartened; they gave up all for lost; the hopes and expectations they had cherished—most extravagant, some of them—suddenly collapsed, fell to the ground, and appeared for the time as if *dead and buried*. By and by, they recovered themselves; the seeds of thought which Jesus had sown in their minds shot up; they took, as it were, form and body in their conceptions, found utterance from the lips of earnest advocates, and rose and spread with a power and a rapidity that surprised themselves. *It was a resurrection*:—a resurrection, indeed, only in the sense of a revival of what had been learnt from the great teacher; but to the excited and susceptible minds of his disciples that new life of the temporarily buried truth was as if Jesus himself had risen from the dead. It was put in that light in popular appeals; and speakers and

hearers alike came to regard it as a reality. So much," the speaker proceeded, " I can make out as to the probable origin of the fiction. With respect to this Paul himself, the thing appears to admit of easy solution from what would seem to be his constitutional temperament. He is one of those men who are ever in extremes. He was, I find, at first a bitter and bloody persecutor of the Christian disciples. Somehow he turned suddenly round, and joined himself to them. Of course, in his case, that could only take place in connexion with such mighty movements of thought and emotion as would give the vividness of reality to any idea that took possession of his great soul. That idea was, that Jesus himself personally appeared to him; that he heard his voice and saw his form. The impression not only remained, and still remains, but seems to acquire strength and intensity from every repetition of those transcendental doctrines which, with marvellous ingenuity, Paul finds in and evolves from the supposed fact. The man is the subject of a noble enthusiasm. It is the most natural thing in the world, as it seems to me, that he should embody his conceptions in the way he does. Of course, there never could be the resurrection of a dead man; but that Paul should believe in such a thing, and dilate on it as he does, is only what might be expected in one animated by an earnestness so intense and realizing as his. He is, I am quite sure, honest and upright in his intentions, whatever may be the form his rhetoric assumes. A noble, magnanimous, glorious man!—one, I believe, having at heart the good of humanity, and who seeks to promote it by means not only allowable in themselves, but which, in him, could not but be prompted by the actings and impulses of his wonderful nature. Why, the man is made up of passion and poetry, intellect and logic; all faculties are in him, more especially a spiritual

intuition which seems to open to him the infinite. It is not to be wondered at that his thoughts come out from the furnace of his heart and from his grand idealizing imagination in the form of bright, glowing, magnificent *facts*. He is a great man, and as honest as he is great.” —“No,” said Paul, turning suddenly round upon the speaker,” not so. I will not accept your attempted justification of what no honest man, if sane, whatever his enthusiasm, would either fall into or adopt. I assert that Jesus was raised from the dead; that I know it by direct and indubitable evidence; if he did not rise, and if I am in my senses and know the meaning of words, then I am simply an embodied falsehood, a living lie, and all your fine complimentary speeches cannot make it otherwise.’ You will not find this story in any of the works of ecclesiastical writers; but it is not to be disbelieved on that account. *It is a parable*. But parables, you will remember, are often much truer than history itself.

4. One more lesson may be gathered from the subject before us; a lesson inculcating at once charity and caution—candid consideration in respect to others, jealousy and watchfulness in respect to ourselves. There may be errors in religion, philosophical conceits and perversions, which may have in them the seeds of more serious results than their advocates imagine. It is very likely that the Corinthian misbelievers were not aware of the logical issues of their error, till St. Paul at once enumerated and exposed them. Among ourselves there are those who embrace opinions which, if fully carried out, would injuriously affect many precious accepted truths. Now, we ought not to charge any man with being committed to all the consequences which to us may appear to be distinctly involved in his opinions, if he says that he does not see the matter in that light; or that he can hold, and does hold, such opinions, but

that he repudiates and rejects their supposed necessary issues. We have heard of one who lived like a saint and died like an apostle,—whose last utterances were intense and ecstatic as the expression of devout and exalted Christian faith,—and who yet thought that Jesus did not really rise from the dead, but was recovered from a swoon; and who sometimes got so lost in his speculations about the Infinite as to be unable to admit, or at least to realize, the personality of God! It is not for us to pronounce on such a case, though it must seem to simple people a great mystery. How the two things—the incredulity and the faith—could subsist together at the same time and in the same mind, passes comprehension. So it may be in respect to lesser men, and other matters. *We* may clearly see the results to which a given opinion may point or lead; but if others do not see it, and, still more, if holding the opinion the results are not realized in them, we have nothing to say. We may wonder, but we must not judge. If, however, while we ourselves believe in any injurious issues as necessarily flowing from certain forms of thought, we feel drawn towards or are likely to be fascinated by them, then, I think, the lesson of the apostle's argument is one of caution,—one warning us to avoid dallying with what may be dangerous. It is quite true that there are regions of investigation where inquiry must *be* pursued whatever the consequences. But when a line of thought seems likely to lead to the positive denial of the existence of God, or the foundation facts of the Christian faith, it is not for us to heed the cynical question of a cold or contemptuous philosophy, "What then?" *What then!*—"much every way." To us, who have as we believe an authoritative revelation, there is such a thing as being "shut up unto the faith,"—such a duty as not to listen to reasonings, however

specious, that would imperil it. The “What then” argument has to be resisted, if suggested to encourage what would actually or virtually result in destroying the basis of religious hope. “There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof is death.” “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.” Things may be plausibly presented to us, and appear harmless in themselves when at first looked at, which, nevertheless, on account of their discovered obvious consequences,—what would be their consequences to us,—their injuriously affecting what we *know* to be serious Christian verities,—we are bound to reject; to refuse to entertain, from reverence to God, loyalty to Christ, regard to ascertained truth, and to the character, conduct, and warnings of apostolic men.

SERMON XVI.

AN OLD YEAR MEDITATION.

“We spend our years as a tale that is told.”—PSALM xc. 9.

THIS psalm is attributed to Moses. Moses and the Israelites had resided in Egypt, and were of course acquainted with the customs of the people—customs, some of them, common to the Egyptians and themselves, and to other eastern nations, among whom many of them remain unchanged to this day. When I was in Egypt, three or four years ago, I saw what Moses himself might have seen, and what the Israelites, no doubt, very often witnessed:—a crowd of people surrounding a professed story-teller, who was going through some tale, riveting the attention and exciting the feelings of those who listened to him. This is one of the customs of the East. It naturally springs up among any people who have few books, or none; where the masses are unable to read, and where, therefore, they are dependent for excitement or information on those who can address the ear, and who recite, in prose or verse, traditionary tales and popular legends. I dare say this sort of thing would be much in repute among the Israelites themselves during their detention in the wilderness, and that it served to beguile for them many

a tedious hour. It is by this custom, then, that we venture to illustrate the statement of the text. It is true that the word rendered "tale" might be rendered "thought" or "meditation," and that our translators, by putting in the last three words, have given us rather their comment than the text, or the one in addition to the other. We will not trouble ourselves, however, about this to-day, but, taking the passage just as it stands, will try to turn what it says to some good practical purpose. Supposing the allusion we have referred to to be contained in the words, they would then mean—"We spend our years like those who listen to a tale that is told."

Taking the text in this sense, we may make it the basis of a few suggestive remarks.

The first thing to be noticed is one which will naturally occur to most people as they look back upon the last twelve months. A whole year is lying behind us, and it seems "as yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night." The general idea of the shortness and brevity of human life may be supposed to be indicated by the figure of the text. However long it may appear in looking forward, when counting the years of which it may consist, the longest life seems short in the retrospect; except, indeed, in some cases, where there may have been great activity, many changes, and much sorrow. To our consciousness, time takes its measurement from what we do or endure. With the busy man time is quick in its passage, but protracted to memory, from the number of links which go to make up what can be recalled. To the indolent and inactive it is slow and wearisome, but seems as nothing when it is past, for there is nothing to be remembered. The hearing of a story is attended by a rapid and passing interest—it leaves behind it a vague impression, beyond which

comparatively but few incidents may stand out distinctly in the after thought. In our own day even, when tales are put into printed books, and run through three or four volumes, we feel when we have finished one, how short it appears after all, or how short the time it seemed to take for its perusal. If full of incident, it may seem sometimes long to remember, but we generally come to the close with a sort of feeling that says, "And so that's all." But this must have been much more the case with the tales "that were told." These had to be compressed into what could be repeated at one time, or of which three or four might be given in an evening or an hour. The story ended; and then came the sense of shortness, brevity, the rapid flight of the period employed by it, with something like a feeling of wonder and dissatisfaction at the discovery of this. "For what is your life? It is even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

The way in which too many regard life, and act in relation to it, may be supposed to be expressed in connexion with this suggestion of its brevity. They treat it like a plaything—make it an amusement—pass it as if engaged with a story or a song. They are never serious; they never feel the greatness of what they are to do and to be, or of the things with which they are constantly in contact. They are light, vain, trifling; acting as if they had nothing to do but to enjoy; living without earnestness, high aims, deep thought, manly purpose. Instead of being actors in a great and serious reality, and feeling as such—running a race, fighting a battle, seeking to achieve what demands skill, energy, endurance—they go on from year to year as if they were all the time listening to a mere tale in the process of telling, with which they had nothing to do but to be excited and amused.

But the words may express something deeper and higher, bearing on the experience of better men. The allusion suggests the idea of the great and varied interests there may be in life—the exaggerated impression, indeed, which events may make upon us as they pass, and the feeling with which some of them may be afterwards recalled. The interest of a well-constructed story is a human interest; it must come home to the consciousness and experience of the reader or auditor; and if it does this in any marked degree, it is wonderful the feeling which its successive descriptions and incidents may excite. It will thrill, and melt, and warm, and agitate. It will stir the soul, and quicken the pulse, and swell the heart. It will steal into the hours of the night; will lead men to forget their food, or not to care for it; and may thus have an extraordinary effect on the sympathetic and susceptible. All this, however, may not only lead to nothing, but, on looking back, the man will begin to wonder at himself—wonder that he felt so much, and may become ashamed of his emotions, his terror, or his tears. Very similar to this is real life. The actual incidents of existence, as they pass over us, often greatly affect us. At particular times, and in certain states of mind, they crush, overwhelm, excite, absorb, give rise to extravagant joy, produce the deepest depression, fill the mind with terror or hope, and occasion, as it may chance, agony or rapture. Some accession to their property, some gratification of their wishes, some prize secured by their love or their ambition, will fill men’s souls with irrepressible delight. Some trouble, disappointment, or apprehended calamity, some temporary misapprehension of their motives or conduct, some suspected alienation of friendship or affection, and even, at times, the pressure of passing public events, will render their nights sleepless, and

make their clays at if they walked in "darkness that could be felt." But they get on, life advances, the years come and go—these wonderfully exciting times and things lie a good way behind them—and then the wonder often is, that they could affect any one so much! We have all, I suppose, known something of what it is to look back on a past period free from the temporary agitations and excitement of events as they occurred. It has then seemed to us as if we could hardly believe that it was our very selves—we, who recall the events—who gave way, as we feel we did, either to the childish joys or the baseless apprehensions of that remembered time. "We spend our years as men who listen to a tale that is told."

The allusion of the text may furnish us with another thought in relation to those who live only for excitement. They are just like the men habitually devoted to listening to a story-teller. No sooner is one tale done, than they want another. They think of nothing but the impression of the moment. They want the pleasure repeated, though they know very well that they may have only to listen to an old story, or that even a new one will but feebly reproduce the pleasurable excitement which attended their entrance into the charmed circle. It is the same with those who live for enjoyment rather than work. They cry out for the repetition of that which has ceased to satisfy; and they go on, trying to prolong or to vary excitements which they perfectly well know have come to be to them as "a thrice-told tale."

Another and a different thought may not be inappropriate. Those who are in the habit of reading stories acquire an insight into their probable course and ultimate termination. However they may be varied in incident, all tales have a great deal in common—just like life in different individuals. They turn on the same or similar

events; the same passions have to be depicted, however modified by event or circumstance; action, character, plot, result, are all to be worked out according to certain admitted laws—for the less nature and probability are violated the better. So soon and so completely does all this get perfectly well known to those given to such reading, that they can very soon predict how things will turn out, what will be the fortune of certain individuals, what the fate to which the antecedents of others will lead. A shrewd guess is very soon formed, after the first few chapters, as to what may be expected in the next volume, and what will be developed and consummated in the last. Such is life to those whose experience has led, as it were, to a frequent perusal of it. The thing lies before them like a well-known tale. Any new story, whatever its apparently novel and startling features, must, they know, be worked out under the action of the same laws which have governed others. It is easy to the experienced and observant to divine; they can predict what may be expected in the career of such and such an individual, or what will be the result in which such and such a course must inevitably terminate. There is this difference, indeed, between fiction and reality: the well-constructed story is, for the most part, rounded to completeness; it administers, in the long run, tolerable justice to each character; and if this is done consistently with the laws of our nature and of human society, and with the principles of the Divine government, the story may do good, and become to the reader a protracted parable. It is to be remembered, however, that individual human lives often close without anything like a visible completeness. Neither the good nor the bad seem always to come to a fitting end. This arises from the moral system of things being here but imperfectly developed, and liable, therefore, to many

apparent interruptions and deviations. This leads us to expect a continuation of the life-story of every man, in which developments shall be made, and a consummation reached, according to the principles which sustain and pervade the government of the universe. Another thing should be remembered: in a story, results are often brought about by happy accidents, opportune arrivals, extraordinary interpositions, with which the author has it always in his power to reward the worthy, justify the innocent, or unmask the base. Some such things do occasionally happen in real life; but woe to the man who bases his hopes and calculations upon them! Many, indeed, go through life as if its scenes and incidents were those of a novel. They are always expecting something to occur, or something to turn up; some fortunate event to come to their relief, to raise their fortune, or put things right, just as if they supposed some unknown individual would make them his heir, or some rich uncle might arrive from India! But the novel or the tale is a poor substitute for the teaching of Providence and the philosophy of fact. "The chapter of accidents is the Bible of the fool."

In reading a tale, or in looking back on one read, we often feel how stupid it was for such and such a character not to have seen at the time the bearing of events, and to have taken advantage of incident or opportunity. If he had only done something which he omitted to do, or left undone or unspoken some act or word, or followed the thread, the end of which seemed to be in his hand, the whole mystery would have been explained, misfortune and suffering avoided, and the final catastrophe prevented or softened. We almost get vexed at times with the imaginary individual for not seeing and doing what we suppose he might so easily have seen and done. Well, it is often thus in real life. We spend our years,

and then look back upon them very much with the sort of feeling which sometimes accompanies the perusal of a tale. How frequently, on looking back, have some men to say to themselves: “Ah! *that* was the turning point; there was the flowing of the tide; had we only seen tilings then as we see them now—which we might have done and ought to have done—had we only felt, purposed, achieved, as things then all seem to have suggested, but which in our blindness we did not perceive, or would not, how different it might have been with us to-day! the whole texture of our subsequent life would have been different—the story might have had a development and a consummation it can never have now!”

Just one word more. Our years may be like so many different tales, a series of stories, more or less numerous, each one having its special characteristic, or, here and there, several that come in succession being very much alike. Some of these stories of ours may be very tragic; some dull; some full of adventure; some quiet, uniform, uninteresting. Here may be lightness, gaiety, and humour; there mourning and tears. Here, courtship and marriage bells; there, disappointment, change, the sickness and sorrow of the heart. In one tale we have the record of folly or sin, of spiritual apathy and religious declension; in another we read of contrition and faith, of renewed resolutions and revived hope. Losses, prosperity, births, bereavements, sunlight and shadow—the exhibited portrait, the concealed skeleton—all sorts of opposite and contradictory things seem to constitute the material out of which the several parts of the series are made up. On looking over it as a whole, the variegated colours may so blend together that the life may really seem more like an imaginary tale than anything else. It is for each of us, however, to remember that life is no fiction, no mere tale, though it may look like one. It is something

inexpressibly serious, something terribly and grandly real—It is to be spent, subject to the action of those universal and eternal laws under which God has placed us, and which, in the end, will have momentous issues, whether men now think so or not. By reason of sin, the whole aspect of things is broken and confused; derangement and dislocation are everywhere; yet, through the grace of God and the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, our poor, weak, guilty nature can be so restored and purified, so raised and helped, that life, instead of being like a tale told by an itinerant story-teller, shall put on the appearance of a sublime epic, of which the substance and the song shall be alike divine. We may so spend our threescore years and ten that, at the end of them, instead of feeling that they have passed like a poor story that comes to nothing, or stooping to take up the splenetic complaint of the remorseful and disappointed—"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,"—we may be able to adopt the noble and lofty language of one who was conscious that, by Gods help, he had really lived to some purpose:—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I ran, not as uncertainly; I fought, not as one that beateth the air. I am now ready to be offered. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

In conclusion, we may remark that it will be well for us all to study the lessons taught by the *great biography*—the life of Him who stands alone among men as "having done everything that was given Him to do." He took upon Himself our nature, and came into our world, and by so doing He exalted and beautified both. He showed us the greatness and seriousness of life, the value of the soul, the eternity for which it was made,

and *for* which it needed to be redeemed. He came to redeem it; He gave Himself for us that He might cleanse us from all iniquity, and purify us to Himself as a “peculiar people,” raising us from the death of sin into the life of God. He confers upon us His Spirit to quicken and animate, to awaken us to a proper conception of what we are, what we ought to be, and what we may-become. He shows us how the life “which we now live in the flesh” may be based and built up on that faith in Him which shall make it divine and great like His own. He can so replenish us with His grace, and so strengthen us with “might in the inner man,” that, instead of living as if intent on trifles, we shall “set our affections on things above,” and live for *them*. This will fit us for that nobler and better *second* life that awaits the faithful. That life, the life of the glorified in heaven, is something inexpressibly great and real, and must be prepared for by something akin to itself. The two great needs of our condition and nature are met by the central provisions of the faith—the atoning sacrifice and the sanctifying Spirit. Through these we are brought to *£*rod, and made *like* Him. We can be so raised above ourselves as “to pass our sojourning here” like men that “continually look for their Lord,” so touching all things temporal as not to lose sight or hold of those that are eternal. “Jerusalem the Golden” will be reached at last. There, instead of spending our years as if listening to a brief and empty tale, we shall be face to face with eternal realities; be consciously and perfectly in harmony with them, and so go on and on, from scene to scene and from book to book of the great epic of the future, which will be a Divine story without an end—ever telling, never told!

SERMON XVII.

BUYING AND SELLING. A WEEK-DAY HOMILY.

“It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but taken he is gone his way, then he boasteth.”—PROV. XX. 14.

A LEARNED Commentator, in his remarks upon this proverb, says: “St. Augustine tells us a pleasant story on this subject. A certain mountebank published in the full theatre that, at the next entertainment, he would show to every man present what was in his heart. The time came, and the concourse was immense. All waited, with deathlike silence, to hear what he would say to each. He stood up, and in a single sentence redeemed his pledge—‘You all wish to buy cheap and sell dear.’ He was much applauded, for every one felt it to be a description of his own heart, and was satisfied that all others were similar.”

On this story it may be observed, that the mere wish “to buy cheap and to sell dear” is not condemned by the proverb before us. What is condemned is, the employment of unjustifiable means to reduce the price of an article, whether intended to be resold or not. Men must, of course, buy cheaper than they sell, or there could be no profitable trade at all; of course, also, the less they give, and the more they get, so much the better, provided always that there is no beating down on

the one side, or overcharge on the other. "To buy in the cheapest market and to sell in the dearest," is one of the established maxims of modern merchandise. It is perfectly fair; for it is to be observed, that buying in a market, and at the market price—a price fixed and regulated, not by individual action, but by circumstances and events which, independently of mere personal feeling, affect the marketable value of commodities—is a very different thing from what is stigmatized by the proverb. Where, for instance, an article is abundant and everybody has more than enough, it must of necessity be far cheaper than where there is little or none, where it has to be imported, where many want it, and all who do are ready to give something considerable to get it. It is perfectly right that the man who deals in such an article, supposing that there are two or three places where it may be had, should buy it where it can be got cheapest, and should take it for sale to wherever it would yield him the largest returns. There is no wrong done in all this to any one. The first seller is satisfied with what he gets, and the last purchaser with what he gives. As to the other places, and the other markets respectively, the merchant will go where he must give more, and carry his goods where he will obtain less, when he has exhausted the first and best on both sides, and has to be content with diminished profits. He will still do his best to keep buying as cheap and selling as dear as possible, though gradually obliged to pay more and charge less, knowing that he is subject to the action of laws, which, independently of himself regulate the market price of the goods in which he deals.

What the proverb condemns, then, is not this. What it means to expose and censure is, consciously unjust depreciation of an article, in order to secure it for less than the buyer believes it to be worth. This

may be done in, at least, two ways. First, by the actual depreciation of the thing itself either as to material or workmanship, or both; the man knowing well enough that, in each respect, it is alike good. Or, secondly, by the man's pretending that he does not want it, and has no use for it, so that, whatever may be its intrinsic value, it is not really of that value to him; he, on the contrary, knowing and feeling that it would just suit him, and secretly wishing to obtain it, if possible.

All this is, of course, wrong. The case, however, is much worse when the buyer knows, or suspects, that the seller must sell; that he is poor, or in difficulties, and that his circumstances may be taken advantage of to wring from him his goods at a cruel sacrifice. A man's heart may be broken, as well as his position destroyed, by such heartless pressure being brought to bear upon him in a great necessity.

The latter of the two pleas above mentioned may, however, be urged sometimes in good faith, and with perfect fairness. A seller may press an article upon you which you really do not want, or do not care for, or not at that moment, and may offer it at a low price to induce you to purchase. You can honestly assure him that you do not wish to buy, and may frankly admit the value and excellence of the thing itself, and that it is fully worth what he asks for it, and even more. Still he presses and urges you to purchase, and perhaps pleads that you would be conferring a favour by doing so. In such circumstances a man might be justified in offering even less than what is asked, though that may be less than the intrinsic value of the article, because he consents, for the sake of the vendor and because of his importunity, to purchase and pay for what may be an encumbrance, or what he may not care to have the trouble to turn again into money.

Where, however, two men, on equal terms, are buying and selling, the one asking a fair price, and the other needing and wishing to purchase, for the buyer either to run down the article, or to pretend indifference, in order to get it for what he knows to be beneath its marketable value—the price which the seller has a right to demand, and which the buyer ought to be willing to give—this is wrong, and is the wrong thing which the proverb condemns.

That such is the case appears from the conduct subsequently attributed to the purchaser—"When he is gone his way, then he boasteth." This at once reveals the real character of the transaction, and illustrates the folly which is often associated with deceit. When a man has outwitted another, or has gained an unworthy advantage over him, his wisest course is to say nothing about it: for his own credit he had better hold his tongue. But people who think themselves very knowing and adroit cannot do this: they long to proclaim their own cleverness, and to enjoy the praise of their achievement, as well as to possess the substantial advantage which they have secured. "When he is gone his way, then he boasteth;" that is, shows with a chuckle of exultation what he has got, expatiates on its beauty or excellence, on the use it will be to him, how long he had been wishing to get hold of such a thing, and how cleverly he had managed to beat down the price, and get it for next to nothing, smiling, perhaps, all the time, at the weakness of the man who was so soft as to let him succeed! In this way it often is that deceit and cunning betray themselves, and a sinner proclaims himself a fool. The man of sharp practice, or "the 'cute customer," will often choose to have the praise of his adroitness and a laugh at his dupe, though he may be thought wicked, rather than be regarded as truthful

and straightforward, if with that he is to be classed with slow, humdrum, commonplace people.

The evil exposed by the proverb is not common amongst us in the higher walks of buying and selling. In the lower strata of shops, and among a certain class of customers, it may, no doubt, be found; but in no place of business of the more respectable order does any seller ever think of asking one price, while ready and willing to take another, or a purchaser to offer less than what is asked, or to depreciate an article with a view to obtaining it on easier terms. If an article is thought too dear, or the buyer does not feel justified in giving its price, it is simply declined, and nothing more is said. It is very likely, however, that in the time and the country of Solomon trade morality was not high even in some of the better class of bazaars. In the Mosaic law there are sundry enactments against unfair dealing; but in spite of these, it would seem, both from the Prophets and the Apocrypha, that there were times when justice and equity were rather the exception than the rule. Divers weights and measures are condemned; just balances and a just meteyard are enforced. "Divers weights" might be such as could be changed, according as the individual bought or sold. "Balances of deceit" might be such as were so constructed as to have all the appearance of justice, and yet might cheat the pocket while they satisfied the eye. The fact is, that among eastern peoples, everywhere—in the olden time, and at the present day—there always has been a tendency to various species of falsehood. The traveller is never sure that he is getting the truth; and this of course is seen in business transactions as well as in other things.

The morality of trade in this country, in the higher walks of business, is, as we have said, in respect to the

subject of the proverb, perfectly sound; so that in no first-class shop is anything to be met with but a fixed price; and no purchaser, accustomed to such, dreams of depreciation with a view to offering less than what is asked. Of course, where things are constantly being sold "at a tremendous sacrifice," where "a bankrupt's stock" is to be offered for sale, or where people are always "selling off," and "must be cleared out," on one pretence or another, we suppose there may be plenty of hollowness on both sides. In such places there may be as much insincerity in the descriptions given, and in the prices asked, as in anything that the buyers may say or do; though they, it is presumed, go to purchase on the principle of beating down and getting "a bargain."

There are occasions, however, when even the most high-minded men—men who would think themselves insulted, if in their warehouses they were offered anything less than what they asked—there are occasions when even they, on the one side or the other, will act on a different principle. In purchasing a house or an estate; in buying a horse; in taking or parting with fixtures or furniture; on leaving an old or entering on a new residence,—these, and other occasions, are times when such bargaining may take place, even among respectable people, as may have the appearance of going very near to what the proverb condemns. But here, again, it is to be remembered that the wish to get a thing for less than what is asked may by no means have in it anything wrong. The vendor in any of the above cases will sometimes say that he is "open to an offer;" that is, that while he asks so much, yet he might be induced to consent to take a lower sum. In such a case, the man wishing to purchase is perfectly justified in offering less than what is asked; but he would not be justified in depreciating the property against his conviction of its

actual value, nor in pretending an indifference to it which he did not feel. At the same time he might properly say that another might possibly be found who would give more than he felt warranted to offer; that much as he liked the thing, and would like to have it, it was not so indispensable to him that he must secure it at any cost: if, therefore, the person wishing to part with it chose to take his offer, he would close with him; if not, the negotiation was at an end. It might so happen that the seller would feel it the best thing he could do to accept what was offered; it would be a saving in the end, though, in his opinion, he was parting with something for less than its value. Still, the circumstances may be such, that while it is "given away," sold "for an old song," neither does the seller feel that he has been overreached by the buyer, nor does the buyer, though quite aware of his good bargain, feel disposed to "boast,"—at least, not in the spirit of the proverb, which is that of a man exulting in the success of a clever trick.

As to house fixtures, every one knows that they must, for the most part, be surrendered at a sacrifice; and even furniture, "as good as new," if obliged to be parted with, must often be let go for "next to nothing." In the case of horses, again, it is singular, how, in the case of men professionally concerned with them, nobody seems to expect anything approaching to ordinary uprightness. Blindness to or depreciation of the best points of an animal, denial or concealment of its defects, as the case may be, seem to be assumed as matters of course; so that, in two senses, there may be "boasting" of a bargain—in the one, at getting a perfect beauty, or a strong roadster, at a ridiculously low figure; in the other, at having so managed as to get rid—and at a capital price—of an old screw. It is told of the son of a horse dealer, a sharp lad, that, when once unexpectedly

called by his father to mount a horse, and exhibit his paces, the little fellow whispered the question, in order to regulate how he should ride, "Are you buying or selling?" The reverse of this proverb might admit of large illustration;—the way, that is to say, in which sellers will take advantage of the ignorance or simplicity of buyers; how they will puff off their articles, imputing qualities which they do not possess, or denying their defects, or in other ways forcing a purchase, and then "boasting" of their success at the expense of the purchaser. But these things are not before us; nor, perhaps, it may be thought, were some others which have been introduced. What has been said, however, will not be in vain, if it impress any with the importance of little things in speech and action; the paramount obligation of strict adherence to truth; the avoidance of every approach to dissimulation in all the concerns of ordinary life; and the necessity which there is for Christian men to show that the religious element pervades and penetrates their whole being, and is regulative and purifying to the minutest point of secular behaviour. It was the prayer of the Psalmist, "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on Thee." Because he was professedly a religious man, he felt he must be eminent in the virtues of common life. It was religious servants who were exhorted "to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," by showing "all good fidelity" of hand and lip, and in respect to the smallest concerns connected with their vocation. It rests on all who profess and call themselves Christians, "whether they eat or drink," buy or sell, "or whatever they do, to do all to the glory of God." "Let every man speak truth with his neighbour." "Let no man go beyond, and defraud another in any matter." "Let all guile be put away from you." "Avoid every form and appearance

of evil." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," it is for Christians, in shop and counting-house, mart and market, "to think on these things" and do them.

NOTE TO PAGE 138.

The insertion of the introductory sentences to the seventh sermon seems to require explanation. It was not intended at first to introduce them; but on second thoughts it seemed best to do so, on one or two grounds. The sermon was delivered on a special occasion—in the afternoon—and after a protracted morning service. The preacher felt it necessary to change his subject, and his style of address, as explained. The extemporaneous discourse—extemporaneous as to language, not thoughts—was afterwards written out. Acting as his own reporter, the preacher attempted to reproduce it, as nearly as possible, *as it was spoken*. Hence that freedom of address and familiarity of illustration by which it is characterised. May they be forgiven!

The discourse on "The Law our Schoolmaster" was written out at the same time, and for the same publication; as both had been delivered in the same church, though on different occasions. The nature of the argument and the object in view, in the latter case, led to the employment of a totally different style of composition. The one sermon aimed at stirring the feelings, touching the conscience, moving the heart; the other sought to establish principles, to guide and regulate thought. No marginal references were given in the one case, that the force of the appeal might not be broken; they were plentifully employed in the other, and wished to be leisurely consulted. The one sermon, as it were, was to be *heard* by the reader—heard, as if the book was speaking like a man; the other was to be *read*, pondered, studied, because the man had spoken like a book.