

THE
PROBLEM OF FINAL DESTINY

STUDIED IN THE LIGHT OF
REVISED THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

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"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."—*St. Paul.*

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ERRATA

- Page 19—line 12—for “Fifth” read “Sixth.”
- “ 126 “ 33—for “to” read “of.”
- “ 128 “ 33—semicolon for period.
- “ 244 “ 16—for “Saducees” read “Sadducees.”
- “ 253 “ 21—for “*ioneon*” read “*Aioneon*.”
- “ 273 “ 2—for “escatological” read “eschatological.”
- “ 292 “ 1—for “cause” read “course.”

EXPLANATORY.

On entering the Christian ministry, many years ago, I accepted, with but little protest, that system of doctrines commonly known as Evangelical. I have been in the pastorate forty years, and considerably more than half of that time in connection with one church. Having naturally a progressive temperament, I became interested in scientific and related studies that were more or less connected with theological conclusions. It was not till far into the seventh decade of the now closing century that my moral nature began to feel a slight recoil from some of the conclusions that previously had been undoubted. One chief point of misgiving related to the traditional doctrine of eternal punishment. Evidently, I was not preaching that doctrine in its literal and sensuous form as in former years. I saw,—if none could ever be saved except those who, in this life, believed in Jesus Christ, and consciously accepted His atoning sacrifice as the only condition of forgiveness and eternal life,—that then, the great proportion of all the people now living, or who ever have lived (infants and imbeciles excepted) must go into a place of eternal torment. When I considered the circumstances under which man comes into this world, also, his environment and the small opportunities that are often given him, I was obliged to shut my eyes and turn from the awful vision. I knew the arguments in support of the doctrine, but they did not satisfy. My fuller comprehension of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, as a loving Father, and a clearer view of the intuitive principles of right, honor and justice

that the Creator, with His own hand, has written in the moral natures of all men, and that must be obligatory upon all moral beings, God Himself included, compelled me to revolt against the creedal theory of eternal punishment.

And yet, I had nothing positive to substitute in its place. I was not then, and am not now, a Universalist, because I have no certainty that all men will be saved in any full sense of that term. For similar reasons I am not able to accept the doctrine of complete and universal restoration. And, as for the hypothesis of conditional immortality, it appears to rest on bad logic and worse exegesis. If I gave up the traditional theory, it must be for better reasons than I yet fully saw; and besides, what positive doctrine was there to put in its place? It is not possible for an earnest mind to rest upon negations. One must stand on solid rock or sink in the mire. A preacher must preach positive convictions or his self-respect and power are gone.

I must now pass over a period of about ten years, during which other urgent duties and the necessity for foreign travel interrupted this whole course of study. At length an event took place, calling here for no explanation, that desolated my home, but not my life, and changed my whole current of thought, making the affairs of this world of but small value in comparison with what is to go on in what Hiawatha calls the "Land of the Hereafter." Then, this old question of endless punishment, by positive infliction, from God's direct hand, came back to me, and seemed to demand solution. My first step was to set a double row of buoys along the channel of thought, outside of which I could not go; for, in all my thinking, I had never for a moment ques-

tioned any of the cardinal facts or principles of the real Gospel of Christ. Indeed, these had grown in interest and in my confidence continually.

My next step was to ask myself just how far I had advanced in the direction of rejecting the traditional theory of eternal punishment, and found that I was able to formulate the following statements as probably true:

1. That God, as an honorable, just and loving Father, would and must do for every soul that He brings into this world all that infinite wisdom and infinite power, controlled by perfect love, can do for its eternal well-being.

2. That as regards countless millions of the human race, their earthly condition is such as to afford them no fair and reasonable opportunity to be saved on what are understood to be Gospel grounds.

3. That there are good reasons for believing that Christ's offers of salvation do not terminate at death, but extend into the world of departed spirits.

4. That the doctrine of eternal misery from the direct hand of God and apart from the operation of natural law, cannot be literally true.

These were advanced positions, but they did not solve the great Problem.

In the Summer of 1897, I came clearly to see that the problem of man's destiny was closely interlinked with every one of the great doctrines of the Christian faith, and must be studied in connection with them; each throwing such light upon the future life as it naturally contained. I seemed to see that if these gleams of light, from many sources, could be gathered into a common centre, they might disclose the right solution of man's destiny. This accounts for the wide range of study

pursued in the following chapters. I saw, as the title of my book suggests, the necessity of revising, and at times almost revolutionizing, some venerable theological conclusions, chiefly along metaphysical lines. While these studies of great subjects must necessarily be short and incomplete, they should yet be full enough to cover essential points, to justify proposed and implied revisions, and to indicate their bearing on the Problem of Final Destiny. Real and difficult issues in Theology may not be dodged in the interest of policy, nor may they be subjected to unfair or partisan treatment. Exhaustive discussions in so small a work, on great subjects, is not attempted and would be impossible.

The writing was commenced solely for the clarification of my own mind; and not till the work approached completion, and the solution had come clearly into view that brought rest to a troubled soul, had I any serious thought of subjecting what was written to the attention of other minds. I do not like to differ, even in minor things, from those with whom I have wrought, in mutual confidence, for many years; but to an honest mind, duty stands above all other considerations.

I wish the work were better done, but I prefer to send it forth for what it is,—a record of one mind's earnest search for truth that, in the light of theological revision, should solve the problem of Final Destiny.

I cherish the hope that most of the chapters may be read by some with interest and profit, for what they are in themselves, and apart from the special end that led to their composition, with which, perhaps, not every reader will find himself in full accord. If we must differ, let us differ in mutual love and confidence.

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THE PROBLEM OF FINAL DESTINY.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROBLEM STATED AND OPENED.

For more than six thousand years the generations of men, like ocean waves, have been thrown up on the shores of time and rolled back into the infinite deep. What has been in the past will continue to be in the future. History repeats itself. "One generation cometh and another goeth. After the fathers shall be the children." This has been and, to the end will be, the order of Divine Providence.

Whence came these countless millions of human beings, and whither do they go? This is the problem of Final Destiny which has not yet been solved.

The great question here proposed involves others that hang around and enter into it, such as these: Was man's entrance into life a new creation, or was he pre-existent? "Does death end all," or is there continued life after physical death? Is immortality unconditional and universal? Has life, after death, any close connection with life in this world, and, if so, what? Do all share alike in the after world, or are some perfectly happy and others utterly miserable? Will existence, to any part of man-

kind, be a curse and not a blessing? What has the principle of natural consequences to do in deciding man's condition in the great hereafter? Did Christ come into the world to save a part of mankind or the whole? and will the purpose of his coming be accomplished? May not final restitution, obtain to the extent that existence, to all who bear God's image and are made immortal, shall be a source of greater good than evil?

These, and other similar questions, enter into and constitute the great problem of Destiny. At bottom they are all one question:—Whence and Whither?

This is for the human race the question of questions. Nothing else, from a practical point of view compares with it. It touches the vital issues of man's existence here and hereafter. It concerns every human being, and is so great a problem that it involves, more or less, almost every other of enduring interest. What is life to us if we know not the end toward which we are tending? Croesus, king of the Lydians, rolling in wealth and luxury, asked of his philosophic counsellor—expecting a flattering answer—if he did not consider him the happiest of mortals? His faithful friend replied: "It is not possible to decide that one's life is truly prosperous and happy until we know how it terminates." This is pre-eminently true of man's existence. All that wealth, honor, pleasure and prosperity of every kind which this world can bestow does not satisfy a thoughtful mind, destined to an immortal conscious existence, apart from some reasonable assurance as to whether this endless existence is to be one of infinite good or of infinite evil to its possessor. So long as such a question hangs in doubt, the soul of man, be he peasant, philosopher, millionaire or king, must be restless; death must ever re-

main the king of terrors ; men must feel that it is better to "bear the ills they have than fly to others that they know not of." At best, "riches take to themselves wings and fly away." Life is a fleeting shadow, a hand's breadth, a tale that is told, "a meteor in the sky, which, before we've said, see, see! 'tis fled." But there is an eternity beyond. What to us and to the human race is that eternity to be?

There may be people who regard such a question as unworthy of their attention ; but such ones are themselves unworthy of the intellectual and moral natures that God has given them. Most men have times of profound thought on this great subject ; and history shows that it has ever been so. Apart from the problem of Destiny, we know not how to explain anything. Existence is an awful mystery ; the course or history of human life is inexplicable ; God Himself is the "Great Unknowable," in whose presence we bow down, but whether we should do it in fear and dread, or in confidence and love, who, apart from light on the awful problem of Destiny, can satisfactorily decide?

This great problem, on which the world has been thinking for thousands of years, is still unsettled. The questions at the opening of this chapter indicate the variety and diversity of opinions that still prevail. A deep feeling of uncertainty, an undercurrent of misgiving and doubt, of mingled hope and fear are continually, and from every quarter, revealed. Those who think they have solved the problem would give worlds, if they had them, to know assuredly that they had solved it correctly and beyond the possibility of mistake.

Is the problem of Human Destiny solvable? The fact that it has not yet been fully solved is not proof that it

cannot be. Other questions that perplexed the thinking world for ages have, at length, reached satisfactory solutions. The Copernican system of Astronomy is an example. How men of scientific turn and culture struggled with the problem of our Solar System and of the stellar heavens! But, at last, by a wide range of study, and the grouping together of rays of light from all quarters the great system of astronomic truth stood revealed, and a new universe was created. So, the time must come, if men study honestly, patiently and in right directions and long enough, when this problem of Destiny will yield up its secrets to the infinite satisfaction of a weary and waiting world.

Demonstrable solution of the problem at the present time is probably impossible. No one has yet come back from the unseen world fully to reveal its secrets. I do not mean to deny that messengers from the spirit world have appeared to men in such a way as to prove the fact of continued life after death; nor would I venture to predict that the time will never come when communications between the seen and the unseen worlds will be far more frequent, marked and satisfactory than they have ever yet been. But, certainly, at present, no such reliable testimony is generally believed to exist. Swedenborg claimed to have communications with spirits in the world of spirits; but I do not see how any one can read many of his strange and weird narratives without concluding that he often mistook hallucination for reality.

Conceding that the problem of Final Destiny cannot at present be solved on the basis of demonstrative certainty, may it not be placed on the pedestal of rational probability? Probability, rather than certainty, is the ground on which we all stand in relation to nine-tenths of the ques-

tions with which we have to deal. Outside of mathematical and moral axioms our beliefs, decisions and actions have to be regulated largely by degrees of probability. When probability is very strong, men should act upon it and follow its guidance with caution, but without hesitation. Wise men do this; weak men hesitate; and this constitutes largely the difference between success and failure in this world, and may, as regards the world beyond. Final Destiny, on the basis of rational probability, is then all that these chapters are expected to establish; but that probability will, I trust, appear so great that rational people should not hesitate to accept and act upon it with confidence and earnest endeavor, as they do on other questions to which they are similarly related.

A rational solution of the problem of Final Destiny necessitates a re-examination and careful revision of the historic Creeds, and some of the traditional beliefs of the Christian Church. As the Creeds stand to-day, the problem is already solved. They lay down the exact conditions on which alone the salvation of any soul is possible. Then they make it clear, in view of these conditions and existing facts, that the great proportion of the human family, past and present, who have attained the state of moral accountability, not having complied with these specified conditions, are, and must be eternally lost; in other words, tormented forever by the direct hand of God. For nearly 2,000 years this has been the doctrine of the Creeds and the professed belief of the Christian Church. All this time the heart of man, apart from creedal dogma, has more or less revolted against so awful a conclusion, which it cannot reconcile with the love and justice of God.

Creedal theology, unrevised, makes no compromises;

and therefore the feeling is everywhere growing that the time is near, if it has not arrived, when, on this and on many other points, a revision and re-statement is a necessity.

In view of these facts, the title of this work has been adopted, which is, *The Problem of Final Destiny, Studied in the Light of Revised Theological Statement*. Apart from such a revision there can be no other than the old unsatisfactory solution. The revised statement, which must retain all fundamental and essential truth, is expected of itself to reveal a new solution. But, to many minds the very idea of such a revisal suggests a rejection of the Bible, the putting of dishonor upon Jesus Christ, and a meandering into bypaths of heresy; just as if the world had never made progress and was never expected to. While revision and restatement upon every other subject is, from time to time a necessity, why should credal Theology, which at best is of human origin, be a conspicuous exception?

A glance at the world's theological history, and at the many and great changes through which it has passed, should convince any one that still further change, carefully considered and cautiously introduced, is to be expected as both certain and necessary. The history of creed revisals is both interesting and instructive. Let us glance at some of them.

The early parts of the Old Testament are a revision and re-statement of traditions and beliefs that had been current among tribes and nations much older than Moses or Abraham. Many suppose that all contained in these earlier writings was a new and independent revelation direct from God; and not, in large part, a revised statement of traditions and beliefs that ante-date Hebrew

history. But late discoveries of those older records disprove this. Then, the later portions of the Old Testament revise, in part, the earlier ones. The Bible is throughout a progressive Book.

The New Testament is, to a great extent, a revisal and restatement of the Old. Jesus revised the Jewish conception of Himself and of His Kingdom. He revised the Ten Commandments, taking them out of the negative and putting them into a positive form. He revised and modified the Fourth Commandment, retaining its spirit, but rejecting its letter. He enlarged the meaning of the Fifth Commandment, making murder to consist not alone in killing, but equally in hating one's brother. The Seventh Commandment was greatly expanded, so as to include thoughts equally with deeds. Christ reversed the Jewish conception of God, making Him a Father and a God of love, and not a Being possessed of like passions with ourselves, as He had been conceived of by many of the old Hebrews. He put a new estimate upon man no less than upon God; He brought life and immortality to light as the Old Testament did not. He made all men brethren and children of a common Father. Jesus reversed the conception of the whole moral law, and made it to consist alone, as God's character consisted, in love. Love was the fulfilling of the law. On this one Commandment hung all the law and the prophets. Thus, the New Testament, while it embodies all that was good in the Old, throws out a vast amount of what was human and temporal, and was intended to pass away, or, to re-appear in greatly modified and improved form. In these and other ways the New Testament is a full revision of the Old. Man and revelation advance together.

Then, again, the apostolic age witnessed, to some ex-

tent, though perhaps unconsciously, a revision and re-statement of Gospel teaching. Christ laid down great principles; the Apostles sought to reduce those principles to a system of doctrines; They did more; after the resurrection we hear almost nothing of the Kingdom of God which was the great theme of our Lord's teaching. Now, the Church, which Christ mentioned but twice, takes the place of the Kingdom, which He spoke of about eighty times. No one can compare the epistles of Paul with the Gospels, without seeing how great is the difference of expression between them. This apostolic revision was not a denial of anything contained in the Gospels, but was an advance along partly new lines.

After the apostolic age, and when Christianity was becoming a power in the Roman Empire, ambition for party leadership entered into the Church; party zeal ran high, differences prevailed and a re-statement of Christian doctrine was demanded. This resulted in the calling of the Nicene Council, and others of less note, for the dogmatic settlement of Christian doctrine. That great revision and re-statement, after a hundred years of contention was accepted, and through ten centuries of spiritual death in the Church was practically unquestioned.

Then, at the opening of the 16th century, the Reformation was inaugurated, which divided the Roman Catholic Church and established Protestantism over half of Europe. After this, among Protestants, the work of revision and creed-manufacture was renewed; and it finally crystallized, among English speaking people, in the Westminster Confession of Faith. For a time general satisfaction prevailed. A little later it came to be seen that the metaphysics of the creed denied man's free-

dom, as the older system had done, and so left him in a state of inability and irresponsibility. Of course, the power of the Gospel was broken, and irreligion came like a flood over England and America. To correct this state of things, another creedal revision was necessary; and President Edwards, Dr. Hopkins, Andrew Fuller, and others became theological reformers. They revised the creedal doctrine of the Will. That, in the end, divided the Churches into what was called New and Old School sections, and this distinction with variations has continued to this day.

Then, again, the scientific, historic and literary advances and discussions of the last forty years have created so much of restlessness, uncertainty and dissatisfaction with existing formulas, that still another revision and re-statement of doctrine is made necessary. While one class in the Church is eagerly engaged in discussions preliminary to such revision, another class appears to be in a state of alarm lest the Bible and the Christian faith should be overthrown. The past history of revision, as here outlined, ought to dispel such groundless fears. Only the wood, hay and stubble will be discarded or burned; while the gold, silver and precious stones will have new settings, and shine more brilliantly than ever.

What has been in the past will continue to be in the future. As knowledge increases—knowledge of the Bible, of science, of history, of literature and of the sacredness of man's moral intuitions—revision, in every department of human knowledge, theology included, is to be expected and desired. And this same process must go on in the world of departed spirits and among the angels of God. All that finite beings can ever know must be

infinitely less than infinite; and, as knowledge increases, revisions of past thought must follow.

The lesson from this sketch on the subject of revision should quiet the fears of the timid, shut the mouths of those who regard Creeds as finalities, and encourage earnest seekers after truth to go forward thoughtfully and prayerfully in the work to which God calls them. Light must be sought from all quarters, accepted and followed, lead where it may. Revision is the order of this world, and so long as time endures and knowledge increases, it should be encouraged and not repressed. God only is unchangeable.

I would emphasize the fact that the present time is peculiarly favorable for the study of this and other great problems, and for needful revisions. The whole civilized world appears to be in a state of unrest and transition. Social, civil and religious life are all drifting towards some new order of things as yet but dimly seen. "Coming events cast their shadows before." Naturally, conservatism resists the change, and it is probably best that it should, as a too rapid movement might produce disorder. New ideas need to be well examined, and tested on all sides, before they come into general acceptance. Recklessness always leads to ruin.

Thinking people are now alive to the great questions of the day; and, especially, to the central truths of religion. They may not all care to express themselves fully. While men have not the interest in Creeds they once had, yet the living truths that hang around those Creeds, but may be no longer symbolized in them, were never so vivid in the thoughts, not only of church people, but of the world generally, as they are to-day. Those who look on this as an inconsiderate and really sceptical

age are profoundly mistaken. It is true that new ideas on some points are supplanting old ones; but men want to know the truth and to find God, as they never did before; and they are seeking for Him, not in books and sermons alone, as they once did, but in themselves. The truths of Christ's Gospel are largely supported now, not so much by arguments addressed to the intellect, as by appeals to the consciences and consciousness of men. God in us and we in God, is now, more than ever before, the foundation of Christian hope. The immanence of God, the love of God, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man,—these are the great vital principles and facts in the type of religion that is beginning to move, and will soon move the world as it has not been moved before. What was once theory, form and law, is now coming to be spirit and life. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

In this new movement that is agitating the world, the great problem of Human Destiny comes to the front and has to be considered, both from old and from new points of view. Modified conceptions of God, of truth and of man, and what they all signify, and how they stand related, are changing man's conceptions of probable Destiny. Endless punishment is no longer accepted and proclaimed as it once was; and a general hope, growing into belief, prevails that the doctrine, in its old, legal, mechanical, sensuous form of statement is not true. In the creedal form, it is not believed by the people; and the present attitude of a large number of Christian ministers of all orders is one of uncertainty and doubt. The people know and feel this; they know it from the changed style of preaching and speaking on the subject, all of which tends to unsettle the faith of the Church and the world,

not only on this, but, to an extent, on other religious questions. It must then, by all leaders of Christian thought, be fairly and fearlessly met and settled in a way that shall honor God and satisfy man's reason and intuitive sense of right and justice.

The securing of such a result must involve a wide range of investigation. The problem of Human Destiny is so interblended with all the great questions of Christian Theology that it cannot be studied separately, by itself. Each cardinal doctrine must be briefly but carefully considered, and made to yield up its quota of evidence that bears upon, and helps to solve, the problem. No one line of evidence could solve it; but when all these gleams of light, from many sources, are converged to a common centre, then the looked-for solution may be expected of itself to appear. The proposed extended course of study may be briefly outlined as follows:

The Personality of God is the fundamental fact always to be recognized; for, if there be no personal God, there is no problem. Then the Tri-Unity of God must be considered. Not the personality of God alone, but His moral character as a God of honor, justice, mercy and love must be clearly apprehended; for, upon these qualities in God, man's destiny depends. Then man himself must be studied; his two-fold nature, animal and spiritual; the conflict between them, and the probable issue of the struggle should come into view. Creation, its nature, its law, its progress, its purpose and interpretation, at least so far as man is concerned, must throw light on the problem to be solved. The Bible, as a Book, containing human and Divine elements, and its place and value in the discussion has to be carefully considered. The question of Immortal Life, and what it suggests as

to God's purpose in creation, should come into the study. The doctrine of Sin, viewed in its relationships, and especially as to its nature, desert and penalty, must have an important bearing on the great problem. Christ and His Gospel—the central ground of hope—must be studied as Christ revealed it. The controverted doctrine of Atonement calls for examination and revision. The question of the Intermediate State, or of life between death and finality, and as to what may take place in a soul's experience during this period calls for careful consideration. Creeds, and, especially, the "Adamic System of Metaphysics," have had a large share in forming conclusions as to Human Destiny, and so, must be reviewed and revised. Christ's words on Future Punishment are of great import and must have careful study. The question of Eternal Hope, the value of hope, what crushes it, and the efforts men make to encourage hope as to the life after death, must be considered. The Second Coming of Christ, the Resurrection and Judgment, all closely related, bear directly on the great problem. The hypothesis of natural consequences, as illustrated in Divine and human Governments, is one of the most important studies in the whole series. Then, as a branch of the same, the place of the Natural and Supernatural in the world's history has to be considered. And, finally, the rays of light from all the preceding studies must be collected and converged to a common centre, out of which the solution of the problem of Human Destiny ought naturally to arise and stand forth, at least on a basis of strong rational probability.

These are great themes; and, while they are to be studied with constant reference to their eschatological bearing, yet the themes in themselves, though briefly and

imperfectly unfolded, are of such great interest that their discussion should claim attention apart from the special end to be kept ever in view.

In this whole course of study, as in most others, as much depends upon the method of investigation as upon the investigation itself. If the postulate or deductive method is adopted, then we have not a series of subjects to be studied, but a proposition to be proved, which necessitates, or, at least, secures an ex-parte argument in its support. To assume the main conclusion in advance is almost to affirm that further investigation is unnecessary; at least, it involves such committal to a theory as to make an impartial study of the whole subject impossible. Unfortunately most theological controversies have been conducted on the postulate plan, and this is why they are generally unsatisfactory and inconclusive; and why, also, the method should be abandoned.

What is known as the Inductive or study method, as Lord Bacon presented it, is far preferable. This begins with no theory or proposition to sustain; it is only looking after facts and their bearing on the question to be investigated. The facts must speak for themselves, so that no conclusion is forced into view; that must come of itself, and it will be recognized when it appears. On this inductive plan one must not reach conclusions from a narrow line of study, but must range for his facts over wide fields that encircle the whole question. Then, those facts themselves must be studied, classified, compared and allowed to give their own testimony until, step by step, the conclusion becomes more and more distinct and finally stands out a self-revealed truth.

Of late, what may be called the Intuitive or Psycho-

logical method of study, in the department of Theology, is holding a larger place than formerly. Men are beginning to find God and moral truth in themselves more, and out of themselves less, than they once did. God has put into the reason and conscience of moral beings certain fundamental principles and distinctions of Right and Wrong, of Honor and Justice that are common to all men, and from whose decisions there is no appeal. These felt and conceded principles of moral intuition are the arbiters of truth and duty wherever they apply. They help to settle many questions that otherwise would hang in endless doubt. In the future, most questions of religious duty must be settled more at the bar of reason and conscience than by appeal to authority.

In accordance with ideas that have now been suggested, the effort to solve the great problem of Destiny, not demonstratively, but on the ground of rational probability, is undertaken. Some views will be expressed and conclusions reached that current theology, as we find it in the Creeds and in popular belief, cannot accept. But, if freedom of thought, and frank statement of conclusions that seem to follow, are to be sacrificed for any reason whatever, then it were better that the work should not have been undertaken. Truth alone is worth the seeking; and if, on so great a subject, one can go so far as to establish a basis of strong probability, one's labor, though not a finality, is not in vain. In any event, truth once apprehended is in no danger of being overthrown. In the words of John Milton:

"Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so truth is in the field we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth put to the worse in a fair and free encounter?"

CHAPTER II.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD IN THE PROBLEM.

If there be any rational ground for hope that the great proportion of the human family will enter into everlasting life, and that, to none will existence prove an infinite curse, that hope centres in God. God, then, is the chief fact and factor in the problem of Final Destiny. Other factors, as we shall see, enter into it; but, apart from this central one, they could never solve the question. The Supreme Being then must be carefully studied in three aspects—Personality, 'Tri-Unity, Moral Character—showing incidentally how each is related to Man's Destiny. This study must occupy the present and the two following chapters.

If there be no personal God, there is no problem to solve, for the universe is in the grasp of cruel, heartless fate. An impersonal God is impossible of conception. Divine Personality (apart from Scripture) may be established on three grounds—moral intuition, human consciousness and logical induction. The first two of these, because more familiar, will be considered briefly.

1. Moral intuitions prove the personality of God. By intuition I mean those beliefs and judgments that present themselves spontaneously to the mind with irresistible evidence, and without the assistance of reasoning or reflection. They are self-evident and necessary truths. In every course of study something has to be assumed as conceded truth.

The study of Astronomy assumes the truth of numbers, of mathematical axioms and the fact of angles, space and duration. The study of Physics assumes the existence of matter and the reality of touch, sight and sound. The study of Psychology assumes the existence of mind and the fact of consciousness. So, the study of Religion, and of the problem of Final Destiny assumes the existence and personality of God. It assumes this on the ground of moral intuition. All people in all ages have believed in the existence of a personal God, not because they have reasoned themselves into that belief, so much as because man is so constituted that the belief in a Supreme Being is a moral necessity. It is as natural for man to believe in the existence of a personal God as it is to believe in one's own personal existence; and, probably as many people doubt the reality of one as of the other.

Upon this point of intuitive authority all theological and most philosophical writers agree. Sir William Hamilton says: "We are inspired with a belief in something unconditioned beyond the sphere of comprehensible reality." Mr. Mansel, in his "Limitations of Religious Thought," expresses the same idea more simply: "We are compelled by the constitution of our minds to believe in the existence of an Absolute and Infinite Being." Such, in a word, is the intuitive method of finding God. Expansion here is unnecessary.

The second method of reaching the same conclusion is the argument from Consciousness, including necessary inferences. Consciousness as commonly defined is that power, or mental state, that makes us aware of ourselves, of our mental conditions, thoughts, feelings and actions. But Consciousness is more than this. It embraces the

physical world that surrounds us; the books that help to make and mould our thoughts; the people who influence us for good or evil; and so it may include God in whom we live, move and have our being. Within its sphere, consciousness is the highest of all authority. It is, as Herbert Spencer has said, "man's final appeal, and has the deepest of all foundations." The argument from consciousness, including necessary inferences, in proof of a personal God, begins with the study of ourselves. The mental process, put into the first person, runs somewhat as follows: I am conscious of myself, that I exist, that I have feeling, that I possess a degree of intelligence, that I am a moral being, that I possess endowments that constitute personality, that I am finite, and therefore am not self-existent, that I must, then, have been created, and therefore I have a Creator; and, by inference, that the powers with which I am endowed by my Creator, He must, in kind, possess, since no one can impart what He does not have; that my consciousness of finiteness necessitates the idea and fact of infiniteness, and that only the Infinite can create, and I must conclude, therefore, that my Creator is an Infinite Being, possessed of infinite attributes, whom I know as God. This is God-consciousness.

There are different ways of stating the argument from consciousness, but they all begin with ourselves and lead consciously up to God. The great oracle of the Greek philosophers, which they thought to be so profound that it must have descended from the gods, was: "Know thyself and thou shalt know all things." On this, they founded their philosophy, which was their religion. Of late, Christian philosophers and thinkers are coming back to the same method of study; and this method gives a

new conception of God, and, to a considerable extent, of Christian doctrine and of religion. Not only do we find God's personality in the way here described, but in a similar way, we arrive at His moral character as a God of love, and as the Father of mankind, who loves His children and does all for the well-being of each that wisdom, love and power can do. From the moral nature and potentialities of man, we reason to the moral character of God. What man was made to be, in a finite sense, God must be in an infinite sense. God has outlined Himself in every moral being that He has created. These seed-thoughts founded in personal consciousness make havoc with some of the creedal dogmas of past centuries; but the testimony of consciousness, and the argument from that testimony will stand, whatever else falls. Man is first of all a religious being, and the voice of consciousness as to God, is the foundation on which all true religion rests.

The third method of reaching the conclusion of a Personal God,—which will be given more at length,—is the inductive argument from First Cause. The fact of causality is everywhere recognized; the principle on which it rests appears to be the underlying principle of the universe. At least, it underlies everything except God Himself. No one has stated this law of causality more clearly, or traced it logically back to First Cause, and made more of it in his philosophy than has Herbert Spencer, from whom I quote as follows:

“We cannot think at all about the impressions which the external world produces on us without thinking of them as caused, and we cannot carry out our inquiry concerning their causation without inevitably committing ourselves to the hypothesis of a First Cause.” Again

he says: "It is impossible to consider the First Cause as finite; and, if it cannot be finite, it must be infinite. . . . It must also be independent; if it is dependent it cannot be the First Cause. Thus the First Cause must be in every sense perfect, complete, total; including within itself all power and transcending all law. Or, to use the established word, it must be absolute."

On this question of First Cause as a necessity, then, there can be no difference of opinion among thinking people. When we come to inquire into the nature of the First Cause itself, differences arise. Mr. Spencer declares over and over the necessity of a First Cause; but he also claims that, when the human mind has gone that far, it can go no further. It knows nothing and can assert nothing as to the nature of that First Cause, except that it is First and is the "Great Unknowable Force." Others, taking the same general view, declare the First Cause to be Energy; and still others speak of it as, "Some Power in the universe that makes for righteousness." Such varied answers and explanations would seem to indicate that something must be known of the First Cause beyond the mere fact that it is first.

We recognize in these terms, as Sabatier suggests, "not only the First Cause of the Philosophers, but also, the image, half effaced, of the God of believers, the God of love."

We come, then, to the question: What may we know, with reasonable certainty, concerning the First Cause, beyond the single fact that it is absolute? We may and do know many things, such as the following:

We know that nothing can come out of the First Cause, or proceed from it, which it does not itself contain, for, *ex nihilo nihil fit*. We know that the First Cause acts

from itself and not from anything back, or independent of, itself; for, then, it would not be a First Cause. We know that the First Cause is self-existent or uncreated, because it exists and there is nothing back of it; in the nature of things, there can be nothing if it is first. We know that the First Cause is infinite, for what is uncaused cannot be finite and is therefore infinite. The First Cause must possess Unity; it must be one and not more, because two or more First Causes are contradictory and impossible. We know that the First Cause has, in some sense, creative power, because the finite exists and must have come from the Infinite, and, in that sense, is created. The First Cause has plan and purpose, because these are clearly revealed in finite, and, therefore, causal operations. The First Cause has will-power, because it executes, and because it imparts will-power to finite beings. Plan, purpose and will-power necessarily imply thought; thought as necessarily implies intelligence. The First Cause has in it also something of moral character, because it is a "Power in the universe that makes for righteousness," as is conceded, and as every observing person sees and knows. The First Cause possesses immanence, because it is everywhere operative, and no cause can operate where it is not. We know that the First Cause has all these qualities or characteristics, because we find them existing in finite operations, and we have seen that nothing can proceed from a Cause which it does not itself contain or possess. Such characteristics as these combined in a First Cause, imply and necessitate consciousness and conscious being, physical, mental and moral; and this, of itself, is what is meant by the term Personality. And, further, if the First Cause has Personality in any degree, it has infinite Personality,

and this because itself is infinite, and therefore nothing appertaining to it can be finite. Thus the argument from First Cause leads to the conclusion of a Personal God, as an intelligent and moral Being.

Here, I anticipate two chief objections. The first is that it is just as natural and easy to believe that the physical universe is eternal, and that its movements are self-originated by a force inherent in itself, as it is to believe in a self-existent eternal Being who creates, controls and makes it what it is. In the first place, this objection assumes that the causative hypothesis means what it does not mean, namely,—that the physical universe was actually created out of nothing, a thing that is impossible even of conception. The causative hypothesis repudiates such a conclusion, and holds that the physical universe,—because numbers cannot reach infinity, and for other reasons,—is finite, and, therefore, not self-existent; that it is an emanation from an Infinite Cause, and that this Cause is the Infinite God; that is to say, God creates the physical universe from Himself; something of His own Being is in it.

It is objected that this view is Pantheism.—Not so; Pantheism makes God and the physical universe interchangeable terms; whereas this view puts something of God into the universe. God is over it, back of it, through it; in Him all things exist and consist, and from Him all things proceed. But God is infinite, and the physical universe is finite, and so is infinitely less than God. An apple proceeds from the tree, but it is not the tree. The universe sustains some such relation to God, as time does to eternity, as location does to space. In a word, God is infinite and all else is finite; therefore the objection that the causative hypothesis is pantheistic falls to the ground.

On the other hand, there is not a shadow of doubt that the main objection now under consideration involves, and is meant to involve, the quintessence of the pantheistic theory. Its position is that there is nothing back of nature, and that nature, by some inherent potentiality, or necessary law, organized itself. Such a thing is absolutely unthinkable, and I will ask Herbert Spencer to dispose of it, as follows :

“The hypothesis of self-creation, which practically amounts to what is called Pantheism, is similarly incapable of being expressed in thought. To conceive self-creation is to conceive potential existence passing into actual existence by some inherent necessity ; which we cannot do.” Thus, the first objection is disposed of, but calls for another word.

The pantheistic theory of self-creation was partly adopted by some of the Greek philosophers. In its modern form it is largely of Germanic origin. Fifty years ago it was hailed by those who wished to escape from the idea of a personal God, and especially from some of the dogmas of creedal theology, with great expectations. The time for man’s deliverance from the superstitions of religion, they said, had arrived. For years the boast was flaunted boldly, and some timid Christians trembled for the “Ark of God.” But the boast was only of short duration. Under the torchlight of scientific investigation, more than of theological denouncement, the theory was undermined and blown into fragments ; and it is only fair to say that the men who did not accept the Christian idea of religion did more than any others for the overthrow of the pantheistic speculation. They exposed the absurdity of self-creation and insisted upon the great fact of a First Cause. I do not know of a prominent

person who is now willing to stand up and defend, pure and simple, the pantheistic theory of self-creation.

The second objection to the argument for Divine Personality, from the hypothesis of First Cause, already practically answered, is, that it is essentially the old argument from design, and is, therefore, inconclusive. The argument from design is both ancient and modern. Aristotle and the Greeks put it in syllogistic form and thought the argument conclusive, and, at that day it was so. Paley, about one hundred years ago, enlarged the same argument and adapted it to the needs of Christendom; and, for a time, his conclusion was believed to have the authority of demonstration. But later on, the materialistic argument sprung up and pronounced the syllogistic conclusion a failure, on the ground that the Designer might be either a person, as Paley thought, or might be nature itself, which was judged to be quite as probable. This alternative conclusion, if admitted, ruins the Paley argument as a demonstration.

While I would not by any means abandon the argument from effect to cause, from final to first cause as worthless, still its fault should be conceded; and that fault is in the first link of the logical chain. Is that first link, and so the whole chain, held by physical nature, or, is it in the grasp of an Infinite and Absolute Being whom we call God. I do not see that the argument, as Paley put and left it, clearly answers that question; and for the reason that Paley begins at the wrong end of the chain. He finishes his argument where he should have commenced it, and commences where he should have finished. He argued from the less to the greater, from effect to cause, from final cause to First Cause; whereas, I think, and have tried to show, that the reverse of this

order, in view of the objection raised, should have been adopted. The old argument was all right until materialism demanded a possible alternative First Cause,—Nature or God.

To meet this objection it is necessary to begin with the assertion of a First Cause as a necessity, one that every rational mind must recognize and concede. This fact admitted, the next step should be to discover, as far as possible, those qualities or attributes which the First Cause must necessarily possess; and these are the qualities that were brought into view in the preceding direct argument for the personality of God from First Cause. Let all those attributes be logically and necessarily ascribed to the First Cause, and at once it is seen that such attributes cannot belong to limited impersonal nature; they can only adhere in a living, intelligent, moral Being. Let this fact be once established and the alternative of either of the two first causes is destroyed.

Had the Paley argument commenced with a careful study of the First Cause instead of commencing with the study of final cause, and had it discovered in that First Cause necessary elements that place it wholly apart from physical nature, and this in such a sense as to make physical nature not independent in itself, but an emanation from God, then the argument would have been impregnable. We have but to introduce this change in the form of the old argument and it becomes unanswerable if not demonstrative.

The objections, then, that have seemed to cluster around the syllogistic argument and make it inconclusive are avoided in the argument from first cause. Indeed, the weak points in the old way of putting the

argument for the personality of God, are the strong points of the newer method.

Having found God as existing in First Cause, we are now prepared to take up the Paley argument from final cause, and to study the ways and works of God as we find them in ourselves and in nature around us. In this study we "look through nature up to nature's God;" and the vision, from such a point of view is inspiring and glorious. Beholding it we are lost in "wonder, love and praise," and find ourselves changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Turning back for a moment to our starting point and reviewing the ground we have gone over, what have we discovered? We have seen that moral intuition, which never errs, apprehends and declares the personality of God; also that man's consciousness, the most reliable of testimony, attests and confirms the same conclusion; and, further, that the logical argument or argument from First Cause, given at some length, and corroborated by that from final cause establishes, if it does not demonstrate, Divine Personality. Now, let all these arguments,—each complete in itself,—as so many strong cords be wrought together into one, and we have a cable that cannot be broken. In addition to all, and above all, let God's voice, at the opening of Scripture,—and which is echoed and re-echoed through both Testaments,—be heard proclaiming, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This added voice completes the study and binds the arch.

But, it may be asked, of what avail is this search after the personality of God? Who doubts it? Of all questions, this is the most fundamental in the universe; and it is exactly the point around which modern scepticism

centres and raises objection or doubt. It is the stronghold that must be captured, whatever else fails. Grant that most people do believe in a personal God, the other fact remains that the great proportion of them could give no better reason for that belief than that they had been so taught from childhood. It is a mystical, second-hand, if not a traditional belief. This greatest fact in the universe, from which all other facts proceed, ought to be held understandingly, as well as traditionally and intuitively.

Given, a clearly defined personal God, and the whole universe is at once illuminated, and most of its deep mysteries, including that of Final Destiny, are practically solved. If we are not the products of nature or of chance, if God is, and is our Creator and Father, if He has formed us from Himself and into His own image, and made us immortal, it was all for some great end; and that end must have been our eternal well-being. God's purposes will not fail of accomplishment.

Let the fact of God's personal existence be obscured by clouds of doubt, or be held only as a traditional and unintelligent belief, and the whole world is wrapt in a lurid shade, in the midst of which men wander, they know not whither, and wrangle, they know not why. Mankind are voyagers over stormy seas. God has placed us in this condition for a good purpose. He only can quell the storms and bring us safely into the port of eternal rest. Can we trust Him with a child's confidence in a loving Father to care for His own children? God, then, is the central factor in the problem of Final Destiny. If there be no God, there is no problem,—Fate rules the universe.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRI-UNITY OF GOD IN THE PROBLEM.

Through fifteen centuries the doctrine of the Trinity has been more the central subject of discussion, of heated controversy, of bitter acrimony, of dissension and division, and of cruel and often bloody persecution in the Christian Church than any other, or, perhaps, than all others combined. It was this chiefly that led to the convening of the Nicene Council, and that arrayed such Christian men as Athanasius and Origin against each other, and that instigated revolution and persecution that extended through succeeding centuries. It was this doctrine that caused Mahomet to protest that the Christian Church worshiped three gods, and so was guilty of idolatry; and that led him to proclaim and defend as the central truth of his attempted reform the unity of God. It was this that so recently, among Protestant churches, led to the Unitarian controversy, that brought contention and division into so many churches of Old England and of New England. In a word, the doctrine of Divine Trinity has been the root of controversy among theologians throughout the Christian centuries.

To the question, why has it been so? the general answer must be that the whole subject is so profound, and reaches so into the infinite, as to be in its full details unfathomable to finite minds. This, however, has not been generally recognized by advocates of the Trinitarian view, who, when pressed to explain, have stood on the

defensive, and felt bound to take positive positions, and often to formulate dogmas that reason could not accept, nor Scripture support. The theory that three persons are one, and that one can be three,—if the word person is used in its natural sense, to include intellect, sensibility and will, and so personality,—is a self-contradiction, and cannot be otherwise. Yet this has been the position of the historic Creeds since the beginning of the fourth century. Great and good men have claimed to know too much; and by their positive dogmas have confused themselves and repelled those who could not accept their conclusions.

What does the above statement signify? It clearly signifies that the doctrine of the Trinity has a rock-foundation. Good, great, honest and earnest men do not contend, as has been described, over questions that are void of essential, vital truth. The doctrine of the Trinity is worth all the thought, learning and controversy that have gathered about it, and vastly more. I confidently believe, and shall try to explain, that the Tri-Unity of God, rightly understood, is the deepest, most central and living of all truths; and that it is, and is to be, the great spiritual power that is to reach and save the world. Intelligent belief in the Tri-Unity of God is a necessity of the race, and this for two reasons.

First. Man's conscious and supreme need of God, and his historic struggle to find Him proves the necessity of finding Him. Some dim apprehension of God is innate to the human mind. A religion that implies an object of worship is man's necessity. Worship he must; and he can only worship the true God to the extent of his knowledge of Him. In his ignorance man has often mistaken nature for God; and often he has invented and

worshipped imaginary deities as far removed from the true God as night is from day. But amidst all these bewilderments man's soul has been crying after God, the living God; and, in his best moments has searched for Him as men search for gold and silver. The language of the heart has been "O that I knew where I might find Him and come even to His seat." Men who have no revelation but the light of nature feel this need, and try, by earnest thought and religious service, to find God, and in Him eternal life; and this felt need is not confined to the heathen world, it is universal. The most enlightened, with the Bible in their hands, and their names enrolled on Church records, are most earnest in their search and cry after God, feeling that they must know Him better and differently, if they would find spiritual rest. Ministers of the Gospel often, could their hearts be read, would be found to have a similar experience, and to mourn their inability to preach to others the Gospel of God's love out of the depths of their own hearts. Illustrations like these reveal the necessity that men feel for a fuller and more practical knowledge of God. All other knowledge is superficial, and of small value, apart from this, as every moral being at times realizes.

An apprehension of this universal and conscious need of knowing God, brings us to the second thought. It is this: The utter impossibility of truly knowing God, except as He is revealed to us through some conception of His Tri-Unity. The philosophers of our day unhesitatingly admit and contend that whatever is finite in the universe must have been caused; and, that back of all secondary causes there must be a First Cause; and that this First Cause must be Infinite, Eternal and

Absolute. But they claim, further, that this First Cause is incomprehensible to man; that all we can know is that the First Cause is Force, unknowable and absolute; or, at most, that it is "some power in the universe that makes for righteousness." I am compelled to concede that, apart from what is revealed to me of God through His Tri-Unity, I see no way of meeting that cold and unsatisfactory hypothesis. God, considered as an Infinite, Absolute Being, is incomprehensible to the finite mind. We cannot grasp the thought in such a way as to make it clear and practical to ourselves. It may stir the imagination, but it cannot give us the true God and life in Him. It leaves us orphans in the world,—mere links in the causal chain of events,—and with no certainty of a conscious existence after physical death.

As a matter of history, where a clear conception of Tri-Unity has not been known, God has not been known, except as an incomprehensible abstraction; and, just in proportion as men come to know God in His Tri-Unity, they feel His spiritual presence and power. Even an imperfect and almost self-contradictory apprehension of God's Tri-Unity is far better than no apprehension. Just in proportion as men realize the Tri-Unity of God, and draw their light and life from that source, they find spiritual illumination, and are inspired with faith, hope, love and life in the work of spreading the "good news" for the saving of the world; and, where this conception, in every form, is wholly rejected, its rejectors lack those earnest qualities that a positive view inspires. Such is the testimony of observation, of history, and of personal experience. A belief in Tri-Unity is necessary to an experimental knowledge of God.

We have now reached the main question: Is it pos-

sible to gain such a conception of the Tri-Unity of God as, while in accord with Scripture, it shall satisfy reason, and meet the longings and needs of earnest souls in their search after God? Plainly, the old creedal view of the Trinity is so beset with difficulties as to be unsatisfactory to thinking people. It contains much of truth, but truth commingled with so much of what seems impossible of belief as greatly to neutralize its satisfying and saving power. If I did not seem to see a better way of presenting the Tri-Unity of God than the old theory offers, I should remain silent on the whole subject. What is that better way?

Before coming directly to the question, In what does the Tri-Unity of God consist, and how can it be rationally explained? two things should be premised.

First, that the exact mode of God's existence is, and ever must be, incomprehensible to finite beings. We know that God *is* much as we know that duration *is*, and that space *is*. We know that God must be Infinite, Eternal, Absolute; but the *how* of God's existence we do not comprehend. Those who profess to know, and try to explain the mystery, only confuse themselves and bewilder those whom they try to instruct. Had this fact always been recognized and admitted, good and learned men would have been saved much useless toil, and the Christian Church much harmful controversy.

The second thing to be premised is that the term Tri-Unity cannot mean, in any proper sense of that term, tri-personality. The term, three persons, or any equivalent, as applied to God, is not in the Bible, and is greatly misleading. A person is one possessed of intellect, sensibility, will and consciousness; and three such beings cannot be one, and must be three. The idea of one God

consisting of three distinct persons is a metaphysical dogma which was formulated in the early Christian centuries unfortunately, as John Calvin and other such men admit, and has been transmitted and generally held and defended in the Church ever since. But the tri-personality of God, if it means anything consistent and comprehensible, means tri-Theism, which, again, means, must mean three gods. And this is the fatal difficulty that repelled Mahomet, and has repelled thousands of better men since his day.

And yet the three-fold distinction has a legitimate meaning, and contains the central truth of the whole Christian system. Almost the last words that Jesus spoke on leaving the world represented God under a new name; and gave to that name a new and enlarged signification. He called God by the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and, further, He commanded that His disciples should henceforth be baptized into this New Name; and that command, so full of vital meaning, has been carefully observed by His followers ever since.

The distinction indicated in Jesus' new name for God is real and not fictitious; and must be susceptible of some rational explanation. The deep meaning of Jesus' baptismal formula, which gives to God the new name must be sought for in the formula itself; and a true exposition of that formula will bring it into view. The three heads, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and what each means, and the relations they sustain to each other, have to be considered.

1. What did Christ here mean by the term Father. This appellation, as Jesus understood it, was virtually a new name for God, who, in the Old Testament, was commonly called by such terms as Jehovah, the Al-

mighty, Creator, King, Judge and other such titles. True, the name Father was not quite foreign to some of the evangelical prophets. Isaiah exclaims, "Doubtless, God is our Father," as if the conception were new, and of questionable meaning. Some of the Psalms, in a poetical sense, use the same title. But the name Father, with full understanding of its import, and as a common name for God is of New Testament origin. The old names for God, grand as they were, contain no such tender meaning as the word Father conveys. Jesus constantly calls God His Father, and He taught us all to say in our daily prayers, Our Father. It is the name that runs all through the Gospels and Epistles; and it brought into the world a new conception of God which endears Him to His children, so that now we always think and speak of God as our Father; and this, without considering that, when Jesus spoke the word, He gave to men, not another God, but a new meaning to that sacred name, and one that goes to the hearts of men and makes them rejoice that they are all His children, and that God is their patient, faithful, loving Father, who seeks, in His wisdom and love, only their highest and eternal good. This baptismal name—Father—is the new name that makes us sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Even now the full import of that precious name is not known to men as Jesus knew it, and sought to convey its meaning to the world.

(2) What, secondly, does the word Son signify in this new baptismal name for God, of which it is an essential part?

The name of the Son was declared to be above every name; He was filled with all the fullness of God; and He was God manifest in the flesh. He and His Father

are one; He was sent of the Father to become the Saviour of the world. How is all this to be explained? In answer to that question, we may derive some light from archives of nature. All life, being an emanation from God, and having something of God in it, unifies life, so that each life is in some sense a part of the common and universal life. Especially is this true of moral beings, who, in their moral natures are closely allied to God, and bear His image. God is their Father, and "He is over all, in all, and through all." The immanence of God, in the full import of that term, as it is now used, and especially His immanence in the hearts and lives of good men, makes them pre-eminently His children and He their Father.

How does the Sonship of Christ differ from the sonship of other good men who are also the sons of God? The difference is incomparably great; and yet, so far as I can see, it is a difference in degree rather than in kind. Jesus was a man among men. He ever spoke of Himself as the son of man; and His complete humanity is not questioned. He was not only man, but He was *the* representative man. He represented the whole human race, not as other men do, but in a high, divine sense, as the Saviour of men. No man ever will or can become all that Jesus was, yet all men, according to their capacity, may be filled with the divine life. Indeed, this is what man, through sin, has lost; and which is now his supreme need, and is what Jesus, the Son of man and the Son of God, has come to restore. He was a Divine Man; and because of that Divineness which filled Him with the fullness and consciousness of God, His Name stands in the baptismal formula as the Son,—the Son of the Eternal God,—God's representative on the earth, who came to seek and save the lost.

The above exposition relates chiefly, as it must to be helpful, to the incarnate Christ. What he was before the incarnation as the only begotten Son of God in the bosom of the Father, is a deep mystery, and there we should leave it. The incarnate Christ is God with us; and so we know, love and trust Him as Lord and Master, and are baptized into His name as Son of God. To go beyond this is to bewilder ourselves to no profit, as history shows. In any case, we may not substitute human dogma for the obvious consensus of the Word of God on such a subject as that of Jesus the Christ of God, the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

(3) In the third place, what does the term Holy Ghost signify in the new and full name of God as Jesus revealed it in His baptismal formula? Is the Holy Spirit a distinct person separate from God? Or, by this name should we mean some manifestation of God's eternal Spirit, made comprehensible to us through the revelation of the Father and Son, as everywhere present,—though unseen,—to inspire, guide and sanctify all who open their hearts to His gracious in-coming? In other words, is the Holy Spirit the still, small voice of God, taking, as Jesus indicated, the things of the Father and of the Son, and making them known in the hearts of men: in the very consciousnesses of those who seek divine light and life from the Spirit of God? If this statement is not quite clear and definite, it is what, and all, the Scriptures reveal on the subject, and all that the mind of man is able clearly to comprehend. The very thought of such a possible relation to the Spirit of the infinite God is wonderful to contemplate! It should inspire faith, hope and love, and lead all who accept the possibility of such a oneness with God through the Holy Spirit, to a life of thoughtful-

ness and holy living, that they may reach their high calling as sons and daughters of their heavenly Father.

This view of the Holy Spirit is sustained by the words of Jesus, spoken to His disciples, for their comfort, on the evening of His betrayal. He said to them: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go away I will send the Comforter unto you, and He shall take the things of mine and show them unto you. He shall lead you into all truth. This same deliverance for substance is several times repeated, and so is made emphatic. These sayings clearly reveal, first, that the great things that the Comforter or Holy Spirit was to expound and impress were the things that Jesus had spoken of Himself, of His Father; and of the great "good news" that had been brought to men. Second, that the enlightenment and spiritual help that the Holy Comforter should bring to men would be more and better for them than even the continuance of Jesus Himself, in visible form, could be. This promise of the Father no less than of the Son, began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, which inaugurated the Dispensation of the Spirit,—the greatest of all Dispensations,—and has been the foremost spiritual power in the world ever since, and will be to the end.

As showing yet more fully the interchangeable relationship that existed between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we must refer again to Christ's words, where He said, "I and My Father are one;" and, again,—as if taking the place of the Spirit,—"I will be with you always, even to the end of the world;" and, "Where two or three are gathered in My Name there am I in the midst of them." There was a Divine Unity, a oneness, as well as Tri-Unity, in this three-fold relation and manifestation of God; and yet, as regards the one Eternal God,

there was no distinct Tri-Personality. It was one Eternal God differently revealed.

This will appear more evident if we pass from the preceding analytic presentation and look further into the synthetic import of Christ's new baptismal name for God. Back of all, and over all, stands the Eternal First Cause of all things that,—as was seen in the preceding chapter,—possessed complete personality; but beyond that, to human reason, was incomprehensible. Then, later, we have that same incomprehensible God revealed to us by Jesus in the new, endearing relationship of Father; a view of God that we can understand and appreciate. Then we have a yet further revelation of the infinite God in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the son of man, who was the express image of the First Cause, known to us as Eternal God; and He was called the Son of God because God so dwelt in Him as to make Him Divine, and the impersonation of the one only living and true God embodied in human form.

Then, last of all, the Eternal God is revealed to us, not only as Father and Son, but as Spirit. God, said Jesus, is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. How the Holy Spirit of God operates upon the heart to bring it into a new life, we can no more explain than we can explain how the human spirit directs and controls one's bodily movements. "The wind bloweth where it listeth; we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one who is born of the Spirit." Thus we arrive at the Scriptural and rational conception of the Tri-Unity of God. We have three distinct manifestations of the One only living and true God.

Possibly this more formal statement is allowable. The

Father is one with the Eternal First Cause of all things whom we call God, because the nature or being of God is in Him and is revealed through Him: the Son, emanating from the Father, is consciously one with Him, because the Father is in the Son and is revealed through Him: the Holy Spirit is one in being with the Son and the Father, because the same eternal nature that is in the Father and Son is in the Spirit. These three manifestations of the one eternal, incomprehensible First Cause, Jesus, in His baptismal formula, called Father, Son and Holy Ghost,—one God, or, rather, three manifestations and revelations of the one Absolute Being, who, in this three-fold manner, is revealed to men as one God. More than this the Scriptures do not reveal, and the Christian teachers of the first two centuries did not claim.

If this view of the Tri-Unity does not retain the letter of the old theory of Tri-Personality, it does its spirit, which is more than the letter; and this, too, without contradicting reason. It is in, and through this Tri-Unity that we can truly know God; and when this great revelation is made complete to the spiritual apprehension of men, so that they know God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent, as the Holy Spirit reveals Him, then the heart of the world will be moved as it never was before, and a nation will be born in a day.

The Tri-Unity of God, so wonderfully revealed to mankind, was for a purpose; and for a purpose great enough to be proportionate to the infinitude of the revelation. That purpose related to the human race, and could have been nothing less than its eternal salvation. All was done that mankind might have life, and have it more abundantly. For any purpose less than this would God have sent His Divine Son into the world to suffer

and die on the cross? For any smaller purpose would God have revealed Himself to us as our loving Father, whose heart goes out yearningly to His earthly children for their salvation? Would the Holy Spirit of God persevere from age to age in seeking entrance into the hearts of men for any other purpose than to bring them more and more into His own likeness, and so into eternal life? All this must have been God's purpose in this glorious revelation of Himself to men.

Will God's great purpose in this infinite revelation of Himself to men finally be realized? or, will it fail? On the answer to this question turns the Final Destiny of mankind. If the great proportion of all who have lived, and are now living on the earth, are to become eternally miserable, then the great purpose fails. If the large proportion of the human family reach, under Divine guidance, eternal blessedness, and, if to none existence shall prove an infinite curse, then God's great purpose will have been accomplished. Which of the alternatives is the more probable?

CHAPTER IV.

THE HONOR, JUSTICE AND LOVE OF GOD
IN THE PROBLEM.

If God is worthy of the devout adoration, of the supreme love, and of the faithful service of all mankind, as He is, then that worthiness must centre in His moral character. God may be our Creator, He may possess infinite knowledge, infinite power, and be omnipresent; yet, if His moral character is unknown or misjudged, men may be awed at the thought of Him, and filled with dread and slavish fear; but, from that point of view alone, God cannot be venerated and tenderly loved.

The moral character of God may be, and has been, by the great majority of mankind sadly misconceived and misrepresented. It is often difficult for us to discover accurately the real character of our fellowmen, even of those with whom we may be closely associated. We know their physical and mental qualities, but their hearts, their motives and their deep fountains of life we do not know: here we are left to conjecture, and often we fall into serious mistakes. Most people are masked.

How much more then are men liable to misapprehend the heart of God, whom they cannot see, who is Himself robed in cloud and mystery, whose providences seem often dark and frowning, if not cold and unsympathetic. It does not seem strange that, in the early period of human history, men should have feared God, and trembled at the thought of Him, much as they would in the

presence of an active volcano or of a terrific ocean storm. It is not a marvel that men often thought of God as the opposite of good, that they invested Him in their imaginations almost with demoniac qualities, and worshiped Him as the spirit of evil whose vengeance was to be appeased.

Nor, is it very unnatural that men should so generally have turned away from the worship of God to the adoration of nature. Worship something man must; for the spirit of worship was born with him, and is a part of Himself. Religion was an element of his being; and so, not knowing God, he worshiped what seemed to emblemize the Almighty. He adored the sun and moon as the source of light, life and beauty; so that fire worshipers composed a large branch of the human family, and do still. Others, who were reverential towards their parents, worshiped their ancestors instead of God, and do to this day. Still others of a lower and more degraded type did homage to blocks of wood and stone which their own hands had formed, and which, to the wiser ones were thought, in some mystic way, to symbolize the unknown God.

Even the Hebrews, who regarded themselves as being God's peculiar people, could not be restrained from idol worship. They even made a golden calf and danced around it saying, this is our God; and they did this under the flaming mount all aglow with Divine radiance. They thought of the God of Israel as being their especial God, and yet as only one of the many gods of the nations. They invested their God with a character like their own; as they themselves were creatures of passion, of anger, of hate and malice, of jealousy, of wrath and revenge, so they conceived their God to be the same. He was

one like themselves, only vastly greater, whom they must propitiate.

The earlier writings of the Old Testament were in part a reflection and perpetuation of these common mistakes as to the moral character of God.

But, let not the men of our day be too severe on the idolaters and mistaken souls of other times. Is the character of God, as Christ presented and illustrated it, seen clearly, and fully accepted, by the people of our day, or even by a large proportion of the Christian Church? God is still in Christian lands and within the Church to some extent, more an object of fear than of love; and men are often religious more to appease God and to escape hell than to be pure in heart. If all people knew God as He is, knew Him in their hearts as Christ knew and revealed Him, the spirit of the world would be revolutionized in a day. These illustrations are intended to show how the real character of God is misconceived by men, and misrepresented.

This brings us directly to the question: In what does the moral character of God consist? Moral character and personality are not interchangeable terms. Personality underlies moral character, and is that out of which it springs. Moral character in God and in man is essentially the same when man is good; the difference being in degree, not in kind. Man is finite, and, with the best of intentions makes mistakes. God's attributes are infinite so that mistakes are impossible. God's moral character, and man's also, consists in the best possible use of all His natural powers. This is the one rule of duty for God and man. Metaphysically speaking God's character consists in good intentions, in choice, in ultimate choice, in the choice of the highest good of the

universe and of every being that exists. God is love. This is the sum of His moral attributes and of His character.

Love in God is more than an emotion; it is choice, it is benevolence, (*bene volens*) good willing. God wills and purposes the highest good of all His creatures, and He seeks that good by every means that wisdom and power, controlled by love, can devise. Every moral attribute in God is but the modification of love. His holiness is love of righteousness or moral purity, and the hatred of all that is dishonorable and wrong. Justice is love upholding righteous law and the interests it protects. Mercy is love desiring and seeking the pardon and restoration of the unworthy. Love then is the heart of God, and all that He is and does is but the expression of His love. This philosophic conception of God is just beginning to take possession of the thought and heart of the Christian world.

If God is love then He is not that stern and awful Being ever watching for the faults of men, and remorseless in punishment of sin, that some of the traditional theories have represented. The Eternal One is equally loving, tender and merciful with our Lord Jesus Christ "who is the express image of His person," who came of the Father's sending, and who is "God manifest in the flesh." Christ and the Father are one; so that to know Christ is to know God.

That the moral character of God is absolutely perfect, is a fact to be assumed not argued. As an abstract proposition no thoughtful mind, as to theory, ever calls it in question. Deep down in every soul there lies the conception and standard of moral perfection. God placed it there, and our own moral nature instinctively affirms

that this ideal standard must be a transcript of God Himself. However imperfect our own characters may be, and however erroneous our doctrinal beliefs on other subjects, there is yet something in the conscience and consciousness of all men that, beyond the need of other proof, obliges them to ascribe perfection to God, and instantly to reject the contrary idea. It was this that led Whittier to say:

"The wrong that pains my soul below, I dare not
throne above."

And this same monitor instructed Plato, four hundred years B. C. in the midst of surrounding idolatries to testify thus: "God is in no way whatever unrighteous; but He is righteous in the highest possible degree, and nothing is more like Him than the one of us who shall become supremely just."

This also led Job in the midst of his awful darkness and doubt to exclaim: "Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall man be more pure than his Maker?"

This comparative view of God and man brings us to the question of mutual relationships. What relation of duty does man sustain to God, and God to man?

Man's duties to God are plain. Loving obedience is the law; and every act of disobedience is a great wrong done to a loving Father who is more ready to forgive than the child is to ask forgiveness. God should have our deepest reverence and our tenderest love, our fervent gratitude and our faithful service. His will should be our law and rule of life; not because it is the foundation of moral obligation, but because it is always in the direction of perfect love and perfect right, and so is best for all concerned. We are never to forget that every good

and perfect gift comes from the hand of our Heavenly Father, and that His judgments are in love.

While man's duties to God are plain, and easy for those who have the spirit of loving obedience still, we are not to overlook the equally important fact that God also has duties on His part toward the moral beings whom He has created, and created in His own image, so that they are His children and He their Father. I know there are people who object to the idea, and think it irreverent, to claim that God can be under any obligations to created beings. They say that God is a law unto Himself and is above all law. God is a law unto Himself, and so, in an important sense, is every moral being that God has made in His own image a law unto himself. This is Paul's doctrine where he said of those who had not the written law, that they were a law unto themselves, their own consciences approving or disapproving their conduct.

God's sense of duty no less than of sympathy, obliges Him to feel a deep and abiding interest in the eternal welfare of the human race that He has brought into existence and placed, as man is conditioned in this world. When He sees mankind struggling in the whirlpool of ignorance, temptation and sin, does He turn away, as the Priest and Levite turned from the man who had fallen among thieves, saying, I have no responsibility? Man might do this but God never. He never leaves a human being uncared for in such a situation! The very idea is preposterous, and a reproach on the Almighty. Think of the father of a large family of children, each one in great need, and in danger of perishing, and the father, having in his hands abundant means of relief, but excusing himself on the ground that it was not his

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responsibility, and that he was under no obligations to those children! The world would pronounce such a man a monster. But God is infinitely removed from that situation. He knows and feels the duty and responsibility, and more than meets it, superadding Mercy to Justice at every point, in every case of need. Who can think otherwise?

If God is under moral obligation as men are, and higher in proportion as He is greater and wiser than men, then it becomes a question of first importance to ask, what is the standard or measure of obligation? There can be but one measure of obligation for moral beings, and it applies equally to God, angels and men. Ability is the measure of obligation, and I can conceive of no other. In the nature of things it must be so. To demand more than man could render would be cruelty; to accept less would be to countenance sin. This is the Bible standard, which reads: "It is accepted according to what a man hath and not according to what he hath not." I am aware that the rule of ability as the measure of obligation has, sometimes, for reasons to be hereafter explained, been questioned or denied; and yet the law is so obviously just, and of such universal application, as to call for neither argument or qualification.

As applied to the God of honor, justice and love, what does the rule enjoin? Nothing more or less than that God shall do for His universe, and for every moral being that He has brought into existence, all that, everything considered, He can do to promote universal and individual well-being. There must be no favoritism, and higher interests must not be sacrificed to lower. Ability measures God's obligations just as it does man's; and it must be greater than man's in proportion as his ability

and opportunity are greater. It must be so, and I honor the loving God in saying it.

Questions of responsibility and duty, with which all moral beings have to do, are of two classes: Questions of judgment, and questions of conscience. Questions of judgment are addressed to the intellect, and are decided by evidence in the court of the understanding. Among these are questions of philosophy, of science, of history, and those questions which concern most of the everyday affairs of life.

But questions of conscience are of an entirely different character. Here no investigation is called for. The answer is always instantaneous and absolute; because it is simply yes or no, to a question of right or wrong, addressed, not to the intellect but to the conscience. Certain great principles of right, justice and honor are engraved by our Creator in the moral nature of every man, and in such a way that they become a part of himself. God put them there.

Cudworth, after showing that the Divine and human reason are one, says: "Conscience is a ray from the Divine Reason; and the moral law, which it reveals to us, is Eternal and Immutable as the nature of God, and the nature of things."

Gaius, who wrote in the XII century, said: "The law of nature is that law of justice and benevolence which is written in the heart of every man and which teaches to do unto others as he would wish that they should do unto him." These principles are moral intuitions, sometimes called truths of nature, innate conceptions, first truths or truths of reason; but these terms all mean essentially the same thing. They are the voice of conscience, God's voice in the heart of man. This voice

of moral intuition never falters, never errs, and never varies. Propound a series of moral questions like the following: Is injustice towards another ever right? Is every man bound by the law of duty? Is cruelty a crime? Is honorable action commendable? Is an unreasonable demand justifiable? Ask numberless such questions, and there is something in every man called moral nature or conscience that responds instantly; and every moral being in existence whether from heaven, earth or hell, if he does not intentionally lie, gives, on the instant, and without reflection, the same answer.

These intuitive principles of right, honor and justice are the foundation principles of all government human and Divine. Take them out of the heart of man and the world has no standard of appeal. They are always and everywhere recognized as binding upon all men in their relations to each other.

Are they not equally binding upon God Himself? They must be, for moral relations are universal and absolute. They must be if God is God, and is worthy of the confidence and love of the moral beings whom He has created. God can do nothing that is wrong, dishonorable, unreasonable or unjust.

There are moral principles and questions that relate especially to men, and there are others in which God Himself is more directly concerned. Among the latter, which bear directly on the problem of Human Destiny, and God's relation to it, are the following:

1. That the distinction between honor and dishonor, justice and injustice, right and wrong is fundamental and can never be set aside. This is undeniable. It is common sense and common sense is moral intuition.

2. Any assumption that puts dishonor or blame on

God is false. The integrity of God is and must be held as above suspicion at whatever cost.

3. That moral and accountable action is not accident or misfortune but intelligent choice. Intention is and must be the test of character.

4. To require of one what he cannot do, and then to blame and punish him for not doing what was impossible, is simple cruelty. It involves a double wrong; the command is unjust, and then the penalty is a crime.

5. To punish the innocent instead of the guilty is either a blunder or a crime. The innocent may suffer voluntarily but may never be punished.

6. That when persons of inexperience are placed in responsible positions where great personal and moral interests are at stake, they must be given a fair chance of success. The chance of a favorable outcome must be at least equal to that of an unfavorable one. Common justice demands all this and more.

7. To declare one guilty and deserving of eternal punishment for what he is said to have done ages before he was born or existed is a monstrous absurdity as a theory, and, if it be a fact, it is infinitely worse than absurd.

8. To punish one for what he never did or thought of doing or knew about, would be a crime against justice. So any court would decide.

9. God's heart and hand must be unchangeably on the side of this struggling world to do for the present and future well-being of every member of the human race, all that infinite wisdom and power, controlled by love, can do. Intuitive justice demands this.

Truths and principles like these are moral intuitions, and are always so recognized and treated by all thought-

ful persons, except, possibly, in some cases where theological dogma necessitates another conclusion. Then dogma is made to prevail over right.

Pascal and Abelard, after long struggle, both came to the conclusion that God's dealings with mankind, as their creed compelled them to see it, was in violation of these principles of justice, and honor, and right that are conceded to be the intuitive convictions of all moral beings. They both argued that God's ways with men, as seen in the light of their creed, could not be justified on principles of right and honor; and their only way of escape from bringing God into condemnation was to affirm that the intuitions of reason which were binding upon all men, under all circumstances, were not obligatory upon God, whom they conceived of as above law, and having the right to do according to the counsels of His own will even when that will was against right and justice, as reason and conscience are compelled to decide. What must God think of apologies like this made in His behalf, and also of theological dogmas that necessitate such an apology!

Another class of writers upon this point, while seeming to hold the opinions of Pascal and Abelard endeavor to escape their conclusion in a less bold and, as it seems to me, less manly way. They acknowledge the contradiction, but attempt no explanation. The whole thing they resolve into a fathomless mystery. We must accept the Creed on faith and leave God to justify Himself as best He can. This subject is only referred to here, as it bears upon the divine character, and will come up in its place for further study.

It is a pleasure to be able to testify that most theologians, even of the sternest systems of belief, do recognize

and teach that the intuitions of reason and conscience are universally obligatory, and not less so in heaven than on earth. Dr. Alexander says, that: "Where we have intuitive certainty of anything it is foolish to seek for other reasons, and that all intuitively discern that for a ruler to punish the innocent is wrong." He afterwards repeats this in substance. Dr. Hodge writes: "Probation to be fair must afford as favorable a prospect of a happy as of an unhappy conclusion." Melancthon is most emphatic in supporting the supreme authority of man's instinctive principles of right and justice. Speaking on the subject, he says: "Therefore our decision is this; that those precepts which learned men have committed to writing transcribing them from the common reason and common feelings of human nature are to be accounted as not less Divine than those contained in the tables given to Moses; and that it could not be the intention of our Maker to supersede by a law graven on stone that which is written by His own finger on the table of the heart."

The following are the words of John Calvin: "Since all nations are spontaneously inclined to enact laws for themselves, it is too clear to be doubted that there are certain conceptions of justice and right which exist by nature in the minds of men." Turretin, Augustine, Edwards, the Puritans, and indeed, the theological thinkers of the world, except when driven for the time by dogmatic necessities to say what implies the opposite, support the position that the intuitive principles of right and wrong are absolute moral law, and are equally binding upon God and man.

And, of course, the Bible is in line with this view. Christ in His contention with the Jews, said: "Why

even of yourselves judge ye not what is right." Abraham, in his plea for the Sodomites, exclaimed: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right." Ezekiel concludes his argument in vindication of God's ways with men, thus: "Are not my ways equal and are not your ways unequal? Saith the Lord."

It follows then that the intuitive principles of honor, right and justice that God has written in the minds and consciences of all moral beings are of supreme authority, and alike so with God and man. What does this undeniable conclusion touching man's condition in this world, and his consequent relations to the great problem of human destiny involve?

It means that God has placed the human race, as it actually exists on earth, in a condition favorable to virtue, and with a better prospect of a favorable termination than of an unfavorable one, a better prospect of eternal life than of eternal death. If God had the power to do this, the principle of intuitive justice demands that it should be done. And if He had not such power, then justice asks why should the race have been created? Such a question does not imply "carnal reasoning," it is legitimate and proper. God welcomes it because He has placed man, and surrounded him in this world, and the next, with influences that render a happy conclusion more natural and probable than an unhappy one. He must have done it because God is just, honorable and good.

Again, the conclusion that intuitive principles of right and justice are binding upon God, means that sin, as God sees it, consists in sinning, and in nothing else; and that sin always implies intelligence and a willful, intentional violation of God's law; and also that men

are justly punishable or otherwise for what they do intelligently, and for nothing else. These statements harmonize with moral intuitions, and opposite views contradict moral intuitions; therefore the position taken must be true, for God is a God of honor and justice.

Instinctive principles of right and honor demand that God shall not subject the race of men to needless and unreasonable perils by giving them such a nature and environment as to make it certain that not "one in ten thousand millions," will escape at the very beginning of moral existence, or even before, the loss of God's favor, the incurring of His "wrath" and consequent condemnation to eternal misery. Such a thing is impossible for a just, benevolent and holy God to do.

Principles of right and justice mean that God's heart and purpose are always on the side of men for their eternal good. God is considerate of man's earthly condition and is ever merciful. He is more the loving Father of mankind than He is their stern Judge. He never hates His children even when they are disobedient; He is not angry with them when they are wicked. He is never revengeful towards them, whatever they do or say. Such terms, when used in Scripture, are employed in accommodation to human ignorance and weakness. They apply to men, but never to God in the sense in which men understand and use them in their relations with each other. God is grieved when His children go wrong; their persistent wickedness displeases Him, so that He is often obliged to bring chastisement upon them for their good, as loving fathers do upon their disobedient children. But He does not hate them, and is not angry with them and revengeful towards them, as bad

people are, and as weak parents sometimes are towards their own children.

Indeed, our Heavenly Father is the opposite of this. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." He pitied Jerusalem when He wept over it; He remembereth that we are dust; He is in deep sympathy with us; He bears our infirmities and our iniquities even, in His own heart, and dies for us that we may live and not die.

The meaning of all this is that God takes into account the peculiar and unfavorable circumstances in the midst of which we live. He sees more clearly than we can how the iniquities of the fathers are often visited upon their children. Heredity is against us; not that the children of the wicked are punished for the sins of their fathers,—every man shall bear his own iniquities,—but they are weakened, enfeebled, badly constituted and inclined to evil on account of heredity. God our Father allows for this, and compassionates us, as He clearly should.

God also considers man's environment which is never wholly favorable to virtue and is often, without involving individual responsibility, evil, and only evil continually. God sees and feels it all, and on this ground again, He is compassionate and long-suffering toward us.

Our Heavenly Father knows that we all come into the world with strong animal and selfish propensities, and that, when we do our best, it is nearly or quite impossible for the higher nature, so weak in all at the beginning, and with some always weak, to control and regulate appetites, passions and other selfish tendencies, so as to reach and illustrate ideal excellence. In these

disadvantages God has for us a father's compassionate tenderness.

Man's ignorance is another element of weakness that the loving Father always considers and allows for in His estimates and treatment of His children. Moral beings, as we have seen, possess intuitive apprehensions of right and wrong; while yet, on most of the great questions that lie around them, and with which they have to do, their minds are in comparative darkness. This is true of the wisest of men, and is emphatically so of the young, the inexperienced and the uneducated. Because of this ignorance we often run into dangers and difficulties unawares. True, ignorance of itself is not sin, but, to a certain extent, it is an excuse for shortcoming. Men everywhere so regard it; and God who, if He can, loves to excuse His children, is ever disposed to make greater allowances for man's ignorance than we make for one another; and this because He sees and feels their difficulties as we cannot. Our Heavenly Father will do for every human being that He has brought into the world all that infinite wisdom and infinite power, controlled by perfect love can do to secure his eternal welfare. He cannot do more; He may not do less.

This presentation of God's moral character does not make the eternal salvation of all men a certainty; but does not the whole chapter taken together create an atmosphere favorable to such a conclusion, or, at least, to something that approaches it?

CHAPTER V.

THE DOUBLE NATURE OF MAN IN THE PROBLEM.

The second greatest factor in the problem of Destiny is man himself. Although we know him so well, he is still the greatest and deepest of mysteries. "The proper study of mankind is man." To know man's life on the earth, to know what that life is, and what the end will be, is to solve the great problem.

Let us study man,—as to his origin; as to his animal nature; as to his moral nature; as to the conflict between the two; and as to the final result.

To begin at the beginning: The very existence of man on the earth is a great mystery. We know that he is here, and that he has been here for thousands of years. But just how he came into existence we do not know, nor do we know how far back in time his existence began. The more this question of dates is searched into, the further back does the antiquity of man appear to extend. Evidences are increasing that man's existence on this globe antedates the last great glacial age. Rude stone implements, it is confidently affirmed, are being found near Trenton, N. J., and elsewhere, in gravel beds that were certainly deposited at the close of the first glacial period; and just how far back even the second glacial period extends is only vague conjecture. Scientists are utterly at sea as to the actual antiquity of man. They vary in their dates all the way from about ten

more than 10,000 years

thousand to fifty, or a hundred thousand years; and the argument for one date or another seems to accord with some favorite theory that one or another is trying to establish. Most of the discussions on this subject have, always seemed to me to be *ex-parte*. Scientific men seem able to prove what they wish to have true; and this is only saying that they know but little beyond the fact that the human race, in its undeveloped state, has been in existence many thousands of years. We know certainly that man is a created being; that he was created by some mysterious process not yet fully understood; that he bears, in his moral nature, the Divine image; and that he has been on the earth for a much longer period than the commonly accepted chronology allows.

What is man? The Agnostic pronounces the question unanswerable. Man, he declares, cannot know himself, nor his God, if he has one, nor anything else with certainty; not even his own personal existence. With the Materialist only matter exists; thought and feeling are but sensations of the brain; and when that is disorganized, what was called man, ceases to be. Under such theories, our great problem ceases to be great, and is not worth considering.

From the Christian point of view, from that of the historic religions of the world, from the voice of moral intuition, of conscience and of consciousness, the question,—what is man, whence and whither? becomes one of the greatest possible interest and importance to mankind.

Man, as we everywhere find him, possesses a double nature. He is drawn in opposite directions. Sometimes he is good and at others he is very bad. This double nature in man is brought out clearly in the

seventh chapter of Romans, where the good and evil in him are struggling together for the mastery. The same thing is most forcibly illustrated in Stevenson's strange and striking book entitled "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," in which, true to life, the same man, at will, puts on directly opposite characters and acts accordingly. He is never self-consistent as a whole, but is true now to one self, and now to the other. He is, as some one has said: "An angel on horseback."

To be more specific then, man, in the first place, is strictly an animal. He comes into the world as other animals come, and is subject to similar conditions. He appears to have the same instincts, passions and propensities. They all seek food, protection and comfort alike. They all naturally live unto themselves, except that both have affection for their own families and for their kind. Man,—according to the theory of evolution, which has now among all classes, orthodox and heterodox alike, come to be extensively accepted,—has, by evolutionary process, come up through lower orders of creation. His physical nature is an animal nature. Under parental and educational guidance, like other animals, he struggles his way up to maturity; and, when old age comes or before, his physical powers fail, as do those of other animals, and his mental powers appear to fail also. His memory, more of what is just now taking place than of things far back in life, usually fails first; then, his intellect weakens and becomes clouded; his sensitiveness wears out and, at length, he dies an old man as other animals die, weak in mind and body, and who shall say that man and beast do not meet together in death as they had done in life? Have they not a common destiny? As to their animal part, they probably have. This fact

that man is a complete animal, but an animal of the highest order, is a great fact that must not be overlooked; for, as we shall see, it is the real key that unlocks the mystery of man's disordered, demoralized condition in this world, and supersedes other metaphysical theories that have been adopted for that end.

In the second place, man is more than an animal. He has a spiritual nature superadded to the animal,—a spiritual body dwelling in the animal body. "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." The real essence of man, that in which his worth and vast superiority consists is not the body, but the spirit that lives in the body. As a physical being only, he is, in many respects, far excelled by some other animals. He has not the strength of the ox nor the fleetness of the horse; nor can he move through the air like a bird, or swim in water like a fish; yet, he is vastly superior to them all, is lord over all, and was made to rule, and does rule the whole animal creation; and this because of his superior intellectual and moral power.

Of man alone it was said that he is created in the image of God; and this must refer, not as traditional theology claims, to God's moral image or character, but to the rational and moral attributes of his being. It is obvious from the very nature of moral character, or virtue, that it cannot be directly created as man himself is created. Moral character, good or bad, implies moral action, not on God's part, but on that of the being who possesses it. It consists in the use one makes of the responsible powers that God has given him. It is a thing of growth, not of creation, and belongs alone to its possessor. Of

course moral character implies that its possessor is endowed with those faculties that make virtue or vice possible, and it is quite consistent with outside help and influence in the use of its powers; but that action in which character consists is personal. A mere animal cannot be morally good or bad, because it is destitute of those powers that make virtue or vice possible. Animals are not in God's natural image, men are; and this is the fundamental distinction between them,—the greatest of all distinctions.

Man is a religious being. He was made to worship; he must worship. No nation or people ever existed without religious sentiment and some form of expressing it. Herodotus expressed what all wise men have observed, as follows: "I have traveled in many lands; I have found peoples without government, without laws, without rulers, without literature, and almost without homes or clothing; but I have never found a people without altars, shrines and temples." This is a world-wide testimony, and proves that religion is the first and instinctive necessity of man's moral nature. Without religion as a guide and support of the people, no nation however civilized could long exist. France once tried the experiment, and the bloody French Revolution was the fruit. There are religions and religions, but the worst religion that ever existed is better than none, just as the worst of human governments is better than absolute anarchy.

Man's religious nature is the highest and noblest part of his being. It is that which allies him to God, and, if rightly used, connects him with all that is good and great in the universe, and sets him apart from all evil. Those attributes of the human soul which constitute him a moral and religious being are:

(1) Reason, which apprehends the Infinite and Absolute; and intelligence that carries him above the law of instinct into the realm of abstract truth and makes him familiar with the principle and operation of cause and effect. In this he differs from the mere animal that is governed by instinct, which appears to be limited to things necessary to the preservation of physical life. In this animals are often sagacious; but they have no perception of moral distinctions, and they appear to remain stationary, as do their habits, from age to age. But man, over against animals, is not only a progressive being, but he has an intellect that grasps abstract truth, that reasons, compares, concludes, that perceives the infinite, and takes in God and eternity and is capable of that limitless progress for which he exists. In the words of the great Scotch geologist: "Man thinks God's thoughts after Him."

(2) In addition to intellect, man is endowed with that wonderful faculty unknown to animals which we call Conscience, or moral intuition. This power in man compels him to distinguish between right and wrong, to feel the fact and weight of moral obligation, and to hear if not to heed the call of duty. It is the rewarder of virtue and the scourge of vice. It is in the soul of every man as the voice of God that is never to be disregarded, and whose clear dictate is Divine Law in its highest and most authoritative form, from which there is no appeal. This great gift of God may, like all others, be perverted and crushed; but woe to the man who commits such sacrilege against himself and his Maker. Conscience, though often stern, is man's nearest and dearest friend, through which God works in him to will and to do, and

which, if obeyed, would lead every human soul into eternal life.

(3) In addition to intellect and conscience, man is naturally endowed with that most delicate and helpful quality of mind which we sometimes call heart, and at others sensibility, or the power of feeling and of emotion. This quality appears to be especially inborn, since it is more apparent and beautiful in children than it is in later life. A child's trust is a thing of feeling largely; its happiness flows from the same source. Joy and sorrow have their fountain in the sensibility. If all ultimate good consists in happiness, as Dr. Hopkins and many later divines contend, then, indeed, the sensibility, and, in this sense, the heart, is the hope of man; for, if this freezes over and ceases to beat and sing for joy, all is lost. If it be possible, as it is, for one to give too loose a rein to feeling, and so be carried off from reason, it is equally possible, by crushing out emotion, to become dead while we live,—dead to happiness and repellant to our fellow beings. Our good Puritan fathers suffered, some of them at least, from this cause. Men, like children, can often be led in right ways by appeals to their emotional natures, and, up to a reasonable limit, such appeals are proper. We find them throughout the Bible; and, doubtless, the happiness of heaven itself consists largely in a well-ordered rationalized state of the soul's natural sensibilities. Let man's emotional nature, his heart, then be wisely cultivated, for through it he will find God and heaven.

(4) In addition to other gifts, man is endowed with that mysterious and awful power that is called Will, or the power of opposite choice. This will-power is closely allied to the sensibility, so that men are apt to choose

or act as they feel, and yet feeling is one thing and choice another. All moral character consists in choice, purpose, or intention. Take that from man and he becomes a mere negative quantity, neither good nor bad. Free agency and the power of contrary choice are so nearly synonymous terms that one cannot exist without the other; and if man is not a free moral agent, then how is he accountable to God or man?

I know that the freedom of the will has been denied, but never, except at the demand of some metaphysical dogma that must fall if the will is free in its choices alike of good and evil; and even such denial is only in theory and never in practice. All men know themselves to be free and therefore responsible for what they do, or will to do. All government, human and divine, rests upon that basis and would be absurd on any other. Universal consciousness attests the same conclusion. All courts of justice act upon it. Common sense demands it, and a denial is too absurd for serious consideration. The will is the dominating power around which character, good or evil, and so desert and destiny centre. To bring the will of man and his life into a right relation to reason, to conscience and to God, is the one thing to be secured, and the end of Gospel effort.

These attributes of man's nature are in him in an undeveloped state, and require careful and persistent cultivation or they will remain weak or fall under the dominion of the lower nature. Every power that God has given us must be cultivated or it dwindles and dies. If the muscles are not exercised they never develop strength. So of the intellect, of the memory, of the will, of the sensibility, and of all that goes to make up the man.

In a world like this, opportunities for endeavor and growth are abundant. We are beset on every hand with evils to be overcome, while advantages to be gained lie all around us. The world is full of opportunities for all who are wise and earnest enough to rightly improve them.

This brings me to speak of the great conflict that is going on in man's soul between the two natures that God has given him, the animal and the moral. We have seen that man is an animal with animal instincts, appetites and passions; also, that he is more than an animal, being endowed with a religious nature and having reason, conscience, sensibility and free will. What relation do these two natures sustain each to the other?

It is obvious from a moment's reflection, and still more from a moment's observation, that the two natures in man may be out of harmony one with the other. The animal may seek to rule the spiritual, and the spiritual may claim authority over the animal, and thus we should have a house divided against itself. And this is just man's condition as we find it everywhere in the world, and in the experience of every person that lives. The strong pull of the animal in man is downward. It tends to sensuality and selfishness. It ever seeks to bring man's spiritual nature, his reason, conscience, sensibility and most of all his will, into subjection, so that the animal shall be master and the spiritual man its bondsman. And this beastly part of man is often greatly encouraged and strengthened by reason of his heredity and environment. Many people, not in the dogmatic sense, but almost literally, are conceived in sin and born in iniquity, except that the vice in such cases is that of the parent, not of the child. Added to this, environment after birth, and

often through life, is wholly favorable to animal subjugation and is the foe of virtue. Under such circumstances the rampant, unreasonable and unreasoning part of man easily, as the rule, gets control, and rides furiously, dragging the spirit into sin and death.

This is one side of the case. The other side is, that the spirit in man was made to rule, and can, if it will, rule the lower nature. Reason, conscience, and will were made to be, can be, and should be supreme over passion and every form of selfish indulgence. This is possible because the opposite is sin, and sin is never a necessity. But, in the great conflict, the higher nature is at disadvantage because at birth the child, to human view, is an animal. Its spiritual nature is there but in germ form only. Reason, conscience, and power of moral choice are not there as potent forces; while the animal instincts are all there and in force from birth. Consequently, before moral agency begins the lower nature has gained control, so that afterwards it is not easily dispossessed.

Just here begins the struggle. The higher nature sets itself against the lower, and claims authority over it, so that selfishness shall be dethroned and reason and conscience hold sway. If this is accomplished, and in proportion as it is, man is on the side of God and moral purity. Failure here is entrance into sin, which is the broad road to death, and is death utter and eternal, unless deliverance is obtained. This great struggle between man's lower and higher nature, as was said, is clearly brought out in the seventh chapter of Romans, from the 14th verse onward, as follows:

"For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not; for what

I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would do I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me; for I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Nowhere in human language is this great struggle between the animal and the spiritual natures of man stated so forcibly as in these words of Paul. And the saddest fact in the case is that, when left to himself, struggle as one may, the animal nature, not always, but on the whole, triumphs over the spiritual; so that God must directly intervene and come to the rescue, or there is no hope. This is Bible doctrine, and it is also man's actual experience. But God has come to the rescue. He has sent His own Son into the world to destroy the works of the devil, to give help to every man in time of need, to bring complete deliverance and full salvation to all who open their hearts to His light and guidance. It is in view of this fact that, after describing, as just quoted, the struggle into which man by nature is thrown, and also his hopeless condition, that Paul looks away from self and earth to God and the Gospel of His dear Son for deliverance,

exclaiming, in answer to the question: "Who shall deliver us?": "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then, with the mind (or higher nature) I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." (As Christ and His Gospel in the great problem is to be a chapter by itself, its study here is omitted.)

The view here given of the double nature of man furnishes, as I believe, a key to the explanation of one of the greatest and most perplexing facts and mysteries to be found in human history. That fact is the low moral condition of mankind, known in theological writings as "Total depravity." This doctrine is so generally maintained that it may be considered a doctrine of the Christian Church. The world of mankind, it claims, is by "nature averse to all good and propense to all evil." The natural ability to do good, if man ever had it, has gone from him, so that all he does, unless regenerated by the Holy Spirit, is only evil and evil continually.

Those who accept this doctrine of the creeds only in part are yet compelled to admit the sinfulness, destructiveness and general selfishness of mankind as revealed in Scripture, in history, and in the personal lives of men. Of all the destructive creatures that ever came into this world, man heads the list. Wild beasts are nothing in comparison. Men not only destroy other animals by countless millions, and often wantonly, but they prey upon each other. In the early ages, and everywhere now among uncivilized people, war is man's chief occupation. The most fearful descriptions of human depravity anywhere to be found do not overstate essential facts. Paul's description, in the first chapter of the Romans, is a fair sample of literature on this subject, and reveals the truth.

How is this low moral condition of the race to be ex-

plained? Just here thoughtful people disagree. The common explanation runs as follows: About six thousand years ago God created the first human pair from which the whole human race has descended. He made them in His own moral image, beautiful and perfect, physically, intellectually and morally. They actualized the highest ideal conceptions of perfect manhood. It is needless to say that most of this is unsupported by Scripture, science or fact. Tradition lies back of it. But, to go on; Adam and Eve were placed in a beautiful garden where they were permitted to eat of all the fruit except from one tree. They disobeyed and ate the forbidden fruit, "And so brought death into the world, and all our woes."

In Adam the whole human race, it is claimed, fell, became utterly corrupt, totally depraved and lost the power of choosing good. Consequent upon Adam's fall and the fall of the race in Adam, the world of mankind has sunk into the corrupt and corrupting condition that history and experience reveal.

This theory of the "Fall" has been made one of the chief foundation stones of Christian theology for the last fifteen hundred years. Hundreds of volumes have been written and thousands of sermons preached, mainly in its defence; it is confidently insisted, that, upon no other ground can the moral condition of mankind past and present be accounted for. Pascal voices the general sentiment when he says: "Nothing shocks us more than this doctrine; and yet, without this mystery—the most incomprehensible of all—we are incomprehensible to ourselves."

Just here, I am obliged to take issue, and insist that the double nature of man, and consequent conflict as above described, gives a natural, reasonable and suffi-

cient explanation of the dark mystery. If the general principle of evolution is true—I care nothing for phrases and details—then man was not made as a machine is constructed, but he grew slowly into existence as a man, coming up from lower to higher forms of life until, at length, he reached the point where moral agency begins, and where he distinguishes between right and wrong. He became, then, not a creature of instinct, of hope and fear only, but of reason, conscience and free will. This brought him into the natural, not moral, image of God, in which man, when he became man, was created.

But, as we have seen, he was now possessed of two natures; the old animal nature that remained, and the new moral or spiritual nature that was superadded. These two natures, as we have also seen, came into conflict, and the lower nature, for a long time, and to a great extent, prevailed over the higher.

I submit this hypothesis, instead of the commonly accepted theory, as the correct and sufficient explanation of the low and sinful condition of mankind, as it has existed and still exists. And, I repeat, that this view takes the whole subject out of the field of mystery, tradition and improbability, and makes the vexed question simple, natural and reasonable. The view concedes and explains facts, harmonizes discord and commends itself to good, practical common sense. If it does this, then, it should quell the spirit of controversy and quietly correct errors that have grown logically out of the old way of thinking; all of which I am sure would be to millions of good people an unspeakable relief.

One other question remains to be asked: What is likely to be the final outcome of the great struggle that is going on between the two natures of man? I think all

will agree that the reality and greatness of the struggle have not been overdrawn. It exists. It ever has existed. Will it ever end, and, if so, how?

Such a conflict cannot last always. One nature or the other will finally get the mastery. The human race is still in its infancy; it does not yet appear what it will be. Great progress in many parts of the world has already been attained. The tide of advance in which the higher nature is evidently prevailing over the lower, was never so marked, the world over, as it is now. Think of the progress in all directions that has been made in the last fifty, or even twenty-five years. The next century is likely to become the glory of all the centuries, and to witness triumphs, not only of mind over matter, but of man's higher nature over the lower on a grander scale than has ever been known.

And, besides, God Himself is, and ever has been, in the movement. Who can believe that He has brought such a race of beings into existence and cared for them so long, only to see all ground of hope fade away, and the light go out in utter darkness, as it would, if man's higher nature in which he is allied to God is to be finally overmastered by animal instincts. God created man for a glorious end, and He always accomplishes what He undertakes. The very honor of God appears to be involved in the final issue of the human race. The problem of man's destiny must have a happy solution, else, why was he created? I am sure God would never have brought a race like ours into existence just to make it miserable. It may take many more centuries to bring about the Divine purpose; but time with God is as nothing. "One day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." But time has a limit, and, in

the end, good must prevail over evil, light must arise out of darkness, and life come out of death. It must be so, because this is God's method of working. It must be so, because the infinite wisdom and power of God are controlled by perfect love, and love is the mightiest thing in the whole universe. When the animal in man is subdued by the spiritual, the problem of Final Destiny is solved, because then holiness and happiness are universal.

CHAPTER VI.

CREATION BY EVOLUTION IN THE PROBLEM.

Mr. Herbert Spencer has said: "Religion and Science are necessarily correlatives; that, while our consciousness of nature under one aspect constitutes science, our consciousness of it under another constitutes religion." We are ever living in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed. Science and Philosophy search, not only for immediate or final, but for ultimate or First Cause, whence all other causes proceed.

Science and religion are not foes but allies and should work together for a common end. Science is the orderly arrangement of truth. It consists in tracing facts back to their original principles, which in turn the facts illustrate and illumine. All science is one, and is unity in diversity.

Religion is the acceptance of moral obligation. It is moral and spiritual truth actualized; that is to say, it is the heart or will-acceptance of truth as the intellect comprehends, and as conscience enforces it. Both science and religion mean "looking through nature up to nature's God."

Creation is more than science, it is more than discovery, it is more than manufacture. The old idea was that when God created the universe, he made it out of nothing; but this is naturally impossible and inconceivable. From nothing nothing comes. Just what the

stuff was that God put into the universe and then breathed into it the spirit of life, we do not certainly know, but it must have been a pre-existent something; and what is more reasonable than to suppose that it was something of God's pre-existent Self that He wrought into nature, and breathed into that something the living spirit of law, light and progress. This does not mean self-creation, nor is it making God and nature identical, which would be Pantheism. To put something of Himself into the universe and its operations would deduct nothing from God's Infinity or Personality; for what is infinite cannot be made finite. Nor would it diminish His personal freedom in establishing such laws and operations as should, in the end, secure "the highest good of being." Till a better theory is found, I accept this as the probable theory of Creation. If it be not true, then, either the universe must have been created out of nothing, which is inconceivable, or else, if matter existed independent of God, then how is God unconditioned and absolute?

We see analogous operations going on constantly. One thing, in whole or in part, goes into another and becomes a new form of life, as when a plant receives from the earth and the air those elements that it takes into its own life. What is one substance to-day may be entirely another to-morrow. The law of the conservation or correlation of forces, affords a good illustration. Nothing is lost and much is gained.

Creation, then, is the organization of the universe and all that appertains to it, including living principles, into that form of life and operation which we find existent. Creation means life and growth through the operation of living principles that proceed from God, and that act

as intermediate causes in producing what we call nature, physical, intellectual and moral. This is creation. The science of Creation, then, is a comprehension of the laws and living principles by means of which what we call creation and its operations are produced. In proportion as these are discovered, understood, classified and explained, the science of Creation is mastered.

We have seen that the principle of causality pervades the universe and controls its movements. The question now arises: Is there any discoverable system of operation according to which the world progresses from lower to higher stages of development? Until recently, scientists have discovered no such system. The publication by Mr. Darwin, in 1859, of his great work on the "Origin of Species," is thought to contain, and by most of the scientific men of the world is believed to contain, the statement of a theory that explains the method and progress of creation throughout the world and the universe; and which is now everywhere known as the "Darwinian Theory of Evolution." This theory, when first announced, was strongly opposed by one class, and eagerly embraced by another. But now, at the end of forty years, it has gained such general assent among thinking people, and is deemed to be so important, that it takes rank with the greatest discoveries of all time.

The theory, as Darwin first gave it, unifies all life of which God is the centre and the soul. Life in every form and of every kind is in some true sense one universal, infinite life.

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul."

Darwinianism explains the origin of species to be

the result of strength as against weakness. The stronger plants crowd out the weaker, the stronger animals, aided by hard conditions of life, destroy the weaker ones, so that, as a rule, only the strong survive to reproduce their kinds, which naturally improve because of an improved and constantly improving parentage. This harmless-looking statement is revolutionary, because it overthrows the traditional belief that species are not developed or evolved one from another, the higher from the lower, but are each an independent creation from the direct hand of God. Darwin shows that time, environment and struggle for existence produce new varieties; and, that these variations in time grow into species which are only greater varieties. And he claims that, in this way, beginning with the first germs of life, an evolutionary movement has produced all of life that we find in this world, if not in the universe. And he holds that the same law of progress, ever upward, is to go on until the world and all in it shall have reached a stage of development as much higher than the present as the present is beyond what existed at the dawn of creation. The creative work of God is still going forward as actually and rapidly as ever, and will not cease while time endures. The method of creation and progress is uniform; so that when we find how advance is reached in one direction we know how it is secured in every other. The analogies of nature reveal a law of uniformity in every department of creative and progressive operation. Evolution is God's method of creation.

After much thought, I find myself obliged to accept Evolution as being God's central law of creation and progress throughout the boundless field of nature. This conclusion has not been reached without some feeling

of hesitation, and even of awe; because I see that it means reconstruction on a broader scale than many evolutionists even appear to comprehend; or, than can be entered upon in a work like this.

The system of evolution as Mr. Darwin left it is open to at least two serious criticisms.

The first relates, not to the principle of evolution itself, but to the misleading formulas that were adopted for its explanation.

The term that Mr. Darwin invented as explanatory of the method of Evolution was "Natural Selection." But this term, instead of explaining, was so general that it needed itself to be explained. It was misunderstood, and so created distrust and alarm. The followers of Mr. Darwin saw this; and very soon Herbert Spencer and others substituted, or, rather, supplemented another term, called the "Survival of the Fittest," as explanatory of Natural Selection. This newer formula has come to be the watchword, the "open sesame" of the evolutionary hypothesis. It is more definite than was the first. But it appeared to make the central law of Creation and Progress one of heartlessness. Whatever its authors may have intended, the words themselves seem to indorse the principle that "might makes right." The strong destroy the weak because they are weak, and they do this for their own advantage. The weak have no rights that the strong are bound to respect.

Beyond question, there is a vast deal of truth involved in the term "Survival of the Fittest," but taken literally, and as applied to moral beings, it is not all true. Selfishness, or anything that approaches it, is not the central law of God's Universe. There is an altruistic element in nature that is everywhere revealed. The mother bird

protects and defends her young. Animals defend their own species against attack. Let, for example, a common crow be disabled or entrapped, and it lifts instantly the cry of distress. Other birds of its kind, near at hand take up and extend the cry; and, in a few moments, every crow for miles around is at the scene, expressing sympathy, screaming terror, and, by bold, brave acts, seeking to protect and defend its unfortunate comrade. This is one example out of thousands disproving the implication that nature is heartless. Ask the patriot, the philanthropist and the Christian if the law of kindness for the weak and helpless is not engraved by the hand of God on his own heart; ask the mother if she loves and protects her own children, and the answer is always and everywhere the same.

I am sure that Darwin and Spencer never intended, nor would accept the selfish interpretation that has been put upon their theory of Evolution by writers, of whom Mr. Benjamin Kidd, in his now famous book on "Social Evolution," is an example. Professor Drummond, in his work on the "Ascent of Man," devoted one of his most brilliant chapters to a review of Mr. Kidd's position, showing conclusively that his interpretation of the Darwinian formula, if correct as an interpretation, was yet false as to facts.

It would seem that any formula naturally open to the selfish interpretation must be misleading and faulty; and that it must be possible to substitute for the term, "Survival of the Fittest," some other formula that should retain all that is good and true in the Darwinian explanation, and yet relieve it of the bad interpretation which has been so extensively fastened upon it. The term, Struggle with Environment, is suggested as not only

more expressive of the exact facts in the case, while it equally supports the hypothesis of Evolution, and is not open to the objections that beset the other formulas. It is more simple and less likely to be misunderstood. It expresses exactly what always and everywhere takes place in connection with evolutionary movement; and it is the necessary condition of all real progress throughout the universe. The stellar worlds and their solar systems were brought into being by means of unconscious, but awful struggle with environment; every spire of grass, every plant, tree, leaf, blossom and fruit is evolved from lower to higher forms through struggle with environment; and without that struggle there is no progress. All animal life, where there is any real advancement, is subject to the condition of struggle with environment. The same necessity applies to men. In climates and countries where there is no struggle there is no growth. Every child, in getting an education, every parent in the home, every teacher, every business man, every one in honorable position, every community, every nation and the whole world must and does, as the condition of progress upward, struggle with environment. Real evolution can be attained in no other way. Indeed, God Himself appears to create, control and develop the universe by struggling with environment. Why not, then, substitute this simple term, easily understood, everywhere applicable, and which is not open to the objections that lie against the other formulas, because the struggle with environment may be an altruistic or an antagonistic struggle, and is as likely to be one as the other.

My criticism does not question the correctness of the Darwinian principle. It relates only to the formulas of explanation; it discovers spots on the disk of the sun,

but which do not visibly diminish its splendor. I can almost accept the statement of the President of Johns Hopkins University, "That the greatest achievement of the last half century is the establishment of the Evolutionary hypothesis of creation and progress." And yet I do not believe that the Darwinian Theory, as now held, is a finality on this subject, in the sense that it reveals the whole truth, so that there are no other great facts to be discovered that will modify the system. Its greatest fault is, that, while it exalts law and order, it does not, with sufficient clearness, enthrone God over all as the one motive power of the universe.

And just this is my second and serious point of criticism. As first expounded, the theory appeared to leave God in the background, and almost out of sight. It did not deny His personality, but found no conspicuous place for Him. If such a view were a part of the system or necessary to it the objection would be fatal. But it is not. God is the one Power back of evolution, who originated it and is immanent in every movement. Evolution is simply God's chosen mode of operation. Should He withdraw from it His superintendence and power the universe would be hopelessly wrecked. This view of God back of all and over all is being brought out clearly by later evolutionary writers, of whom Prof. John Fiske, in his recent book, entitled "Through Nature Up to God," is a shining example. Science and religion are now joining hands in the recognition of God as the moving force in the universe, as never before. Let the bans between religion and science, between God and nature, be everywhere proclaimed and honored.

We come now to consider the bearing of this central law of evolution, of progress of development, upon the

problem of Final Destiny. If it shall appear that all nature, including the solid earth and man upon it, is now in an inchoate state, that the evolutionary processes of creation are still going on, and that a consummation is likely to be reached that shall include, among other things, the purity and happiness of the human race, then the bearing of creation by evolution, on the Problem of Destiny, would be obvious.

What is now our earth was once a vast cloud of mist; then it became a globe of fire, then of water, and, in the progress of æons, dry land appeared; after that plants, then animals, all of low order, began to live on the surface, and, last and latest of all, man appeared. All this was brought to pass through evolutionary process, that right hand of the Almighty. One movement followed another, grew out of another, and each step was an advance on the preceding one. Thus, our world was made, and probably all other worlds have been formed by substantially the same process. One thing is evolved through another.

But world-creations are still incomplete. Nothing has yet reached finality. All things are in the melting, moulding crucible of evolution, and are passing from lower to higher forms of existence; and all the universe appears to be moving, slowly moving, toward that final consummation when perfect and universal order, harmony, stability and completeness shall be reached.

More especially do these statements apply to our own earth. Old as it is, it has not yet attained its perfectness and final equipoise. What was true in Paul's day is true still: "That the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now." Only yesterday, as it were, had the earth attained a condition fitting it to become

the abode of man ; and, if man, as is probable, is the chief end of the earth's existence, then somewhere in the distant future, it is likely to surpass in beauty and harmony anything we now see, or can clearly imagine. I must believe that a good time is coming when the age of tornadoes and earthquakes, of pestilences and famines, and various sismic and destructive agencies and catastrophes will have had their day, and will either cease entirely, or become so modified and harmonized as to make in the far away time, man's earthly abode, if not his angelic home, far and far more beautiful and delightful than anything he has ever yet seen or, perhaps, conceived.

But what shall be said of man himself under the operation of evolutionary law. If the globe is thus to advance, what of man, its lord, for whom the earth exists? Was man evolved from the lower orders of creation by the principle of natural selection, or by struggle with environment, and has that lower life continued to rise and advance until the upright form of man was reached, into which God breathed His own spiritual nature, raising him above all earthly creatures, allying him to angels, and making him the child of God, destined to an immortal life? Is all this a glorious truth, or is it fiction? For myself, I believe it to be true ; and I believe, further, that the end of man's progress is not yet attained. He is still in the process of evolution and creation. Think of the advance that has been made since the dawn of history. Think of Christ, who He was, why He came, and what through Him men may yet become ; think of the world's progress during the last century even ; think of the present activity and energy of men, of their hopes, aspirations and possibilities ; think of the openings and opportunities with which God is stimulating His children.

to high endeavor; think of the great crowd of witnesses from the unseen world who are ready to lend a helping hand; and think of God's immanence and of the Holy Spirit who comes to be man's guide out of darkness into marvelous light; think, too, of the exceeding great and precious promises, and of the millions who have already gone up from this earthly battlefield to their heavenly reward, and who beckon those who are yet behind to follow after and receive the victor's crown! Let one think of all these things and consider what they signify, and can he not clearly see that man's highest development has not yet been attained and will not be, till he reaches that intellectual, moral and spiritual completeness of which he is capable, and to which he was destined from the beginning, and before the beginning of his existence. Man, it is said, was made but a little lower than the angels and crowned with honor. Shall God fail, can He fail in seeking to bring man to the destiny for which he was created, for which, too, God has spent countless ages in the work of preparation? Impossible.

I hardly need ask further how does this subject of evolutionary creation bear upon the great Problem of Final Destiny? If the solid globe that has been for æons of æons a building,—that was built largely for man's sake, and, as a suitable theater for the unfolding of his earthly existence, and is not yet completed,—is still "marching on" towards physical perfection, and will not halt until the goal is reached; if the solid earth, notwithstanding its many set-backs and discouragements, is to persevere in this way, under God's law of evolution,—is man to fail? Is he to be less than the ground he walks on? Will God save cold clods and not find some way of saving living men, made in His own image and placed on earth in ex-

actly the position He saw to be best and, on the whole, to be best for them? Believe it who can!

Then, again, all the other creatures inferior to man, mere animals, whose history antedates or runs side by side with that of man, are made to reach the highest point of development of which they appear to be capable. Shall man be the conspicuous exception? Shall his existence go out in utter failure, in everlasting darkness? Shall this be the portion of at least a large part of the human race? Is man less than a beast, and is he reared and doomed to an infinitely harder fate?

I do not forget that man is a free moral agent, but has not God a will that is even stronger and broader than man's? It is clear that no man can be made holy, and so be saved apart from his own choice. He must will the right or he cannot be right. But God has a power over human wills, as we see in the cases of so many who are led away from their sins into the love and service of God. And is it not written, "they shall be willing in the day of His power?"

If this great consummation is not to be reached, then why should the human race have been created? Surely it was for good and not for evil that God made the earth for man, and man to dwell on all the face of the earth, and be its possessor and ruler. But, if he is always to be what he has been, and is, and especially if the creedal view of man and his destiny is the true view, then, should not the race as a whole, or in large part, have been left uncreated? I am sure that the great scientific and evolutionary movements that have been going on for ages evidently in the interests of mankind, and under the eye and guiding hand of the Almighty, are not to stop short of their prophetic and natural accomplishment. This

world will yet become the paradise of God and will be inhabited by paradisaical people.

Some astronomers are predicting that, perhaps, a million years hence, the earth may lose its heat and its atmosphere; but long before then, if there be any truth in prediction, Scriptural or scientific, the consummation of our race will have been reached, and the earth, as it will then exist, may be far better adapted to the beings who shall then inhabit it than the earth in its present form could be.

As for the future condition of those who have died and are dying in a state of spiritual darkness, I know that their misfortunes, their ignorance and their bad environment will not be counted against them. Every man will have somewhere a fair and reasonable opportunity to be saved. It must be so, for God is honorable and just. If they do not have it in this world, it must come to them in the great hereafter. Existence will not be made an infinite curse. If there shall be left any who cannot be brought into a state of purity and peace, then the evolutionary law of disintegration will find them, and they may sink down into eternal nothingness. The law of the correlation of forces does not destroy, for nothing can be destroyed, but it changes forms of existence. What is made can, in the same sense, be unmade. Awful as is the thought of annihilation, it is less awful than is that of eternal misery.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BIBLE AS A BOOK IN THE PROBLEM.

One who has revered and studied the Bible from childhood, and found in it deeper and diviner meanings as the years and decades come and go, naturally hesitates when called to enter upon even a semi-critical study of its sacred pages. But why hesitate? Truth gains and never loses by fair and thorough investigation; and what is not true is worse than worthless.

What is this unique and wonderful Book that we call the Bible? It is not so much one book as it is sixty-six separate books or writings bound together in a single volume; thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. These writings were composed by different authors, each in his own characteristic style, and extending together over a period of about one thousand years. As a rule, each writer wrote independently of the others, and delivered his own message for a special purpose to the people of his own day, and to meet then existing needs. We find no clear unity of plan among the writers further than that all, or nearly all, of the writings are upon religious subjects, and that the law of progressive thought, as the centuries advance, is clearly discoverable. In many cases, the date and authorship of the books of the Bible are definitely known; in others these questions are in doubt, and modern study reveals wide differences of opinion in relation to them; and these

differences relate to some books of the Old Testament and to some of the New.

The Old Testament is chiefly occupied with the religious progress, or attempts at such progress, of the Hebrew people; and it is written in prose or poetry, all in the most natural and human form. The New Testament centres around Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man; and is every way a great advance on the Old. Christ was both the inspiration and the disappointment of the Jewish people.

How is such a book to be studied and interpreted? Are the well-known and accepted principles of literary criticism and interpretation, as applied to other religious books, ancient and modern, to be applied here? Or, is the Bible to be studied and explained according to a wholly different set of principles? Just this is the dividing line between what is known as the creedal or traditional method, and the so-called scientific mode of interpretation. Both systems agree that the Bible is of incomparable excellence, and of priceless value to the world; and, that it is Divinely inspired. But, as to the nature and extent of that inspiration, there is difference of opinion.

The traditional view claims that the whole Bible, one part equally with another, as originally written, is so directly and fully inspired of God, that, on every subject upon which it speaks at all, it expresses the absolute, changeless and final truth; and this in such a sense as to be inerrant, and to make further progress in that direction impossible. Indeed, many go so far as to insist that every passage of every book, that every word, letter and vowel point was, in the original manuscript, so dictated by the Spirit of God that each writer acted simply as an

amanuensis. Some make exceptions as to certain scientific statements, not considering that the moment one exception is admitted the door is opened for a hundred others, and that the whole contention is practically abandoned. On this theory, the only question an interpreter has ever to ask is: What do the words of the Bible, as dictated by the Holy Spirit, mean? And that meaning, when found, is authority on that subject for all time. Neither error nor further progress is possible. What is written is, on that point, a finality.

The critical view of inspiration dissents, in part, from the traditional view. It affirms Biblical inspiration; but claims that the inspiration of the Bible is not in the book itself, but in the men who wrote its contents. It claims that all men are, in some true sense, an inspiration from God; indeed that all life is such an inspiration.

“Every bird that sings,
And every flower that stars the elastic sod
And every breath the radiant summer brings
To the pure spirit, is a word of God.”

This view regards man as the highest type of inspiration; that his moral reason, his conscience, his intuitive sense of honor, right and justice, are all Divine inspirations; and, within natural limits are absolute authority. They are essentially the same in all men; they never err. They are the last court of appeal, at whose bar every moral question should come, and from whose decision there is no appeal, because it is the voice of God.

The Bible itself has to be subjected to this test of reason, of conscience and of moral intuition; and, at that bar its inspiration, and the extent of its inspiration, is settled. There is, and there can be, no other rational

standard. Some men are more highly and broadly inspired than others; some are inspired for one purpose and some for another. Bezaleel, Moses tells us, was inspired to work in brass for the adornment of the tabernacle; Moses himself was inspired as a lawgiver; Joshua, as a warrior; Elijah and Josiah, as reformers; Isaiah, as a spiritual seer; and so on to the end. One is inspired for one purpose and another for another, but each from God.

Here, again, the creedal or traditional theory raises the question: Are not the writers of the Bible inspired of God in a wholly different sense from that in which other good men are? They are inspired for a different purpose, and, generally, in a higher degree; but I do not know that it is different in kind. All true inspiration is from the Holy Spirit, and all who are thus enlightened, are, to that extent inspired. Who shall say that John Bunyan's inspiration was not equal to that of the author of Ecclesiastes; or that some of our modern hymns and poems are not as truly inspired as is the Song of Solomon, or as are some of the imprecatory Psalms. The book of Esther, although the name of God does not appear in it, is yet a beautiful story; but, so is that of the "Bonny Briar Bush;" and I suppose that the writers of both, and of other such books, were more or less under Divine guidance. Every minister in preaching, should have something of Divine inspiration. Ought not the Spirit of God to abide ever in the hearts of all Christian people, and is not this abiding presence inspiration?

Some, who accept this view in general, add, that there is this difference: The writers of the Bible had inerrant inspiration. Did the writers themselves claim that? Do their writings claim it? Did the people of their day claim

it? No; and, if such a claim were set up, it would not bear the test of reason. Passages in some of the imprecatory Psalms, the 109th for example, are not inerrant, because they contradict the teachings of Christ. Some of the Old Testament wars of extermination, which, it is said, God commanded—that of Saul against the Amalekites for example—were a violation of right and justice, and so, could not have been inerrant. Laws authorizing and regulating slavery, polygamy, divorce at will, and some other such things, were not according to God's absolute ideal, or ours. They were only permitted because of men's ignorance and the hardness of their hearts, as Christ taught in commenting on them.

The Bible throughout, and especially the Old Testament, contains a large human element. Where the general truth was revealed to a writer by the Spirit of God, that truth was expressed as the writer understood it, and in his own language; and, besides, most of the writers were more or less influenced by the ideas and spirit of their own times. Probably all were. It could not have been otherwise.

This view of the Bible makes of it a somewhat different book from that which the creedal or traditional theory claims it to be; but I am unable to see that it detracts anything from its value as a revelation from God, or for the purpose for which it was given. It does, indeed, free the Bible from many a practical difficulty which the old theory fastens upon it; and, also, from the necessity of ever trying to explain things that are inexplicable; and, equally, from the necessity of apologizing for God, on account of statements attributed to Him which appear to be contradictory of both right and reason. Any view that does this, and does it fairly, brings to thoughtful

minds a great relief and exalts the Bible. Besides, when one's mind is free from such small entanglements, it is prepared to see and appreciate what the Bible contains and enforces on great subjects.

The practical value of the Bible does not turn on its absolute inerrancy, but upon the great central, living truths which it embodies, and brings to the minds and hearts of men for their deliverance from sin, and for the attainment of eternal life. The crucible in which the Bible is to be tested is not its inerrancy, but its saving power. The idea that, if the Bible is not inerrant it is worthless, is a delusion of the devil for the turning of men from its great central truths, and getting them to quibble, if not quarrel, over little things, of no value in the great problem of Human Destiny. If a city is burning, the firemen do not stop to contend about the perfectness of their engines. Let Christians in this sensible way take the Bible as God intended, and then, any imperfections it may contain will correct themselves.

The formation of the Bible, like the creation of the world, was by slow process. This is God's method, slow but sure, and one thing at a time. If the Bible, that began at the bottom of the human ladder, had gone on and up faster than it did, the Hebrews would have been left behind where they were at the start. Many of the materials that were useful and necessary at the beginning, naturally became unsuited to the later needs and conditions of the world, and so, had to be set aside or greatly modified. The New Testament dispensation, as Paul argues, and the Book of Hebrews reveals, is largely a substitute for much of the Old, and for the reasons here suggested.

Mr. Sabatier, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, says :

"It is against all analogy that the fullness of perfection should be met with at the outset of any evolution, whatsoever; those who place it at the origin of Christianity are victims of the same illusions as the ancients who placed the Golden Age at the beginning of human history."

We have now, from the critical side, seen what the Bible as a book, is. Another and far greater question that henceforth claims attention is: What is the Bible for? Till this question is clearly answered, the Book is a sealed mystery. When it is answered we see and feel its value, and understand that small things in comparison with great, are of but small importance. In a word, the purpose of the Bible is to promote the spiritual life of the world.

The Bible as to its main purpose is a great light from God, let down out of heaven into the darkness of this world to illuminate first, the Hebrew people, and then, the whole human race. The Bible began with men in their low estate; when the beast in them overmastered what little of moral culture they had attained; and, as God's instrument it has been leading them onward toward that higher condition of development and blessedness to which man is destined. It does this along many lines, some of which it is now proposed to follow, giving sketchy outlines of what, if fully written, would fill a volume instead of a few pages.

1. The Bible, by gradual process, is a revelation of God to man. Near the opening of human history, men had lost all right knowledge of the true God; they were given over to idolatry; and from this condition they had to be reclaimed or their state was hopeless. The

process must be step by step, and gradual. A rational being without God is a moral monstrosity.

At first, God was revealed to men as a Being of power, then, of knowledge, then of judgment and justice, whom men were to fear and blindly serve. Next, God is made to stand over against idols as the One, living and true God. A little later He becomes the special God of the Hebrew people, as against the gods of the nations that were no gods. When men began to attribute moral character to God, they thought of Him as a Being like themselves, selfish, angry, jealous and revengeful. They were then unable to appreciate a higher conception. At length the justice, the mercy and the goodness of God began to come into view. Later on, as seen by a few highly gifted or inspired souls, God became a righteous moral Ruler; and later still, and especially in the New Testament, God is seen as a faithful Father, loving, pitying and caring for all His children upon all the earth. This last view of God is as different from the first, as a snow-storm is different from a harvest, as an acorn differs from an oak. It took a thousand years to displace false ideas of God, and work the true conception of His character and relations into the minds of men; and it is not fully accomplished yet. This is one of the greatest achievements of the Scriptures, and what an almost infinite uplift of hope and aspiration it has brought to the world.

2. The Bible, by slow process, beginning with simplest lessons, unfolds to man the perfect law of God. In the garden God began to tell Adam and Eve, as children, what they might and might not do. Law, in the sense of physical order must, it would seem, have been recognized from the beginning. Man, from the first, had in himself the conception of right and wrong, and so of

personal obligation ; otherwise he would not have been man. But these primitive ideas were far short of a perfect system of moral law, defining the duties which men owe to God and to one another.

The first full and formal attempt we find in the Bible to set forth the moral law of God is contained in the Ten Commandments. Some of these may have been known to men outside of Hebrew limits ; but nowhere had they ever been formulated as we find them in the Twentieth Chapter of Exodus. What clearness of statement and perfect order of arrangement is here ! The code seems perfect, as far as it goes. But a glance at that law shows that it had not reached the ideal standard. With two or three exceptions, each command is given in negative and not in positive form. It forbids, but does not enjoin ; and the people understood that law as referring only to certain outward acts which they must not do. Good as the Ten Commandments are, they embody but little of the spirit of love, and less still of the spirit of brotherhood. All through the Old Testament the duties which they enjoin are variously expressed and enforced. Christ, in His comments on them greatly broadened their meaning. He brought out their positive side, and their relations to the thoughts, purposes and hearts of men. The whole law of ethical righteousness was revealed by Christ as it never had been before. But not till Christ proclaimed, and the Apostles illustrated the New Commandment of supreme love to God and the love of one's neighbor as one's self, was the law of God fully understood. Love is the sum of all God's commandments ; it is the fulfilling of the law. God is love ; and he that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. This revelation

of the Law of God makes the Bible the Book of all Books.

3. The Bible unfolds to man the nature, necessity and worth of true religion. Apart from the Bible, men are religious, for it is their nature to be so; but the highest conception of religion springs from the Word of God. True religion means loving service of God and man. It means purity of heart and life. It means glad sacrifice of one's self for the love of God and the good of others. This idea of sacrifice runs all through the Old Testament, and finds its glorious consummation in the sacrifice that Christ made of Himself on the Cross for the saving of the world. This is the Bible conception of true religion; and it stands over against idolatry, formalism, dogmatic belief and perfunctory service. True religion is the worship of God in spirit and in truth. It is a service of love. This high Biblical conception of religion is found nowhere, as a theory or as a privilege and duty, outside of the Christian Scriptures. Here, and nowhere else man becomes one with God, in thought and purpose, becomes the temple in which God dwells; becomes a co-worker with God for the saving of a lost world. It is this religion that allies man to all that is good in the universe, and separates him from all that is evil. This is man's highest good, and, when we consider that this great boon comes to the world through the Bible and not otherwise, how shall we find words to express our appreciation of God's great gift, and our thankfulness for its bestowment?

4. The Bible is God's revealer of man to himself. At best, man is the greatest of mysteries and of contradictions. Take away the knowledge which the Bible imparts concerning him, and the mystery deepens into blank

darkness. He knows not his own origin, his nature or his destiny. The Bible is a faithful mirror, in which every man finds a true reflection of himself. He there learns that he was created in the image of God; that he was made but little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor.

But he learns there also, of his sad fall and of his moral separation from God. He finds there an explanation of the fact of which he is so conscious, that his spiritual nature is in subjection to his animal instincts and passions, and that he has entered upon a road that leads to death. He is a conscious transgressor of the law of God as revealed in Scripture, and re-enforced by his own conscience; and that, left to himself, there is no reasonable hope of recovery, and still less of ever attaining to that moral and spiritual blessedness for which he often longs, and knows that he was created. He realizes that if the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. He is self condemned, and knows that it is only by repentance and return to God that he can be saved. But the Bible does not leave man in this wretched condition. God's ear is ever attentive; He hears the soul's first cry for help; and He takes him up from the horrible pit and the miry clay, places his feet on the rock and establishes his goings and puts a new song into his mouth, a song of hope, and joy, of praise; of deliverance and of eternal victory. A Book which reveals man to himself, saves him from himself, and leads him heavenward is of inestimable value.

5. The great achievement of the Christian Scriptures is the revelation to the world of Jesus Christ, its Lord and Saviour, who stands midway between God and man, reconciling, not God to man, but man to God. Apart from Jesus Christ—revealed prophetically or in person—

God has never been known, except as a consuming fire, an object of dread. But seen in the light that emanates from Christ, God becomes truth, light, life and love. The very people who depreciate the Divine side of Christ's nature owe to Him the bright conceptions which they so much cherish of the loving Fatherhood of God. No such conceptions were ever reached by men except in the revelation made to the world through Jesus, the Christ of God.

The first Biblical hint of the coming Messiah was given at the garden gate, in these words: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." From that time on, all through the Old Testament, we have repeated intimations of His coming, descriptions of His character, and outline sketches of what He was to accomplish; so that when the Old Testament was completed, a state of general expectancy in all the Jewish nation, and, to some extent, among Gentile peoples, prevailed.

At length the world was so far prepared that Christ came, preaching that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. This was the central and the greatest fact in human history; for it measured this world and the world beyond. If the "testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy" in the Old dispensation, so, the life, the words and the inspiration of Jesus was the soul of the New. The whole Bible is Christo-centric. Take Christ out of it, or belittle His place in the great scheme of human redemption, and you have turned the sun into darkness and draped the world in hopeless mourning. Christ is the light and life of the world; but this is not the place for enlargement on so great a theme. I only add that, while great truths are voiced in nature, we are wholly in-

debted to the Christian Scriptures for our knowledge of Christ and His saving mission to a lost world.

6. While it would not be right to attribute the whole of what is called Christian Civilization and progress to the Bible, still, it must be claimed that only where the Bible has prepared the way, has any high state of civilization and progress been attained. A glance at the world, as it now is, proves this. The civilizations of Greece and Rome are no exceptions, since they embraced only a few conspicuous persons, while the great masses of the people were in utter ignorance and misery. In the best days of Rome, more than half the population were slaves. Wherever the Bible is known and read, civilization follows in its train. Human governments and the general condition of the peoples are improved; schools, high and low, are established; eleemosynary institutions of all sorts for the relief of the unfortunate are built and sustained; great inventions, as the printing press, the telegraph, steam and electro-motors, and numberless other inventions and improvements follow. I concede that the Bible does not do all these things directly, but it is the underlying power that produces them, and they only exist where the Bible prepares the way.

Think of what would be on earth, had the Holy Book never been written. Then, such agencies as the above would never have existed, and the world would be to-day, so far as man can see, in pagan darkness. The Christian Church is entirely a product of the Bible. With all her faults, she has been for nearly two thousand years the centre and medium of spiritual power in the world; and, under modified and improved conditions, she will in-

crease her influence until all mankind, accepting her truth, will fall into her loving embrace.

7. If the Holy Bible were put in comparison with the sacred books of other historic religions, it would so far eclipse them all, that their light in comparison, would be as darkness. Even the enemies of religion acknowledge its wonderful power. Rousseau said of the Bible: "Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and so sublime, should be merely the work of man?" Diderot, speaking of the Bible to his infidel associates, said of it: "But it is wonderful, gentlemen, it is wonderful! I know of no man in France who can write and speak with such ability." The Bible is the admiration and inspiration of our greatest authors. Walter Scott said of it: "There is no other Book." Milton and Shakespeare drew their deepest inspirations from it. Statesmen and jurists follow in the main its guiding principles; and all men, at death, pillow their aching heads on its precious promises. No books, sacred or profane, for depth of thought, for simplicity, and yet sublimity of diction, for weight of meaning, and for fitness to guide, comfort, reprove, bless and save a needy world bear any comparison with the Holy Bible. It stands alone and unapproachable.

8. And, finally, the Bible inaugurates the New dispensation of the Holy Spirit. This is its last, and perhaps its greatest achievement. Christ said to His disciples: "It is expedient for you that I go away, and if I go away, I will send the Comforter unto you and He shall lead you into all truth. He shall take the things of mine and show them unto you." Our Lord leaves the impression, and means to do so, that it was better for the world that He Himself should go out of it, and that the Holy Spirit coming in His place should instruct, inspire, lead on and

sanctify inquiring, trusting souls, and do for them more than all the Prophets had done, or than He Himself could do, apart from the abiding presence of the Spirit of God among men.

This does not mean that, previously, the Holy Spirit had not been present in some measure to enlighten and inspire those who sought divine guidance; but it does mean that now and henceforth, the Church—and world included—was to be under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit as it had never been before. This New Dispensation was inaugurated, according to promise, in that upper room, on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in the 3rd of Acts. That outpouring of the Spirit was for all coming time; and what the effect was upon the apostles themselves, and upon the early Church, history reveals. The eyes of men were opened, and they saw what they had never seen before, and never would have seen but for that new power of enlightenment that had come down from God out of heaven.

One of the special ends to be secured by the dispensation of the Spirit was to make revelations to men of things to come. Jesus Christ had brought Life and Immortality to light. But in this, as we shall see, He had done but little more than re-state, with some additions, the current doctrine of the future life that was then held by the Jewish people. He did not speak exhaustively or finally upon that subject; He left the "gates ajar" so that other minds, enlightened by the Holy Spirit might enter in and complete the discoveries that He had brought partially into view. I cannot regard the closing books of Scripture as the end of God's revelations to men; and much less as the whole revealing work of the dispensation of the Spirit, which began when Christ left

the world, and was to continue till the final consummation. Is it too much to believe that there are people in the world to-day, guided by the Holy Spirit, who have a better knowledge of God, a clearer view of Jesus Christ, a fuller understanding of the Gospel and a more reasonable conception of the life after death, than was apprehended by any of the men in the early Christian centuries?

No, God's revelations to men through His Spirit have not been withdrawn from the world. All our knowledge upon these great subjects, and especially upon the great hereafter, which Christ just began to unfold, and left incomplete, is not to be obtained by a backward look. There is much yet to be revealed; and God's Spirit is leading His people on to greater visions of truth than have yet been reached. Whether this is called inspiration or enlightenment it matters not, so long as the fact remains and is conceded.

The time is coming, and, I think, is near at hand, when man's connection and intercommunication with the unseen world will be fuller, and more recognized and trusted than it has been hitherto. Then, I hope it will appear, on partly new evidence, that the human race will be so far saved as to make existence, to most an infinite blessing, and to none an infinite curse. How would such a consummation glorify the Scriptures and exalt His Name which is above every name.

I am confident that to this day the dispensation of the Holy Spirit is but imperfectly revealed; and I take comfort and courage in the hope and confidence that the day is at hand for which preparation is now going on, not for the second coming of Christ in visible form, but for some mighty manifestation of the Holy Spirit that shall

scatter the clouds of darkness, flood the world with light, solve the problem of the coming life and bring the New Jerusalem down out of heaven, so that henceforth God's Tabernacle shall be with men. The last and greatest achievement of the Bible is the bringing in of the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit under whose guidance and inspiration God will lead the world on, and accomplish for the human race that which was purposed at the beginning, its deliverance and eternal salvation.

CHAPTER VIII.

IMMORTAL LIFE IN THE PROBLEM.

The most interesting and precious, yet mysterious thing in all the world, is that well known and yet unknown something which we call life. Life in every form, high and low, is full of fascination, not only to the scientist, but to the casual observer, and even to the little child. Flowers, trees, domestic animals, birds, fishes and wild beasts have a charm alike for man and child, all because they have life. Take that away and they become an offense.

What is life? This simple question no living man can answer. Learned and unlearned people may talk about life endlessly, but they cannot tell what it is. The lexicographer calls it vitality and other such names; but these are only synonyms of life and not definitions. It is said that life is the opposite of death; then, what is death but the opposite of life? All this forms a circle, but not a definition. The scientist can, in a sense, dissect life as he finds it in flower or animal; psychologists can describe its operations and parts, but they know not what life is. The historian may fill hundreds of volumes in telling what life has done, but when asked: What is life? he is silent.

All life is correlated. No living thing exists apart by itself, but belongs to one "stupendous whole." Life is mysterious and undefinable because it is allied to the

Infinite. Life is an emanation from God. God is in all life, and that, in proportion as each living thing is able to receive Him. One of the recently discovered Logia, as translated by Harnack, of Berlin, reads: "Jesus saith, wherever they may be, there they are not without God; and just as one is alone in this manner, I am with him. Erect the stone and thereby thou wilt find me; split wood and I am there." This Logium, so far as it has any definite meaning, teaches the immanence of God; that He is everywhere and in everything, especially where there is life; and more and more as life becomes intellectual, moral and spiritual, there God is, and there is real life, immortal life.

Just where life begins or ends, it is not easy to determine. If God is essentially Life, and if all things finite emanate from Him, then, it would seem that there must be something of life in all things, even in what we call dead matter, that feeds and sustains life. Some minerals, as magnetic iron ore, and certain gems, appear to have something in them that answers to what we call life. All crystallizations make a near approach to, if they have not, life. In the vegetable world there are degrees of life. The toadstool fungus that comes up of a night, at the foot of a noble oak, has less of life, and life of a lower order, than has the tree that overshadows it. There is also a connecting link between vegetable and animal life. There are plants that capture and digest insect food. One form of animal life is much higher than another. The life of a horse or a dog is higher than that of a turtle or an oyster.

What distinguishes the life of man from all other forms of life on earth is, that rational, moral and spiritual elements enter into it and make it divine. Man, in his

mental configuration is like God, possessed of reason, conscience and free will. He is, therefore, capable of taking on moral character like God's. Indeed, moral character, good or bad, becomes to such a being a necessity.

Ethical and spiritual life—one in kind—are radically different from, and are above all other forms of earthly life. The distinction between a man and an animal, is one of the greatest distinctions in the universe; it is an infinite distinction. It is this distinction that makes us moral beings, that constitutes us "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," that makes Jesus Christ our Brother, and God our Father.

It would seem most natural, then, that this high and Divine quality of existence and of life, so different from every other, should have a nature, or spiritual body of its own, different from, yet residing in, the physical body, where also the animal life resides. This view accords with both reason and Scripture. Paul says: "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body;" and in his great chapter, he goes on to explain the difference between the two. Throughout the New Testament we have a clear distinction drawn between the soul and the spirit, one representing the physical life and the other the spiritual existence; and it always speaks of men and treats them as spiritual beings and wholly separate from animals.

If man, as we have seen, has a double nature, then each nature must have a matrix suited to its own needs. The two lives in man are as different in kind as are those of an animal and an angel. The angel has a spiritual body; so will the higher nature of man when it becomes angelic; so has it now in every human being

awaiting the death of the physical body when it shall take its flight. We cannot conceive of a spirit that has not form and substantiality, however etherealized; nor of a spirit leaving a human body that has not a corresponding spiritual body in which it exists, moves and has its being. But if the spirit is clothed in a spiritual body, when it goes from the physical body at death, it must have had that same spiritual body before what is called death ensued. What this spiritual body is, or is composed of, we do not know. It is invisible and intangible, except when it chooses, or when power is given it, to manifest itself after death, of which we have many examples recorded in Scripture. This spiritual body, composed, perhaps, of electricity mingled with yet rarer elements, lives in the physical body somewhat as people live in their houses. The body and the spirit part from each other at physical death, one going back to the dust as it was and the other to God who gave it. The substance of which the physical body consists may change form, but it can never cease to exist; and, is it not rational to believe that the spirit in man, and which constitutes him man,—conscious of itself and of God,—will continue not only to exist as a spirit after it leaves the body, which was necessary to it at the beginning, but will rise to a higher consciousness and life than was possible to it while dwelling here in the flesh? Is the spirit of man endowed with Immortal Life?

In this belief I have unfaltering confidence and assurance, and this for the following among other reasons:

1. The natural instincts and moral intuitions of the human mind give assurance of Immortal Life.

Natural instincts are common alike to animals and men; and in both they are to be implicitly trusted. They

are not the products of thought and judgment, but are the voice of God in the natures of those who feel them. When the bee builds its six-sided cell, the beaver constructs its dam and house, and birds form their nests and breed their young in Springtime, and in Autumn fly from Northern cold to Southern sunshine, they act from instinct, or, rather it is God acting in and through them. Instinct in animals is the call of nature to preserve and perpetuate life, their own and that of their kind; and nature never deceives; it is a safe guide, always to be trusted.

Men, no less than animals, are creatures of instinct. When sudden danger threatens, before one has time for thought, instinct impels one instantly to ward off the blow. Self-preservation is the first law of nature. But man's instinct, unlike that of the lower animals, reaches beyond the preservation of physical life. Religion is man's highest instinct; and, while many would give all they have for their lives, they will yet give up their lives for their religion. How many,—martyrs, for example,—sacrificing the less for the greater,—have, as Jesus did, laid down their lives that they might take them, again. Is such an instinct a deception, or, is it God's voice to be trusted and followed? God never misleads.

But man, as he comes from the hand of his Maker, has more than instinct, and more than reason; he is possessed of moral intuitions, which, again, are God's voice written yet more distinctly on the tablets of his heart. One of these moral intuitions, which is both instinct and intuition, is the clear apprehension of immortal life as the destiny of the human spirit. God has put into every soul an intuitive conviction of immortality. Man's fear of dying is not the fear of annihilation,—

“But the dread of something after death,—
The undiscovered country from whose bourne
No traveler returns, puzzles the will, . . .
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of.”

This instinctive and intuitive conviction of life after physical death, is practically universal. The instinct for religion is not more universal than is that for immortality. Go where we may among the peoples of the earth, living and dead, and this belief that physical death does not end life universally prevails.

The American Indian expects in the future world to find magnificent hunting grounds where he will pursue much the same course of life that he had followed here. For this reason his bow, pipe, hatchet and other things are buried with his body that he may be ready and well equipped, to enter upon his new and enlarged field of activities. The ancient Egyptians showed clearly their belief in life after physical death by embalming their dead, and building for them costly tombs which they called *Eternal Habitations*. In mummy sarcophagi recently opened the soul is painted as a bird ready to take flight, singing as it rises: “Hail, O my Father; I have come! . . . I live and grow; I wake in peace.” The Persians as far back as the fourth century B. C. taught, through the Magians, “that some men would revive and become immortal with a fine ethereal body, and would lead a life of bliss upon the earth forever freed from the corrupting influence of evil.” The sacred books of India are equally clear in their statement of the doctrine of life after physical death. Every ancient tribe and nation has had,—expressed in different ways, more or less materialistic,—a belief that the spirit lives after the body dies.

Modern tribes and nations of all sorts cling to the same belief. So universal is this God-inspired conviction that the few Materialists and Agnostics who raise doubts without making denials, are but the needed exceptions that prove the rule. This universal belief in Immortal Life is not a mere speculative theory, but is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, moral lever that moves the world. Take this conviction from man and the race sinks into brutehood. Religion, in any true sense of the word, is banished from the earth. Hope is blighted; high ideals are obscured, and the great motives to endeavor and struggle towards a nobler life are belittled or destroyed; and there is nothing better for man than to eat and drink, for to-morrow he dies. Any view that leads, logically, to such results must be false.

To most minds this argument for immortal life, from the voice of natural instinct and moral intuition is convincing and satisfactory. To reject this evidence is to bring an accusation against God, who planted these instincts and intuitions in every human soul. If they are misleading and unsatisfactory, who is responsible, man or nature, man or God? Nature plays no tricks, and makes no mistakes; therefore man is immortal.

2. For those who ask still further evidence, let the Logical Argument from Reason be introduced as confirmatory of the moral argument, and we reach the same conclusion.

Wise men in all ages have been reasoning upon this subject. They have wanted to know the logical grounds on which the great conclusion rests. Socrates reasoned himself, or thought he did, into the belief in immortality. Up to the moment of taking the hemlock he was saying to his friends that "conscious existence could

not cease to be conscious existence; and that personality after death must be essentially what it was before." Plato took up the general argument of Socrates, and, in his "Phædo" carried it further; and some of his disciples further still, until, at last, they lost themselves in metaphysical speculation. The great argument for immortality by Cicero was a re-statement of the Greek argument placed on a more practical Roman foundation.

The Buddhists and Brahmins, who comprise so large a proportion of the human family, are forever reasoning on the subject of life after death; and they all come to the same conclusion, that physical death does not end the soul's conscious existence. The fact that Oriental doctrines, on this and kindred subjects, are now being extensively proclaimed in the United States and Great Britain makes some knowledge of them important. They hold that souls inhabiting human bodies pre-existed; and that they go from one body to another, and from one moral state to another, until at last they attain to what is called "self-recognition," which is supposed to mean inward purity, after which the soul is absorbed into Nirvana, the God from whom it originated. Thus the historic religions uphold the doctrine of continued life after physical death; and try to reason out that conclusion.

Christian writers have also attached much importance to the logical argument; and as the world grows wiser, have improved upon the older methods. The Christian argument from Reason, for life after death, may be summarised in part as follows:

1. The fact of this universal belief invests it with rational probability.

2. The strong and instinctive desire for immortal life is an argument for its existence. Why should God have

put such desires and hopes into the natures of men if they are not to be gratified?

3. Man's intellectual and moral powers are susceptible of a far higher development than this life can furnish. God must have intended that the human soul should reach its highest development; but, for this, life after death is a necessity.

These are some of the logical arguments used to prove the fact of Immortal Life. But this whole class of argument taken by itself, and apart from instinct and conscious intuition, though corroborative, is not conclusive. Men never doubt immortality till they try to prove it as an abstract proposition. Its proof is largely in ourselves.

3. A third proof of Immortal Life is one that can only be fully appreciated by those who know God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent, which, of itself, is eternal life. Conscious life in and from God, is conscious Immortal Life. Christ said, because I live ye shall live also. I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me shall never die; he that liveth and believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. I live, said Paul, yet not I but Christ that liveth in me, and the life I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.

Texts like these, with which the Scriptures abound, may seem to one who lives unto himself to be mystical if not meaningless; but to one who has the consciousness of God in his own heart and life, so that he is as conscious of God as he is of himself and of his fellow men,—to such an one Immortal Life is not something to be attained hereafter, but is a present reality. This argument from conscious union with God, and of spiritual life from and in Him, is coming to hold a larger and more commanding place in the thoughts of men than it once held. Those

who are in a condition to appreciate it need, and seek for themselves, no other proof. Life in Christ is to such Immortal Life, so that while God lives they must live also. They are not going into eternity some time, for they are in eternity now, and can never be otherwise or elsewhere.

I concede that this kind of proof may not be convincing to one who has no personal experience of this Divine Life; but to one who has that experience, further exposition is unnecessary; for, in himself he has evidence that is satisfactory and conclusive. The time will come, and it is coming, when this kind of evidence will be the most convincing of all proof, and it should be so now to all men.

4. The direct Bible evidence, especially of the New Testament, in support of Immortal Life is so full and clear that all I need do is, not to quote, but to classify Scripture teaching. One class of texts describes the condition of the righteous and the wicked in the future world. Another class, of which the 15th of 1st Corinthians is an example, treats of the resurrection of all the dead and of life afterwards. Another contains warnings and encouragements, having reference to the life after physical death. Another class puts the two lives, that on earth and that beyond in contrast, connecting one with the other; and still another class connects man's after life with Christ's resurrection from the dead and the soul's trust in Him. All these, and other classes of texts imply the fact of life after death. Comment upon them, or even quotation, is unnecessary, as no one denies that the Scriptures teach the doctrine of Immortal Life.

5. One other form of argument for continued life after physical death is convincing to a growing class of people. It is the argument from what are claimed to be well attested facts, Do spirits of the dead ever return and mani-

fest themselves unmistakably to living men? Are such manifestations clearly attested by the senses, one or all, of sight, sound, or touch? One such case, could it be established beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, would constitute scientific proof, at least of the fact of life after physical death. No extended statement is here called for. Let us leave Biblical illustrations, of which there are many, out of view, and look only at recent testimony. Let us concede that much and most of what is claimed to be spirit-manifestation is superstition, delusion, hallucination; or, worse still, deception and trickery. Concede this, and yet facts remain to be accounted for that are attested by persons of intelligence, whose characters are above suspicion, and whose observations have been so conducted, and are of such a nature, as to make mistake impossible. They only testify to what they themselves know to be true as stated. My contention is that, should the same weight of evidence that supports some of the facts of spirit-manifestation be brought into any court of justice, in a trial that involves capital punishment, no judge or jury would hesitate to pronounce sentence on that evidence; and this, because the case would have passed the limits of reasonable doubt. If this be conceded, then the conclusion of continued life after physical death is judicially established. I believe the time is at hand, if it has not already passed, when as much as this will be generally conceded; and such concession, I repeat, amounts to scientific proof of continued life after death, which is practically the question involved.

This, then, is the conclusion of the whole preceding study. The doctrine of Immortal Life will ever remain the settled conviction of mankind,—because man by nature is so vitally allied to God; because of his inborn in-

structive and intuitive convictions; because reason teaches the fact of immortality; because Christian consciousness asserts it; because the Bible declares it, and because it is attested by actual manifestations from the unseen world.

And yet, this central doctrine of Immortal Life is involved in two complications, the second of which is serious. The first of these complications arises out of the theory of Conditional Immortality, now held by many good and learned men. Its advocates teach that Immortality is not a natural attribute of the human soul, but is the special gift of God, through Jesus Christ. The righteous only, whose souls are made alive by the influx of the Divine Spirit, are raised from the dead and endowed, not only with eternal existence, but with eternal blessedness. All others of the human race are either never raised from the dead, or, if raised (and here there is difference of opinion), they soon fall back into unconsciousness, if not into utter annihilation. This may be regarded as eternal punishment, since it deprives the wicked of that blessed existence which they might otherwise have enjoyed. The theory claims that the terms death, eternal death, destruction, destroyed, destroyed root and branch, burned up, and other such terms in the Scriptures naturally mean annihilation.

Without replying in detail, I cannot accept that interpretation,—because there are so many other passages that are clearly contradictory of that view; and because the death that comes to the wicked and sets them over against the righteous is spiritual death and not annihilation; as, for example, when one is spoken of as being dead in trespasses and sins, and of persons being dead while they yet live. All the passages that speak to the

death of the wicked more naturally refer to spiritual death than to a state of eternal unconsciousness.

What to my mind is of greatest interest in this discussion, is the main purpose for which the theory of Conditional Immortality appears to have been adopted; which evidently was and is to escape the conclusion of endless punishment. One of the latest books published in defence of Conditional Immortality is entitled the "Tri-Lemma"; and places its explanatory title on the three lines of a triangle; one line of which represents Eternal Punishment; another Universal Salvation, and the base line Conditional Immortality. Then, as the first two are argued down, only the third conclusion remains, which is defended against both the others. This is an ingenious device; but, to my mind, no one of the three propositions expresses the whole truth; and, for reasons that will appear later on, I should have to reject them all. But, were I compelled to choose between endless misery and conditional immortality, I should be obliged to do, as others have done, accept the latter alternative. The idea of ceasing to exist is fearful to contemplate; but, as compared with the idea of eternal misery, inflicted by the direct hand of God, it is a state of Paradise. Any sort of alternative is preferable to that. But, fortunately, neither of them is necessitated; nor yet is the conclusion of universal salvation, which is only another device to escape from the doctrine of eternal misery.

We have now reached the second complication that entangles the doctrine of Immortal Life. It is this very question of Eternal Punishment as an infliction from the direct hand of God. A very large portion of Christian people throughout the world believe, or think they do, in

the awful doctrine of eternal punishment as formulated in the Creeds of the Church. The conditions of escape from such punishment, as given in the creeds, are such as to make it certain that the greater part of the countless millions who have lived, and are now living on the earth, are doomed to go into a place of eternal misery where their existence must be to themselves, not a blessing, but an infinite curse.

Such a belief is horrible to contemplate; and it shrouds God and the universe, not in mystery only, but in blank darkness. We can understand, in part, why the deathless spirits of men should begin their existence in animal bodies where they would meet with trial and temptation, and have to struggle their way upward into the regions of light, liberty and life. All this is favorable to the development of character, which is the chief purpose of our earthly life. And such a system accords with God's evolutionary method of creation, providence and progress. We can see why and how, under such a system, great multitudes, after many struggles and failures, might never attain to a high state of virtue and blessedness. But how the Almighty could create a race of immortal beings, knowing in advance that the great proportion of them must go into eternal torment, which His own direct hand should inflict, is beyond the power of human comprehension; is something that lies outside the line of rational belief! The fact that man is endowed with the power of choice explains nothing, unless it means that the freedom of man, within very narrow limits, thwarts the Wisdom and Power of God in His efforts to carry out His own benevolent purposes, which is an impossible belief. Nor does the plea that God has sent His Son into the world to save lost men avail as an explanation. So

long as it is contended that none can ever be saved by Christ except those who know Him, and, in this life, by faith accept Him as their personal Saviour,—because such an experience is possible only to a small minority of the millions who have lived on the earth.

No, when God created man in His own image, conditioning his earthly existence as He did, it was all for a benevolent purpose; and that purpose was not so much His own glory, as it was the well-being of mankind, to whom He sustained a Fatherly relation. In this creation, God made Himself responsible for the consequences that should come out of it; and He obligated Himself to place every moral being of the race in a condition, or environment more favorable to a successful than to an unsuccessful issue of existence; and, indeed, to do for each individual all that infinite wisdom, power and love could do for each individual's highest happiness. God has done, and is doing all this, or, as the alternative, He has not made man immortal.

Just at this point lies the complication in which the doctrine of Immortal Life is involved. God has either made some degree of eternal well-being for each member of the human race practicably possible, and morally certain, or else He has not made them immortal. He has not created a race like ours to make a large proportion of it eternally miserable, but has done it, for an opposite end. To vindicate the Almighty, one must hold this conclusion, or else deny that man is immortal; which, for reasons given one cannot deny. God must, and will in the end, bring most of mankind into an experience of perfect blessedness and, to no part of our race will existence become a far greater evil than good. God's benevolent purpose in man's creation will be surely accom-

plished. The beginning clearly predicts the end, and the end must fulfil that prediction.

“What began best can’t end worst,
Nor what God blest once, prove accurst.”

CHAPTER IX.

SIN IN THE PROBLEM.

Almost every great question is complex, many-sided, has complications, and must be studied, not by itself alone, but in its relations to other questions with which it is closely connected. Otherwise the investigation is *ex parte*, or, it stands on so narrow a basis as to be of but little value.

The general problem of Final Destiny, is a good example of a many-sided question. It is so intertwined with other great subjects that they all have to be studied together, each giving its quota of testimony, or no valuable conclusion can be reached. This explains why so wide a range of great topics comes into the investigation.

The question of Sin is one of broad, interlacing relations, and should be treated accordingly. Seen by itself alone we know that sin exists, that it is universal, and, that it is the meanest and most destructive thing in the universe. It is not possible to draw a picture of Sin and its baneful effects more horrible than the reality, as every thoughtful beholder sees it. It is everywhere, in high places and low, and in ourselves, doing its deadly work. So far there can be no disagreement. But, if Sin is all this and more, then we should study it in its relations, and discover if possible, its place in the problem of Final Destiny.

(1) What are the relations of Sin to moral law? Sin,

according to Scripture, is the transgression of law, and where there is no law there is no transgression. The moral law is the transcript of God's character, which is love; and love is the fulfilling of the law. Thou shalt love God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself. On this commandment hangs all the law and the prophets. But, before the law of God was engraved upon stone, or inscribed in the Bible, it was in-wrought with the moral nature of man. If it had not been there first, the written law would have been meaningless. The eternal principles of right and wrong, of honor and justice, of mercy and of love, are moral intuitions. Every human being, as we have seen, recognizes them as binding on himself, on God, and on all mankind. No authority is above or beyond law. So all writers agree.

Dr. Alexander says: "God, as a moral Governor, has incorporated the elements of His law into our very constitutions, and that the intuitive perceptions of conscience are independent of every doctrine of theology, even the greatest." Paul's statement on the same point is conclusive. Rom. ii: 14-15. "For when the Gentiles which have not the law (written law) do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." The moral law of God is written in the Bible, and yet more clearly on the tablets of man's heart or moral nature; and Sin consists in transgressing the mandates of that law. This is both the Scriptural and the rational conception and definition of Sin.

(2) What are the relations of Sin to what is called heredity? The term heredity, as applied to mankind,

means the tendency in children to take on the characteristics of their parents, or of more remote ancestors. This tendency relates not only to physical and mental, but often, in some degree, to moral traits also. That such a tendency exists and should in some measure be taken into account in passing judgment upon character must be conceded.

But, when the doctrine of heredity is carried to the extent we find it in the historic Creeds of the Church, and especially with what is known as the "Adamic System," every reasonable person should not only hesitate, but oppose. According to that view the moral character of Adam is transmitted to the whole human race, so that Sin is a part of man's nature, of his inmost being. It was in him ages before he was born, or had a conscious existence. Every man sinned in Adam, and for that sin is justly condemned to eternal misery. This is the condition of the whole human race. Every individual, as God made him, and before there was any conscious action on his part, or he had any knowledge of good and evil, was a sinner. God adjudged him as such, and calls on him to repent of Adam's sin, or of his sin in Adam; to repent for being created a sinner, otherwise he would be sent by the God who made him what he is, and what he is to repent of, into a hell of eternal torment. I have actually met one man, an intelligent Christian minister, who said he believed all this nonsense, and that he had actually repented of Adam's sin, or of the sin which he himself must have committed in Adam ages before he was born. There may be others like him, but I have not met any other. Such a view of hereditary sin and guilt as is here described is simply absurd, and, of course, is not true; it cannot be thought of as anything but false,

except when it is brought forward in support of some dogma that cannot otherwise be supported. If sin is such a thing as is here described then it is nothing, and it is not worth thinking about. But, alas! it is not that!

(3) The relation of sin to intelligence. Intelligence is necessary to virtue and to vice. If one does not know that a thing if done is wrong, then he is not guilty for doing it. If he ought to have known, but did not, then his sin consists in being ignorant when he should have been informed, and not in doing the best he knew at the time. This was Paul's sin when he persecuted the Church; he did not know, but he ought to have known. If a child can truly say to his father, when some injurious act has been done, "I did not know it was wrong," that father may regret the act, and reprove the child for being ignorant, but he cannot punish that child for the act itself and yet be a just parent. What if God should call every error in judgment, every mistake, or even blunder in finite beings, when they were doing as well as they knew, a sin, to be punished as such, where would we be? No, God's rule is: "He that knew his Lord's will and did it not is to be beaten." We must live up to the light God gives us, otherwise we commit sin. Every man is accepted according to what he hath and not according to what he hath not."

(4) Consider next the relation of sin to the human will. The will is the pivotal point in moral character. Law and knowledge are essential to intelligent choice, but actual choice, by which is meant purpose or intention, is necessary to moral character good or bad. Choice implies freedom, or the ability to choose in more directions than one; it implies the power of contrary choice; otherwise choice and necessity are interchangeable terms, and

not contraries, as they are in fact. To say with President Edwards that "a man is free to choose as he chooses, but that he has no power or ability to choose otherwise," is to concede that what is called choice is only another word for necessity. This is not freedom, but a delusion practised on one's self as a means of harmonizing opposing doctrines. If man has no ability to choose, then he has no responsibility for not choosing. That is just the conclusion President Edwards wished to avoid. At the same time he did not wish to deny the bondage of the will, which was the common sentiment of the Church in his day; and so he gave the old definition of inability a new turn and called it "moral inability;" but the element of choice, which necessitates the power of purposing in more than one direction, was left out of it. But this advance, little as it was,—a simple metaphysical subtlety,—brought relief and made the Gospel preachable. What many ministers began to preach, from that day, was that men could and did deliberately choose between accepting and rejecting Christ as offered in the Gospel.

But, the point I make is that all sin consists in choice, in intelligent choice,—men choose the wrong when they could and should choose the right. No act of necessity, no choice that could not have been otherwise than as it was, can involve ill desert or moral character. Men may deny this in theory, but they never deny it in practice. It is not one's outward act at all that determines character, but the choice or purpose that lies back of the act. If men honestly choose or purpose to do God's will, to act benevolently, to carry out the law of love in all things, then they are in the way of duty; but, if they choose the opposite, or refuse to choose the good, which is practically the same thing, then they commit sin, and

sin continually. The attitude of the will in the presence of known duty determines character. God respects man's freedom; the will, in one sense, is omnipotent; it puts on man a fearful responsibility, but it is a responsibility without which moral character could not exist.

(5) Let us glance now at the relation sin sustains to conscience. Conscience is moral reason; it is pure reason exercised upon questions of right and duty. It is in all men, great and small. To say that one has no conscience is to say that he is incapable of moral distinctions, and so of accountability. This is true of the animal creation that has no moral nature. The proof that every man has a conscience is in the fact that every man distinguishes between right and wrong; he makes this distinction for himself, and he applies the same distinction to others. Conscience is the voice of God in the human soul; it is the voice of authority and duty, and it is never to be silenced but always to be obeyed. No man ever sinned in obeying the clear dictates of conscience, and no man ever disregarded that inner sacred voice without committing sin; so that one might almost define sin to consist in the deliberate disregard of the voice of conscience. That is always sinful and nothing else is. Conscience is law.

But, it is said that conscience is often blinded, uninformed and hardened. What then? Is conscience still the unerring rule of duty? I reply that man's judgment is often mistaken, his intellect is unenlightened, his will is perverse; but conscience, when it speaks at all, speaks always for God and right and duty, and is to be trusted. One must not mistake prejudice, stubbornness, willfulness, wrong judgment for conscience, as some do, and call that following conscience. Any truth can be per-

verted. But if one knows what conscience is, and follows it in purpose and life, he cannot sin. Every sin is a violation of conscience, and every violation of conscience is sin. If this be not so, then man has no clear standard of duty; and moral foundations are broken up.

(6) The relation of sin to man's ability, is what? I answer that ability, in all cases, is the measure of obligation. If not, then obligation has no standard of measurement, and the world is adrift it knows not whither. When a man in given circumstances does the best he can, he may err in judgment, but he does his whole duty and commits no sin. Such an one may be treated as incompetent, but to treat him as a criminal would be cruelty. Sin is wrong intention, and not failure through inability.

(7) Glance at the relation of sin to temptation. Temptation is an inducement to do wrong, either by omission or by commission. Some temptations spring up from within ourselves, and some come in upon us from without. Their name is legion. I cannot even catalogue them, they are so many. But every temptation to do wrong presupposes an apprehension of what is right, from which the temptation would draw us away. Sin, then, consists in drifting with the temptation, instead of resisting it; it is floating with the current instead of rowing against it. Is temptation, then, necessarily a great evil? No, the reverse. True, if there were no temptation there might be no sin; but it is just as true that there would be little if any virtue. This statement helps to explain the world in which we live. But may not temptation mitigate the turpitude of sin? At times, yes; but, if successfully resisted it increases virtue. Temptation

works evil or good to men according as they take it; yielding is sin, overcoming is righteousness.

(8) This view of temptation suggests the relation of sin to character, and especially to moral character, which term expresses what one is in fact, not what he seems to be, or has the reputation for being. Character is good, bad, or a commingling of the two. The formation of good character is that chiefly for which man exists. Character in the circumstances in which man is placed is forced to form. The one thing, or, at least the chief thing we are all doing in this world, is the making of character. Sin destroys moral character. If continued till it rules the heart and life, it defeats the end for which man was created. It is the foe of all that is good; it destroys in man all that is worth saving,—his moral self.

(9) What, now, is the relation of sin to penalty? We have seen, from various points of view, how fearful a thing sin is, and how the fact of voluntariness everywhere enters into it. It is then full of ill desert, and merits punishment, just as righteousness deserves reward. The fact of penalty or punishment for sin is conceded; but, on two main points there is difference of view that calls for examination.

The first is as to the main purpose of penalty. To this question different answers are given:

One that punishment is strictly disciplinary, and is meant for the sinner's good. The parent's treatment of his child is the standard illustration. Why does a good and wise father punish a disobedient boy? It is not done in wrath, but in love; not in vengeance for injuries received, but in kindness to the boy; not that the boy may get his deserts, but that he may be suitably reprov'd, reformed and made a happier and better boy. This is why

good fathers punish their children. And, it is insisted that God is the wisest and best of Fathers, and that the spirit which He has breathed into the hearts of earthly parents is a transcript of His own.

It is insisted further that when human governments inflict punishment, it is, or should be largely for reformatory ends. All this contains truth, and yet plainly, this theory does not cover the whole ground.

A second theory is that punishment is a satisfaction of the intuitive sense of justice that is felt in the heart of every moral being, and of God. If a great crime is committed men instinctively feel that the criminal ought to be punished; justice demands it. This sense of justice explains why, when a criminal receives a severe sentence, the public experiences a feeling of satisfied relief. It is partly the ground also, on which mob violence is sometimes prosecuted and approved. God, it is said, has the same sense of justice, and therefore he attaches penalty to laws. This, again, is but a partial explanation.

Another reason for punishment is, the protection of the public. Crime strikes at all public interests; it tends to overthrow government and all the interests it protects, and, therefore, should be punished as a means of restraint and for public protection. This reason certainly applies to human governments that are in danger of overthrow, but not so obviously to Divine government that is in no such danger.

I should prefer to say, what will appear later on, that the violations of Divine law are punished on the basis of natural necessity; it must be so, otherwise law would not be law.

The relation of sin to penalty presents a second question, more difficult than the first. This question relates

not to the reason for punishment, but to its extent. And, here again we are in the midst of conflicting theories. Sin must be punished, but how far, and according to what principles?

One theory is that the punishment of sin must be as great as are the evil consequences that flow from it. Do results measure desert? Let us see. One man plans to do a great wrong, but through some mistake fails, and no harm follows, except to himself. The attempt of Guy Fawkes to blow up the British Parliament is an illustration. Another commits some heedless blunder, and measureless evil follows,—as, when Chicago was burned up because a milkmaid, in the evening, allowed the cow to kick over her lamp. This rule overlooks the motive, the selfishness which was back of the act and is its true measure.

Another theory measures desert by the dignity of the Being against whom the sin was committed. Men may measure sin and desert that way, but God does not. What can God care for that dignity that is affected one way or another by the follies and sins of men. He pities, blames and punishes them, but, as for His own dignity and greatness being endangered or affected, the idea is too absurd for a moment's attention.

Again, it is claimed that sin is an infinite evil, and, therefore, it deserves an infinite penalty. If every sin that any man commits,—and this is the meaning,—is an infinite evil, how many infinite things of the same sort does one sinner do in the course of his life? If the first sin he ever committed, if the sin he sinned in Adam was infinite, and deserved infinite punishment, then his thousands of other sins, each of them infinite, deserve infinite punishment thousands of times multiplied. The idea is absurd.

And besides, those who support this theory, hold also that God permitted sin to come into the world because He could, all things considered, turn it to some good account. How then is it, and is every act of sin, an infinite evil?

Apart from all the above theories, I must maintain that the true measure of penalty is to be found in the law of natural consequences. Divine law has two parts: Precept and award. If the precept is obeyed, reward follows of itself necessarily. If the precept is violated, the natural consequences of violation are as sure to come as effect is to follow cause. We all know this to be true in regard to the violation of physical law; and, is it not reasonable to suppose that the same rule obtains in regard to moral law? God's methods are uniform. The penalty which sin deserves, then, is penalty that a violated law of God naturally and necessarily inflicts. Whether that penalty will be eternal or not will depend upon whether or not the violation is eternal. The penalty will endure so long as sin continues, and a return to obedience will remove the penalty so far as, in the nature of things, it can be removed. But this question of natural consequences is so great, and so vital to the problem of Final Destiny, that I only refer to it here and reserve its full study for a chapter by itself later on.

Two or three other points, before coming to the last, require only a word each. Sin brings the sinner into wrong relations in every direction. It makes him false to himself, to the nature that God has given him, false to the law of his being, false to reason, to conscience and to every moral obligation, false to God and to the whole universe whose just claim he no longer respects. A condition like this is one of moral discord, and, if that attitude

is continued endlessly, it is eternal hell. Nothing but true repentance and return to obedience to the moral law of God, such as Christ came, if possible to secure, can save such an one from a state of eternal death.

(10) This brings us to the relationship that sin sustains to the problem of Final Destiny. We have seen that the moral universe, as God has made it, involves in appearance, if not in reality, a series of necessary evils. It involves the human race in ignorance, in mental and moral weakness, in inexperience, in conflict and in speedy physical death. It does not necessitate sin, but it makes its existence in the world not only probable, but a moral certainty. God, in creating the race, never could have purposed that sin should become on earth, or in the universe, finally triumphant. He permitted it to exist for some good reason and he will certainly, in some way, bring good out of it. It is not difficult to see that sin gives an experience to men, in some cases, that proves a blessing to them afterwards. Peter was a wiser, more stable and a better man for having once, in an unguarded hour, denied his Lord. Paul's Christian life burned with a holy zeal for Christ which he might never have felt in the same degree, had he not once been his persecutor. I suppose that nearly every man can turn back to some mistake, yes, to some sin in his life, that served in one way or another to form a crisis, to induce reflection, repentance and a great change for the better. What our short vision can discover in a few such cases, God may see on an infinitely broader scale. He may see what Pope describes :

"All discord, harmony not understood,
All partial evil, universal good."

I confidently anticipate that when the universe, or what

we know of it, comes to be better understood it will be seen that all its parts, sin and suffering included, are the natural though not in all specific cases necessary out-working of that underlying and resistless law of evolution, by means of which all things that have been, are, or are to be, come to exist. What now seems fragmentary, disorderly, harmful and evil will be found to have been natural, educational, and necessary steps in the vast onward, upward movement, that shall in the end explain and vindicate the ways of God; and, as one result, bring the human race at last into harmony with its Creator, with itself, and with the whole moral universe. God's wisdom and love are in and through it all. Creation by evolution, through struggle with environment, is still progressing and will go on until perfection is attained.

When God looks upon mankind darkened by sin and ignorance, struggling with temptation and the manifold vicissitudes of life, often on the borders, and sometimes in the vortex of despair,—when God sees all this, does He care, does He simply despise and condemn, does He throw off all responsibility and charge all the blame on these struggling souls and send them, unconcerned, into eternal misery? No, a thousand times, no! “A mother may forget her child, but I will not forget thee. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort thee.” God cares for His children, else why has He been so forbearing and why did He send Jesus the Christ, His son, to seek and save the lost?

God saw from the beginning what, and all, that was to happen in the history of mankind, and yet He went on with the work of creation. Could He have done this and yet known that the great proportion of the countless millions who should live on the earth through thousands of

years would, by His own hand, and by positive physical infliction, be made eternally miserable? It cannot be, for God is good.

I know again, that man is a free moral agent, that he is endowed with that awful power, the power of choice, and that God will never take that power from him, but will hold him responsible for the use of it. Otherwise, man could not be a child of God, and in his Father's likeness. I know this; but, I know as well, that God has a will, a wisdom and a power infinitely greater and stronger than man's. Man's liberty is all within narrow bounds, beyond which he is powerless and cannot go. God's will, which is His purpose, has an infinite range, and holds all things in its grasp. What He cannot do by direct fiat, He can bring about, as we have seen, by indirect and moral means. In this way He has gained the hearts and control of many; and, if He can do this for a part, and yet respect their freedom, why may He not, in time, do it for a large proportion of mankind, if not for all, at least to such an extent that their existence shall be to themselves, not an infinite curse, but a blessing? With some, the blessing of existence, owing to the power of sin, may be very small; it may involve a loss of being and of possibilities, but it cannot be endless physical torment. Nor can it consist in the gnawings of conscience, in regrets and in mental anguish, for this implies repentance, at least a desire to return to duty, which God, through Jesus Christ will recognize, encourage and accept. Only those will be left who prefer to be what they are, away from God and living to themselves and with those like themselves.

The relation then, of sin to the problem of Human Destiny is this: Sin is the one discordant note in human

history. The time will come when that discord shall cease and the harmonious song of love and praise shall be universal and eternal. This is the solution of the great Problem.

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL IN THE PROBLEM.

The most glorious personage ever born into this world, whose thought and mission are higher, whose fame and power are greater than those of any other, whose words and life are ruling the thinking world and are destined to bring the whole race into harmony with His principles and spirit of love,—is Jesus, the Christ of God.

Historically, he was of lowly origin. Literally, "He was born in a stable and cradled in a manger." He belonged to a peasant family, was a Nazarene from a mean little town among the hills of Galilee. By trade He was a carpenter. He could read and, probably, write; but we know not that He ever wrote a line in His life. He was familiar with the Scriptures. His public life extended only through three or four years, when He was rejected by His own people and crucified, while yet He was a young man. This is Christ's historic life.

He had a prophetic history. Christ, the Messiah, was the subject of continued Old Testament prophecy from Genesis to Malachi. "His name was above every name." It was said of Him: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." His advent was the theme of earnest expectation in the Jewish nation; and a common feeling

pervaded the whole world that some great personage and deliverer was soon to appear. The Jews looked for a Messiah who should come in great glory, and make their nation the ruler of all the earth. In this mistaken view they did, as many others have done, and are doing,—they gave a literal interpretation to prophesies that were intended to have only a spiritual fulfillment; therefore, Christ's advent was a disappointment to His nation.

What, then, was Christ in reality? We can best learn this from His own words. He often speaks of Himself as the Son of Man. He was a man, and as man "He was tempted in all points like as we are." He grew in stature and in wisdom and in favor with God and man, as other bright and good children do. He prayed to His Father, as other people do, and ever sought His guidance and support. He lived by faith. He came to do the will of His Father, not His own; and He said: "My Father is greater than I." He possessed and illustrated, in the highest degree, every noble human quality. He was a perfect man.

But He was, and claimed to be, more than a man. He was the Son of God. All men are in some sense God's children, and He their Father because God has imparted to man something of His own moral nature, and so made him one with Himself, and this, not in a figurative, but in a literal sense. Man has a oneness with God that the lower orders of creation, destitute of moral nature cannot have. But Christ is the Son of God in a higher sense than any other human being ever was or can be. His spiritual nature was pre-eminently Divine, by reason of its Divine fullness. "He was filled with all the fullness of God." He was God's representative on earth. The spiritual affairs of this world were so committed into His

hands, and He was so able to meet the responsibility, that He could properly say of Himself what no one else can say. He said: "Before Abraham was, I am." "I and my Father are one. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "That the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." He said to men: "I am the way, the truth and the life; I am the door; I am the vine and ye are the branches." And, again: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." "I am the resurrection and the life." Many such things Christ said of Himself, and they were all re-affirmed by the apostles. Such words were spoken naturally, and in no spirit of boasting. "My words," He said, "are true." Think of any other man applying such language to Himself as Christ was in the constant habit of using. Christ then, in His unique personality, stands apart from all men, and is so allied to God as to be His representative in the work of man's salvation. In Christ alone we see and find God. He is God manifested in the flesh.

If I am asked, what was Christ, theologically defined? I prefer to leave that question where Christ Himself, and the New Testament leave it, and where it must ever remain,—a great spiritual fact and mystery, that was never intended to be compressed into a theological or metaphysical dogma. The Creeds, in trying to do this, have confused themselves and the Christian world. Christ's mission is not one of theory, but of salvation for mankind by means of the Gospel, of which He Himself is the soul and life. Christ and God are one.

What is this Gospel that it should attempt so much? Since many people appear to mistake what is incidental to the Gospel, or some of the fruits of the Gospel, for the

Gospel itself, it seems necessary, at the outset, to correct in a negative way some of these errors.

The Gospel is not a system of creedal metaphysics. No doubt it has a philosophical basis, but it is not a scheme of philosophy. For example, the Gospel embodies no statement, and much less a solution, of the current doctrine of the Trinity. Whatever of truth there may be in the theory of "Three in one and One in three"—and there is much—this is purely a matter of human speculation and philosophy. It is not the Gospel, nor any essential part of it. I believe in a Trinity of God, but limit its formulation. No theory of the Atonement constitutes the Gospel. A whole class of metaphysical conclusions and speculations which, in past times, have been preached as vital Gospel truths, and as essential to Christian character and church standing, are now seen to be, not the Gospel nor essential to it. They are schemes of man's devising.

Ethical teaching, apart from spiritual life, is not the Gospel. The great importance of ethical teaching is not questioned; but ethical truth was in the world, and was extensively taught, long before Christ came. It is the rock-basis of the Gospel, but it is not the Gospel. Christ taught ethical truth, but His chief Gospel mission was above and beyond that. Ethical teaching is but the stepping-stone to the Gospel.

Nor is the Gospel a system of sociology or humanitarianism. True, all men are brethren, having God as a common Father. The law of kindness between man and man should prevail; the rich should remember the poor; the woes of men should be alleviated. The spirit of the Gospel leads to all this, as cause leads to effect; but effect is not cause; nor is humanitarianism the root principle of

the Gospel that goes to the heart; that brings man to God and purifies the life.

Christian civilization is not the Gospel, but is one of its fruits. The fruit is not the tree, without which there would be no fruit. The blessings of civilization are inestimable, and are directly or indirectly the fruits of Christ's Gospel; but the heart and soul of that Gospel is, as will soon appear, deeper and richer than all these combined.

Having disposed of these inadequate conceptions of what the Gospel of Christ is, as revealed in the Scriptures and in human experience, I come now to the positive side, and repeat the question:—What is the Gospel?

The Gospel, as the word signifies, is good news; and the name that was given to Christ at, and before His birth was Jesus, which means Saviour, and this because, "He should save His people from their sins." At the time of His birth, an angel announced to the shepherd the great news, in these words: "Fear not, for, behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a great multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will to men." Then the wise men came from afar saying: "Where is the young child, for we have seen His star in the east and are come to worship Him." Thirty years later, at His baptism in the wilderness, "there came a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'"

Surely, then, with all these wonderful attestations, Christ Jesus could have been no common personage. He

must have come to this world on some great and Divine mission. If we would know how great, and just what, that wonderful mission was and is, listen to the words of Christ Himself, where, in the third chapter of John's Gospel, He announces the sublime purpose of His coming and of His Gospel.

"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 eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth should not perish, but have everlasting life. God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

Three times Christ repeats the sublime purpose for which He had come into the world. In another place He repeats the same thought: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The apostles take up the refrain after the crucifixion. Hear Paul to Timothy: "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Then, again, how full and free are the invitations of the Gospel. Listen to Isaiah, in anticipation of Christ's day: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Hear Christ saying: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Learn of me and ye shall find rest unto your souls." In the last chapter of the Bible, we read, "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come;

and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Observe with what holy enthusiasm, hope, confidence and love all the apostles speak of Christ and of the Gospel which He brought into the world for the saving of men; and then, if we note, in addition, the power which the Gospel, from that day till now, has exerted over the lives and hearts of all who truly accept it, we must see that the coming of Christ and His Gospel into this world was, indeed, good news and glad tidings of great joy unto all people.

Why is the Gospel all this? The simple statement of it is the greatest announcement ever made to man, but there must be some reason, some facts back of the words themselves, that make them so great. What are those underlying facts?

The Gospel of Christ is good news and glad tidings of great joy, unto all people:

1. Because Christ through it reveals to man the heart of God. It is said that "God out of Christ is a consuming fire"; by which is meant that God, apart from Christ, is more feared than loved; that the severity of His nature overshadows His Fatherhood and His love; that God is a King and Judge, more than He is a sympathizing and merciful Saviour. This was the prevailing view of God throughout the ages prior to the coming of Christ; and the Jewish people, as a whole, were no exception. This is the view, substantially, that men throughout all the earth take of God to-day, except as they are enlightened by the Gospel of Christ. There is no other view to be consistently taken, if Christ, as the impersonation and representative of God, is lost sight of or denied; and this explains why the old view yet so extensively prevails.

Men are trying to know God out of Christ, and they find in Him only a stern Judge and King. We have one class of intelligent people who talk continually of the love and Fatherhood of God, while yet they regard Christ as only the greatest of men. Where did their conception of God come from, except from Christ? Why then, do they feather arrows with which to attack Christ's Divinity with pluckings from that very Gospel which alone brings them into an apprehension of God as a merciful and loving Father?

A new conception of God is just dawning upon the world, because Christ and His teachings on this great subject are beginning to be understood. The theory of Kingship is melting into Fatherhood; and this is the open door to a new and glorious era of Human Destiny. It supplants much of the old theology and makes all things new;—God, man, theology and Human Destiny are comparatively new. For a time, these new conceptions of God and His Gospel disturb current thought and awaken alarm; but there is a divine life and power in them that will yet revolutionize and uplift the world.

2. The Gospel of Christ is good news, because Christ, through it, "takes men out of the horrible pit of miry clay into which they are fallen, and places their feet upon a rock and establishes their goings, and puts a new song into their mouths, of praise to God." Explain the fact as we may, the human race, except as enlightened and uplifted by the Gospel of Christ, is in spiritual darkness. Selfishness, and therefore death, hold dominion. This is almost equally true in the higher and in the lower walks of life. Gilded selfishness, on the one hand, and debauched selfishness on the other, is the chief distinc-

tion. The disease and its diagnosis are the same; only outward circumstances differ.

From this miserable condition men must be freed or they cannot see God and attain to what is worthy of being called eternal life. Can men free themselves? Can ethical teaching free them? Can any self-centering religious services and outward forms satisfy an awakened conscience? Can anything short of the Gospel of Christ bring rational and lasting peace to a lost world? To all these and such like questions human history and personal experience answer, no; Christ only is mighty to save.

How does Christ save sinful and lost souls? I answer, by laying hold of every outstretched hand and helping its possessor across the dark, deep chasm that lies between it and God. That chasm is selfishness. All men feel the bondage and the degradation of the pit, but their strength is weakness. God only can deliver. To illustrate: Some years ago, an explorer and his crew, in their search for the north pole, were wrecked in the polar sea. They reached a frost-bound shore. Cold, hunger and discouragement had thinned their ranks, so that the few who remained were just alive. They had no hope in themselves. One day, peering seaward, they spied a ship far away. They knew it had come to save the lost. They were just able to raise a signal of distress, but would it be seen! After long and anxious waiting, the ship shifted sail and headed for the flag of distress. What a moment was that to those lost men! Thousands of such illustrations might be given and the application is obvious. Men are lost. They are restless and want often they know not what. They want God. They are on the cold polar island of selfishness, starving and dying for spiritual food

and life. The signal of distress is raised, the Gospel ship approaches, and they are saved.

This is the mission of Christ and His Gospel to this world. Is not His coming "good news" to all who know themselves to be lost, and in need of Divine help to save them from themselves.

3. But the mission of Christ through His Gospel is not yet accomplished. To help men across the chasm from themselves to God is a great thing, but it is only the first step. Men must be led ever onward into a higher, diviner life. The germination of a seed is not the full grown plant or tree in a state of fruitage. Nature's order of growth is, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grown corn in the ear." Growth is everywhere the condition of continued life. When plants, or animals, or human beings cease to grow, they begin to die. This is pre-eminently true of man's spiritual nature. Here there is room for infinite growth; and Christ in His Gospel, has made full provision for the soul's need of spiritual progress.

What the Gospel gives to those who follow on to know the Lord is life, growing life. "And this is life eternal, to know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent." That knowledge of God which means life, eternal life, is not theory, but experience; it is not something that others have told us, but what we know for ourselves; it is not what we have found and read of in books, not even in the Bible, but it is the Divine life mingling with our lives. It is "God in us the hope of glory." This is no figure of speech, but, of all facts, it is the most literal and the most living. we are, in a spiritual sense, to become one with Christ as He is one with the Father. We are to live and move and have our being in Him, even more than we

have in ourselves; and we are to be as conscious of this as we are of ourselves; so that one who has this life, no longer acts from himself but from the promptings of an infinite Spirit that dwells in him, enlightening his thoughts, regulating his feelings, stimulating his heart, directing his will, controlling his actions and exalting and ennobling his whole moral being.

This is what Paul meant when he said: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." It is Christ's life, the life of love, and so eternal, as Christ said: "Because I live ye shall live also." This experience to those who know it, is as real, simple, natural and conscious as are any of the common experiences of one's every-day affairs. Those who have it in part, understand it in part. But those who live unto themselves and from themselves, no more understand such words as I have quoted, and others like them, than a deaf man understands music, or a blind man appreciates colors. Take such a chapter as the sixth of John, where Christ says: "Except ye eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, ye have no life in you," and, indeed, the entire last half of the chapter; and, to one who has not the experience of an indwelling Christ the whole statement is bewildering, not to say revolting. It was this to some of Christ's professed disciples, who said: "These are hard sayings, who can hear them?" And so they turned back as many others have done, and walked no more with Him. But, to those who are born into the new life words descriptive of it are clear in meaning, and sweeter than honey and the honey comb.

How is this higher Christ-life to be attained and lived? It cannot be reached by any legal or self-centering effort. One must be born into it of God's spirit. It comes to

those who go out from themselves entirely to Christ and trust Him alone to guide and govern their thoughts, feelings and lives. Their one responsibility is to live henceforth in the spirit of love, trust and service. Such ones have the "witness of the spirit that they are born of God." "They become dead unto the world and alive unto God. Old things have passed away and all things have become new." Observe, it is not the Gospel, apart from Christ, that does this; it is no system of truth that does it; it is not the Bible, the Old Testament or the New, that does it, but Christ Himself, personally acting through what we call the Gospel, that does it all. Christ then, is the Gospel, so that, to accept Christ is to accept the Gospel; to reject Christ, is to reject the Gospel. The Gospel is only a theory without Christ, who alone is its soul, life and power.

In this view of the Gospel, and of Christ its Founder, I have tried to avoid points of controversy. We saw at the beginning who and what Christ was, that He should undertake so great a work as that of saving a lost world. Christ is the Gospel and more; He is the revealer of God to man. We know God only through Christ. Take Christ away, and God, in any true and practical sense as we have seen, is unknown and unknowable. "He is past finding out"; and we have to stop where Job stopped, when, in the agony of despair, under the inscrutable ways of Providence he exclaimed: "O that I knew where I might find Him, I would come even to His seat, I would order my cause before Him." Poor Job, he was where thousands of others have been; but, had he known in his heart the Christ of God, as I have tried to describe Him, and shall further try, his mind would have

been as quiet, peaceful and trustful as that of the weaned child.

This is the Gospel, and the Christ of the Gospel, who "came to take away the sins of the world, and to destroy the works of the devil. This is the Christ who tasted death for every man, and wills to have all men saved. This is the Christ who is "with his people always, even to the end of the world," the Christ who dwells in our hearts by faith; the indwelling Christ from whom we "receive the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

And now, the great question arises: Will Christ's mission of salvation to this world be fully accomplished?" Will Christ "yet see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." I lay it down as an indisputable fact that what Christ came to do, He will accomplish.

What did Christ come to do, but to carry out the will of the Father and to bring the human race, through discipline and suffering, first into submission to God; and finally into such measure of happiness as each soul shall be able to receive and enjoy. Such a consummation is most reasonable and probable; for, I ask again, why should God have made man immortal, if his existence were not to bring to him more of good than of evil. The answer to our thrilling question turns largely upon the word of the Lord. Out of many, I select three passages, which seem to me to confirm the view here suggested, and commend them and the whole subject to thoughtful contemplation: Phil. 2: 10-11: "That at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth (that is in Hades), and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

Eph. 1 : 10 : "That in the dispensation of the fullness of time, He might gather together, in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him."

Col. 1 : 19-20 : "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell ; and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."

These and other such great sayings are essentially one, with variations, and each appears in a different epistle, showing that the subject had received thorough consideration and was deemed to be of special importance. What do the passages mean? I cannot see how any unbiassed person who has no preformed theory to defend, can fail to find in these words of Paul a clear statement in general, of the doctrine of final restitution as the consummation of the Gospel of Christ to this world ; at least, to the extent that every human being will be so far saved, that his existence will be to him a blessing and not an infinite curse. But all this is not accomplished in the present life, and must therefore, go on after death, in the Intermediate State, which is to be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE IN THE
PROBLEM.

The doctrine of a general judgment, to take place at the end of the world, has been the common belief of the Christian Church. All who accept this doctrine must, from logical necessity, accept also the fact of an Intermediate State, extending from the point of death to the end of the world. One view evidently involves and necessitates the other.

Of late, one class of Christians, perhaps a growing class, has put a new construction upon the terms General Resurrection and Final Judgment but this view also necessitates an Intermediate State; intermediate between death and the time when the mediatorial reign of Christ shall end. As this newer view of resurrection and judgment will be studied in a chapter by itself, its further notice will not come into the present study.

What is here proposed, is a study of the Intermediate State as it stands related to the doctrine of a General Resurrection and Final Judgment at the end of the world. Ecclesiastical historians show that a belief in the fact of an Intermediate State has, in some form, been held in the church throughout the centuries. Quotations are unnecessary. In the Scriptures that state is spoken of, or implied, under different names, which will be considered in their place.

Assuming, then, the fact of an Intermediate State, the question at once arises: What takes place, or may take place in one's spiritual experience between death and the final judgment? This question should be studied in the light of reason, of conscience, of history and of the inspired Word; all of which should throw light upon a question that does not admit of demonstration, and must be settled on the ground of strong, rational probability.

That the whole subject, at present, lies much in the mist, is evident from the differing and conflicting theories that are entertained concerning it, as a mere glance at some of them reveals. The annihilationist theory, founded on conditional immortality, has one way of answering the question as to what may take place in a soul's existence between death and judgment. The doctrine of final restoration, which has had its advocates from the time of Origen, would necessitate another and different answer, as the writings of Meyer, Endicott and other later writers show. The figurative or spiritual theory of Swedenborg and his followers has a solution of the question not less romantic than the theory itself, and they quote Scripture almost endlessly in its support. The pre-millenarians, who comprise some of the best Christians, and ablest thinkers and scholars of the Church, anticipate Christ's second coming before what is called the millennium, and not after. This view does not remove the necessity of an Intermediate State, but modifies conceptions of what may take place during its continuance. What is known as the orthodox view is not so easily stated, because its supporters appear often to be either indefinite or inharmonious in their presentations. Sometimes one gets the idea that the righteous go, immediately after death, into heaven, and the wicked

into hell; but that when the judgment comes, they are brought back from these abodes to be judged; after which they return to the places from whence they came. Others represent that both the righteous and wicked are in some intermediate place of happiness or of misery until the hour of final destiny is reached. But, in any view, there is an Intermediate State, in which changes of some sort take place; and at the end of which comes the general resurrection and final judgment; but, just what takes place, or may take place in the intermediate period is left in obscurity. Still another theory, known as that of the "Greater Hope," anticipates that, in some cases at least, the offers of mercy, such as are made through Christ to men in this life, will be extended, and availed of in the intermediate world after death.

This brief and imperfect classification reveals two things: 1st, That the doctrine of the Intermediate State intertwines itself with all the theories that men hold on the subject of Eschatology, and this, in such a way that, to some extent, they have to be studied together. What one holds on one branch of the subject determines one's conclusions on every other. 2d. That the conclusions of good and wise men on the question of the Intermediate State are so indefinite and diverse as to show that the whole question is yet in a condition of unsettlement. Any new or modified hypothesis, therefore, which seems rational, and likely to harmonize discordant views, is worthy of serious attention.

After much reflection, I submit the following as a possible and probable solution of the great question as to what does, or may take place between the time one leaves the body and the termination of the Intermediate State, whenever it shall terminate.

The view is this: That so long as Christ is on the mediatorial throne, He will continue to mediate; that His offers of mediation and mercy extend to all for whom He came, and died to save, wherever they may be, in this world or in the Intermediate State beyond this life. What the result of these offers will be I cannot positively say; I am only sure that they will continue throughout Christ's mediatorial reign.

The great text on this subject, one to be relied on more than upon any other, is in 1 Cor. 15: 24th, 25th and 28th verses: "Then cometh the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must rule till He hath put all enemies under His feet. . . . And when all things shall be subdued under Him, then shall the Son also, Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

This remarkable passage, by the agreement of all commentators, teaches:

1. That Jesus Christ is on the mediatorial throne, administering a mediatorial government over men and over the spiritual affairs of this world. All things, as regards the saving of men, are in His hands. He has set up, what, in the four Gospels, is nearly a hundred times called the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven (showing that it belongs to both worlds) over which Christ reigns as Lord and King.

2. That this mediatorial reign of Christ is not eternal; it had a beginning and will have an end. While it was purposed and predicted from the dawn of human history, it was not fully inaugurated till the son of God became incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ. John heralded

the coming when he preached that the "Kingdom of Heaven was at hand." This mediatorial Kingdom of God will continue unto the end of the world, or, until all things shall be subdued unto Christ, and until the last enemy, death, is conquered, and the resurrection and judgment are accomplished. Then the purpose of the mediatorial reign being accomplished, Christ will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and the Son, also, shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Thus far commentators are substantially agreed. Several other great passages, emphasizing the same truths, and giving them enlargement and support, might be quoted. I select but one out of all: Phil. 2: 10-11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Other corresponding texts are: Eph. 1: 10 and Col. 1: 19-20.

What now, let it be asked, is the definite purpose of Christ's mediatorial reign? So far as we know it has exclusive reference to the people of this world. The human race was lost and beyond the reach of self recovery. The Son of God, in the person of Jesus Christ, by appointment of the Father, and at infinite sacrifice, entered upon His mediatorial reign to rescue, as far as possible, the human race, individually and collectively, from the death of sin and its consequences. He came to seek and save the lost by redeeming all, and offering to help and save all who would accept of His gracious offer and be willing to be saved. The offer was universal.

To the question: For what length of time are Christ's gracious offers extended? no definite answer is given.

But the natural and almost necessary inference is that the offer is indefinite, or, at least that the offer is co-extensive with the mediatorial reign. Christ is Mediator, between God and man, not to bring God down to men, but to bring men up to God. So long, then, as Christ is Mediator He will continue to mediate. Wherever souls are found, in the body or out of it, that need help, Christ's hand is extended to them; and, if they lay hold of it they will be saved. The terms that are offered in this life, are offered in the life beyond. In the nature of things they could not be different. It seems to be an almost self-evident truth that Christ will not withhold mediation, while yet he holds the office of Mediator. I must believe this unless I find elsewhere a clear, positive denial in the Word of God. The *onus probandi* rests with those who limit Christ's mercy to this life.

If this exposition does not quite harmonize with some of the creeds that men have formulated, it does, I believe, harmonize with the real interior convictions of thoughtful, progressive, Christian people throughout the world. Most Christians hold views, often half unconsciously to themselves, apart from creeds, on the subject of life, death and the hereafter, that involve and necessitate the exposition I have given of Christ's mediatorial work in the Intermediate State.

In confirmation of this, the following illustrations are worth considering:

1. It is now conceded that all who die in infancy and before moral agency begins, are saved in heaven, and that Christ is their Saviour; which means—must mean—that they come to know Him, trust in Him and enter into His service after death. All this implies intelligence and freedom such as was not possible for them in this

world. Opportunities for faith and service must then be given them after death, and they must choose or refuse there, just as they would have done here. To admit this—and who denies it—is practically to concede the premise—that the work of saving souls sometimes begins and goes on in the spirit world just as it does here.

2. I know of no intelligent Christian who does not believe that some, at least, of the countless millions who never heard of Christ in this world, will yet, in the last day be found among the saved. I should pity the man who thinks otherwise, and consider him a Pharisee. But what does such an admission signify? Not that they are saved apart from Christ, for there is no other name given under heaven whereby they can be saved. Their salvation, therefore, must be secured through the revelation and acceptance of Christ and of His Gospel revealed to them in the Intermediate State. There, they are freed from the errors and sins of this life, and become as the angels of God. Here again, we have “for substance of doctrine” what my exposition claims.

3. If, now, we glance at the Christian world, what do we find? We find here and there a man or woman who seems either almost perfect, or else almost hopelessly wicked. But, between these two extremes stand the great majority whose characters are mixed. They are not wholly good nor wholly bad. And this is equally true of those who do, and of those who do not, profess to be Christians. They die as they live, and are not fit subjects for either heaven or hell. Death makes no change in their characters. It follows, then, that if any of these are saved, their salvation must be consummated through Christ in the place of departed spirits. Here, again, comes an admission of my exposition.

To say that the change in such cases is only one of degrees and not of direction, avails nothing because it is not true. They do change more or less in direction and, were it otherwise, change of character, whatever it is, would show that the completing of character goes on under Christ's Mediatorship in the Intermediate State, which is the substance of my contention.

4. Then, further, if it be conceded, as it is, that God must in honor do all that infinite wisdom, power and love can do for the final salvation of every soul that is born into the world, and that Christ's mediatorial reign is established for that purpose, then, the question arises, has God, in this world, done for every child of Adam all that infinite wisdom and power, controlled by love could do, to secure its eternal salvation? It does not seem so, and if not, then the work of saving must go on after death. Christian men believe this.

5. How many aching hearts has the view I am advocating, comforted, and might have comforted? Many a sorrowing one has stood by an open grave where the feeling of loss was great, but the feeling of uncertainty was still greater. The loved one was not perfect in this life. Could perfection be attained in the life beyond? What comfort would an affirmative answer bring to this afflicted soul! Most ministers speak and pray at funerals as if they believed, and wished the sorrowing ones to believe, that God's mercy extends beyond this world. Why has God put such longings into human hearts if they are not to be satisfied?

These illustrations are given partly in support of my interpretation, but chiefly to show that most men do think, at times, outside of the creeds of the Church; and that when they do so think, they are very sure to believe that

the mercy of God extends into the Intermediate State. In spite of creeds they do believe that—

“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There’s a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty. . . .
For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man’s mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.”

These illustrations are to be confirmed by facts. The view I am advocating is theoretically held by a majority of all professed Christians now living, or who have ever lived on earth. The entire Roman Catholic Church accepts it, and has from the beginning, as is shown by their constant saying of masses for the dead. The Greek Church holds substantially the same view, although, on the question of Purgatory, they differ from the Catholics. Why should not prayers be offered for the dead? When our friends leave the body and enter upon the untried mysteries of an endless life, they need the prayers of the living, and would be grateful for them. Who would willingly be denied that privilege?

The great poets of the world, Classic and Christian, who are supposed to be seers, express with hardly an exception, in poetic form, the same view. Homer, Dante, Browning, Tennyson, Goethe, Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier and the rest, sing in the same strain. In Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, we have a human soul, that he himself personates, passing through purgatory and hell into heaven, where he beholds the face of God and is at rest. He is saved through suffering. Most of the poets,

as quotations would show, foreshadow hope for man in the great hereafter. The analogy of nature illustrates and proves the fact that change of character and progress upward do not end at death. Such progress, slow but sure, is the central law of God's universe. If man, after leaving the body, is an exception to that law, he is the only exception to be found in the whole realm of nature; and which is the more probable that nature contradicts herself or that theological dogma is at fault?

Putting all the preceding considerations together, do they not invest the conclusion that Christ's mediatorial mercies extend into the Intermediate State with at least a high degree of probability? And, do they not afford presumptive evidence that the Bible is likely to teach along the same line?

This brings us to the question: Are the Scriptures in harmony with this view? Do they sustain it?

As for the Old Testament, until we come to its latest books, Daniel, for example, and to the Apocrypha, it has very little to say definitely on the subject of a future life. It deals with men as creatures of this world, in which they are to be rewarded or punished according to their deeds. The Hebrew people, coming from Egypt, where the idea of a future life was very prominent, must have known of that doctrine and believed it; but God's plan with them was to take up one thing at a time; and so, for centuries, the future world was left in the background. But this very silence awakens hope. Had there been no hope after death, would the Lord have left men ignorant on that great subject?

Let us now turn to the New Testament and what do we find? We find, as we should expect, on this great question, much of mystery, much that is dimly revealed,

and yet a light sufficient to guide our steps to safe conclusions.

We meet, in the New Testament, two classes of passages, and only two, bearing directly upon the question of an Intermediate State. One class has reference to what, according to the generally accepted system of belief (and, at present, I have only this system in view), takes place at the end of the Intermediate State, which is spoken of as the final consummation, translated the end of the world. The other class of passages refers to what takes place in or during the Intermediate State, and while Christ is on the mediatorial throne. One class describes events that begin where those of the other class end. One class describes finalities that reach on endlessly; the other, a process of preparation for the final consummation. These two classes of texts must be kept apart, as they relate to wholly different things, and, together, cover the entire ground.

Take as an example the 25th chapter of Matthew, where, if taken literally and as commonly understood, we have a description of the final judgment. I do not need to paint the graphic picture. Here, as in various other places, we have a clear statement that, at the day of judgment there will be found two classes, the righteous and the wicked; that the righteous will then be received into eternal life, and that the wicked will go into eternal death. This is the literal and commonly accepted meaning. Now, let all this be granted, and what has it to do with what takes place, or may take place, immediately after death, or, at any time during the Intermediate State? It has nothing to do with that question. We have, then, to throw out of this study all of the passages of the New Testament that relate to the final judgment and its

awards, at the end of the world, and to retain for examination only those which refer to the intermediate period between death and finality. This separating and clearing process greatly simplifies the whole question.

The New Testament has several words descriptive of the place into which spirits immediately enter on leaving the body. One of these is sheol, from the Hebrew, rendered Hades in the Greek. This word is strangely and wrongfully, as every scholar knows, translated in the common English version, hell. The New Version corrects the translation. The word Hades, wrongly translated hell, more than all things besides has shaped and settled the faith, on this subject, of the Christian world. It has led to the belief that all Gospel mercies end at death.

The word sheol or Hades has a clear and definite meaning. It signifies the place of departed spirits, whether they are good or bad. It is the place where all go, without regard to character, at death. The word, as every scholar knows, no more describes hell than it does heaven. The other words, with these, paradise, from the Greek and tartarus of classic signification, are all used in the New Testament interchangeably, and in the same sense, to designate the place of departed spirits. Paradise may suggest the idea of pleasure, and Hades of pain; but none of these interchangeable terms suggest, and much less mean, either heaven or hell as the final abode of the soul. This undeniable explanation removes the chief objection to the position that the offers of mercy may extend into the Intermediate State.

But, it is asked, Are there no texts which clearly teach that the offers of mercy never extend beyond this life? My answer is, that after careful examination I find not

one. It is said "that it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment." Yes, but according to the creedal view how long after? Not till the final consummation of all things. It is said that we must give account for the deeds done in the body. Yes, but not till the day of judgment at the end of the world; and, besides, it does not say that we shall not give account of the deeds done out of the body as well as in, perhaps thousands of years after they were committed. Is it not written that "as a tree falleth so it lieth?" Yes, but men are hard driven when they take refuge behind texts that appear to deny the fact of life after death.

The only Scripture I know of that seems, at first glance, to make death the limit of mercy, is the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, in the 16th chapter of Luke. It is in no other Gospel. What does it mean? In the first place, about one-half of the critical commentators, and it has been so for centuries, hold that the parable has nothing to do with the subject. They class it with the preceding parable of the unjust steward with which it stands connected. This parable, it is held, was spoken against the Jews. The rich man represents the self-righteous Jew, and Lazarus the miserable Gentile eating Jewish crumbs; and that very soon the tables would be turned. This favorite exposition, if accepted, removes the parable from this study.

But, suppose we take the literal interpretation, what then follows? The parable now shows, as its main lesson, that conditions in this world are often reversed in the next. To illustrate this it relates that the rich man and Lazarus died, and that both went to the place of departed spirits, where they were so near together that they conversed freely with each other, and with Abraham,

who was there also; and that Lazarus, being good, was happy, and that the rich man, being evil, was miserable. His conscience troubled him; he was restless, and he prayed, not to God, but to his Father Abraham, for himself and for his brethren. But it does not say that he, himself, might not have repented and been forgiven and saved. I do not know of one scholarly expounder of the parable, even among those who take the literal view of it, who does not emphatically declare that there is nothing here to show that the rich man might not and did not actually repent and find pardon. Trench, Meyer, Stier, Ellicott and many others take special pains to make this belief emphatic. Certainly it is neither impossible nor improbable. His troubled conscience argues it. If this is the only important passage in the Bible to hang the doctrine upon that offers no mercy through Christ, after death,—and I know of no other,—then it seems to me to be a very small peg on which to suspend so vast a conclusion.

Now, on the other side, if it is asked: Is there explicit Bible evidence to the contrary? I cite the fact that Christ, according to Peter (3: 18-19), after His death, went at once to paradise or Hades, where the antediluvian world was, and preached to them. If the offer of mercy was forever withdrawn, why did He do this? Not to tantalize them surely.

Dr. Delitsch says that, "Christ manifesting Himself to the dead, in Hades, preached to them the victory that had come to pass. He preached to the Old Testament dead the New Testament Gospel of the now completed redemption." If this be so, the question is settled.

We have in the New Testament a class of passages which, if rightly interpreted, clearly show that where sin

and death greatly abound in the world, grace and mercy through Jesus Christ do much more abound. In other words, that God has provided a remedy equal to the disease. To some of these passages I can only here make reference: Rom. 5: 12-21 is clear on this point. I quote only from the 18th verse: "Therefore, as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For, as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But, where sin abounded grace did much more abound; that as sin has reigned unto death, even so, might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

I submit that, apart from special pleading, the two statements, one as to death, and the other as to life, are parallel. One is just as broad and full as the other.

1 Cor. 15: 21-22: "For, since by man came death, by man came also, the resurrection of the dead. For, as in Adam, all die, so also, in Christ, shall all be made alive." Life and death here refer not chiefly to the body, but to the spirit. The terms are antithetic, and one clause is as broad as the other. If all die in Adam, not physically, but spiritually, then all will be made alive in Christ spiritually. On this text, H. A. W. Meyer says: "The two statements are equally universal." And Bishop Ellicott adds this comment: "Where God puts no limitation, let man be silent."

In connection with these passages, read 1 Cor. 15: 25-28. Eph. 1: 10. Phil. 2: 10-11. Col. 1: 19-20.

Most surely no such results as these passages contem-

plate and declare have yet been reached by the Gospel of Christ, nor do I see how they can be in this world except in part. Only in the Intermediate State will Christ's complete and final victory over sin and death be fully achieved.

The view here taken of the Intermediate State answers, indirectly, the question that every thoughtful person is sure to ask. It is this: What is to become of the countless millions who shall have lived and died outside of the true Christian life, and before the ushering in of that millennial day that saves the living but not the dead? Are the dead annihilated? No. Are they in a state of unconscious sleep awaiting the sound of the last trump? Again, no. Where are they? They are in the Intermediate State, unless they shall have gone beyond, listening to the voice of love and mercy which some of them never heard in this world; and which others, if they heard, heeded not. Their environments have now changed. The human body in which their existence had to begin, with its besetments, is thrown off; good influences abound, and there is reason to hope that very many will there avail themselves of the still proffered grace of God in Jesus Christ and be fully saved, while all will yet come into such a mental state that existence will not be to any of them an infinite curse.

The bearing of this whole study on the great problem of human destiny is so obvious that further suggestion is unnecessary.

Of course, if, according to another view, a spiritual rather than literal construction is put upon those Scriptures that describe the general resurrection and final judgment, it would modify somewhat one's course of study, but it would not disturb the general conclusion as

to the fact of an Intermediate State, and it would make more than probable the still larger fact that Christ's offers of mercy are co-extensive with His mediatorial reign, and extend, therefore, into the spirit world. This view will occupy a later chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ATONEMENT IN THE PROBLEM.

It is claimed by theologians, and personal experience confirms the claim, that what is known as the doctrine of Atonement, or At-one-ment, is the deepest, most vital and important doctrine of the Christian Religion. Certainly more has been written upon it, and it has been more a subject of contention and of metaphysical speculation than any other, unless the doctrine of the Trinity be an exception.

The whole question centres in God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ, who sacrificed Himself and died, the just for the unjust, that the world might be saved. Some of the Scripture references that set forth this great fact are such as these: "He was made a curse for us." "He tasted death for every man." "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities." "He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows." "He was offered to bear the sins of many." "God hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." The Old Testament and New, abound with corresponding statements of the fact that, in some true sense, Christ identified Himself with men; and, that He suffered in their behalf with them and for them.

But this cannot mean that He takes the sinner's place in such a sense that He Himself becomes a sinner; nor

that He suffers literally the penalty that is involved in the sinner's transgression.

Such a thing, if possible, would be unjust to every party concerned. It is something that God, in justice, could not permit. The innocent may suffer, may suffer willingly and gladly for the sinful in order to help and save them; but they cannot take the guilt or punishment of others in any proper sense of those terms, upon themselves. Such a thing is not possible.

Christ bore the sins of men just as He bore their diseases, their afflictions and their sufferings. He felt for them, He was in deep sympathy, His heart went out to them, He longed to save them, and He was ready, joyfully to sacrifice Himself in their behalf, if, by this means He could deliver them from sin and its consequences. Christ's suffering was not a legal infliction, but was the outcome of infinite love; He loved us and therefore gave Himself for us. He bore our burdens; or as the prophet puts it, "Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses."

He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows just as He bore our sins; they were on His heart, they caused Him pain and prompted Him to sacrifice Himself to save alike the suffering and the sinful. In this sense Christ's life and death were vicarious; in this sense He tasted death, and made atonement, for every man.

But this is not the sense in which such terms have been commonly used in theological discussions of the doctrine of Atonement. The word has been used in a legal, governmental, forensic sense, from which the moral element, perhaps unintentionally, has been largely excluded. No system of metaphysical formula can ever comprehend or explain the Biblical conception of Christ's Atonement;

and this because the thing to be explained is not a theory but an experience, a life, the life of love, that can no more be reduced to a scheme of doctrine than can a mother's love for her child, or the soul's breathing after God. This is not denying that there is a true philosophy that underlies all religion, but religion itself is not a philosophy, but is a life.

What are some of the metaphysical theories that men have originated, and called the doctrine of Christ's Atonement?

The underlying scheme which is never lost sight of is that which sets the justice and mercy of God at variance, and puts one over against the other, as if the two were antagonistic and irreconcilable. Justice is conceived of as the central attribute in the character of God, and mercy as holding a subordinate and dependent position; so that, until justice is satisfied mercy cannot be extended. A common way of stating the case is somewhat as follows: God is a great king; the moral universe is under a system of absolute law; the central pillar of God's moral government is Divine justice; if penalty for sin should ever fail of execution according to its just deserts the moral Government of God would be destroyed; the only way in which a sinner can ever escape the demands of exact justice, is for some substitute to take his place and endure his deserved penalty, whatever it may be; and that Christ has, in this sense, as man's substitute, borne the penalty of all for whom He died, so that now God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth.

Different ways are devised by which this scheme of substitution may be carried out. One favorite idea of former centuries was that all the people of this world are subjects of the devil's kingdom; and that God made a

bargain with the devil that if he would deliver over a certain number of souls to be saved, that Christ, the Son of God, should endure a penalty equal to that which these souls would have suffered if the agreement had not been entered into. Such a position is too absurd and dreadful to claim a moment's attention.

Others have tried to harmonize justice with mercy, by denying that Christ, as the sinner's substitute, needs to suffer all the penalty that sinners would have endured in order to obtain mercy for them; and this, on the ground that the dignity of the sufferer made an equal amount of penalty unnecessary in order to the upholding of law and government. But here, again, the same vicious and false conception of transferring desert and penalty from the guilty to the innocent is involved; a conception that, instead of vindicating justice, dishonors it, and Him who could permit such a transfer. The whole doctrine of imputation, whether of sin, of righteousness, of penalty or of reward, from one moral being to another, confounds and destroys the principle of justice, and, as we shall see, denies the fact of mercy.

All such metaphysical schemes of Atonement as the above, rest on what is known as the *quid pro quo* basis, of so much for so much; that is to say, that, if Christ shall endure a certain amount of punishment, in place of the sinner, that then, a certain amount of penalty due to the transgressor may, on the ground of transfer or substitution be remitted. What I have to say is that this entire conception is fundamentally wrong from whatever side it is looked upon. And this because:

1. It involves a misconception of the nature and needs of Divine government. It assumes that human and Divine governments are essentially alike, and that they are

subject to the same conditions, necessities and dangers, and must be upheld and administered by similar means. This view is wholly erroneous. The two governments are as different from each other as can be well conceived, as night is from day.

The governments of men are weak and liable at any time to be overthrown. Their existence depends on the will of the people, without whose support kings could not be crowned; or, if crowned hold their scepters one day. They must be kept up and protected by armies, navies, penalties and prisons or soon fall in ruins. The government of God, physical and moral, is subject to no such contingencies; it confronts no such dangers; its laws are self-protective, and need none of the supports that are the necessity of human governments. The assumed analogy does not exist, and therefore every application of the *quid pro quo* theory based on that analogy is without foundation in fact, and so is misleading and false.

This fundamental distinction between human and Divine governments will be fully considered in its place later on.

2. Justice is not the central attribute in the moral character of God, as the metaphysics in question assume, nor is mercy the central attribute. God's whole moral character is expressed in the word love or benevolence. It consists in choice, in ultimate choice, in choice of the highest good of Being in general, and of particular well-being, so far as the general good makes it possible. Love then, as we have before seen, is the sum of God's moral character; while justice, mercy and all other moral qualities are attributes or manifestations of love. It is then the love of God, not His justice, that is first of all to be considered and defended. Justice is love protecting

general interests. Mercy is love seeking the good of the undeserving. Justice then, is not the central principle in God's character that is to be made foremost and be protected above all other interests, as the theories in question assume. This view of God puts a new face on the whole subject.

3. Justice and mercy are not necessarily antagonistic, as the *quid pro quo* theory assumes them to be. Justice gladly yields everything that love can grant, and mercy wants nothing that love cannot give. The government of God is in no danger; and both the justice and mercy of God are satisfied with anything that promotes the highest good, and especially that brings pardon to penitent, trusting souls. There is then no conflict between them to be reconciled. They are both bound to the same principle, and seek the same end. And those, as we shall see, who force them into antagonism wrest the Scriptures, represent God as divided against Himself, and so do violence to reason and to justice.

4. What perhaps is more obvious, and most fatal to all the theories under review is, that they logically defeat themselves. If Christ's sufferings as man's substitute, view them as you will, are a legal substitute for man's punishment, then sinners are saved, if saved at all, not on the ground of mercy, but on that of strict justice. If I am justly condemned to pay a fine which I cannot pay, and if my kind hearted substitute pays it for me, and if that substitution is accepted by the government, then it is no longer mercy that I ask for but justice. The debt has been paid, the penalty is satisfied, and I demand release. This, so far as I can see, on any form of the *quid pro quo* basis is a logical conclusion; so that all for whom Christ has suffered as a legal substitute have met

the conditions that strict justice demanded, and are saved on the ground, not of mercy, but of justice. I am not sure that the authors of Creeds which claim that Christ died only for a part of mankind, namely, for the elect, did not see the difficulty and intend to meet it on the ground that Christ, having borne the penalty of the elect ones, they are sure of their final salvation, and for that judicial reason. Of course this is another Gospel composed not of Divine love but human metaphysical speculation.

The attempt then to make justice, and not love, the central and controlling feature in the character and government of God, and to array justice against mercy as if they were naturally antagonistic is a failure. Justice and mercy find equally, and together, their place in the loving heart of a loving Father. What God wants and Christ seeks as the foremost end, is not strict justice, but the soul's salvation from sin and death. In this, love directs justice.

The way is now prepared for the statement of one or two other views of the Atonement which, though still faulty, are not open to the same, or so great objections, as are those that have now been considered. The first of these views, and one which appears to prevail extensively at the present time, may be described as a modified and undefined holding of what is called the Governmental conception of Atonement. It is claimed, and rightly, that the Atonement must have some sort of relation to moral law and government, but just what that relation is we do not know, and cannot definitely define. The subject, it is said, runs so into the infinite, and is so lost there, as to be incomprehensible to finite minds. Some sort of Governmental relation it must hold, a relation that makes it safe and proper for God to bless and save sinful

men on condition that they turn from sin and trust in the loving mercy of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ. While the former theories professed to know too much, and knew a great deal that was not so, this view, I think, should comprehend more of what it regards as incomprehensible. The real Gospel is more simple, and more easily understood, than people who are looking for some great mystery are apt to think.

Another view of Atonement, which has truth in it, so exaggerates that truth, as to carry it over to the side of practical error. In its attempt to exalt the love and moral excellence of Christ it represents Him as performing works of supererogation for the saving of lost men. He went beyond the call of obligation, and did for man's salvation more than was His duty to do; and these works of merit that extend beyond the call of duty, some claim, are placed to the credit of those who become penitent believers in Jesus Christ. It is needless to follow out the theory further than to say that, in one essential point it cannot be true. Works of supererogation are never possible to any moral being; and they are no more possible to God than they are to men. Christ in His incarnation and death carried out the law of love; He did His whole duty; but He did no more than, in the circumstances, He ought to have done. God could not have done more or better than He did; and it would have been wrong, not so much perhaps to men as to Himself, to have done less. There is but one law of duty, and there can be but one in the moral universe. Ability, clearly apprehended, measures responsibility and duty. This law is obligatory on God and man alike. It must be so; when God requires of men that they shall do unto others as they would that others should do unto them, He takes the same obli-

gation on Himself to do for the race that He has created, what He would desire and expect that race to do for Him were He in their circumstances. It follows then, that to do one's entire duty, to meet one's obligations fully, is all that any moral being can do, and the least he should do; and this rule applies alike to God and man.

One other insufficient view of the Atonement should be noted. I refer to what is sometimes known as the Moral Influence theory. It is said that the whole purpose of Christ's incarnate history was to make an impression upon mankind that God cared for them, and so to win their confidence. That Christ's Gospel is, in this way, a vast moral power is conceded; but to say that Christ came, suffered and died for the one purpose of producing a moral effect upon men is to belittle the Gospel, and to turn the sublimest event in the universe into a spectacular performance. If Christ in His mission to earth, incidentally, did that, He did intrinsically and infinitely more. Many who have been unable to accept substitutional theories of the Atonement have gone, at times, too far in the opposite direction, and have seemed to find in that great doctrine only an effort to create moral influence, which is certainly a sad lowering of the whole subject.

We come then to ask: In what does the Atonement by Jesus Christ, so far as we can comprehend it, consist? In what sense is it vicarious or substitutional? I answer, in the general sense that God, in the person of Jesus Christ, so took our sorrows, burdens, sins, diseases and sufferings of all kinds, upon Himself as to make them practically His own. There was no legal, polemic transference in the case; but there was vastly more than that.

Christ's whole heart, His feelings and deepest sympathies, His intense and infinite love were all in it. He put into it the sacrifice of personal suffering even unto death, that men might be saved. He did this willingly, joyously, for the sake of the end. For the joy that was set before Him,—the joy of saving a lost world, Christ endured the Cross and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. On this same principle of loving sacrifice, and sacrifice of love, all that is said of Christ in that wonderful Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah, is to be explained.

Christ stands in the same relation to the sufferings, diseases and sicknesses of men, that He does to their sins. He takes them all upon Himself, and bears them in His feelings and heart, almost as if they were His own. In proof and illustration of this, see the quotation in Matthew from that same Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah, which reads: "That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Esaias, the prophet, saying—Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." In the same sense then, in which Christ took and bore the sins of men He took and bore their infirmities and sicknesses. They did not become His literally, but He bore them on His heart, in His feelings and sympathies, much as a mother bears the afflictions and sicknesses of her beloved child. She makes them her own, and often feels them, and suffers more on account of them than does the child itself. The world is full of sacrifices of love for those we love. Nor, let it be objected that such sacrifices are a source of unhappiness to those who make them. That they give pain and suffering is true, but this is not inconsistent with the profoundest happiness. A mother is never so happy as when she is consciously bearing the infirmities and sicknesses of her children; and equally so whether the

children are wayward or loving. It is the same with our Divine Lord. The sufferings, sins, and consequent miseries of men enter into His heart; He feels for them, longs to save them and is ready to sacrifice Himself and die for them. He does this, and His loving sacrifice for the saving of the world is His Atonement for men.

God the Father feels and suffers in the same way, and for the same reason and end. It has sometimes been represented that Jesus Christ is more tender, loving, sympathetic and merciful than is the Father. But this is delusive. We are all the children of our Father in heaven, and He feels for us and loves us as only an infinite Father can. From eternity God has loved us, felt for us, and the great atoning sacrifice has ever been in His thoughts and on His heart, awaiting the time for development. It was the Father who commissioned the Son, that is to say, who incarnated Himself, that He might show His own heart to men, gain their confidence, save them from themselves and from sin, and bring them to trust Him, love and serve Him and so enter into eternal life. Christ and the Father in this whole movement are one, one in purpose, in feeling, and in sacrifice.

The Holy Spirit has part also in the great Atonement, and is prompted by the same pure love and tender interest. He, too, is seeking to enlighten the minds of men, to show them the heart of God, to lead them out of sin and to make them holy and happy forever. While Christ is conspicuous in that He assumed human nature and died on the cross for men, yet, back of all that is the heart of God beating in tender and equal sympathy and love for a lost world. The Father and Son suffered together, and are one in saving the world.

But, it is asked, has not the Atonement any reference to the law and government of God? Certainly it has.

Because Christ is not punished for us, and does not in that literal, legal and metaphysical sense bear our sins, we are not for a moment to conclude that He loses sight of, or has not due respect for, the moral law of God. It is just because men are lost in sin and cannot save themselves, or be saved, except by coming into obedience to the law of God, that the atoning sacrifice was made. Christ cannot save men except He saves them from their sins. He would not if He could, and He could not if He would. Salvation necessarily implies conformity, heart conformity, to the law of God, and so, to holiness in purpose and life. This is all that the Atonement undertakes to secure, and this is just the legal relation it sustains to the government of God. Such a relation is simple and natural, and, as would be shown if space permitted and it were needful, is pre-eminently Scriptural.

In the preceding study old theories of the Atonement have been criticised, but nothing that can be called a theory, new or old, has been substituted in their place; and this for two reasons: 1st. That the New Testament contains no theory of the Atonement; and 2d. Because the atoning work of Christ cannot be compressed into a theory or dogma. All attempts to do this have taken away its life and power. It must always be so; therefore, I refrain from dogmatizing on this deepest and most spiritual of all subjects. Let Christ's atoning work rest where the Scriptures leave it;—an expression of God's love to men and of His infinite sacrifice in their behalf, for their present and eternal salvation. This, to use a theological and not a Scriptural term, is the Atonement. All that can further be said is, that Christ's conception of the Gospel included the whole, and not simply a part,

of the human race; that He is not for one class and against another; but that His atonement and purpose are alike for all mankind.

The bearing of this study of the Atonement on the problem of Human Destiny is apparent at a glance. If God,—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,—feels such an eternal interest in, and solicitude for our ignorant, sinful and lost race as has been represented, and if Christ, sent of God, has undertaken, at such infinite sacrifice the work of saving the world, and if the Holy Spirit, in accordance with Christ's promise, is taking the truth of Christ and revealing it to men in a special and persistent way, and, if God never wearies in well-doing, and never fails in what He undertakes, then there is ample ground for confidence that, at least the greater proportion of mankind, if not all, will, sooner or later, be won over, to His love and service. Why all this Divine sacrifice, suffering and prolonged endeavor if it is yet to leave the great proportion of all who have lived, and are now living, in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity forever? It cannot be. If God's heart is eternally on the side of men, to seek and save them, He will surely find some way, just to the universe, and honorable to Himself, for the accomplishment of His benevolent purpose. The end of the Atonement will be reached and understood when Christ, having been lifted up, shall have drawn all men unto Him, and shall have destroyed the works of the devil. Then, and not sooner, will He have seen the travail of His soul and been satisfied; then will the problem of Human Destiny have been solved.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ADAMIC OR CREEDAL SYSTEM OF
METAPHYSICS IN THE PROBLEM.

The Gospel of Christ is not a Creed, nor is it a system of cold metaphysics. It is a "pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb," flowing freely, and in natural channels, through the world and the ages "for the healing of the nations." This is what Christ meant the Gospel to be, what it was at the beginning, and would ever have been, had not men, by means of dykes, dams and other such devices sought to change its course and bring it within human limitations.

The dykes, dams and side channels here referred to, are the historic Creeds of the Christian Church; and, I may add, the systems of Theology growing out of those Creeds, and in defence of them. The first fact to be here emphasized is, that these historic Creeds are strictly human productions. They are the attempts of men to reduce the truths of Christianity into scientific or metaphysical form. In that point of view they are interesting and proper. But there is no more of sacredness about them, or of binding authority upon the consciences of men in them, than there is in the conclusions of Astronomers, Geologists, Chemists and Botanists; or than there is in treatises upon intellectual or moral philosophy. Truth, and that alone is sacred, and it matters not whence it

comes. All true science is sacred, because it is from God, and one department of science is hardly more sacred than another. The time has come when the nuptials between Science and Religion should be everywhere and loudly proclaimed, for they are one, and should never be put asunder.

And yet, historic Creeds, although they are the work of men's devising, and were formulated long ago, when the world was in intellectual darkness compared with the light that now shines, are generally held, in the Churches that adopt them, to be of so sacred a character that they must not be revised, but continued from one generation to another as the standards of Christian faith, and the tests of good fellowship; and, often of membership in the Christian Church. If any clergyman doubts this let him read history, and that, too, of very recent date; or, better still, let him come out squarely in the denial of some old and valued dogma in the Creed of his own Church, and he will find that the Creeds are not dead. They are still, in most parts of Christendom, electric wires full of life, and woe to him who ventures to touch them with unhallowed hands!

I suppose all are agreed that the historic Creeds of the Church embody a large amount of valuable and vital truth, expressed in such a way as to be instructive and profitable. Most persons concede that, in the early Christian centuries, when general intelligence was more circumscribed than it is now, some formulated statement of Christian doctrine, beyond what the New Testament contains, was desirable. All thoughtful people will further agree that the Creeds of the Church have, in various ways, been a great help and stimulus to Christian people in their struggles with evil, and in efforts to be

steadfast in the work of the Lord. Some minds are so constituted that they need to have some authoritative guide outside of themselves and of the Bible, clearly written, to tell them just what to believe and what to do. This is the theory of the Roman Catholic Church, and has been, to a considerable extent of the Protestant Churches.

The great majority of Christian people take their conclusions on theological subjects more from Creeds than from all other sources combined. Why should they not, when these Creeds are made standards of authority for officers of the Church, if not for all its members; and, when, in many cases they are instilled into the minds of children with as much of faithfulness as is the Bible itself?

The special reason for the present study is the obvious relation of Creeds to the problem of Final Destiny. If the Creeds are to be accepted literally, then alas for mankind! All hope of a happy issue is ended. A majority of the human race, it would seem, ought never to have been created; for their existence must be to themselves, and largely without their own fault, not a blessing but an infinite curse. I cannot believe it.

The Creeds that I have styled strictly historic are not numerous. Probably a dozen would complete the list, and of these, four or five have special prominence. One very noticeable fact is that all these Creeds, on their metaphysical side,—which, alone is here to be considered,—are practically alike, and appear to have had a common parentage. However much they differ on minor points, they all agree substantially as to the relation in which Adam stands to the human race; and they all seek in him, and not in the fact of man's animal nature, an ex-

planation of the low moral condition of the human family.

Looking now at the Creeds themselves, and especially at the Westminster Confession, the first thing that strikes one's attention is a perverted view of the great doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. The Confession describes God as "Absolute, working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory." The Sovereignty of God, in the true sense of that term, is an undeniable and glorious fact. By appealing to the imagination, it exalts God infinitely above our powers of full conception; at the same time, it sinks ourselves, by comparison, into the depths of nothingness. But God's Sovereignty has limitations; and it is not all for self-glorification. What exists of necessity He does not create nor control. Space and duration, the principle of Cause and Effect, the distinction between right and wrong, are necessary and eternal. God does not create them any more than He created Himself; and He is controlled by them, and is under law to them, as actually as are finite moral beings. God's obligations to the moral universe are as much greater than ours as God is greater than man. They are infinite. The very same intuitive principles of right, justice and honor that are binding upon men are binding upon God also. This was clearly shown in the fourth chapter of this series, upon the Honor, Justice and Love of God in the Problem of Human Destiny. It is indeed true that God is back of all that is finite in the universe, and is over all, in such a sense that a rational definition of the terms Sovereignty, Election, Foreordination, Predestination and Reprobation may be given that makes them acceptable, and expressive of central truth. But when they are so defined and employed as to shut off human freedom in matters

of right and wrong, and to make God the Author of sin, and the Punisher of men for what they never did or were guilty of, then vital truth is perverted and God dishonored. God's sovereignty must not turn man into a machine, nor involve a system of absolute and universal fatality.

The creedal representation of God's Sovereignty places Him above all law and all obligation, except to Himself, which is very far from the truth. The evil of this view consists not in the error itself, so much as in the fact that this error becomes a logical stepping stone to greater errors further on.

The second criticism I have to make on the creedal view is akin to the first. It is this: That the metaphysics of the Creeds land, logically and necessarily, in the abyss of fatality. The Westminster Confession is a logical instrument from beginning to end. Grant the major premise and the conclusion follows necessarily. The major premise is the absolute sovereignty and foreordination of God; the two combined.

The Confession declares that "God hath foreordained whatsoever cometh to pass." This statement admits of no modification or limitation. Whatsoever, includes everything in the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual world. Nothing ever did or can take place other than, or different from, what God had foreordained and made not only a certainty, but, in the circumstances, a necessity. Much has been written by learned theologians to prove that the sin, fall and eternal death of angels and men were foreordained of God, and so, by inference, according to His holy will. This foreordination the Book describes to be something back of foreknowledge, and independent of it. His decree amounts to di-

rect or indirect causality emanating from Himself. If this does not mean essential fatality, I should be at a loss for words that could express that idea.

Yet, there are people who insist that this must be a forced and unfair construction of the words used. Well, let us go further then, and introduce another and fuller quotation that comes almost immediately after, and as explanatory of, the first. It is the doctrine of Election, which is only another word for foreordination. "Some men and angels," it says, "are predestined unto everlasting life and others are foreordained to everlasting death"; and all this, in such a sense that "Their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be increased or diminished." This same doctrine is further explained in the chapters on Providence, Effectual Calling and elsewhere; and is substantially the doctrine of all the historic Creeds. It applies alike to the righteous and the wicked, to angels and to men, and to all events possible and actual; and, if it does not mean absolute fatality, then I repeat, that the idea cannot be put into words. On this point, which lies at the foundation of all virtue, it appears that the Creeds, and the school of materialistic sceptics are in substantial agreement.

A third general criticism of the Creeds is that they take such views of sin and its punishment, as put dishonor and injustice upon the character of God, and therefore must, to that extent, be false. They do this in several ways:

1. They make the very nature of man, as God created it, sinful and deserving of eternal punishment.
2. They represent man as created with utter inability to do good, and then, as deserving endless punishment for want of ability to do what he cannot do, and for not doing it.
3. They represent God as punishing the innocent for the

sins of the guilty. If these three points are sustained by the following quotations, then how can the honor and justice of God be longer maintained under that system?

Turn first to the Westminster Confession of Faith. It says: "A corrupted nature was conveyed from our first parents to all their posterity. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil do proceed all actual transgressions." Then the Book explains what this corruption of nature means, as follows: "Both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin." Then, it adds: "Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God and contrary thereunto doth of its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death and all miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal." The sinful nature that God put into man at his creation works all this ruin. One cannot help asking in such a case, who is the sinner?

Most of the other historic Creeds are still more emphatic on these points. The synod of Dort asserts, in reference to the "propagation of a vicious nature," "that all men are conceived in sin and born the children of wrath, disqualified for all saving good, propense to evil, dead in sins, and the slaves of sin . . . they neither are willing, nor able to turn to God, to correct their depraved natures, or to dispose themselves to the correction of it."

The Augsburg Confession reads: "We mean by original sin that which the holy fathers and all of sound judgment and learning in the church do so call, namely, that guilt whereby all that come into the world are, through Adam's fall, subject to God's wrath and eternal death

and that very corruption of man's nature derived from Adam." The thirty-nine Articles of the English Church read: "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam. Every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

The French Confession speaking of Original sin, says: "We believe that the stain is indeed sin, because it maketh every man (not so much as those little ones excepted which are yet hid in their mother's womb) deserving of eternal death before God."

The Westminster Confession expresses the belief "That elect infants will be regenerated and saved." But what of the others!

The above quotations are only specimens selected out of a great multitude from different sources and of similar import. The Belgian, the Bohemian and the Moravian Confessions, all echo the same note. Calvin, the elder Hodge, and other such writers of influence defend and repeat the positions formulated in the **Creeds**.

I submit that the three points stated above are abundantly sustained by the quotations given, and that they charge God with treating that as sin which cannot be sin; that He punishes the innocent for the guilty; that He deprives men of all ability to do good and then sends them into eternal torment for not doing what they cannot do. If such doctrines do not put dishonor upon God, then, I am unable to see what could be dishonorable.

A fourth criticism, closely allied to the above is, that the supporters of the historic Creeds are obliged to admit that, judged by the moral standard of intuitive justice, God's treatment of men cannot be vindicated; and that

therefore God is not bound by the principles of right, justice and honor, as other moral beings are. If this shall be found true, it is a fearful accusation. It dishonors and dethrones God.

Two of the ablest thinkers and writers that France ever produced were Abelard and Pascal. They were both strong adherents of the historic Creeds, and would, I suppose, have accepted without hesitation as true, all that is contained in the above quotations. But they both saw that the "Adamic theory" was utterly inconsistent with the intuitive principles of honor and justice, as revealed in reason and conscience. They must, therefore, either deny the Creed or admit that God was dishonorable and unjust, according to the dictates of intuitive human reason and conscience. They both, but apart from each other, elected the last alternative, and exempted God from any obligation to act on the principles of honor and justice, as revealed in reason and conscience. I quote their words. First Abelard, as follows:

"Would it not be deemed the summit of injustice among men, if any one should cast an innocent son, for the sin of a father into those flames, even if they endured but a short time. How much more so, if eternal! Truly, I confess this would be unjust in men, because they are forbidden to avenge even their own injuries. But, it is not so in God, who says vengeance is mine, I will repay, etc."

Here Abelard exempts God from moral obligation, and puts the arbitrary will of God above the law of right, justice and honor. Now listen to Pascal:

"What can be more contrary to the rules of our wretched justice than to damn eternally an infant incapable of volition, for an offense in which he seems to have

no share, and which was committed six thousand years before he was born. Certainly nothing shocks us more rudely than this doctrine; and yet, without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves."

Here again, right, honor and justice are made to fall before the historic Creed. Dr. Hodge takes substantially the same view. Speaking of God's dealings with mankind, he says that "They cannot be explained on the common sense principles of moral government. The system that Paul taught was not a system of common sense, but of profound and awful mystery."

Dr. Woods, Dr. Chalmers and many others make similar admissions, but try to hide the injustice under the cloud of awful mystery. It is a mystery of horror, because it strikes down every principle of right and justice in God! It leaves the world and the universe with no moral standard of duty; for, when the voice of reason and conscience is denied as of universal obligation, then we have no guide, and might as well (or better) be brutes as men. And, as for God, if He is above the eternal principles of right and justice, then, how can He be God, or an object of intelligent worship. The weak plea that, to save the Creeds, resolves the whole matter into profound mystery, and there leaves it, is scarcely worthy of intelligent respect. It is the story of the foolish ostrich over again.

I must pass on to a fifth line of criticism, which is that the Adamic System of metaphysics, as it has been given from the Creeds, is impossible of belief, except on the basis of some unnatural, unfair, forced and false principle of interpretation. The advocates of the creedal doctrines see that explanation is necessary; and hence they are

ever trying to find some way of escape from the natural meaning of words. Dr. Hodge, for example, after admitting that no person can be properly condemned who has not had a fair probation, goes on to say that all men had such a fair probation in Adam; and also, that children are not condemned and sent to hell for Adam's sin, but for the sins which they themselves committed in Adam long before they existed! Then comes in the theory of imputation, as if moral character could be imputed in any proper sense of that term. It is further claimed that the nature of man is not sinful, but something back of nature, as if there were anything back of nature except God. Is God then the sinner? The whole plea of mystery is another attempt to escape natural conclusions. The plea is itself a confession of error. One more way of escape is, to turn upon certain other inconsistent critics and exclaim: "You are another just as bad." This will appear in the next chapter on Creedal Metaphysics Revised. Others again fall back on the authority of the great and good men who have formulated the creeds as if they were inspired to do their work; and others still point to the noble Christian characters that have been formed under the inspiration of the Creeds, as if this made them true. Others still hide under the cloud of federal headship.

These are only a part of the apologies and misinterpretations that are resorted to in order to make the Creeds possible to rational belief. And, I submit that most of the explanations are no better than the Creeds themselves, and some of them are even worse. What are these dogmas but a chamber of horrors from which every person having eyes should shrink away, unless he has also nerves of steel.

As we should naturally expect, there never has been

agreement among thoughtful Christian people in the interpretation and support of the "Adamic System" as contained in the Creeds, unless possibly during the dark centuries before the Reformation. When the Nicene Creed was adopted, the minority against it on this and other grounds was so strong as to make it doubtful, for a long time, as to which side would finally win; after the Council, the struggle went on with various vicissitudes for two or more centuries. Then, as regards the Westminster Confession of Faith adopted 250 years ago, how was it adopted? The assembly was made up of Presbyterians, men from the Church of England and Congregationalists or Independents. The Presbyterians were in the majority, and largely so after they brought in the delegates from Scotland. But throughout those protracted sessions and heated debates the most determined opposition was manifested. Finally, the Church of England members virtually withdrew, and the Congregational members, eight or ten, I think (and they were men of great learning and influence) kept up the fight, not all along the line, but at certain points. To illustrate: At one of the sessions, Peter Nye, in a speech from the floor, said earnestly: "Every man has a right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, be he Christian, Papist, Mahometan, Jew or Pagan." These awful words created consternation in the assembly; the conservative members lifted their hands in holy horror, and exclaimed aloud against the sacrilegious utterance. The tumult was so great that the presiding officer had, at once, to adjourn the session that the passions of the members might cool off.

The Confession, by a large majority vote, was finally adopted. Now what followed? In a short time, the

Presbyterians of England who had gained their victory, became themselves tired of the instrument which they created; and a large part of them not only renounced allegiance to the Creed but, by reaction, became Unitarians, or joined the Independents; so that, for a long time there were almost no Presbyterians left in England; and the Scottish Divines had to uphold the Creed and give it the name it has since carried. But, of late, if reports be credited, the Scottish clergy are falling off from the old faith and into line with what is called the New Theology.

Almost everywhere, except, perhaps, in the Southern States of America, there seems to be a disposition to let the historic Creeds sleep in peace. Occasionally there is an outburst of old orthodoxy, but it is of short duration. The world is changing, and it may not be long before the metaphysics of old historic Creeds will sleep with honor, overshadowed by sacred memories, in national archives beside the recovered relics of Egypt, Assyria and Babylon. May they rest in peace.

How have these old Creeds been used to conjure with in other days! What grim, grand men of iron heart and hand they have nurtured for the holy war! How steadfast and conservative they have been, always the foes of progress, scientific and theological, regarding themselves as finalities. How, on the cry of heresy, they have been ready, in olden times to unsheath the sword or kindle the fires of martyrdom for the destruction of such as did not bow before the Creed. But this is almost over now, and the brave old Creeds may rest in peace, while the ark of God moves on, with no hand but the hand of Christ to guide its way into the kingdom of God amid the Alleluias of a ransomed world.

How came such Creeds as these under review ever to

exist? They were born partly of Greek fatalistic philosophy, and partly from the last half of Paul's fifth chapter to the Romans. All who are familiar with the early Centuries of Christian history know that the foremost men of the churches were familiar with Greek philosophy—the popular religion of that time—and that, naturally, a desire existed to bring the Christian religion,—then, also, becoming popular,—as far as practicable into harmony with prevailing philosophic conceptions. This explains, as I think, how it was that so much that seems foreign to the teachings of Christ came into the theology of those early times. Augustine himself, once a professor of Greek philosophy, was probably foremost, though in part unconsciously, in that kind of service.

If the Adamic system has any Scripture basis, it will be found, as intimated, in a few verses of Paul's fifth chapter to the Romans. The substance of these verses, as any one can see, lies in these two propositions: 1st. That all men died in Adam. 2d. That all men were made alive in Christ. The two statements are parallel, and one is as broad and all-embracing as the other. Death and life are exact opposites. If one is spiritual death and exposure to eternal punishment, the other, as we have seen, is spiritual life and deliverance from eternal punishment. We have then here a dilemma with two horns. If those who hold the creedal view will accept the second horn of the dilemma, I should not think it worth while to contend against the first; for then, the creation of the human race would be an infinite good, and not, as on the other hypothesis, to the great proportion of the human family, an infinite curse. One horn of the dilemma corrects the other, and harmonizes not only this passage but the whole subject to which it relates.

The bearing of this study upon the problem of Man's Destiny, if not perfectly obvious, may be stated in a word: The historic Creeds are the historic obstacle to Christian hope. If the Adamic philosophy is not true, then a system of faith, very different from that, if only we can find what it is, must be true. This study encourages hope and earnest search for truth, and promises, as a result of honest, earnest endeavor, help from God and deliverance for the world. The historic Creeds from other points of view will be continued, and more definite conclusions reached, in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CREEDAL VIEW MODIFIED IN THE
PROBLEM.

The preceding chapter was a study of the historic Creeds according to their natural and intended meaning. It would seem impossible that the interpretation which, for example, the framers and supporters of the Westminster Confession first put upon it, should always be acceptable. It has not been. This chapter is to consider some of the changes that have taken place, and what has produced them.

That revisions and modifications of the old theory have taken place in the thoughts and actions of men in the last century, I suppose no one will deny. Not so much that the Creed itself has been changed, as that its interpretation is no longer what it once was. The Creed now is very generally accepted, not literally as it reads, but "for substance of doctrine"; and that substance is usually or often made to mean whatever good judgment and common sense endeavor to read into it. Even those who, in theory and profession would question the correctness of this statement, yet in practice admit the change, and, if clergymen, they preach and pray, not as the Creed reads, nor as ministers preached and prayed one hundred years ago, but in a sensible way, just as if they believed that all men if they will, can and should repent of their sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of

their souls. It is a departure from the old and natural interpretation of the Creed, and not adherence to it, that inspires the preaching and gives it power over men at the present day.

The changes have been most manifest in New England, in Old England, in Scotland and, perhaps, in Germany; and they have been, I suppose, least apparent in the Southern States of America and throughout the Roman Catholic Church. But, everywhere, a loosening and liberalizing spirit is manifest, and the movement goes on with augmenting power, bearing the fruits of mutual confidence and greater brotherly love, while it gains the respect of the outside world. The narrowness, coldness, bigotry and spirit of crimination and recrimination that characterized earlier days is yielding to the genial and harmonizing tendencies that a more or less changed view tends to produce.

Changes in the interpretation of the Creed began in the first half of the eighteenth century. Jonathan Edwards, one of the purest men and profoundest thinkers that America ever produced, and Andrew Fuller of England, both firm believers in the Creedal or Calvinistic system as a whole and both extremely conservative, were yet forced by their convictions to become theological reformers. Practical difficulties, as is usual in such matters, obliged them to take an advanced step,—only one step instead of many,—that served as an entering wedge that was afterwards to be driven its full length. That step was a denial of man's real inability to obey and seek God; and the affirmation that what is called inability is simply a determined unwillingness, or, as it was then phrased, "moral inability" and not natural. This simple distinction was the "elephant's proboscis pushing itself into the

china shop." On all other points Edwards and Fuller appear to have been, however illogically, firm believers in, and able advocates of, the old creedal system.

The practical facts that forced these great and good men to make their new departure were such as were felt in common by the observant and thoughtful men of their age, namely: That the old Adamic system of doctrines was found to be unpreachable. They put no responsibility upon an unbelieving, sinful, dying and yet utterly helpless world. How could the minister call his unconverted hearers to do, and blame them for not doing, what confessedly they had no sort of ability to do? In times of persecution and outward conflict, when there was no leisure to consider logical difficulties, the doctrine was proclaimed in a way that gave firmness, stability and encouragement to Christian people. But later on, when quiet was restored, and the Church settled down to earnest thought and work for a lost world, how could it consistently address that world, if no member of it had any sort of ability to respond to the appeal any more, according to the accepted theory, than if he had been a block of wood or stone?

As a consequence, the Gospel was, as a rule, no longer preached to the unconverted, but only to the saints, to whom, in regeneration, the gift of freedom had been imparted, or rather created as a new power. As a matter of fact, so history relates, in New England and in Old England, the pulpit rarely addressed itself to the unsaved part of its hearers. The old Puritan Churches failed more and more in this respect, as both Edwards and Fuller testify, until religion fell almost to its lowest ebb, and iniquity was coming in like a flood. The Church with its "half-way Covenant" was fast losing power, and

the world was losing hope, when Jonathan Edwards, after much mental struggle and reflection repudiated the old doctrine of absolute inability, and proclaimed that the sinner's inability was his persistent unwillingness. This view, whether consistent or not with other beliefs still held, threw responsibility upon the sinner. His unwillingness or moral inability was voluntary, and so, instead of freeing him from responsibility, only increased his guilt. This new doctrine in New England and across the sea, with only dissent here and there, was caught up with avidity and preached with great power. As might have been expected, there was at once, as was said a great "shaking among the dry bones" and one of the most powerful revivals of religion ever known immediately followed; a full account of which was afterwards given by President Edwards.

This is the first epoch in the new revision or modification of the Adamic Theory. One battle had been fought and won, but the war was not yet ended. Other theological reforms had to follow or the victory already gained on logical grounds would have to be lost. At this period, and to meet the necessity, another thinker is raised up in the person of Rev. Samuel Hopkins, D.D., who was a student of Jonathan Edwards, and who carried his reform views beyond those of his master. Dr. Bellamy, and others, wrought along the same lines. Dr. Hopkins held that all sin consists in selfishness, and all virtue in benevolence; both of which are voluntary choice. He held that the impotency of sinners in respect to believing in Christ is not natural but moral, for, as he says: "It is a plain dictate of common sense that natural impossibility excludes all blame. "An unwillingness of mind is a crime and not an excuse, and is the very

thing wherein our wickedness consists." He also denied the doctrine of imputation, both of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness. These are his words: "Though men became sinners by Adam, yet they have and are accountable for no sins but their own. Adam's act in eating the forbidden fruit was not the act of his posterity; therefore they did not sin at the same time he did. The sinfulness of that act could not be transferred to them afterwards, because the sinfulness of an act can no more be transferred from one person to another than can the act itself." He says again: "That, though believers are justified through Christ's righteousness, yet His righteousness is not transferred to them. Personal righteousness can no more be transferred from one person to another than personal sin." Thus he clearly repudiates the dogma of imputation.

One other controverted doctrine of the Creedal system, and one which bears on the great problem of Destiny, has been incidentally referred to; but, as it had a large place in the old discussion and its issues, it should be more fully stated. It is that of limited and of general atonement. The theory of the Creeds is that Christ died only for the elect; and that His coming into the world, and His death on the cross, had no more to do with the non-elect than it had with fallen angels. "A certain number, so definite that it could not be diminished or increased" were, by God's decree to be saved, and all the others, by that same decree were to be eternally lost. This is what, for convenience, I shall call the Old School doctrine.

The New School divines denied the dogma of limited atonement and held, both on the grounds of reason and revelation, that "Christ tasted death for every man" im-

partially, and as much for one as for another. If this be true,—and it must be, or, as we have seen, God would be dishonored and man treated unjustly,—then, on Old School principles the doctrine of universal salvation is clearly established. What the old or Creedal doctrine had always contended for was, that all for whom Christ died will be saved ; for all these belong to the elect. Now if, as the Bible teaches, and as the New School reformers contended, the atonement of Christ was general and not particular, then all men will be saved. I see no logical escape from this conclusion.

Thus the work of revision went on, becoming more advanced and more clearly defined until the freedom of the Will, or power of contrary choice, and the fact that Christ died equally for all men and not for the elect alone, and other kindred doctrines, were clearly developed and formulated. In this completing process such men as Dr. Taylor of Yale, Professor Finney of Oberlin, and others had a guiding influence. The system of doctrines known as New School Theology, as against the Old School System, was clearly defined.

Two results immediately followed: One was the great revival, mainly under New School guidance, that prevailed extensively, continuing for nearly fifteen years from about 1830 onward. The other result was the sharp conflict that now sprung up between the leading advocates of the two systems. And, curiously enough, the matter of contention was not as to the positive beliefs of the two sides, whether they were right or wrong, but largely as to whether either party could justify its position in the light of those intuitive principles of honor and justice which all sides in the controversy professed to accept and respect. The relation of the Old School posi-

tion to those principles has been already considered. Unfortunately for the New School side of the controversy, as I think, it still retained certain elements of the Adamic system, and put such interpretations on them, as naturally to open its position to some of the very objections and inconsistencies that are charged so unmercifully, yet logically, upon the Old School doctrines.

In order to avoid misapprehension, I will here place the two views side by side, in as definite language as possible. The ablest interpreters of the Old School system reject the accusation that makes the race guilty of Adam's sin, and hold that each man is guilty of his own sin committed in Adam. It denies that man is condemned to eternal death without a reasonable probation, and claims that each man had such a probation in Adam his federal head, ages before he was born; and, sinning under that probation, he is condemned. This is the Old School view.

What, now, do New School men hold? Denying the positions above stated, and claiming that sin is always a voluntary act, they insist that man's connection with Adam, though not sinful in itself, is yet of such a nature as to bring his whole physical and mental being, on his entrance into the world, into such a disordered condition that, as soon as moral agency or the ability to discern right and wrong begins, he is certain to fall into sin against God, and so under condemnation to eternal death, not for Adam's sin, nor for his own sin in Adam, but for actual transgression of the known law of God, committed voluntarily as a rational moral being.

Just this is the vital distinction. What now do the advocates respectively, of the two systems, think and say of each other? Each side charges the other with holding

views that are dishonoring to God, and in violation of those distinctive and universally accepted principles of right, of honor and of justice that God has implanted in every heart, and which must be alike obligatory upon God and man. The New School man's view of the Old School theory is voiced in the words quoted from the Creeds in the previous chapter, or, better still, in the following quotation from Whelpley, in his famous book entitled "The Triangle." He says:

"You shall hear it inculcated from Sabbath to Sabbath in many of our churches that a man ought to feel himself actually guilty of a sin committed six thousand years before he was born; nay, that prior to all consideration of his own conduct he ought to feel himself deserving of eternal damnation for the first sin of Adam. . . . I hesitate not to say that no scheme of religion ever propagated among men contains a more monstrous or more horrible tenet. The atrocity of this doctrine is beyond comparison. The visions of the Koran, the fictions of the Veda, the fables of the Zendavesta, all give place to this. Babbinal legends, Brahminical vagaries, all vanish before it. . . . The idea that all the numerous millions of Adam's posterity deserve the ineffable and endless torments of hell for a single act of his before any one of them existed is repugnant to that reason which God has given us; is subversive of possible conceptions of justice. It is an insult to every man's unbiased understanding,—to the light of his conscience."

This long quotation might be longer; and similar expressions from other New School writers might be quoted indefinitely; but let this suffice.

Now, what does the Old School man think of the New School position? It throws back again almost the lan-

guage with which it has itself been pelted ; and, on substantially the same grounds, namely: That the New School doctrine is in utter violation of the very laws of right and justice that God has put into human hearts, and which the New School charge the Old School with trampling in the dust. They begin with charging that the New School concedes the physical and mental depravity of man prior to the dawn of moral agency, which, they say, though not in itself sinful, is yet the fruit of man's connection with Adam, and which in all cases leads men into sin and under condemnation of eternal death just as soon as moral agency begins. It is claimed that this doctrine of a deteriorated nature, resulting in the universal certainty of a consequent actual and total depravity or sinfulness, brings no relief as regards the alleged conflict with the intuitive principle of justice. One of those principles, as Dr. Hodge, Dr. Alexander, and, indeed, all authorities in morals affirm, is, "that all new created beings must be placed in a condition as favorable to a happy as to an unhappy conclusion ; that fairness and justice demand this." Such a condition they say "means a real probation before character and destiny is decided. Now, they go on to assert, that the New School doctrine holds that without any probation whatever, God has placed the race, each individual of it from birth, in a condition of such physical and mental weakness and tendency to sin, and has surrounded all men with so many temptations, that their first moral act is certain to be sinful, and to involve them in eternal condemnation. Such a scheme, they say, is dishonorable to God and unjust to man. It withholds from man any reasonable chance of escape, and does this without any sort of probation prior to his falling into sin.

I now quote from Dr. Hodge and the Princeton Divines.

"The New School," he says, "represents the race as being involved in ruin and condemnation without the slightest probation. . . . Men are brought up to their trial under a divine constitution which secures the certainty of sinning, and this is done because an individual sinned thousands of years before a majority of them were born! Is this a fair trial?" This is the very argument that the New School urges against the Old, and which the Old tries to escape on the ground partly of imputation, but chiefly on the plea that all men had a fair probation in Adam. Dr. Woods repeats Dr. Hodge in these words: "And is there not just as much reason to urge this objection against the theory just named?" (that of a corrupt nature ensuring sin and ruin without any previous forfeiture of rights). "Its advocates," he goes on to say, "hold that God brings the whole race into existence without holiness and with such propensities, and in such circumstances, as will certainly lead them into this fearful condition in consequence of their first father without any fault of their own." He goes on to argue that so far as the justice and goodness of God are concerned, one theory is just as open to the charge of trampling on the intuitive principles of right and justice, and so of dishonoring God, as is the other; except, that the creedal theory gives to man a probation in Adam, which the New view denies.

"Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" Very likely, in this case, the final decision will be that each is right, as against the other, and that both are wrong as against those intuitive principles of right, justice and

honor which, as some one has said, "must stand and be held sacred if the heavens fall."

This intellectual contest between Old and New School doctrines became more and more earnest as the years went on; and, especially so in the Presbyterian Church, where the Westminster Confession of Faith was the doctrinal standard. In most of the Northern States New School sentiments, as above represented, had come extensively to prevail, greatly to the dissatisfaction of a majority of the Church. The result was that, in 1837-8 the Presbyterian Church of America divided. How this was brought about and what the immediate results were, it is not necessary here to explain.

The fact to be chiefly noted is, that the liberalizing process went on, creeds became less sacred and were, by all parties, taken less literally, until about thirty years later, the two General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church of America were again happily united. They still hold to the Westminster Confession, but now, by a sort of mutual understanding, not literally, but "for substance of doctrine." This concession, made informally, was a great step in advance of former positions. But the finality is not yet reached. The time is coming, and is probably near at hand, when long-drawn-out metaphysical Creeds, as standards of authority, will have had their day and will fall into general disuse. Professor Briggs, in a recently published article, after showing how the Westminster Confession was made two hundred and fifty years ago, predicts the end of its authority as a practical standard of faith and discipline in the Church, as follows:

"The Westminster standards have been rejected by all but Presbyterians. They are now distasteful to a large

and increasing number of Presbyterians. They will soon be discarded in Great Britain and America. . . . The next step in Presbyterianism will inevitably be the preparation of a short and simple creed, unless they come to the opinion that the Apostle's Creed is better than any they can make in our times. . . . The forms of Presbyterianism have been preserved in the American Presbyterian churches; but the spirit of Presbyterianism and its substance as held by the Westminster Divines, has, in large measure departed. It is a question how long the form will maintain itself without the substance and without the spirit. No one can intelligently study the Westminster Assembly and its documents in their historic setting without seeing that the Presbyterian Church has drifted so far from them that it is an inconsistent and, indeed, an untenable situation. It must react to the original historic position of the Westminster standards, or it must throw over the standards and make new standards which really express the worship, doctrine, polity and discipline of the Presbyterians of our day."

This quotation from Dr. Briggs expresses substantially the condition and need of nearly all the Churches, no less than of the Presbyterian, with which he is or was then connected.

The outline I have given of one section of a great controversy, and, to some extent strife, coming down to recent date, is for a purpose. It is not intended to "rake open the fires that were smothered," but to illustrate the spirit and progress of the present age; and, also, to suggest that the end is not yet reached. Greater changes than have taken place are unavoidable in the not distant future. Even now, Christian men of evangelical stand-

ing may and do hold opinions, on many important theological questions, in opposition to all the historic Creeds, and publicly advocate them; and this, without losing caste or standing in the Churches where they belong. This is true of many distinguished ministers who hold and teach, in one form or another, the doctrine of final restoration, or of conditional immortality. I must believe that the doctrine of eternal punishment, as it is in the Creeds, and as it has been preached, but as I might almost say is preached no more, is doomed to pass away entirely, or to be greatly changed. The whole present drift of thought is in that direction. If the Creeds go, that doctrine must go with them, for the Creed is its main support. The Fatherhood and love of God, as now accepted, make this a necessity. The Gospel of eternal hope will replace that of eternal despair, and will be a great inspiration to the churches and an encouragement to all mankind.

The Church of the future—as regards what it shall hold and emphasize as most important, and as to methods of work—will be greatly different from the Church of the past. Her moral power will be far greater, and she will move along widely different lines. Tradition, authority and excitement will give place to reason and sober judgment; and the old antagonisms among thoughtful people in the Church and out of it, will have passed away; and the result will be a general religious awakening and an in-gathering of the people of all classes into the Church. There will come an extensive revision of existing doctrinal beliefs, in which a fuller knowledge of human relations, of man's earthly life, as related to the spirit life beyond, and, especially of man's relations to God, will come more fully into view, and

hold, over the hearts and lives of men, that controlling influence to which they are entitled. In this revisal the old theory of eternal misery, inflicted by the direct hand of God apart from the law of natural consequences, will be discarded or become obsolete. Then the Christian world will have entered upon a new and mighty movement that shall reach every land and people; and, at no distant day extend and establish the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

CHAPTER XV.

ETERNAL HOPE, HOW MAINTAINED IN THE PROBLEM.

Hope is the opposite of despair; one excludes the other. A belief that the great proportion of the human family who have lived, or are now living upon the earth, are to be eternally miserable is the doctrine of despair, against which the soul of every thoughtful man instinctively and necessarily revolts. Difficulties and objections arise and force themselves upon every sane mind. For one to say that he sees and feels no such difficulties and objections is to confess that he has never thought upon the subject; is to confess himself to be a child who believes without thinking, or else one who cares more for tradition than for truth, for creeds than for conscience, for authority than for reason.

The greatest practical objection that can be brought against the doctrine of endless punishment is, that, like a serpent it winds itself around the human heart, and crushes out the main-spring of Eternal Hope. In proportion as this objection is recognized and felt, and yet is not followed and examined, but stifled and resisted, Hope dies; and with it the Spring and possibility of earnest Christian endeavor for the saving of the world. The sources of inspiration and of earnest endeavor in the human soul are hope, faith, truth and God; or it is all the same if they are taken in the reverse order. Let a

sense of serious doubt upon any subject enter into one's heart and mind and one's power of sustained action upon that subject is gone. Pluck the quills from the eagle's wing and he descends to the ground. Man's doubts are the plucked quills of the eagle that bring him down from his soarings. His wing of hope is broken, and he falls.

To analyze: Hope is the Spring of endeavor; take that away and energy fails, strength is paralyzed. We are saved by hope. But hope is not a thing by itself, is not independent. Hope is the child of faith, and leans ever on its mother's bosom, more smiling, but less thoughtful. If there be no faith there is no hope. But faith, again, is not an independent virtue. It must have truth for its pedestal. A faith that does not rest on truth is false and delusive; so that doubts in regard to truth weaken faith, which, in turn, paralyzes hope, and which, again, destroys endeavor. But we have not yet reached the ultimate. Truth is not a thing apart by itself any more than are hope and faith, but is an emanation from God, so that to doubt as to truth is to doubt God. God is underneath the whole superstructure of truth, which upholds faith, of faith that supports hope, and of hope that is essential to earnest, successful endeavor. Men will work on while hope endures; take that away and further effort ceases.

The relation of hope to endeavor may be best seen in the light of illustrations: Multitudes of eager men are rushing to the Klondyke in pursuit of gold. They brave every peril and hardship because hope inspires and sustains them. They have both desire and expectation; and this urges them forward. If, in the course of time hope shall weaken and discouragement take its place, then effort will cease. Some years ago all France, under what

was considered great leadership, was full of energy and action in the work of constructing the Panama Ship Canal across the Isthmus. They put millions of money and thousands of lives into it; while the people were sustained by hope, gold flowed in like water. At last hope failed, and at once the work ceased. Recently the people of Greece were as eager for war with Turkey as blood-hounds are to be let loose for the chase. They had high hopes. After several unexpected defeats hope failed and turned to despair. Then they were driven like flocks of sheep chased by dogs. In our own Civil War the rebellion was resistless while hope endured; but, as hope gave way courage weakened, and, at length, the Confederates surrendered without a battle. The Spaniards, in the war just ended, are another fresh example.

These illustrations of the power of hope in the business world apply equally in the department of religion. Glance at the first century of the Christian era. Those early disciples believed in Christ, and what He said and did and was. This faith inspired their hope, and hope enkindled zeal and energetic endeavor to bring the world into an experience of divine life corresponding to their own. With what self-surrender, self-sacrifice and utter consecration did such men as Paul give themselves to the missionary work whereunto they were called. And what mighty results, by the blessing of God, attended their labors.

Glance into what are known as the dark centuries of Christian history and what do we see? The Apostolic spirit and zeal have departed, hope languishes, faith rests on dead form, not on living truth; God, as Christ revealed Him, is obscured, and so earnest endeavor for

the saving of the world gives place to contention, superstition, worldliness and spiritual death.

At length Luther appears; the Reformation dawns, God in Christ comes into view, the Bible is resurrected, faith returns, hope revives, and what splendid energies are put forth, and with what grand results!

In the early part of this century the great missionary enterprises, Home and Foreign, which have been one glory of the century, were inaugurated. The enthusiasm connected with those movements, and with the meetings and reports of the Boards that conducted them, was deep, universal and memorable. Since then the membership of our churches has many times doubled, wealth in Christian hands has increased beyond all precedent; every facility for Christian work has multiplied ten-fold; yet where are we to-day in relation to missionary work? and, as regards enthusiastic effort for evangelization at home and abroad? Let our depleted treasuries, our curtailments here and there, let the coldness that generally prevails in church life, let the drifting of men away from the churches, let the feeling of uncertainty, of doubt, of misgiving, if not of indifference, that so generally prevails,—let these things answer.

Nothing is more certain than that a large and intelligent section of the Christian Church, and of people out of the churches, are in an attitude of doubt, of protest and of unbelief in regard to measures and doctrines that were once unquestioned. The religious world is at the opening of a transition period which, when reached, will awaken new hope and energy and make the Gospel of Christ resistless. But just now hope languishes.

I am convinced that doctrinal difficulties have much to do with the existing state of things; and the one doc-

trine which more than any other now meets with distrust and unbelief is the doctrine of eternal punishment for most of the moral beings now living or who have ever lived on the face of the earth. Does the great part of the Christian world, in its heart, believe that doctrine? If Christians did—to repeat a stale thought—would they not run crazy? or, if there exists some way of escape from such a doom through Christ, would they not be as earnest to lead a lost world to Him as they are to extinguish a fire, or to save the drowning crew of a wrecked ship? It could not be otherwise.

Think of what this doctrine of eternal punishment is, as written in the creeds and sometimes preached from pulpits, listened to and accepted by the people with as little apparent emotion as if they were hearing some pleasant narrative of foreign travel. Men can be made to believe strange things under skillful leadership; but this doctrine is too fearful to be generally accepted without protest. The objections which were felt and urged by the few long ago, are now pressing upon the hearts of many who do not care to make avowal on the subject.

It will be the further purpose of this chapter to show, largely by quotation, how earnest people have sought to inspire Eternal Hope and escape Despair by bringing objections to that destroyer of Hope, the Creedal doctrine of endless punishment.

(1) That the doctrine of endless punishment, as found in the Creeds and sometimes preached and accepted as true, is dishonorable to God and unjust to man. It involves a violation of those intuitive principles of right, honor and justice which have been already stated and found to be equally binding on God and man, and which constitute the standard of final appeal. This is claimed;

and, if the point is well taken, the objection is unanswerable and fatal to the doctrine, as it would be to any doctrine that puts dishonor upon God. It is an argument that lies within the comprehension of all men; and each person may pass judgment for himself. The question is: Could God honorably create a race of moral beings and condition their existence as man's existence is said to be conditioned, and then, for the lack of perfect moral character, and for the first failure, doom them to eternal misery, to eternal separation from His own love and favor? Could God honorably do all this?

(2) A second way of escape is, that the penalty for sin is not eternal misery which makes existence a curse, but that it consists in the loss of well-being. Sin weakens the mind, lessens its capacity for happiness, brings the sinner under condemnation and inflicts the penalty, not of hopeless and utter misery, but of great mental and spiritual loss. This appears to have been the opinion of Augustine, whom Roman Catholics and Protestants alike honor as the great and most trusted teacher of the early Christian centuries. I quote from "Bronson's Quarterly Review," a reliable authority on such a subject:

"In Augustine's view," says the writer, "Eternal Death is a subsidence into a lower form of life, a lapse into an inferior mode of existence, a privation of the highest vital influx from God in order to everlasting life or supreme beatitude, but not of all vital influx, in order to an endless existence, which is a partial and incomplete participation in good."

He says again: "However great their sufferings from the pain of loss, or the pain of sense may be, it cannot be such throughout eternity as to destroy the good of exist-

ence and make it a pure, unmitigated, penal evil to live forever."

Such a view of future punishment from such a source, so at variance with the commonly accepted opinion, ought to have great weight with thoughtful minds; especially when we consider that Origen, and other theologians of the early centuries, appear to have held substantially the same view.

(3) A third method of escape and of hope comes through what is known as the moral argument against eternal punishment. This view cuts the knot by simply declaring that it cannot be true. I shall let two representative men give their thoughts on this question. The first is John Foster, than whom no man stood higher in the English nation for intelligence, genius and Christian character. After a long struggle he was forced to express himself as follows: He begins with describing eternity, the actual condition of the human race, the character of God and the awful nature of eternal punishment, as a positive infliction, which he calls a "lurid and dreadful shade" on God's system of economy; and then says:

"It would be a transcendently direful contemplation if I believed the doctrine of the eternity of future misery. It amazes me to imagine how thoughtful and benevolent men, believing that doctrine, can endure the sight of the present world and the history of the past. To behold successive, innumerable crowds carried on in the mighty impulse of depraved nature which they are impotent to reverse and to which it is not the will of God, in His sovereignty, to apply the only adequate power, the withholding of which consigns them inevitably to their doom,—too see them passing through a short term of exist-

ence (absurdly, sometimes, denominated probation) under all the world's pernicious influences, with the addition of the malign and deadly one of the great tempter and destroyer, to confirm and augment the inherent depravity on their speedy passage to everlasting woe,—I repeat, I am, without pretending to any extraordinary depth of feeling, amazed to conceive what they contrive to do with their sensibility, and in what manner they maintain a firm assurance of the Divine goodness and justice."

This quotation is sufficient, although there is much more of the same sort. Mr. Foster says: "A number (not large, but of great piety and intelligence) of ministers within my acquaintance have been disbelievers of the doctrine in question, at the same time not feeling themselves called upon to make a public disavowal."

The second honored name to bear testimony under this head is Dr. Channing, who represents the Liberal School, as Foster does the Orthodox.

Dr. Channing says: "If I and my beloved friends and my whole race have come from the hands of our Creator wholly depraved, irresistibly propense to all evil and averse to all good,—if only a portion are chosen to escape from this miserable state, and if the rest are to be consigned by the Being who gave us our depraved and wretched nature to endless torments in inextinguishable flames,—then, I do think that nothing remains but to mourn in anguish of heart; then existence is a curse and the Creator is,—O my merciful Father! I cannot speak of Thee in the language which this system would suggest. No! Thou hast been too kind to me to deserve this reproach at my lips."

Again, he writes: "We can endure any errors but those

which subvert or unsettle the conception of God's paternal goodness. Urge not upon us a system which makes existence a curse and wraps the universe in gloom!"

An able writer of the Universalist order applies the same argument as follows:

"No intelligent person of this era could bow to the authority of Jesus if He taught the Ptolemaic astronomy, or if He affirmed the Platonic cosmogony. Even so the conception which I hold of the universe and its Author, of man as the child of God, of the meaning of the human creation, of the divine Fatherhood, which Jesus has more fully revealed than all others, makes it as impossible for me to accept the orthodox traditional teaching on the subject of the final issue of Christianity, on any authority, as it would be to accept mediæval science on any authority."

This method of putting and supporting the moral argument against eternal punishment has been often stated and calls for no comment. It is to be taken for what it is.

(4) A fourth door opened for escape from the hope-destroying doctrine is that of Final Restoration. If we could believe that the sin and misery of the lost would somewhere end, and that all mankind would finally be restored to holiness and eternal blessedness, then we should know that God is not against His children, but, in mysterious ways, is seeking their highest good.

The argument for Final Restitution is supported from moral reason, but chiefly from the New Testament. Such passages as these are most frequently quoted: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil." "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet."

It would seem from passages like these, and I give

only two out of many, that Christ became incarnate for the purpose of destroying sin and establishing universal purity and peace; and when this is done, not sooner, then cometh The End. Only the line of argument is here suggested.

(5) A fifth way of escape is found in the doctrine of Universal Salvation; and this, in the Universalist and Unitarian churches of to-day takes on the form just referred to, of final restitution. It is not contended now, as it was once by the elder Ballou, that all punishment ends at death, but only that it is not eternal.

Universalism of a peculiar type was introduced into this country more than a hundred years ago by Rev. John Murray, who had been associated with both Wesley and Whitefield in evangelistic work. His universalism was a logical necessity from the doctrine of general atonement as against that of limited atonement. Orthodoxy conceded that all for whom Christ died would be saved but held that He died only for the elect. Murray insisted that Christ died for all the world that "He tasted death for every man" and for each alike; and that therefore on the Orthodox admission all men would be saved. So far as I can see his argument assuming the Orthodox theory that all would be saved for whom Christ died, is conclusive.

(6) A sixth door of escape is that of Conditional Immortality, which was considered in the chapter on Immortal Life in the Problem. In this connection, therefore, it is only needful to say that the theory of Conditional Immortality is simply a rebound from the doctrine of eternal punishment. That doctrine was felt to be so disheartening and destructive of hope, and so to earnest Christian effort, that, in some way its horrors must be

escaped; and conditional immortality was seized upon as a way of relief. Dreadful as is the thought of annihilation, it is yet a great deliverance against the more dreadful thought of eternal punishment; and, for that reason chiefly, as I think, it has been formulated and defended.

(7) A seventh way of escape is found in the theory of what is called Greater Hope. This is a new hypothesis, supported mainly by Evangelical Christians, who felt that some relief from the old creedal doctrine was necessary; and yet, who could not accept any of the preceding theories. The idea took form in connection with foreign missionary work. The old view doomed every human soul, in pagan and Christian lands alike, that did not believe in Christ as a personal Saviour to eternal perdition. This new theory excepts a certain class of persons who may be trying to find the truth, but have had no such knowledge of Christ as to make intelligent faith a possibility. Such persons, it is claimed, may have the opportunity of knowing and accepting Christ in the life after death. This view, with more or less of latitude, appears to be held by many leading clergymen and theological professors; and it came near, at one time,—through strenuous opposition to the commissioning of missionaries holding the Greater Hope theory to the foreign field,—splitting asunder one of our oldest and most efficient foreign missionary societies. The fact that the new view is no longer held as a bar to missionary appointment abroad, or to pastoral service at home, shows to what extent the idea prevails in Orthodox connections.

The great conservative objection to this theory is, that if admitted it logically opens the door to all who shall not have accepted Christ as their Saviour in this life, to

such an acceptance in the life beyond. One step, it is said, leads to the other.

That such is the natural if not inevitable logic of the situation is probable. To say the least, this latest theory shows that intelligent Christians in Orthodox Churches are depressed in spirit by the old doctrine, and are seeking relief as necessary to the inspiration of hopeful endeavor.

(8) Omitting from this chapter the argument from natural consequences, the eighth and last way of escape from the discouraging doctrine of eternal punishment is to shut one's eyes and ignore the whole subject. John Foster, as we have seen, tells us that in his day he knew of learned and pious ministers who held the radical view which he himself advocated, while yet they did not feel themselves called upon to avow their convictions. It is claimed by those who profess to know, that the number of clergymen, not to say of laymen, who, at this time, are thus "hiding their light under a bushel," is very large. However this may be, two things are certain. One is that the amount and character of preaching on the subject of eternal punishment at the present day bears no comparison with that of one hundred, or even fifty or twenty-five years ago; and when it is preached, it is for the most part done in a sort of apologetic and hesitating, qualifying way, wholly unknown to the fathers of living men. "Thereto hangs a tale."

The other fact is that the number of clergymen who adopt and publicly advocate views opposed to the Creedal doctrine of eternal punishment, and, also, that the number of hitherto conservative churches that do not now regard such views as a bar to the pastorate, is large, and is constantly increasing. It would be easy to give a long

list of names of distinguished living men, and of others who have just passed away, all belonging to Orthodox churches of different denominations, who stand, not offensively, but openly in opposition to the doctrine of eternal punishment, as a positive infliction, apart from natural consequences. They are found in every Christian country, and their number is enlarging.

This great change in public sentiment is to be explained on two grounds: First, changed views in respect to the character and purpose of God, and of His relations to mankind. God has come to be to the Christian heart and to the Christian Church, a God of love. Christ has revealed the Father to us, not as a God of terror, but of infinite tenderness, whose heart and sympathies are now and eternally for, and not against the human race, and for every individual of it. This view over against creedal representations assures, if it does not necessitate a change of position on the subject of eternal punishment. It is the new point of view.

A second and more practical reason for the great change now going on is that the old theory is depressive to rational hope, and so to earnest, persistent endeavor. I have known Christian ministers foolishly to say that, if the doctrine of eternal punishment is not true, then they would do nothing more for the support of foreign missions, or for the conversion of the world; as if a belief that the great proportion of all the people now living, and most of the countless multitudes of moral agents who have lived and died are doomed to eternal misery, were an inspiration to Christian hope and endeavor! Instead of that, is it not, to thoughtful people the most hopeless and depressing view conceivable.

Salvation does not consist in escape from an eternal

hell, but in preparation for eternal blessedness. It is deliverance from the bondage of selfishness and entrance into the divine life that Christ Himself enjoyed. This was why the Gospel was brought to men and why it should be preached. The Gospel is no negative system, seeking after a negative salvation; but a positive one, seeking to bring every man into the image of the Son of God. A belief that it will yet, by the grace of God, do this for every one who bears the Divine image, to the extent to which each moral being shall be found capable of receiving it, should inspire confidence, inflame hope, and so prompt to the most energetic efforts of which man is capable.

At the opening of this chapter it was seen that the rational hope of success in any department of life was conditional upon confidence. Take that away and hope dies. After that, dead form may continue, but living energy has gone out of it, so that nothing is left but a corpse without a spirit.

There must be some practical modification of the old creed on the subject of future punishment and the dogmas that lead to it, or, for aught I can see, the Christian faith must lose and continue to lose its hold upon thinking, intelligent men. Almost everything thinkable except metaphysical creeds has been revised and revolutionized, most of them over and over again in the last fifteen hundred years. But the creeds, with slight changes, remain the same, as if they were too sacred to be examined in the light of the XIX Century. That examination has now happily commenced, and it is likely to go on, whoever may oppose, until the creeds come out from the shades of credulity and metaphysical speculation, where they originated, into the clearer and more

scientific and spiritual light that now irradiates these questions. When that revision is made and accepted in the pulpit and in the pew, I anticipate that the Gospel, *as preached*, will commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God; that doubts will disappear, that confidence will be restored, that hope will revive, and that religion will take on such a movement Godward and heavenward as has never yet been witnessed. But, if hope is crushed religion dies. "We are saved by hope."

The one serious obstacle that the conclusion toward which the present study seems to tend and which has to be encountered, is found in what Christ Himself declared on the subject of future punishment. This is the strong hold of the doctrine; and our Lord's words are not to be contradicted, nor subjected to an unnatural and forced interpretation. They must be left to mean what He intended to teach and no more. A study of Christ's words on the subject of future punishment in the problem of Final Destiny will, therefore, be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHRIST'S WORDS ON FUTURE PUNISHMENT
IN THE PROBLEM.

A well-known and honored clergyman of New England, conversing recently with a friend on the question of eternal punishment, said : "That he saw and felt deeply the difficulties and embarrassments in which the doctrine is involved ; and that he would gladly accept some conclusion of final restoration, were it not that the words of Christ on the subject of future punishment were so definite and conclusive as to compel adherence to the old doctrine, however urgent other reasons might be against it."

These words, I believe, voice the sentiment and feeling upon this subject of most open-minded and thoughtful Christian men. The great topic now to be studied is the Biblical view of future punishment. There are two methods of studying a grave question like this : One is what may be called the microscopic and the other the telescopic method. The microscopic method consists in taking up, one by one, every text of the Bible that seems to have any relation to the subject, and, by minute critical examination try to find in each word some concealed meaning that may be brought out in support of one side or the other. The commentator is obliged, more or less, to adopt this method. But I have come to look with suspicion upon any doctrine in theology or morals that

is developed and defended in this way. The central truths of the Bible do not have to be discovered; they disclose themselves; they are as deep rivers and lofty mountain ranges that stretch across continents, and microscopes are not needed for their discovery. The existence and character of God, the sinfulness and misery of men, the great doctrine of redemption through Christ, and Christ Himself, the fact of continued life after death, and the causal connection of righteousness and blessedness, and of sin and misery in this world and beyond;—these are among the great truths of the Bible that “he who runs may read.”

The telescopic method of investigation passes over small things, and small ways of studying great subjects, and fixes attention upon central questions and the obvious underlying facts and principles that give them support. The moral firmament, with its suns and satellites, are its field of vision.

After this method let us approach and study the great Biblical question of eternal punishment. We have seen that the doctrine will stand or fall chiefly in the light of what Christ Himself has spoken concerning it. True, the apostles have spoken also; but their words and figures of speech are but the echoes of Christ's voice; and they have authority chiefly as Christ imparts it to them. Let us find what Christ has actually revealed on the subject, and all else must revolve around Him, as the planets do around the sun.

Our field of study may, with safety and advantage, be still further narrowed. We may take our Lord's fullest and most impressive utterance upon the subject of eternal punishment, and, if that utterance, in view of all the accompanying facts, unmistakably supports the doctrine,

then, without further controversy it is to be accepted. On the contrary, if a careful and candid study brings the meaning of His teaching, and so the doctrine itself into serious doubt, then no other considerations can establish it.

The crucial point, both for defence and attack, is our Lord's statement contained in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, from the thirty-first to the forty-sixth verse. It reads as follows :

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. Then shall the king say unto them on His right hand: 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took Me in; naked and ye clothed Me; I was sick and ye visited Me; I was in prison and ye came unto Me.' Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying: 'Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee? or athirst and gave Thee drink? And when saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in? or naked and clothed Thee? And when saw we Thee sick and in prison and came unto Thee?' And the King shall answer and say unto them: 'Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me.'"

"Then shall He say also unto them on His left hand: 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into eternal fire prepared

for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty and ye gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and ye took Me not in; naked and ye clothed Me not; sick and in prison and ye visited Me not.' Then shall they also answer, saying: 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying: 'Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me.' And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

This apparent and spectacular description of the general judgment and its consequences, is the strategic point, the citadel of defence for all who hold to the doctrine of eternal punishment. Thoughtful readers of history know that the issues of great international wars usually turn on some one decisive battle that decides the fate of empires and changes the map of the world. The battle of Marathon is a familiar illustration. The capture of Quebec took North America from the French and gave it to the English. The victory of the Americans over Burgoyne at Saratoga made the British Colonies free States. The fall of Vicksburg necessitated the fall of the Confederacy.

In the religious world, moral conflicts have turned on some one great issue. On the coming and crucifixion of Christ, turned the destiny of the world. Martin Luther's theses nailed on the church door at Wittenburg rent the Papal Church in twain, and established Protestantism. On the same general principle, Christ's words on future punishment in the account just quoted, form the moral battle-ground upon which the question of eternal

punishment is to be settled. The real question at issue here is not as to whether the doctrine of endless punishment is true or false; nor is it whether or not the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew is susceptible of an interpretation which favors that doctrine. It is as to whether Christ's words as here reported do *necessarily* support that doctrine; for, if there shall be found good ground for rational doubt, and strong probability against that interpretation, and in favor of the conclusion that the words were, or may have been, spoken for some other purpose than that of teaching endless punishment, then that doctrine is not here established, and should not therefore be accepted, especially with all the antecedent probabilities that lie against it.

Upon four points there is general agreement: 1. That all men are to be judged. 2. That the crucial test in judgment is moral character. 3. That reward and penalty extend into the future life. 4. That so long as sin continues penalty will endure.

The points upon which Christian people differ, are: 1. As to whether the forgiving and saving mercy of God extends, through Christ, into the future life. 2. As to whether or not penalty,—in the sense of positive infliction apart from natural consequences, making the existence of moral beings a curse and not a blessing,—is to continue endlessly.

The first of these questions was considered in the chapter on the Intermediate State. As for the second, it must be answered, if answered intelligently, not by simple, direct exegesis, but in the light of underlying, accompanying and cumulative facts and principles that have much to do, and must have, with the settlement of this main question. The facts and principles to be considered

as throwing light upon the whole question of probability are such as these :

1. Facts brought out by recent Biblical and theological criticisms have modified, if not changed many conclusions that once were supposed to be finally settled. The Bible is now seen to have a much larger human element in its composition than it was once thought to contain. It is no longer looked upon, in the strictly ideal sense, as an inerrant Book. This does not mean that the Bible has lost anything of its intrinsic value ; but that its authority on many questions is not as broad and absolute as it once was thought to be. The Bible was written for the people whom it immediately addressed ; its statements were more or less modified by prevailing ideas, and it was never intended to be so far in advance of average intelligence as to be incomprehensible, and so useless to those for whom it was immediately written. We know this to be true in regard to science, both physical and ethical ; and, in some degree it must be true of all questions that lie on the border-land of human comprehension. The light it first sheds upon such subjects is shadowy, and then it increases as time rolls on, and the minds of men are able to receive it. For what is called revelation to go beyond this would not be revelation but mystery ; and it is certain that the Bible is written, not on the plan of stating the whole truth at once, but such portions of it, from time to time, as men are able to understand and utilize. In a word, the Bible is throughout a progressive Book.

Since the completion of the Bible, and, as I believe, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our conceptions and knowledge of God, and of what we call the government of God, have been greatly clarified and enlarged.

The mission of God's Spirit, as the Teacher and Inspirer of men, did not cease when the Bible was completed, but is ever in the world revealing God and His truth to those who seek Him, and more and more as the centuries advance.

The initial truth of the whole Bible is written in its first words: In the beginning—GOD. Out of this one word all religious truth and true religion are evolved. There were a few great, inspired souls in Old Testament times who lived actually in the light of the New Dispensation, just as there are Christian people to-day who live among the types and shadows of the Old Testament age. As the Old Testament was the initial revelation for the New, so the New was initial, and only that, to the whole dispensation which it inaugurated. It opened up enlarged and inspiring views of God, revealing Him as a loving Father who sent His Son to seek and save His lost children. It raised questions that it did not answer. Just as the Old Testament was not a finality, so the New Testament holds an advanced, but not terminal place in the world's search after God. It started inquiries that after ages, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, were to pursue and solve.

Sabatier, in his "Philosophy of Religion," says: "It is against all analogy that the fullness of perfection should be met with at the outset of any evolution whatsoever; those who place it at the origin of Christianity are victims of the same illusion as the ancients who placed the Golden Age at the beginning of human history."

This Nineteenth Century has been one of great intellectual and spiritual enlightenment. Our ideas are assuming new forms. Not only are God and man seen in a new light, but the government of God, physical and

moral, is found to be, not the anti-type of human governments, but the Divinely appointed order of nature; and this order of nature, or government of God, is in no danger of being overthrown, even as the honor of God is in no danger of being dimmed. We are coming to see that God's laws are self-protective, that penalty is the natural and necessary consequence of wrong-doing, and is inflicted more for disciplinary reasons than to satisfy abstract justice, and is never administered in the spirit of hatred and revenge, but always in love.

These enlarged conceptions of the Bible, of God our Father, of the law of love, and of the meaning and purpose of penalty must modify traditional interpretations of those texts that speak of God as wrathful, and of punishment as a lake of fire, a place where wailing and gnashing of teeth shall endure forever. We must interpret such passages in the light of moral intuitions, in the light of another and different class of texts with which the Scriptures abound, and in the light also of new revelations from God that are fast taking possession of the thoughts and hearts of men; and we must put upon those awful texts, including that in the last of Matt. 25, the mildest and not the severest meaning which, in view of all the circumstances they are able to bear. We must emphasize the noun *punishment* rather than the adjective *eternal*.

2. A second accompanying fact to be considered is, that we are uncertain as to what Christ's exact words were on the occasion of His supposed announcement of general judgment. We are not certain that, at any point in the Gospels we have Christ's exact words, all of them, and in just the order in which they were spoken. In many cases, two, and sometimes three, and even all four

of the evangelists report and seem to quote Christ's exact words spoken on given occasions; but no two accounts agree as to what His exact words were. If anywhere, we should expect that Christ's exact words would be given in the formula by which He instituted the commemoration of His own death in the Lord's Supper. We have four accounts of what He said on that great occasion, each one repeating His exact words; and yet no two of them agree. Not long ago, an Episcopal clergyman, speaking to a gathering of ministers, on the Lambeth Platform, insisted that, as one condition of possible church union, all churches, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, must agree to use the exact words that Christ spoke when He instituted the ordinance. One hearer could not resist the temptation of asking which of the four differing reports of His last exact words must we feel ourselves obligated to use. It seemed to strike the good man as a strange question, but He did not answer it.

The order of Christ's sayings is nowhere preserved. The Gospels are not only fragmentary, but they contain only a very small part of what Christ actually spoke to the people of His day. All this must be remembered by those who undertake to form His words into dogma.

Often when I read an elaborate exegesis of some saying of Christ, the whole force of which turns upon some one word, I say to myself, What, if after all, as is very likely, Christ never used that exact word at all. The Evangelists give in their own language what they relate, from such information as they had, and understood to be His meaning. Doubtless they were, for substance, generally correct; but who can say that their reports were not at times, unconsciously shaded by their own

thoughts upon the same subject, or by partial misapprehension? This is most natural and probable. Sabatier, again, says :

“It seems to me impossible to deny that in the teachings of Jesus there are parts which are uncertain, things that have either been badly understood or badly reported ; and oriental and contingent form which needs to be translated into our modern languages. Who does not see that neither in His language nor in His thoughts there is anything absolute. Both of them are constantly determined by the generally received ideas of His time, the state of mind of His interlocutors ; and unless you desire to deny that Jesus was a man of His age and of His race, how can you abstract Him from His environment and attribute to Him ideas that have neither date nor place?”

When we recall that none of Christ's sayings were reduced to writing during His life-time ; that the four Gospels were written not earlier than from twenty to fifty years after Christ's death, and were taken largely from the recollections of the few unlettered living men who heard Him speak, and from traditional and abbreviated reports ; and also, in view of the fact that at least two of the Evangelists never saw Christ or heard His voice ;—when we take all this into account, how can we be sure, or presume, that all of His reported sayings are a full and exact repetition of what He did say?

Apply these suggestions to the Judgment discourse, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and who can be bold enough to build so dogmatic and awful a theory as that of endless punishment upon what is here reported. Then, consider further, that this discourse is given only by Matthew, and is not even referred to by any of the

others, as if it were unimportant; and consider again, that if it had been reported by other of the Evangelists that doubtless different words, in part, would have been used,—and surely no one should be too positive as to the conclusion he draws from such a rendering.

3. A third accompanying and modifying fact grows out of the prevailing ideas among the Jewish people in Christ's day on the subject of the future life. Up to near the close of the Old Testament writing, the Jews appear to have had no clear convictions on this subject. But when Christ came an entire change in this respect had taken place. The great proportion of the people now believed not only in the future life, but in judgments and awards after death. Their ideas were vague and sensuous; but they were pronounced, as the contention between the Pharisees on the one side, and the Saducees on the other reveal; and Paul's appeal to the Pharisees on that subject, made for the purpose of dividing his enemies, reveals the same fact. Just how this change of view was brought about is not clearly known; it is enough to know that it was the prevailing opinion among the Jew's in Christ's day. Josephus is very full and explicit in his statement that the Jews, except the small sect of Saducees, were strenuous believers in a future life, and in future punishment. Indeed, Christ's words in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew on that subject were little more than a re-statement, so far as judgment and penalty go, of what the people themselves previously believed. What Christ did was simply to give, as the ground of future punishment, a want of sympathy and love for the least of those whom He came to save. This is the central fact in the statement, and the circumstance of judgment which was brought in to emphasize that

fact was only a recognition of something that the people would admit and insist upon.

Christ attacked positive sins, but if men's opinions were generally in the right direction, He let them alone. If they believed in a judgment to come, that was enough, and so He left them on that subject where they were; just as He did on the subject of demoniacal possession.

Professor Edersheim, of Oxford, in his great work on the Life of Christ, after stating clearly what the prevailing view on future punishment among the Jews was, says:

"The views held at the time of Christ must have been those which the hearers of Christ entertained; and whatever those were, Christ did not, at least, directly, contradict, or, so far as we can know, intend to contradict or to correct them."

This statement in different forms, he repeats on several occasions. Christ left the Jews on that subject where they were. "They believed," Edersheim says, "in Future Punishment and also, in Final Restoration for most, especially of the Jews." Their views were crude and indefinite. They knew something about ages or æons, but as for endlessness they had no clear conception of it, as perhaps even we ourselves have not. My point is that Christ, in Matthew, only for the sake of emphasizing a great duty, recognized the Jewish idea of future punishment, but without even intending to pronounce upon it, or to carry it beyond their existing coarse and shadowy beliefs. In this view, which I hold to be correct, the passage in Matthew ought not to be forged into a dogma for the support, literally, of eternal punishment.

4. A fourth modification consists in the fact that Christ's method of teaching was after the parabolic, emblematic and figurative style which then prevailed, and

which is always more or less resorted to among crude and uncultivated people. Figurative language is more easily understood by children and undeveloped minds than any other; not because it conveys exact thought, but because it conveys general impressions, and teaches truth in a general, indefinite way. Christ's parables all have important meaning; we feel their power, but it takes an exegete to bring out the exact point and formulate it into a doctrine; in some cases, the wisest of men are still contending as to what that formulation, if attempted, should be. There is no probability that those whom the Lord addressed could have put the meaning of His figures and parables into words of accurate and definite meaning. Christ's statement of the general judgment, if it be not in fact a parable, is yet so figurative and scenic as to show that He never intended it to be crystallized into dogma. Jesus was one of the most unliteral, parabolic and hyperbolic teachers that ever lived. What He says about the prayer of faith sending mountains into the sea, about giving one's cloak to the thief that steals one's coat, or the cutting off of one's hand or the plucking out of one's eye if they offend, and many other such things contain living principles but not literal truth. Much that Christ said, including Matt. 25, was never intended to be taken literally.

5. A fifth, and closely related fact is that, in the Bible, spectacular, scenic and sensuous descriptions are often used to set forth other facts and spiritual truths of an entirely different nature. The prophecy and its fulfillment are often so far apart that, to one who has not spiritual discernment, they appear to have no connection whatever with each other. To illustrate:

All are familiar with that Pentecostal scene which took

place in the upper room when the Holy Spirit descended with great power and spiritual effect upon the people. Peter says that this was in fulfillment of a prophecy by Joel, which he quotes as follows :

I will pour forth of my spirit upon all flesh;
 And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
 And your young men shall see visions,
 And your old men shall dream dreams;
 And on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days
 Will I pour out of my spirit and they shall prophesy,
 And I will show wonders in heaven above
 And signs on the earth beneath;
 Blood and fire and vapor of smoke;
 The sun shall be turned into darkness,
 And the moon into blood,
 Before the day of the Lord come;
 That great and notable day;
 And it shall be that whosoever shall
 Call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Who would have expected such a spectacular catastrophic prophecy to find its fulfillment in that spiritual manifestation in the upper room? It was a spiritual, but not a literal fulfillment or anything like it.

Another similar case is seen in the first coming of Christ. The Jews were looking for Him and they expected Him to come in great glory as a temporal deliverer to break off the Roman yoke and make the Jewish the greatest and most glorious nation that ever existed. They took the prophecies of His coming and of His kingdom literally; viewed in that way, they were in the main justified in their expectation as any one may see who reads some of the last chapters of Isaiah, parts of Zechariah and of the other prophets. It is the law of prophecy that spectacular and sensuous description is to

have a quiet, spiritual fulfillment that is far from literal as possible.

An instance like this relates to Christ's second coming. The apostles and early Christians expected Him to appear literally, in great glory, attended by hosts of angels, in their generation. They were mistaken; yet they took their idea from Christ's own words, where, after describing the scene in the most vivid, spectacular, catastrophic and literal manner, He said distinctly to His disciples: "All these things shall be fulfilled before this generation shall pass away." "Some of you," He said, "standing here shall not taste death till all these things be fulfilled." Did Christ deceive the people, or did they deceive themselves by taking His words literally, when He meant that His coming should be a spiritual and not a physical, spectacular manifestation?

One other striking instance is in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and also in the twenty-first chapter of Luke, where Christ predicts the overthrow of Jerusalem in these words: "Immediately after these days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Did all this or anything corresponding to it happen when Jerusalem was destroyed? It is then, the almost uniform habit to emphasize a coming event by some scenic representation that never takes place literally, or in any scenic sense.

Apply these illustrations to the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew with which they are closely associated, and which is equally spectacular, catastrophic and physical, and is it not highly probable that the real fulfillment of what Jesus there said will be as different from what the people of that day expected, and from what many now

expect, as were the prophecies of the Pentecost, of His first coming, and all the others, different from their actual fulfillment? His words are no more definite in this case than they were in the others.

6. We now come to the serious and difficult but tentative question that bears directly on our problem. Jesus, in the New Testament, is called sometimes the Son of God and oftener the Son of Man. Under the first title He has no visible form, and He is to us what He was to John in the opening of His Gospel; under the second, we think of Him as a human being in human likeness; and in that likeness there were times when the fullness of divine light and power came upon Him so as to overshadow and beatify the human and make Him indeed the Son of God. But when Jesus lived here in the earthly body was He always endowed with Omniscience as to knowledge and with Omnipotence as to power? Or rather was He not in His incarnate state subject to the essential conditions and limitations of other men? We know that He was tempted in all points like as we are; and this presupposes human conditions. We know that the child Jesus grew in stature and in wisdom as other children do, and in favor with God and man as all should. We know that He was naturally endowed with intellectual powers of the highest order, and with a moral and spiritual nature of marvelous development. He lived a life of prayer and dependence on His Father, as all should. His thinking appeared to run almost entirely along ethical, charitable and spiritual lines; and here His conceptions and teachings were perfect, the ideals of all ages. He accepted without question the writings of the Old Testament and was familiar with them, as frequent references reveal. But as for the ap-

plication of His own principles to some of the problems of the Nineteenth Century, He probably had no conception of them. His knowledge of general literature, of the history of other nations, and of natural science as we understand it, must have been limited to that of His own people and day.

Jesus was strictly a Jew, sharing the patriotism that burned with full and hidden flame in every Jewish heart. He recognized the limitations of His life-work, and never sought with His own hand or voice to reach the world outside the Jewish faith. There is no proof that He thought of Himself or was thought of in His own family and neighborhood as the expected Messiah until He arrived at early manhood. In His public life He rebuked the wickedness of His people, and the wicked practices into which they had fallen; but He did not address other nations, or speak of them, except in their relations to the Jewish people; for He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He was educated in Jewish thought and it is conceded, as we have seen, that He was influenced by it, so far as ethical and spiritual truth would allow. Beyond this He made no protest. The Jews, as we have also seen, in His day believed in life after death and in future punishment for the wicked, and that such punishment for all except the Jews would be eternal. Their ideas were crude and sensuous, but Jesus accepted them in so far as they did not militate against ethical righteousness and spiritual life. That Jesus' knowledge on questions of eschatology was not Omniscient is evidenced by the fact that on one point, at least, He frankly stated that He was ignorant. Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the angels nor the Son, but the Father only. If Jesus confessed His ignorance on one

point, very likely He would have confessed on others relating to life after death if there had been occasion to speak of it.

I do not see how any one can study the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew in connection with the twenty-first and the last part of the seventeenth of Luke, in which the destruction of Jerusalem, His own second coming, the Judgment and the end of the world are foretold, without feeling that the whole subject is left in a confused state. He seems to say that the fall of the Jewish nation, the second coming of Christ, and the end of the world will be contemporaneous events, and that they will all take place before that generation shall pass away. He says that there were some standing there who should not see death until all those things should be fulfilled. The apostles took His words literally, and so they believed, and earnestly taught, that Jesus would return in glory, and that the great consummation would be reached in that generation. They looked for this second appearing daily. They were disappointed; they were mistaken; and this, on one of four grounds, or on all combined. 1. The words that Jesus spoke may not have been correctly reported. 2. The apostles may have misapprehended Jesus' meaning, and so been led into mistake. 3. Jesus Himself may have been more or less uncertain and confused as to the matters of which He Himself spoke. Or 4. Jesus may have had full knowledge but saw that the people were not yet prepared to receive it, and so, intentionally, He left them and the whole subject in comparative obscurity. On any one of these grounds, or on them all combined, it becomes clear that these mysterious chapters, including the last words of the twenty-fifth of Matthew, afford no

rational basis for positive dogmatic statement. Let those who shrink from the view here outlined present another that shall recognize all existing facts, and explain them more satisfactorily. If the above view, or anything like it, in relation to the Omniscience of the Son of Man, especially on questions of Eschatology, be true, then it would be seen that the creedal theory of eternal punishment from these words of Jesus is not established.

7. As for the judgment scene in Matthew it may be either a parable, like that of Dives and Lazarus, or a general statement of practical religious truth; but it is not a theological dogma.

The whole chapter made up of parables is occupied with the subject of judgment as connected with conduct and character, especially of the Jews. From the first to the fourteenth verse, we have the parable of the wise and foolish virgins; from the fourteenth to the thirty-first verse, we have the parable of the Talents, or of the Unfaithful Steward, upon whom judgment is pronounced, and in which the Pharisees were chiefly intended. Then, with no intervening clause to show that parabolic teaching is discontinued, comes the discourse that we are considering. Christ describes two sorts of persons; one class is compassionate toward the needy and the other is not; and it is on this ground alone that judgment is pronounced. If we have a parable here,—as I believe we have,—then the central truth in it is, not the judgment, but the duty of caring for the needy in whom Christ is represented, and the sin of failing to do so. This is the central thought of the passage and the judgment which follows is quite incidental to the main purpose, and so is not authoritative on the question of eternal

destiny. It is brought in to emphasize the duty of kindness to the needy.

But suppose the passage, whether a parable or not, does center in the general judgment, what then? I can only answer in part, as this scene must reappear in the next chapter, on the general resurrection and final judgment.

But, here, two things are to be noted as bearing on the doctrine of eternal punishment. One is that the whole argument which we have been considering to show that that doctrine is not authoritatively stated in the passage, has to be refuted. After that, this difficulty must be met. If one part of the sentence is to be taken literally, the whole of it must be so taken. If eternal means necessarily endless, then eternal fire must mean literally eternal fire. But who in our day will admit this? Still further, the Greek phrase *TAETHNE*, here rendered *all the nations* usually, in the Bible, means the Gentile nations. It is used with this limitation at least eighty times, and is probably so used here; and if so the old argument is ruined. As to the other Greek word, *IONEON*, translated eternal, we know that this word often means æons or ages, and has a time limit, as, e. g., the eternal hills, and it may be so here. I do not say it is limited, only that it may be, which is all my contention calls for. And further still, the old doctrine to be sustained, must overthrow one of the most fundamental and well-established laws of Biblical exegesis, which is—I quote a standard work on hermeneutics—that “Any text which is capable of an interpretation in support of either of two opposing theories cannot be used as a proof text in support of either.” On this ground the passage in hand should be thrown out of the argument entirely.

But, it will be objected that this is not the only passage in which Christ introduced the question of future punishment. True, but it is the most formidable one, and for that reason it was selected. As for the others, substantially the same course of study as that applied to the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew applies to them all, and leads to a similar conclusion. As for what we find in the writings of the apostles on this subject, including the "lake of fire and brimstone" that so often appears in Revelation, it is all an echo, and sometimes an exaggerated echo of Jewish thought, or of what Christ said, chiefly in the passage now under examination; so, as was premised at the beginning, what this does not establish nothing can.

In all this I am not denying the fact of future punishment, nor its terrible nature. It is indeed, a fearful thing, and must endure as long as sin continues. All I am questioning is its endlessness as being established in Matthew twenty-fifth; and what I am trying to do is to put upon Christ's words the gentlest, and not the sternest interpretation of which they are fairly capable. This course seems to me to be more in accordance with Christ's spirit and mission, more honorable to God, more hopeful and just to man, and is what every Christian heart wants to believe if there exists any rational ground for hope and confidence.

My conclusion then, rests on cumulative evidence, and is one of strong probability. Demonstration either way is impossible. But, to my mind, the weight of probability leads me to conclude that Christ's words in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew were spoken for some other purpose than that of teaching that a large part of mankind would go into absolutely eternal punishment.

9. I have reserved for the last word what I regard as a conclusive argument against the traditional interpretation. It is, that that interpretation is a square contradiction of what Christ Himself repeatedly declared to have been the great purpose of His coming into the world, and of other great texts of similar import. These are His own words: (John 3: 17.) "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 12: 47.) "For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." (Luke 9: 56.) "For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Again, (John 12: 32.) "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." (John 10: 10.) "I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly."

These, and other such passages, unembarrassed with scenic representation, parable, or entanglement with other questions, state definitely the purpose for which Christ came into the world; and, I repeat, it is the exact opposite of that which is ascribed to Him by the traditional interpretation of Matthew twenty-fifth. What Christ says of His own mission is confirmed by His apostles; as, for example: (1 John 3: 8.) "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

I do not see how any thoughtful, fair-minded person can, with all the facts before him, hesitate to expound the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew in the light of these great and positive sayings as to the purpose of Christ's earthly mission; nor, if he does do this, how he can fail to see that that chapter must be fairly susceptible of an interpretation widely different from the one involved in the traditional theory. For myself, I must believe that Christ

stated the purpose of His own coming correctly, and that the purpose for which He came will yet be accomplished.

If this study furnishes rational ground for belief that the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew does not necessarily teach the doctrine of endless punishment, and is fairly susceptible of a different and milder interpretation, then the purpose I have had in view is accomplished.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING, THE RESURRECTION AND FINAL JUDGMENT IN THE PROBLEM.

The Second Coming of Christ, the Resurrection from the Dead, and the Final Judgment, are among the foremost doctrines of the New Testament. Our Lord frequently referred to each of them, and, in the Epistles they are a theme of perpetual interest.

The three doctrines are so interblended as to be parts of a common whole. They could not, except to a very limited extent be studied separately; and the same general principles of interpretation and of reasoning relate to them all. For this reason the three are grouped under one heading. Obviously it is impossible, in a single chapter, to study these great subjects in their entirety. I must, therefore, fence off the field for inquiry and admit only such parts as relate more directly to a solution of the problem of Human Destiny.

The first matter that claims attention then, is a statement of these doctrines, as they have been held from the first by the churches, and have been written in Historic Creeds for many hundreds of years. The common belief on these subjects, as it was conceived by the Jewish Church, and has since been accepted by the Christian Church, is miraculously wonderful; so much so that its full statement should be its own disproof.

It assumes that Christ's Second Advent, and all that accompanied and followed it, is to be taken in the most literal and catastrophic sense. It affirms that Christ, at His second coming, will appear suddenly and in great glory in the clouds of heaven, accompanied by hosts of angels; that the Archangel of God will be there, and will blow a great trumpet whose sound shall reach and startle heaven, hell and earth; that then, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all who are in their graves shall come forth (assuming apparently that the spirits of the dead are yet in their graves); the sea also is to give up its dead. All these are to reappear in the very bodies they had while living on earth. All the good who once lived here and have died and gone to Paradise (whatever place that is) hearing the trumpet call, will at once leave their happy abode, come back to the earth, find their former bodies essentially as they left them, and re-entering these bodies they will hasten to stand at Christ's right hand beside the great white throne, resting possibly on the Mount of Olives. Among those who thus come from Paradise, will be all the children of all the ages who died in infancy, and all the weak-minded who ever lived; these, returning to earth will find the very bodies they had left here perhaps thousands of years before, and thus clothed upon, they too will stand to be judged.

And all the souls in Hades, translated in our Scriptures hell, will come from their dungeons back to the earth where they once lived, and where they too will find and re-enter their old bodies, and will then be arranged at Christ's left hand. In the meantime all who shall be alive on the earth when the Archangel's great trumpet sounds, and the spectacular wonder begins, will not die, but will be caught up in the air, good and bad alike,

bodies and spirits together, and will be assigned to their respective places on the right or left hand of the Judge where they are soon to be tried.

While all this is going on, the whole globe will be wrapt in awful flame of conflagration; the earth shall melt with fervent heat and all shall be burned up. In the midst of this fearful drama, the judgment scene will be opened. The millions of millions of the human race will be there assembled (as many think in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, a little valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, capable of holding perhaps one hundred thousand people). Thus gathered together each individual of the race, good and bad alike, in turn, will be called before the bar of God, there to stand and give strict account of all the deeds done in the body; even to every idle word,—thousands of years before; but nothing will be asked of what each may have done in the long intermediate experience between death and judgment. This period, a thousand times longer than earthly life, is left a blank as if the spirits of men had remained in unconscious sleep through that vast length of time.

How long this judgment scene is to continue, who the witnesses are to be, and whether or not there will be advocates on either side, or on both sides, is unknown. But when, at length the great assize is ended, judgment is pronounced, the Judge, in the most formal, solemn manner will acquit the righteous (but on what grounds they will be pronounced righteous is left to inference) and send them back into a higher glory than was that from which they came. As for the unrighteous, they will be sentenced to eternal misery, and sent, not back into Hades whence they came, but into a place of outer darkness, or, into a lake of fire and burning brimstone, where,

it is said, the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched, and where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth forever. And this is the second death.

With slight variations, such for example as the thousand years of millennium necessitates, this has been substantially the creed of the Church, Jewish and Christian, for about two thousand years. If the correctness of this statement is doubted, I ask the doubter to read the historic creeds of the Church from near the beginning of the Christian Era and since, as they have been collected in Dr. Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*, and other similar works. I have space for two or three quotations, as fair specimens of them all.

The following is from the Creed of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America: "Finally, we believe, according to the word of God when the time appointed by the Lord (which is unknown to all creatures) is come and the number of the elect is complete, that our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven corporeally and visibly, as He ascended, with great glory and majesty, to declare Himself Judge of the quick and the dead, burning this old world with fire and flame to cleanse it. And then all men will personally appear before this great Judge, both men and women and children, that have been from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, being summoned by the voice of the Archangel and by the sound of the trumpet of God. For all the dead shall be raised out of the earth, and their souls joined and united with their proper bodies in which they formerly lived. As for those who shall then be living, they shall not die as the others, but be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and from corruptible become incorruptible. Then, the books (that is to say, the consciences) shall be opened and the dead

judged according to what they have done in the world whether it be good or evil."

The following is from the Westminster Confession of Faith:

"At the last day, such as shall be found alive, shall not die, but be changed, and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever."

Of the Last Judgment, it says:—

"In that day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but, likewise, all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds and to receive according as they have done in the body, whether good or evil."

Then follows the pronouncing of judgment, as in all the Creeds, the righteous entering into eternal life and the wicked being cast into eternal misery.

These are average quotations upon the subjects treated, and do they not justify and defend the general view I have given of the current doctrine of the Churches on Christ's Second Coming, the Resurrection and the Final Judgment, except that I did not bring the fallen angels into the gathering hosts?

I now come, in the second place, to outline another view of these doctrines which stands over against the preceding view, and which many earnest, thoughtful Christian people are coming to adopt as both rational and in accord with the spirit of the New Testament Scriptures.

This view rejects entirely the scenic and catastrophic theory, and finds for these doctrines a spiritual meaning and manifestation only. I will explain. The Second

Coming of Christ is seen to be a great and glorious reality on which the saving of the world turns; but it is a silent, unseen, spiritual coming into the hearts of men, moulding them into the divine image and inspiring them with the divine life. It makes no visible display. All the spectacular imagery of Scripture made so much of in the other theory is only, as we have seen elsewhere, to arrest attention, and is but scaffolding to be of use for a time in rearing the spiritual temple, and then to be thrown aside as useless lumber, so that the temple itself may stand forth unencumbered, a "thing of beauty and a joy forever."

According to this view, Christ began to come a second time as He promised to do, in "that generation." On the day of Pentecost, at which time, in the scenic language of prophecy, "the sun was darkened and the moon turned to blood,"—the second coming of Christ began to take place. He was then and there present with His people in a fuller and deeper sense than He had ever been, even while dwelling with them in human form. That was "the great and notable day of the Lord," as the Prophet Joel well called it. It was the morning of the long Gospel day of Christ's second coming. And He has been coming to the world, and into all hearts open to receive Him from that day to this; and He will come more and more, until the whole earth is filled with His glory, a glory infinitely greater than any spectacular display in the clouds of heaven could bring to Him, and infinitely more blessed and helpful to mankind.

It is objected that this view does not conform to the Biblical statement. The answer is, that it agrees with the spirit if not with the letter of that statement. And, besides, Christ's first coming did not agree with the

scenic descriptions of that coming as given in the Old Testament. The Jews expected some glorified, wonderful, kingly personage to appear who should work miracles in their behalf, and make them the greatest nation on earth; and, because Christ did not meet that expectation they hated, rejected and murdered Him. Christ's second coming was likely to be as different from the popular expectation of the Christian world and especially of the converted Jews, as was His first coming to the Jewish nation. In both cases, His coming was infinitely better than what they looked for would have been. "The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life." The day of Christ's second coming, then, is the day when the old Mosaic Dispensation passed away, and the new Gospel Dispensation was ushered in. On the morning of that long and glorious day Christ's second advent began to appear, and He will continue coming more and more, "conquering and to conquer" till all the world, with rejoicings and hallelujas, will fall at His feet and worship Him as Lord of lords and King of kings. This is the glory that the spectacular representation emblemizes, and how different from yet how much above the emblem is the reality.

If now, we turn to the closely related doctrine of the Resurrection, the same method of exposition should be applied. The Resurrection from the dead, like Christ's second coming, is a continuous event or series of events, that takes place at the close of every individual life, each spirit rising, apart by itself, and not all at once. The contention is that the spirit in the physical body is itself a spiritual body; and that what we call death is the spirit of man, in its spirit form, withdrawing from the body; and what we call the resurrection from the dead is that same spirit rising out of the death of the body into a

higher form of life, which is yet the same life continued, but now independent of the body. This view accords with Paul's words: "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." It is not the physical body then that is raised but the spirit. When men did not distinguish between body and spirit, then of course the body was the man, and this is what it was expected would be raised from the dead. The raising from the dead, then, is continuous as Christ's second coming is continuous. There is nothing spectacular about it, except in a figurative or symbolic sense.

Practically, according to the new theory, what is called the Judgment follows the same general law. The call to Judgment, like the Resurrection is continuous, and not to all the race instantaneous and catastrophic. Christ's Judgment Day like His second coming and His resurrecting power, extends throughout His mediatorial reign. Under the general government of God, and, especially, under Christ's reign, men are all being judged; that is, they are being tried, tested, approved or condemned every day they live. The same Judgment Day goes on after death as before, and will, as Paul has shown in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians, until the time arrives when all things are subdued unto Christ, then will He lay down His mediatorial reign, that God may be All in All. Till then the door of hope is open, and the day of judgment continues. All spectacular representations, to repeat, are but scaffolding or scenery used for the impressive setting forth of the great fact that all men are to be judged, that is, tested, tried and disposed of according to their characters. This is partly realized in this life; and in the life after death it will become perfectly manifest, because then all men will be

seen, known and treated according to what they are, and not according to what they seem and claim to be. On this principle awards are conditioned upon character, and men will be judged, rewarded or punished according to their deserts.

We have now before us the two systems of belief, and methods of interpretation as regards the three great doctrines of Christ's Second Coming, the Resurrection from the Dead, and the Judgment. They stand side by side. I have dwelt at length upon the two systems because I believed that a full statement of them would, of itself, go far towards deciding their respective merits. I cannot quote venerable creeds in support of the second view; but, it would be easy to give the names of many scholarly men, holding high places in the Christian Church, who adopt substantially this second system of interpretation on these questions, and hold it to be both reasonable and in full accord with the meaning and spirit of the Holy Scriptures.

And now, in the third place, we come to a study of the two systems with a view to the discovery of their relative merits. They must be examined in the light of facts, reason and Scripture. The two systems stand so evidently over against each other that both cannot be true; nor is there room for any middle or common ground between them. The acceptance of one view means a rejection of the other; and yet, the real significance as to bottom facts is not so great as, at first glance would appear. The verities in both are the same. Only the time, place and surroundings of their accomplishment are changed.

I adopt substantially the second view, and for reasons that will now in brief, be stated:

1. To my mind the very wording of the two views as

just given, leads me to reject the first, and so to accept the other. One is self-evidently wrong, the other is self-evidently right. Very often the statement of a position drawn out fairly and at such length that it can be clearly seen, is its own argument for or against; and we have here an example. Suppose that some person should come to me with a narrative so remarkable, extravagant and marvelous as to be entirely unlike anything that had ever been known to take place; a narrative that stands against all probability, science and reason;—what ought I to think and say concerning it? No answer is needed as the question answers itself. Such a case corresponds to that of the first of the theories under consideration.

2. Then again, look at this first named theory as it stands related to the ordinary and uniform operations of nature. The normal operations of nature are not spectacular nor catastrophic, but quiet, silent, uniform and without observation. Mark the movements of the planetary system, the coming and going of the seasons, the alternations of day and night, and the vegetable and animal growths over all the earth. How hidden and almost silent and uniform are all the movements of nature. God's laws are uniform and unostentatious in their operations; and this is no less true of the moral and spiritual world than it is of the physical. The world, the whole universe is a unit. Now, here comes in a theory that utterly denies such harmony and unity; it introduces a series of such miraculous wonders as were never known or heard of in the operations of nature, and which implies the reversal of the laws and operations of nature; and all this where no apparent necessity exists, since all that is vital or valuable in the first theory is fully secured in the second, and this by perfectly simple and natural opera-

tions, and with no apparently needless scenic and spectacular display. One theory is in perfect harmony with all the laws of God as we see them everywhere in operation; the other sets aside the order of nature and of Providence, and substitutes instead, a series of stupendous marvels. Who can hesitate as to which of these theories is probably true?

3. Why then, it is asked, if this be so, was the miraculous theory ever originated and made a doctrine of the Church through so many centuries? When once established and accepted a single words explains how it was continued. The word Tradition accounts for it. But how and when did the catastrophic theory originate? It was evidently of Jewish origin. As we have seen, in part, elsewhere, the Jews in Christ's day, with only the small sect of Saducees dissenting, not only believed in the resurrection of the body,—as Mary expressed it when talking with Christ about Lazarus, "in the last day,"—but their views of the resurrection were sensuous and coarse. They expected the literal body, clothes and all, to rise, and that man's appetites and passions would be revived, and that all this would be brought about in the most dramatic and miraculous manner. This common view, as was seen in the last chapter, influenced the early Church in such a way as to modify modes of thinking and speaking upon all eschatological questions. Christ's simple statement of facts was naturally, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps intentionally, made to harmonize with Jewish theories that embodied those views. In the early centuries the Jewish theory, almost in its coarseness, and according to the literal interpretation was accepted even by the most learned and pious of the Christian

fathers. I quote a sentence or two from Augustine to illustrate. He says:

“Every body, however dispersed here, shall be restored perfect in the resurrection. Every body shall be complete in quantity and quality. As many hairs as have been shaved off, or nails cut, shall not return in such enormous quantities to deform their original places, but neither shall they perish; they shall return into the body into that substance from which they grew.”

Such theories never came from Christ; they were of Jewish origin, as was the whole system of catastrophic phenomena, in which the three after-world doctrines now under consideration, were so entangled as to lose, in large part, their spiritual meaning. The second view of these doctrines rejects the catastrophic and Jewish scaffolding, restores the spiritual conception and, as well, the spiritual conception of Christ's Kingdom, and should therefore be accepted in place of the traditional theory.

4. We come now to the Holy Scriptures. What have they to say upon this great subject? First of all, then, what do we mean, or, rather, what should we mean by the term Holy Scriptures, or the Word of God? The book itself, which is only paper and binding, is not what we should mean. Nor are the words and sentences which are printed with ink, a thing of man's device, what we ought to mean. Words are at best only clumsy symbols of thought, as Bushnell has shown in his essay on the Use of Words. The words in the Bible might have been greatly changed from what they are, and yet the real Bible might have remained unchanged. The glowing figures of speech and symbolic representations of truth, are not the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible is the living truth, the truth of life, which the book, its words,

its figures of speech, its predictions and its emblems partly hold and try to express. Inspiration has reference to the truth itself and not to the form of expressing it, or rather of trying to express it. Spiritual truth can never be fully expressed in words spoken or written. In this world God's Spirit must be superadded. In the Spirit world words are useless; for there, heart reads heart directly without the media of words.

The words, figures, metaphors and symbols of the Bible are almost wholly of human invention. God gives the fact, the truth, and man expresses it as best he can. Writings for children, or for uncultivated people, must appeal largely to the imagination or they will not be understood or awaken lasting interest. This explains why Ezekiel and other of the prophets wrote as they did, and why Christ spoke in parables; and sometimes on dark subjects, as in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, pictorially. It explains also Peter's words in the second epistle, where he says of the heavens that "they shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth, also, and the works therein shall be burned up." All this is a striking, almost a startling figure to express the thought that God's spirit will move upon the hearts of men, and that the earth is to be purified as by fire.

Prophetic language like this is not intended to be taken literally, as was shown in the chapter on Christ's words on future punishment in the problem. On the day of Pentecost, the sun was not darkened, and the moon was not turned into blood as the prophet Joel said it would be. Take another case to show that picturesque prophecies were never fulfilled according to the letter. The thirteenth chapter of Isaiah contains a prediction of the

fall of Babylon in these words: "The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." Babylon fell as predicted, and it was a great fall, but none of those signs took place literally or were expected to. Again, it was prophesied that before Christ should come the prophet Elijah should re-appear; and the Jews rejected Christ because that prophecy had not been fulfilled; but Jesus said that the coming of John in the wilderness was its fulfillment. None of these great prophetic sayings are to be taken literally. They embody deep ideal truths, but the clothing of those truths in language is strictly a human invention, and is sure to be more or less influenced by preconceived notions on the subjects treated. I repeat again, that the Holy Scripture consists of the real meaning, the truth as God sees it, and not always in the literal form of words as men use them.

It is once more objected that, although figurative language is not to be interpreted literally, yet, it must represent a meaning corresponding with, and equal to, the figurative language employed. For example, if literal fire is not meant in Christ's words in Matthew twenty-fifth, or in the prophecy of Peter above quoted, then something equally fearful is meant. If so then why was not that different but equally fearful thing called by its own name? And, besides, that theory of interpretation, in the sense intended, is not true. On the day of Pentecost and in the fall of Babylon, nothing took place at all corresponding to the darkening of the sun and moon and the turning of these luminaries into blood. And there is no good reason to suppose that Christ's words in Matthew, or the prophecy of Peter, or any

others of like character will have any closer fulfillment than had those just referred to, or than those had which predicted Christ's first coming, by which the Jews being literalists were deceived. Doubtless predictions of Christ's second coming will prove an equal surprise to all literal interpreters, when they come to understand its true fulfillment, which will come along the line of the second system of interpretation.

On the other side I ought to be able, if the second theory is the true one, to present some positive Scripture evidence in its support. Well, here in part it is. Christ said to Mary, in the eleventh chapter of John: "I am the resurrection and the life." It is not that He would sometime be, but that He was then the resurrection and life. When Mary interposed the current Jewish objection: "I know it will be so, in the last day," He went on to add: "He that believeth in me though He were dead, yet shall He live,—live in the present tense,—and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," that is, die in the sense she used the word. Christ here puts the physical death and the resurrection side by side, and so upholds the second theory. Again, Christ said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." We have here a statement of continuous resurrection, now and hereafter, which is the point in question. Again Christ said: "He that heareth my word and believeth on me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." There is no waiting for a far off resurrection and future judgment here. No one, I believe, would dispute these interpretations if he had not some opposite theory to maintain which required

that these plain, literal, unfigurative passages should give out a different meaning.

Christ's argument with the Pharisees, in which He declares Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to be then alive, and adds that, "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living," proves that the resurrection had begun before His day, and was going on continually. Christ's own resurrection immediately after death, as Paul reasons in the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians, is a sure proof that men shall rise even as He rose from the dead. Besides, it is said that when Christ arose from the dead that others arose also, and were seen by the apostles. Then Peter describes how Christ, after the crucifixion, went into Hades and preached the Gospel to antediluvians who were then living, and within the reach of Divine mercy. All those texts that speak of the new life, of the eternal life, of life in Christ, more than suggest that the resurrection and the judgment are not far off but near at hand. The disciples of that day in part so understood it, and Christ encouraged that understanding.

My general conclusion then is, that Christ's second coming, "that great and notable day of the Lord," inaugurated at Pentecost was then near at hand, as Christ Himself said it was, and that this coming is continuous throughout the Christian Dispensation. Also that the Resurrection from the Dead is not a sudden, spectacular event at the end of the world,—except as the world to men ends at death,—but, that it begins where earthly life ends, and is continuous so long as physical death continues. As for rewards and punishments consequent on judgment, that subject has been partly considered and will be more fully unfolded in the following chapter on the Law of Natural Consequences in the problem.

The bearing of all this upon the problem of Final Destiny is evident. Escatological views and conclusions are greatly changed. This life is a training school for the continuous life beyond. Character is everything. God's judgment upon every soul is ever going on in this life, and will extend into the life beyond, and continue as long as Christ's mediatorial reign endures; and the hope is awakened, though no positive assurance is given, that the whole human race may yet attain, some to the highest conceivable blessedness, and all to such a moral condition as will make existence, not an infinite curse, but, on the whole, a positive good.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LAW OF NATURAL CONSEQUENCES
IN THE PROBLEM.

There are not many greater questions before the world to-day than this: Why and how do penalty and pain, under the operations of Divine government, always follow transgression? That such is the order of nature is assumed and conceded; but why and how. A clear answer to this question would do much to clarify many others, and especially that of Final Destiny. The difficulties and errors into which men fall in studying this question arise from mistaken conceptions of the nature and operations of what is called Divine Government as related to human governments; and also as to the double nature of what is called penalty or punishment.

We take our ideas of the Divine government largely from what we know of human governments. The assumption is that the two are essentially alike, except that one is infinitely greater than the other. Very much as man bears the natural image of God, and so is like Him in that respect,—as far as the finite can be like the infinite,—so human governments bear the image of the Divine government, and the two are then alike, except that one is finite and the other infinite.

On this ground men reason from one government to the other, and assume that what is proper and necessary in human governments must be the same in the govern-

ment of God. Those doctrines of the Creeds which are supposed to be founded on governmental principles, take shape largely from this sort of comparison. The governmental theories of the doctrine of the Atonement, of the doctrine of Forgiveness, of the doctrine of Judgment, and of the doctrine of Endless Punishment, all originate in man's conception of necessity, as it is seen and illustrated in human governments.

On the other hand, human governments shape themselves, or try to, after cherished conceptions of the Divine government; and those conceptions are formed from the human point of view as to what God's government is and must be. For example, God is a great King, with absolute authority, and therefore, human governments must have kings with absolute authority. God rules by Divine right, hence earthly kings must do the same. God is a sovereign lawgiver; all legislative, judicial and executive power is vested in Him; therefore it should be in kings of the earth. God rewards and punishes; so, then, should earthly rulers. God protects His kingdom from overthrow; therefore human governments should have armies, navies, courts, prisons, penalties and capital punishments. All this enginery is borrowed from what men conceive to exist in the government of God; and much of this conception is a reflex from the necessities of human government.

Thus men reason both ways. First, from human governments up to the government of God, giving to the divine administration such form as they think it ought to possess; and then, in turn, they reason back again from their conceptions of what the government of God is, or should be, to what human governments may, of divine right be; thus justifying human rulers in trying

to make themselves in their dominions what God is in His.

I hold this whole course of reasoning and acting to be radically wrong; and this, mainly, on the ground that human governments and Divine government, so far as it is government, in the true sense of that term, are not alike, cannot be alike, but are and must be so radically different that men cannot, to any considerable extent reason safely from one to the other. We have only to glance at the facts in the two cases to see that this statement must be correct.

The fundamental point of difference arises out of the infiniteness of God and the finiteness of man. Kings and rulers over human governments are weak, ignorant, erring, sinful, dependent; they are creatures of a day just like other men. They cannot get to the throne or into power except as other men put them there; and when in power, they cannot protect themselves, much less make and administer laws except as their subjects uphold them. The divine right of kings is an absurdity. No king ever held his throne or crown one hour longer than the people, and the agents appointed to protect his reign, stood by him, as the world's history abundantly illustrates. Hence, human rulers and governments must have armies, navies, prisons and penalties as the condition of their existence. All this is the exact opposite of the conditions of God's government and of its perpetuity. If every moral being in the universe should rise against God, they would not have the weight of a feather towards effecting His overthrow. They would simply, as many have done, crush themselves and not God, who is independent, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, just, honorable and good; and who needs no protection because He

is never in danger; needs no counsel because He knows all things; needs no armies for there is nothing for them to do; and no corporal punishment because it is unnecessary.

Another radical difference between human and Divine governments relates to the nature and methods of penalty under the two systems. In the government of God law is self-protective; under God it inflicts its own penalty just as cause produces effect, so that no violator of Divine law ever did or can escape. Penalty under human governments is wholly different both as to its nature and method. Human laws have no power of self-protection; they never inflict their own penalties, and would be worthless, except as advice, were not executives appointed, and other provisions made for the arrest, trial and punishment of transgressors; and, at best, while many escape punishment, some through mistake or intentionally are punished unjustly.

Then, the kinds of punishment under the two systems of government are so dissimilar that we ought to have, as we have not, two different words to express the two kinds of punishment. Penalty for one and punishment for the other might express the two meanings that are so wholly different. But dictionaries do not provide for this. Indeed, men have so interblended the two governments and their operations as not to see or feel the need of different words to express ideas so fundamentally different.

This brings me to say that the central fact in the universe of God is the principle or law of Causality. Every event has a cause, and the cause and event exactly correspond; and they include consequences that naturally follow, either at once or in due course of time. This

order of sequence is everywhere observable and may be attested by thousands of illustrations. The falling of a meteor, the revolution of a planet, the change of the seasons and the whole course of nature are the results of adequate causes lying back of them; and they, in turn, become causes of other events, and so the chain of causality reaches on from the greater to the less, *ad infinitum*. Let any person violate one of the principles or laws of nature in the physical world and he will soon discover that law, or the principle of order is able and sure to vindicate itself. If the hand comes into contact with fire it burns; if one takes deadly poison he dies; if one falls he is injured; and these results follow their causes equally whether the violation was intended or is accidental. In moral law the same general principle applies. If men do right they have the rewards of virtue; if they do wrong the penalty of vice falls upon them. These results may not follow at once, but they are as sure to come sooner or later as the stars are to hold their courses in the heavens.

The great conclusion therefore at which we arrive is this: That the government of God, when we get down to bottom facts, is just the Law of Natural Consequences. In other words nature and her laws are endowed by the Creator with the power of self-protection and preservation. The natural operation of physical and moral law secures this apart from any outside interference except upholding power. If nature can protect herself, and accomplish her Creator's designs in virtue of her own inherent potencies, and if she does this always and everywhere with unfailing certainty and with unchecked onward progress; then surely nothing more is needed. Outside interference would hinder and not help

the mighty movement of God's perfectly organized Creation. In this view, the terms government of God, and order of nature, are nearly, if not quite interchangeable terms. God's government has nothing of human machinery in it. It is simply God, working through nature, or nature's laws, and not otherwise, for the carrying out of His infinitely wise and benevolent purposes for which the universe exists.

So far as physical nature and the laws that regulate and control matter are concerned, it is now conceded that nature is her own vindicator, that she needs no other, and that she is perfectly just, while yet she knows nothing of favoritism or of forgiveness. When physical law is violated penalty follows, in which case law is cause and penalty effect; and there is no escape from this principle of causality. Physical law knows no forgiveness, and it takes no account of moral character in the strict sense of those terms. It blesses all who observe and curses all who violate its principles. When men learn from experience and wisdom, not to violate nature's laws they have their reward; but that does not save them from the natural consequences of former violations. Restoration to obedience and its rewards, learned from reflection and experience, is the only mercy to be found in the operations of nature or natural law which constitutes the physical government of God. Nature is kindly and begins to heal when violation ceases. Up to this point as regards natural law, I suppose that most thoughtful people are in substantial agreement.

Here the question arises: How far do the same facts and principles apply to what is called the moral government of God? As physical government is the regulation and control of matter by fixed laws, so moral govern-

ment is the regulation and control of moral beings and actions by established moral laws. The term physical law and moral law and the distinction between them, is real and not imaginary. Different existences are to be operated upon differently. Moral beings are more than things; they are living creatures created in God's image and made capable of knowing, loving and serving God, and of enjoying Him forever. They are endowed with reason, conscience and free-will; they distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong; they are consciously accountable and under obligation to God and man. Obviously then, they, as moral beings, must be under a system of law very different from that which applies to inanimate matter, or to irresponsible living animals. Moral beings must be governed by moral law which corresponds to the nature that God has given them. It must be the law of right, of duty, and of honor, of love.

Is the moral government of God the moral law of God, as His physical government is His physical law? Is the same principle of causality involved in both? Does moral law vindicate itself by inherent and natural rewards and penalties in the same way that physical law does, so that there is in the moral world no more need of outside interference, or of outside governmental machinery for special penalty, than there is in the physical world?

Just here a wide difference of opinion seems to prevail. A class of progressive thinkers find a law of analogy running through every department of God's universe. Modern science claims that, if we can find what nature's laws are, and especially how they operate in any one sphere however limited, we may feel sure that we have the type of all law and operation as God has established it throughout His kingdom. Unity of design

is found everywhere. God does not depart from a uniform method in the physical or in the moral world. In both, the method is the same; therefore law and government are one in the moral as in the physical world.

The traditional or commonly accepted view of Divine moral government rejects the idea that law carries within itself its own support and defence, and expresses therefore the real conception of God's government. That government, it insists, means more than the law of natural consequences; it means also superadded rewards for the righteous, and positive punishment beyond that of natural penalty for the wicked. A distinction is here implied,—and it is fundamental, call it by what name one will,—between penalty and punishment; penalty should mean natural consequences, and punishment superadded positive infliction. Is there any punishment superadded to natural penalty in the moral government of God more than there is in His physical government?

This is a great question that enters weightily into the problem of Final Destiny. It is almost the decisive question. If the traditional theory of positive infliction, over and beyond that of natural and necessary consequences is to be accepted as true, then the problem of Destiny is, or may be, settled in one way; but, if the incoming theory that moral law, equally with physical is self-executive, and has no other penalty but that of natural sequence, then the problem is likely to be settled in another way. Undoubtedly the great proportion of the Christian world, past and present, holds to the former view, and is prepared to support it with time honored and plausible argument. But it is to be definitely noted that all these arguments are based upon, and presuppose, the groundless assumption that Divine and human governments

are essentially alike; or, so far alike that it is safe and proper to reason from one to the other, and to assert that, since human enactments cannot execute themselves, but have to be enforced by physical punishment outside of natural consequences, that the moral law of God is subject to the same or similar conditions. But we have already seen that the assumption, or major premise in the argument, is not true. The two governments are fundamentally unlike. Besides, it is now generally conceded, as we have seen, that physical law, as God Himself has arranged it, defends and executes itself, and this in such a way as to call for no outside interference, or for any penalty or punishment which it does not itself inflict. If this is true of the physical laws of God, why, I ask again, may it not be true of His moral law? If we find no intrinsic reason against such a conclusion which makes it impossible, or at least very improbable, then, on the ground of analogy and probability, it should be accepted.

And, besides, if God in His moral government has for transgressors two kinds of consequences, one of penalty and another superadded of punishment, then how, in such a case, is this further infliction of punishment after penalty to be executed? Is God, after the law has had its course and penalty, to become His own direct Executioner, to inflict, with His own hand, what His law had failed to do? Or will God appoint agents to execute this further punishment? In any case, just how is this incomprehensible thing to be performed? On what ground can it be justified? Such questions serve to expose the absurdity of two sets of punishment, and to establish the conclusion that the law of Natural Conse-

quences, and that only, prevails in the moral, as it does in the physical government of God.

To this conclusion four objections are raised :

First, it is said that the theory of natural sequence is opposed to all the historic Creeds of the Church, and to the traditional belief of the Christian world. It may be so in part ; but creeds made hundreds of years ago, and founded so far as this question is concerned on the mistaken hypothesis that human and Divine governments are essentially alike, are not infallible. At best creeds, all of them, are things of human device ; and many of them contain dogmas that only blind traditionalism can accept. As for the general beliefs of Christendom that are shaped by a few leading minds in past centuries, it is sufficient, perhaps, to set over against these the scientific conclusions of the present day, and the opinions of many scholarly and Christian men who, after careful search for truth find themselves obliged to substitute the newer theory of natural consequences for the old one of additional positive punishment. Then, is it not almost unthinkable that God should have two sets of punishment for the same offence ; one of natural consequences, and then something else added to that afterward ? This would be punishment superadded to penalty ; something never done in human governments ; and it is unreasonable and almost inexpressible except by circuitous phrases.

2. But, I suppose that a greater objection to the view of natural consequences is that it does not seem to accord with Scripture teaching. I concede that it does not fully conform to the letter of the Word, as we sometimes have it, but it does to the spirit of the Word, which is far more than the letter. The letter of the Word, as was

shown in another connection is human, while its spirit or real vital meaning is Divine. The real teaching of the Bible is, that virtue shall be rewarded and vice or sin shall be punished; but it goes into no philosophical or didactic statement as to how these results are to be reached, whether by the outworking of law itself, or by some corporal punishment outside of the natural consequences of violating law. Figurative language is sometimes employed to express the blessedness of the righteous and the misery of the wicked; but these figures are at least quite as consistent with the doctrine of natural consequences,—if the doctrine is accepted as it is being presented,—as it is with the other theory of superadded punishment from the direct hand of God. No one, at this day, takes the figures used to describe the future life of the righteous or of the wicked in a literal sense. God's Spirit gave as the truth to inspired men, that obedience to law would be rewarded, and disobedience would be punished, and then, as we have seen, left the wording of the thought to the writers themselves. On this theory,—and, so far as I can see on no other,—can the inspiration of the Scriptures in any true sense of that term be rationally maintained.

The writers of the Bible then have expressed the doctrine of reward and punishment in their own language, and in terms familiar to the people whom they address, and according to their own understandings. In those days all men appear to have accepted without questioning the idea that Divine and human governments were essentially alike; and they spoke and wrote accordingly. In that view they were mistaken. The mistake did not neutralize the spirit of their message, but it vitiated the form of it. The real spirit of the Word on the whole subject,

is found in such passages as these: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "The sting of death is sin, but the strength of sin is the law; sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death." "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." All the promises made to the righteous and all the threatenings against the wicked embody the spirit of the doctrine of reward and punishment. But none of the texts quoted, nor the hundreds more like them explain or try to explain the exact method by which such results are to be reached, any more than the passages that speak of God as Creator attempt to explain the method of His creation. Questions of science and of philosophy are not matter of Biblical revelation, but are left for thoughtful and observing people, one by one, to decide as successive stages of development make necessary and possible. On the subject of the mode of rendering reward and punishment, all I should claim is that the Bible leaves that matter where it found it, unsettled. Scientific thinking rejects the traditional view and accepts that of natural consequences as being in accord with reason, fact and Scripture.

3. Probably the strongest objection to this view of natural consequences is in the alleged fact that natural rewards and penalties are not great enough to meet the demands of justice. What man is wise enough to say such a thing intelligently? We know a little of what physical law can do and does do for people in this life who observe it, and what it can and does do for those who disregard it. One class is healthy, prosperous and happy, while the other is in the midst of suffering, privation and death. But moral law is higher than physical; it guards more sacred interests and the results of obedience or the opposite are more marked and enduring.

The blessings of Gospel peace and life come to one class, and the darkness and death of sin to the other. "Great peace have they that keep Thy law. The name of the wicked shall rot." They shall go into darkness where there is gnashing of teeth and where the worm dieth not. All that the Old Testament denounced against sin and sinners, all the terrible figures of the New Testament, are not too fearful to describe the character and condition of one who deliberately and continuously arrays himself against the holy law of God. That law is just as valuable as are the interests which it protects; and the penalty which it inflicts on wilful violators, as the natural consequence of wrongdoing, is hell itself. It is often all this in the present world. Think how sin has corrupted and ruined nations, communities, families and individuals; and how it has turned, and is now turning large portions of this beautiful world into a charnal house of misery and death, all brought about as a natural result of violating God's laws, physical and moral. Then consider what the world, nations, communities, and individuals might and would be if all God's laws were known, loved and obeyed! It would be heaven on earth. There are some who even now enjoy this blessedness, "because they have respect unto the law of God." The whole 119th Psalm illustrates what God's law can do for those who keep it, and also what it will do, in the way of penalty, for those who trample it under their feet. God is back of all law whose natural penalty is God's testimony against sin.

Let us glance for a moment into the life after death and observe what the law of God, as the consequence of well or of ill-doing, has for the souls of men in their spiritual bodies. There as here, moral law is in full force, but environment is greatly changed. At death the spirit-

ual body, which was the real man, not only quits its physical tenement, but it leaves all earthly and physical things behind. Only the spirit itself and character remain. Kings and peasants stand alike after death before God. The rich and the poor then meet together. Outward earthly conditions are nothing.

In that state spirits mingle with spirits, and they know one another even as they are known. Language, considered as vocalization is not needed; for spirits read as by intuition, or spiritual vision, the thoughts and moral states of all with whom they mingle. There is no hiding of one's self under false pretenses there as men do here. All self-deception, hypocrisy and vain pretense are stripped off, and every one sees himself and is seen of others, as he is seen of God.

In these circumstances companionship is not, as it often is here, an unnatural and forced union, but is according to real likeness and moral affinity. Those who knew each other here and were closely associated may meet there; but whether they shall remain together, or soon separate, will depend on mental and spiritual characteristics. The good will choose the good, and that type of goodness which adheres in themselves, for their companions. The wicked will do the same. Character is the great gulf between heaven and hell that cannot be passed over.

In that world, as in this, the principle of causality holds sway. Sin and misery, holiness and happiness, stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect. In that world where there are no shams or hiding places, the natural consequence of selfishness on the one hand and of benevolence on the other, are seen and felt as they are not here. The righteous are inconceivably blessed,

and the wicked, continuing so, are cursed, self cursed beyond the power of words to express. The garment of self-righteousness is stripped off. Conscience like an electric wire is alive and becomes a source of torture. Reason, memory and reflection upon what was, and might have been, is the undying worm. What awful disappointment often comes to human souls by the law of natural consequences when they enter the spiritual world and begin to see things as they are, and not as they imagined them to be!

And yet may not character change from good to bad and from bad to good, and so condition change as character changes in the world of spirits, much as it does in the world of sense? Of one thing we may be sure; that if character should ever change, then condition must change also. And I am unable to conceive of moral beings placed in such environment as to make choice, good or bad, naturally impossible. This we do know from the sacred Word, that angels, somewhere in the past, kept not their first estate, but fell into sin, became rebels against God, and so became devils, and fell under the curse of God's self-executive law. If angels may fall, I see no good reason why spirits that go to the unseen world unprepared may not repent of their wickedness, turn to the Lord and trust in His proffered mercy through Jesus Christ. If, as I have tried to show in the chapter on the Intermediate State, the offers of the Gospel are co-extensive with Christ's mediatorial reign, this must be so, and, on this ground there is hope, but not certainty for the final restitution of the whole human race.

This much, however, must be conceded, that if those who go in their sins into the future world, do not truly repent and turn from selfishness unto God and seek His

favor and blessing, there is nothing before them but spiritual death, which is the opposite of spiritual life. As for everlasting misery in such cases, if indeed, such cases are to exist, I should hope that sin and separateness from God, might in time, either induce repentance or so wear out the mind, destroy memory, conscience and consciousness, that the soul might, at last, as a fearful alternative, fall back into a state of practical non-existence.

But, should any or all who leave this world unreconciled to God, subsequently, by repentance and faith, avail themselves of the offers of Divine grace, and come back into harmony with God's moral law and be blessed, let no one think for a moment that because they are saved, nothing has been lost, eternally lost. Every sin here or there weakens character, weakens the whole mind, and produces evil effects from which there is no full recovery. Multitudes of saved souls are by no means now, and never will be what they might and would have been had they always lived according to the law and will of God. And so, if they should go into the spirit world filled with selfishness and sin, and should in time repent and turn to God and be saved, they would yet be spiritually crippled through all eternity. They could never recover what sin had taken from them. At least the scars, caused by sin, would remain forever.

This view of eternal loss, consequent upon transgression, is clearly and fearfully presented by Professor Huxley in his Lay sermons. Time wasted never returns; opportunities lost are lost forever; God Himself could not bring them back. The loss that sin produces is eternal loss of being and of well-being. The natural consequences of wrong-doing are so fearful and irreparable as to put a new and terrible meaning into the Biblical de-

scriptions of future punishment. Those who make sin a trifle know not the law of God nor the nature of sin. They trifle with eternal consequences.

I can only add that God, in Jesus Christ, is love ; that His heart is on the side of all moral beings that He has ever made, wherever they may be, and that He will do them all the good they are willing to receive at His hand. Yet, He will never set aside human freedom. All who will can be saved ; and for those who will not, there is no hope, either in this life or in that which is to come.

A fourth objection, which must be reserved for the next chapter, is that the view of natural consequences here advocated appears to deny the doctrine of miracles, or of supernatural intervention.

One final word of hope for those who die in sin. I have represented that in the spirit world the soul's environment will be changed. The old temptations of the flesh are thrown off, and light from God shines with wonderful clearness. As a consequence, the sinner's reason will be enlightened, his conscience will be aroused, and, for a time, the soul may sink into almost despair, and its misery will be fearful. But this very state of mind is a ground, not of discouragement but of hope. It is the soul's conviction of sin, its repentance, and its effort to return to God ; and is, therefore, not the penalty of hell, so much as it is the entrance through God's appointed doorway into heaven. It is not anguish of soul in the spirit world, but indifference there, as here, that is most to be feared.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL
IN THE PROBLEM.

In the preceding chapter on The Law of Natural Consequences as illustrated in government, human and Divine, the generally accepted supernatural or miraculous element in human history, and in Scripture representation, was designedly omitted; not because it was unimportant or out of place there, but because it was entitled to more of prominence and space than could be given it in that connection.

We have seen in a general way that natural laws, physical and moral, are uniform in their operations, and are self-executive, each system by Divine order inflicting its own penalty and bestowing its own reward; so that together, they constitute what is called the Government of God.

The question now to be studied is: Are there supernatural or miraculous exceptions to this rule of uniformity? If so, and if they are of frequent occurrence, then they are of great historic and practical value to the religious world, and must prove an important factor in the problem of Human Destiny.

Obviously the first step to be taken is that of definition. We often hear people representing that the world everywhere is now full of miracles; that the transformations of springtime, that the turning of a soul from sin to God,

that physical life and death, and that the whole cause of spiritual progress on earth—are all of them miraculous. Persons who talk in this loose way have no clear idea of what a real miracle must be, and so cannot be reasoned with on that subject.

What is a miracle?

The words supernatural and miraculous are synonymous terms, signifying something that is above natural law, something that sets aside the operations of natural law, and substitutes instead the direct and causative interference of God; and such an interference as is regulated by no law known or unknown to man. If any law whatever is involved in a sense that implies direct or secondary cause, then, that event whatever it be is natural and not supernatural. Nothing can be a miracle which does not completely set aside or suspend the operation of natural law.

Many things are very wonderful and inexplicable that are no more supernatural than is the rainbow or an autumn forest. Nothing is to be pronounced a miracle because, for the present, it cannot be explained on natural grounds. It must be of such a character as to be necessarily produced by the direct and immediate hand of God, and by means of no law or order of sequence whatever. Such an event, could it be proven to be such, would be a miracle; but the proof is necessary to an intelligent declaration. I do not deny the fact of miracles; they are certainly possible with God. Indeed, they are often supported by strong probability; but probability is not proof, and conclusive evidence must be had to convince any thoughtful person that natural law, or its operation, has been set aside by the miraculous hand of God. I cannot accept the argument of Hume against,

not so much the fact of miracles, as against the possibility of proving them to be such, even if they do take place. His point is, that a miracle is so very improbable that any amount of evidence that the miracle did take place is more likely to be mistaken than that the miracle was genuine. There is weight in the argument, but it is not conclusive, except to the extent that the clearest and strongest evidence possible must be had to establish the fact that a real miracle has actually occurred; and this, because the antecedent probability is against miracles. Science knows and can know nothing of them.

Having thus defined the supernatural, and indicated the nature of the proof demanded, and the difficulty of obtaining it, I come now to say that, in early times no such distinction between the natural and the supernatural as has here been given was recognized, or probably even thought of. Things to the people of those days were what they seemed to be; and with some it is so now. The age of true scientific research had not yet dawned upon the world. That began to appear with the coming in of the Renaissance, at which time the world began to awake from the sleep of many centuries, and to inquire earnestly into the ways and works and truths of God. Before that all things remained as they were, and one generation accepted the ideas of the preceding one without the trouble of asking questions. A miracle was a miracle. The natural, as clearly distinguished from the supernatural, was an undreamt dream. Men believed in miracles as easily, and without question, as they believed in any series of natural events. They believed that they happened, that was all. If a miracle were declared to have taken place, no matter where or how or what it was, there was no one to question the statement, and so

it passed current; and, if it were very wonderful,—the more so the better,—it went into history. There are parts of the world to-day where essentially the same state of things exists.

Now, it was both natural and sure, that among such people as I have described, and there were but few exceptions, declared miracles would be superabundant. And, indeed, they were; but, in those days they were not called miracles, much less supernatural events. They were simply wonders, that men delighted to see and talk about but not to question or explain.

Read the ancient classics, Greek and Roman, and observe how continuously, and with apparent thoughtlessness great writers, like Homer, for example, will string one supernatural event after another, ascribing them to their mythologic gods or heroes, never questioning the truth of their own reports, or doubting for a moment that they would be accepted without question by a credulous people, and become to them an inspiration to great endeavor. In the lowest depths of paganism as it has been in the most of Asia, and is now in Africa, supernaturalism abounds.

It cannot be denied that the sacred Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, following the prevailing ideas of all the world, contain, among other narratives of supernatural things that have the look of strong probability, some marvelous statements of miraculous import that credulity itself can hardly accept on the sort of testimony that stands back of them. I instance the case of the "Three Worthies," as they are called, who are reported in the book of Daniel to have been thrown into a great fiery furnace heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated; and that these men were seen walking

about in that awful flame of melting heat for, we know not how long, and that they then came out of this furnace without injury, and without even the smell of fire on their garments. This statement rests entirely on the book of Daniel, which, it is now claimed, was written hundreds of years later than it purports to be, and which is evidently more a book of history, written in symbols than it is of prophecy. For one, I should want better evidence than this, before I could accept the recorded wonder as more than emblematic, figurative, pictorial or parabolical representation of what the miracle is said to be. And I should have to reason about the story of Jonah; that of the sun standing still in the heavens at the command of Joshua; the distinct verbal articulation of Baalam's ass; the swimming of a solid piece of iron on the water, and possibly some others in much the same way. The writers spoke after the manner, and according to the common belief of their own day. Their words were human, but there was a divine truth underneath the words which the imagery was meant to emphasize, and which should not be lost even if the imagery be not according to literal facts.

The reported miracles of Christ come under an entirely different rule of interpretation. Christ was wholly exceptional and unique. Whether His mighty works, which took place as represented, were actually supernatural or in accord with some occult natural law known as yet only to God, will be considered with other similar cases in a moment. What I have here to say is, that Christ came into the world in fulfillment of clear prophecy as both the Son of God and the Son of Man. He came to be the world's Redeemer, and He came, not as He was generally expected to come, in kingly splendor, but as an

obscure peasant. It was natural and necessary, therefore, in that age, that His personality and authority should be attested by some superhuman, and yet benevolent manifestation of power that should be revealed in the presence of all the people. This was done. No one questioned the facts as reported; and His mighty works, in addition to what He was and said, confirmed both the representations that were made of Him, and His mission as the Saviour of the world. For such reasons one can believe essentially, though not in every detail, that marvelous things did take place as reported. The facts themselves are conceded.

Returning again to miracles of the common sort, that have been reported in such vast numbers, one naturally asks after their origin. Why has the world been so crazy for miracles? Ignorance is one cause. The more ignorant a people are found to be the more eager they are for miracles. Superstition is another cause. Give to people a religion that is based, not on solid facts, but which is full of vague and marvelous things, and let them surrender themselves to its demands, and they will hunger and thirst after wonders to satisfy their superstitious propensities.

Others believe in the supernatural for traditional reasons. The fathers told the great wonders to their children, and to their children's children, and so the stories grew, and a sort of halo surrounded them and made them sacred. This is the great secret of the enduring power of Brahminism and other Oriental religions, in which the adoration of ancestors form so large a part. But Orientalists are not the only people who cling to the supernatural for essentially the same, or similar reasons.

With still another and better class of believers in the

supernatural, the imagination, that creative and highest power of the human soul, is largely responsible. It has been observed that men of great imagination and genius are apt to be superstitious, and to see wonders where common people see nothing. Men, if they can, like to build castles and fill them with ghosts and other marvels. A perverted and diseased imagination is sure to find and parade the supernatural. Children, our American Indians, and all uncultured tribes of men lean towards the miraculous and find what they seek. Among recent writers of wild imagination, the author of "She" stands prominent. Men who are themselves like Rider Haggard, half inspired and half crazed, are able to produce the same effect on others, and so the disease becomes contagious.

Happily, the traditional and morbid belief in the supernatural that once was almost universal, is now being shaken, and is beginning to pass away. The light of modern science has corrected many of the errors, and modified or dissipated many of the opinions of former times. The great underlying truths of all the ages which may have been clothed more or less in garbs of fiction are as abiding as the everlasting hills; but the garments which they may have worn will be exchanged for more becoming ones, better suited to our times. The whole argument from miracles is less valued and insisted upon now than it was formerly.

Many things that once were held to be supernatural are now fully explained on natural principles. And many of the inventions of modern skill and science, those for example in the department of electricity, which seems natural enough to us, would have been supernatural to our fathers of even one hundred years ago. The field for

the miraculous is constantly narrowing, and the time may come when the belief in supernatural events will be exchanged for such scientific explanations as shall bring all, or most of them, into harmony with God's otherwise uniform modes of operation.

This brings me to the question: Is anything in the whole universe of God, when rightly understood, supernatural? Certainly the universe itself and all that belongs to it is natural, was created on natural principles and according to natural methods. Law and order are perfectly natural, and the opposite would be most unnatural. Life, and the way of coming into life and of perpetuating it is natural. Death is no less natural than life; continued life after death for moral beings, is quite as natural as was the life before death in this world. The soul's condition in the great hereafter is determined and fixed by the operations of natural law. All truth is natural; changes of moral character in this world and beyond are all brought about by natural processes. The ordering of Divine Providence is no more nor less than the bringing into operation of those laws which God has established for that purpose. The spirit of God comes into contact with, and enters into the spirits of men as an enlightening, guiding power; but it is all done on natural principles. The new birth of a soul into the Divine life is just as natural as was that of the body into physical life. Indeed, to God, one thing is as natural as another. Nothing happens which, in His sight can be accident, or out of the great system of order. Even sin is not supernatural, for it too, follows the principle of natural causality. Indeed, the very things which men call miracles, could we see them as they are, and as God sees and produces them, would, in all probability, be found to

come about by the operation of some law that we do not yet understand.

If God determines here and there to put forth His hand and do some things outside of the common course of nature, as we see it, it is almost certain that He does it on some natural principle or law that, in given circumstances, would always secure the same result. Such action then is natural and not miraculous, unless the whole universe and all its operations, as some of late claim, are to be regarded as a series of stupendous miracles. But such an idea, besides being improbable, would destroy the very conception of a miracle for which so many are contending. If all this be true, where then, in all the operations of nature, and of Divine movement, is there any place for the really supernatural?

God's presence and power are none the less real and operative in any series of events that may seem to us marvellous or otherwise because they are produced, not apart from, but by the operation of, some principle of order which we call law. Law and order are the agencies or instruments by means of which the creative and evolutionary processes of the universe are carried forward. It is not abstract law that works such infinite results, but God Himself, producing them by means of natural principles or laws that He has established for that purpose. Between this view and that of a certain class of scientists who see only cold law, and recognize no infinite moral Being back of law, and working through law for the carrying out of His benevolent purposes, there can be but little in common. No, the presence of God, and of His all-pervading power, wisdom and love in the movements of the universe is ever to be recognized and made emphatic by Christian teachers. God works through law,

that is to say, through established principles and methods; but it is God, and not law, that we are to revere and worship.

When Christ healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind and raised the dead, it may, for aught we know, all have taken place on some natural principle that applies in such cases, but which no man can yet explain, much less employ.

In our day very remarkable cases of sudden healing are said, on what appears to be good authority, to take place, and frequently under circumstances that seem miraculous; but there is no miracle in them. We shall know more of these occult operations and laws as time and experiments go on. In former days the visitations of spirits to men from the unseen world were regarded as supernatural, but are not so regarded now, and should not be, any more than the visit of one friend to another should be considered supernatural. The fact of such visitations is attested by a great number of reliable witnesses, and there seems to be no mistake about it.

If we glance for a moment at the ways by which some of the so-called miracles may be explained, we may find a cue for the explanation of others, if not for all that are said to have taken place. Observe: I am not denying that the things occurred substantially as they were reported to have done; but this, when admitted, does not prove that they were miracles. Take an illustration from Chemistry. Here is a man who has taken some deadly poison, and he ought, by the operation of natural law, to die. A physician is at hand and gives him promptly an antidote for that poison, and the man does not die. All this is in perfect harmony with natural law. When one law is modified in its action by the intervention of an-

other there is no miracle. In some such way many unexpected and apparently supernatural things may be explained. Take another case from the department of Physics. As regards physical bodies large and small, rest or motion is equally natural; so that if one body is set in motion by the impingement of another, it ought to continue that motion forever, and would but for the coming in of some other law to counteract the law of continued motion. The friction of the atmosphere, or coming into contact with some other body, may bring this moving one, contrary to the first law of motion, into a state of rest. Again, bodies set in motion should move in a straight line. This is the law; but a lineal movement may be changed into a curvilinear one by the attraction of some other body perhaps many millions of miles away. In this case neither law has complete operation; one limits and modifies the other. Our planetary system is a beautiful illustration.

These are only specimens to show that what often appears to be a violation, or setting aside of some law of nature, is not a supernatural result, but is one natural operation modified by another. In some corresponding way, it is more than likely that all, or nearly all, of the so-called supernatural occurrences of the past and present may be explained. The operations of natural law that God has ordained for the orderly government of His universe, explain them.

Even resuscitations from death itself, which sometimes take place, may possibly be explained as the result of natural causes not yet clearly revealed. When a spirit leaves the body, what we call death ensues; but there is no miracle. Death is as natural a thing as life, and we know that human beings are ever passing from one state

to the other. Suppose that some spirit after leaving the body according to natural law should return, as the spirit of Jairus's daughter is said to have done, and reanimate it again; why should its return be necessarily more miraculous than was its departure? It is less common, but that proves nothing.

Many cases are on record where persons to all appearances die, and yet sometimes days afterwards the spirit returns to the body, reanimates it, and life goes on years afterwards. In Munich, Bavaria, and I suppose elsewhere, they have a law that all who die shall be taken to a large central room whose walls are clear glass and there be suitably draped, poised, and for one, two or more days be exposed to public view. This is a place of favorite resort, and at any time one may see three or four, and I have seen eight or ten bodies so exposed at once; each having a hand or foot connected by a small cord to a bell in an adjoining room, where a guard is always on watch for the ringing of a bell that the least motion at the other end of the cord would produce. There have been bell-ringsings, but I cannot say how many or how often.

We have frequent cases of trance,—like the well-known one of Rev. Wm. Tennent, and, I suppose of Paul also, when his spirit went to the third heavens,—where the parties seem to die, but after a time the spirit returns and life goes on as before. In all this there is no miracle. Why may not the resuscitations in Christ's time possibly have been similar cases. Is not this less improbable than that the natural order of the universe should have been set aside? If God guides spirits into the body and then out of it by natural law, why may He not, in the same way, guide them back again?

This line of study, based only on probability, has not

been pursued with any expectation that it is to be the last word on the subject, or that it will satisfy Christian people of strong conservative and traditional tendencies. I am not striving for such a result, but only to present thoughts on these great subjects as the Lord of all life and truth has given me to understand them. Differences of opinion must exist here on earth and throughout eternity; but charity or love among the children of a common Father should never fail.

I know and feel the difficulties with which the view I have taken of the supernatural is beset, and therefore I express myself tentatively and with hesitation. My justification is that the old view is involved in still greater difficulties; and I find myself in a position where I must say nothing, or take the side of the greater probability. The question ought to be studied because of its place and importance in the public mind, and because, from the Christian standpoint, only one side has been fairly presented.

The view here taken of the supernatural is not new, or unfamiliar to some of the great names of the Christian Church. Bishop Butler, a century and a half ago, in the first chapter of his famous "Analogy," says: "There may be beings in the universe whose capacities, and knowledge, and views may be so extensive as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural, i. e., analogous and conformable to God's dealings with other parts of His creation; as natural as the visible course of things appear to us."

This chapter, as its opening sentence indicates, is a continuation of the previous one, on the subject of Natural Law and Government, human and Divine, in the great problem. The course of study there pursued led to

the conclusion that, as moral beings under Divine government, we are in this life, and also in the life beyond, subject to the Divine law of natural consequences. An objection to that view, growing out of alleged supernatural action in the case of miracles had to be met, and was laid over for the present chapter. I have now attempted to show that even so-called miracles may not be exempt from the operation of natural law; that they may be produced, not by God's immediate hand, setting aside natural law and acting apart from all law, which itself would be a miracle, but in accordance with uniform principles which, at present, we do not understand.

If this view is correct, then the objection falls, and the conclusion that all moral beings, in whatever world they are, exist and are disposed of under the law of natural consequences is confirmed and fortified against successful attack. If men are under natural law, physical and moral, then they are liable to change their relations to moral law, and if any do change, as God must always wish and encourage them to do, from bad to good, then the same law that before inflicted penalty will now, to as great an extent as possible, bestow reward. Besides, this view as against the old, vindicates the honor of God by making Him a Legislator over the human race, and not in any true sense their jailer to keep them in prison, not so much by the force of natural law as by the force of might. God is first of all our Father, and the Upholder of law and order in all the universe.

I had thought of bringing the subject of prayer, and the indwelling presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, into a similar course of study. But this now seems needless, as by a parallel line of inquiry, the same conclusion would be reached, namely, that God answers prayer,

and bestows the gracious aid of His Spirit, not apart from, but in accordance with, and through the operation of His own physical, moral and spiritual laws which are established for these, and for other great purposes.

It is not denied that the view here taken reaches into the infinite, and is therefore beset with difficulties ; but the same objection lies against every hypothesis that ever has been or can be adopted to explain the relations of the finite and the infinite, of the natural and the supernatural.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION DEFINITELY STATED.

Having now studied separately the chief factors that enter into the great Problem of Final Destiny, and found that each points toward the rising sun of a glorious future for the human race, it only remains to converge the rays from all sources into a common focus, so as to give illumination and distinctness to the final conclusion. At this point a reader might naturally expect to find a condensed resume of the whole study as contained in the preceding chapters, and of the conclusions they severally involve. But, on reflection, it would seem that in so small a book as this such an abstract, except along one or two lines, might better be almost omitted.

While all the studies have held unfalteringly to the fundamental principles of the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures, and as written in the moral natures of all men,—the revisal of theological statement, where truth and the growing needs of the world demand revisal, have been freely suggested and argued. The studies themselves, considering the greatness of their subjects, have, of necessity, been brief, and, except as to their main purpose, incomplete. But I hope that the views of the writer have been clearly expressed, and this in the spirit of kindness and Christian charity, even where he has been obliged to modify or reject some old-time and cherished theological conclusions. Each subject,—while

studied apart by itself and never losing sight of the problem to be solved,—has left the facts unshackled to voice themselves; and that voice throughout has been in unison; so that the whole investigation has foreshadowed a common conclusion which is now to have a more definite and positive formulation. That general conclusion is, that the creedal and traditional Theory of Final Destiny is not sustained, and that almost the reverse of what it claims must be true.

Here the question not unnaturally arises: Why, then, did not the author at the commencement of his work announce clearly the hypothesis that he meant to establish? To this question two answers are freely given.

First, because to have stated it then would have committed the whole course of study to the support of a postulate, and so to an *ex-parte* line of investigation. But a second and stronger reason was, because, at that time, to speak frankly, no clearly defined harmonizing hypothesis had come satisfactorily into view. The question was an open one, and the study itself was to disclose the answer.

Several points were from the first fully settled; such as these: 1. That love is the sum of God's moral character, and that, therefore, He does and must do for each member of the human family,—all of them His children and He their Father,—everything that infinite wisdom and infinite power controlled by perfect love could do to promote their highest and eternal well being. 2. That God would, therefore, give to every soul born into the world and made immortal, not only a possible chance, but the very best of opportunities to be saved, so that a favorable outcome of existence would, in the end, be far more natural and probable than the opposite alternative. 3. That,

on the commonly accepted system of theological belief no such opportunity for the great majority of mankind is given in this world; and, that, for this and other reasons, the work of God's loving and saving grace must be and would be extended into the intermediate state. 4. That the doctrine of eternal torment, by positive infliction, as taught in the creeds and often preached, could not be literally true.

Points like these were settled from the outset; but, separately or together, they did not give a working hypothesis that solved the problem of Final Destiny; and this was what I was earnestly "feeling after if haply I might find it." I tested various hypotheses, but found no one that served as a key to unlock the whole mystery until the general study was approaching completion. Then, from all quarters, the solution came into view of itself, and with such clearness and fullness as to be more than satisfactory. Up till then I had been thinking and writing for my own enlightenment, with hardly a thought of bringing what was written into public notice.

The hypothesis here referred to is nothing startling or original. It had in substance often been thought over; and had been seen in print; but it had never come to me in such light and from so many quarters as it was now presented. I saw that it satisfied my own needs, that it solved my difficulties, that it presented a view that was honorable to God, just to man, not hostile to Scripture, in accord with reason; that it was a hypothesis which, if adopted, left me standing on middle ground (where I prefer to stand), between the extremes of ultra orthodoxy on the one hand, and of ultra radicalism on the other. While it compelled me to reject the idea of endless conscious misery as a positive infliction, that would

make existence a positive curse, it forbade my full acceptance of the Universalists' conclusion as to the sure and complete salvation and glorification of all men. Especially I could not accept the conclusion of the elder Ballou, that all men, regardless of character here, would be saved at death, and enter at once into glory. Nor could I accept the doctrine of final restitution, that with certainty brings even the worst of mankind finally into a state of purity and eternal blessedness in heaven. All this is possible but not certain. Future awards, whether of pleasure or pain, I saw must flow naturally and necessarily from the moral state, good or bad, of the persons involved.

My hypothesis then for the solution of the problem of Final Destiny is found in God's law of universal order, and in what that law necessitates; in a modified sense of that term, it is the Law of Natural Consequences. To explain, I must glance backward for a moment.

We have seen that human governments and the Divine Government are so entirely different from each other that we cannot reason extensively from one to the other. They have no common analogies. What we call the government of God is natural or God-appointed law, whose operations can never, in any true sense, be set aside. God's laws are so self-executive and self-protective that they cannot be overthrown, or call for any outside support or interference; they are made to administer and protect themselves. Such is the Divine constitution and order of what we call nature, physical and moral.

The laws of the universe, so far as we understand them, fall, as was seen, under two great divisions, namely: physical law which relates to matter, and moral law which relates to moral character, good and bad. If any one

doubts that physical law is self-executive and self-protective, he has but to set himself against it and find out his mistake; for he will suffer and not the law, which is resistless. Ocean waves and the tide of time roll on, and it is not in the power of the finite universe to change this order of physical nature.

What all men know and admit to be true in the whole realm of physical law is found to be just as true in the department of moral law, which is no less uniform, changeless and self-executive than is physical law. Moral law, like physical, has its own rewards for obedience and penalties for disobedience; and these follow in all cases with absolute certainty and necessity. What we call repentance means a turning from the violation of moral law into conformity with it; and by forgiveness, that God trusts us and takes us into the conscious enjoyment of His favor. As physical and moral law differ in their nature so their rewards and penalties differ.

The penalty of violated moral law is moral disorder; it is sin, guilt and spiritual death. The violator is out of harmony with himself, like a discordant instrument; he is out of harmony with his fellow beings, with truth and duty, with the moral universe and with God. In proportion to the extent of such disorder and violation of law man is morally dwarfed and degraded; the intellect is darkened; the will is bewildered, the heart is disordered, and the whole moral man is tending toward brutehood. Nothing can save such an one, not from eternal physical torment, but from eternal spiritual death, except return to a state of obedience to moral law from which he has broken away. Such a return, could it be secured, would save the greatest sinner in the universe. The whole effort of the Gospel of the blessed God to save

lost men, is to bring them into harmony with God's moral and spiritual law. When that is accomplished they are saved.

By this I do not mean that they are restored to what they might have been had they always been conformed to moral law. That is impossible, and, in this sense, sin receives eternal punishment; it is eternal loss. But in all cases a return to the spirit of obedience and duty to God as moral law requires, is to escape from the curse of moral law, so as to enjoy its protection and blessing. In that moral attitude the soul is once more open to the indwelling and guidance of God's Spirit whom sin had shut away.

This view of the moral law of God, and man's relation to it, applies certainly to what we see and know in the present life. And, what I insist upon is, that what applies in this world, applies in all worlds where moral beings exist. Principles are eternal. Moral law as God ordained it blesses or curses accordingly as it is obeyed or disobeyed.

The hypothesis of Natural and Necessary Consequences does not stand by itself alone. While it is brought more distinctly into prominence by the chapters on that subject, yet every study in the series looks in the same direction and sustains the same conclusion. They all combine, by taking away one support after another, to overthrow the Creedal doctrine of endless punishment as a direct Divine infliction, apart from and beyond the operation of natural law; and also to uphold the hypothesis of natural consequences. Indeed, when the other supports are gone, this conclusion only remains and must be accepted. I should have no interest in seeking to overthrow the old view if there were not a better one

at hand to take its place. Every chapter lends its aid directly and indirectly to the hypothesis of Natural Consequences.

The personality, the Tri-Unity and the moral character of God, give assurances that God will do all that infinite wisdom, power and love can do to bring all men into harmony with His righteous law. The double nature of man, and the conflict between his higher and lower natures, make certain the conclusion that man's higher nature will finally prevail. The Bible was inspired of God to lead men out of darkness into marvelous light, and its end will be secured. Immortal life was bestowed on man for his well-being, and not to make him eternally miserable. Sin was permitted for wise ends, and when those ends are secured it must cease to exist. Christ came into the world to save men's lives, not to destroy them; not to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him, might be saved. Christ's atonement reveals God's heart to men, and His purpose to secure their final salvation. Christ's mediatorial reign makes it certain that those who have no fair chance to be saved in this life will have further opportunity in the continued life beyond. The historic creeds, so far as they bear on the question of eternal punishment, must be greatly revised or set aside as untrue. Eternal Hope that "glows immortal in the human breast," is not doomed to utter disappointment. Jesus' words on future punishment—if they have as they should, in view of all the facts, the mildest and not the severest meaning put upon them—do not antagonize His own declaration that He came to give life, and to give it more abundantly. Our Lord's second coming, the resurrection and judgment, rightly viewed,

look towards and not from the conclusion that, in the end, moral harmony is to prevail in the universe.

All these lines of study confirm and illustrate the general conclusion that the law of natural consequences, as God administers it, must determine the problem of Final Destiny by establishing in the end, harmony in the place of discord, in this world and beyond.

We are now prepared to take one look ahead and see what we shall see. The souls of men, on the death of the body, go at once, all of them, good and bad alike, to the place of departed spirits, called in Scripture Sheol, Hades or Paradise. We have there two, if not three classes of moral beings. One class consists of those who, by the aid of gracious influences which they enjoyed and improved in the world, were enabled to live so far in accordance with the claims of God's moral and spiritual system of law and order that their characters are formed into the Divine likeness. These pass almost immediately into the Higher Heavens, where they become associated with congenial redeemed spirits.

Another very large class, embracing doubtless the great proportion of the human race, enter the spirit world bearing mixed characters. They come from all ages and from all lands. Some have had many advantages, and others next to none at all. Some are very good but imperfect, while others are very bad and with but few virtues. Their environment has now almost wholly changed; but their opportunities for being saved, that is to say, for being brought into harmony with the law and spirit of God, are essentially the same there as they were here, except that they are probably much greater. Christ and His Gospel are the same.

Doubtless, many who are almost in the kingdom soon

enter it, and pass on to a higher life. Others who, at death were far from God, and lost,—but not hopelessly,—in sin, become soon awfully sensible of their condition. They see their mistake; conscience is awakened from its dreamy sleep; remorse takes hold of them; they feel their ill-desert and unworthiness; and, for a time, perhaps, they have no hope. This distressed state of soul our orthodox theory claims to be a part of the soul's eternal punishment; while in fact, it is a sure sign of the beginning of repentance or change of mind, that, by the loving kindness of man's Saviour is bringing him back into conformity with God's law of love, which, attained is itself salvation.

Just such experiences we often meet with in this world, where men, from a sense of sin and of their lost condition, are for a time driven almost to despair. John Bunyon, and thousands of others like him are examples. We regard such experiences as exceptionally hopeful, because they show that a sense of sin and the work of repentance are taking deep hold of their hearts and are producing there a radical change. The same experience in the spirit world should have the same interpretation. It is moral law—the sword of the spirit—doing its saving work of leading souls to God.

In consideration of these, and all the facts contained in the preceding chapters, I am prepared to believe confidently that the great proportion, if not all of this class, will ultimately return to God; so that they shall enter, all enter, into such measure of eternal life as the potentialities of their souls shall enable them to enjoy.

There are different measures of soul stature in heaven as there are here. Some are great and some are small. There are also different tastes and adaptabilities; and

there are different spheres or classes in heaven as there are on earth; and each spirit finds its class, its natural companions, and its congenial occupations. The law of perfect love for each other, and for the blessed lord and the eternal Father rules all lives. What, in large part, "was lost on earth is gained in heaven;" and God is over all blessed forever.

It was intimated a little back that possibly three classes of human souls might enter the spirit world. It is certainly possible that some go there, or become after going there, so debauched by trampling on the moral law and love of God, and by giving themselves wholly to sinful indulgences as to become irredeemable, in any true sense of the word redemption. I say it may and probably will be so.

What, then, would be the condition of such souls? Would they be in great anguish and despair? No. Would they be anxious to escape from their condition and go with the blest? No. Would they live on forever? Probably. Would their existence be to them a curse and not a conscious blessing? No. What, then, if such beings exist, would they do and be? I answer, they would still have their reward. What they would desire above all else is animal, sensual, selfish gratification; and this they would be permitted to enjoy. Such low spirits would group together in some dark corner of the universe and find such enjoyment as they might and could obtain. Their punishment would, as Augustine and other of the early Fathers held (as already quoted), consist, not so much in conscious misery, as in loss of being and of high enjoyment. And yet, what they have they want, and would exchange for nothing higher out of their own line of selfish loves. Will not such an existence at last wear

out and cease to be? Possibly. Does God hate such souls? Is He angry at them? Are they objects of His wrath? No. God is love. He pities them, and would do them infinite good if they would let Him, but they will not. Their existence cannot be called an unmitigated curse, for they enjoy it. But it is eternal penalty because of eternal separation from God and from spiritual good, and so is eternal loss, all the result of violated moral law, which itself is alienation from God and spiritual death.

To human view there are people living in the world to-day, thousands of them, who seem to belong to this class of almost hopeless ones. I have not now in mind the poor, ignorant, miserable people who live in pagan or semi-pagan darkness, and who have had almost no light or opportunity to be saved. For such there is hope. Their day of privilege and opportunity will yet come; and, as they have never been hardened against Gospel truth, when it comes to them in the other life, they may see and gladly follow it.

There are those in so-called Christian lands who have deliberately separated themselves from all that is good in this world, from God and all that represents Him on earth. They live wholly unto themselves. They have given themselves over to work iniquity. They are dead in trespasses and sins. They will lie, cheat, steal, rob and murder if they have a chance. The only thing they fear is human law. When such people die is there any hope for them in the other life? That depends. If there is yet any seed-principle of reform left in them, any conscience, any desire in their hearts for a better life, then there is something to appeal to, and this gives hope. There are very few so utterly hardened that nothing good remains. Prison convicts are often open and yield-

ing to loving Christian sympathy and appeal. Why should it not be so in the other world, where temptations are less, and good influences are so much greater?

Some of this class, possibly not a few, may never be saved. All men are free moral agents, otherwise they could have no moral character; and God always respects human freedom. If they are not saved their condition in the spirit world will be relatively what it is here. The two worlds are not so very unlike as many suppose. Here bad people flock together, and talk over and rejoice in, their own evil ways. It will be so in the other world, where every such spirit has its reward. Wickedness gives a sort of pleasure. It is not to hardened souls all positive misery. It does not make existence an infinite curse. What all but themselves would consider hell is their delight.

But, after all, I do cherish some hope that the time will come in the great future when every moral being who shall then consciously exist, will accept and carry out in life, as he sees it, the law of love, which is the central principle of God's moral universe. But I hope tremblingly.

Further detail might be interesting but it is needless, and would do harm should it divert attention from the main question to side issues. If the hypothesis of Natural Consequences, under the operation of God-appointed and self-executive moral law, recognizes and upholds the main conclusion of this and of the preceding chapters; and, especially, if it furnishes a rational substitute for the discarded doctrine of eternal punishment as consisting in positive infliction after the manner of human governments; if it illustrates how the principles of the Gospel of Christ, and its redemptive work, extend

after death into the world of departed spirits, reaching and saving millions who were unprepared at death for the Kingdom of Heaven; if it supports and defends the honor, justice and love of God in His treatment of mankind; if it gives a broad ground of hope for a struggling and disheartened race; if it inspires Christian workers with confidence and courage in their efforts to uplift and save a sinful and needy world;—if it does all this, as, to my mind it does and must, then, does it not bring into distinct view, and make rationally probable, a glorious solution of the great problem of Final Destiny, which was the proposed endeavor of these chapters.

How does the conclusion and prospective consummation to which we have now arrived, if accepted, exalt the Creator, and vindicate His wisdom, power and goodness in the creation of the universe, and especially of the human race! How perfectly it satisfies reason, and responds to the Divinely created instincts and moral intuitions of human beings, inspiring them, if anything can, with reverence, confidence, love and life; and awakening in them an earnest purpose to live ever in the spirit which God Himself illustrates, and into which, as the Scriptures teach, He is drawing, and will yet draw, by cords of love, His wayward, wandering children back to Himself. Such a view of Final Destiny is itself an inspiration; and it should awaken every soul to a life of gratitude, of consecration, of hopeful, self-denying endeavor, and to earnest prayer and co-operation with God for the uplifting and saving of mankind.

It is not claimed that this great solution of the problem of Final Destiny is reached on the basis of actual demonstration. The nature of the subject forbids this. Absolute certainty on most questions of the understanding and

judgment can only be reached through experience. But strong probability, which amounts to moral certainty, is a sufficient, and often the only basis for rational belief and corresponding action; and this, as I confidently claim, the preceding studies have established. Let the words of Robert Browning, with which he closes his poem on "Apparent Failure," be also my conclusion :

"It's wiser being good than bad;
It's safer being meek than fierce,
It's fitter being sane than mad.
My hope is the sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That, after last, returns the first,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once prove accurst."

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