

1848

An Offering on Religion, Addressed to the Church Universal

John J. Austin

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/quakerbooks>



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Austin, John J., "An Offering on Religion, Addressed to the Church Universal" (1848). *Historical Quaker Books*. Book 24.
<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/quakerbooks/24>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Pennington ePress at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Quaker Books by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

Presented to
Mother Knapp.
By
The Author.

AN OFFERING
ON
RELIGION,
ADDRESSED TO
THE
CHURCH UNIVERSAL.

~~~~~  
BY JOHN J. AUSTIN.  
~~~~~


UTICA:
A. WALKER, 30 GENESEE STREET.
1848.

Entered according to act of Congress in the year
1848, by

JOHN JENKINS AUSTIN,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the U.
S., for the Northern District of New York.

Printed by
W. B. BRITT, 30 Genesee Street, Utica.

PREFACE.



Believing that pure Christianity is in the ascendent, and that liberal Christians are rejoicing in the fact as the harbinger of a better day, the author of this little book would, while mingling his hope with theirs, call to serious thought and duty. That much has been done, *pennâ et vocë*, to make the world wiser and better, is granted; that much yet remains to be done, may not be denied. Amid the multitude of larger works, performing their present mission, this 'Offering' is now made to the Christian public, in the hope it will not be altogether unacceptable. It has to do with the *religious*, rather than the theological element. It would present religion as a *definite* reality. It would speak to the *heart* through the in-

telleet. It would hold up as the rallying point of Christianity the great truth,—‘Prepare me for *life*, and I am prepared for death, and the future.’ As a *thing for life*, then, it is sent forth, dedicated to the service of God, and the good of man.

The style is doubtless imperfect; the sentiment is believed to be sound. The dove-critic is welcomed to his task; the vulture-critic is most heartily despised.

And now, invoking the richest of Heaven’s blessings upon all proper means of extending His religion among men, this little volume is sent forth upon its errand of Love.

Newark, N. Y., 1848.

J. J. A.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
Preface,	3
'Our Father,'	7
The Origin and Nature of True Religion,	8
'Which art in heaven,'	25
'Hallowed be thy name,'	26
Religion Proven by Good Works,	27
'Thy Kingdom Come,'	47
'Thy Will be done,'	48
Truth Conducive to Religious Faith,	49
'In Earth as in Heaven,'	58
'Give us this day our Daily Bread,'	54
What Christ's Kingdom is Not and what it Is,	60
'And forgive us our Debts,'	84
'As we forgive our Debtors,'	85
True and False Religious Profession,	86
'And lead us not into temptation,'	107
'But deliver us from evil,'	108
Christ the Example of the Religious Reformer,	109
'For thine is the Kingdom,'	130
'And the Power,'	131
Religious Meditation and Worship,	132
'And the Glory,'	154
'Forever,'	155
Religion the only true source of Consolation,	156
'Amen,'	180

OUR FATHER.

Eternal Essence! God of boundless Love!

Who wert, who art, and ever wilt endure,
The same as when commissioned from above

Thy spirit came, all radiantly pure,
To warm the bosoms of the sons of men,
And turn their thoughts to reverence of Thee!
'Our Father,' we adore thy holy name,
And trust thy truth, whose might shall make
us free!


Grant that, ere long this love-fraught phrase may
be

The light, the love, the watch-word of mankind!
Turning the hearts of millions unto thee,

Who now in darkness wander, fully blind!
Oh, may each bosom, kindled from above,
Behold in thine a 'Father's' gracious love!

The Origin and Nature of True Religion.

‘Every one that loveth, is born of God.’—
1 John iv: 7.



The **EXISTENCE** of God, no professed Christian can doubt, is the broad, the sure, the only basis of true religion. The Atheist, and the Polytheist, may protest against the reality of God's being; but our argument is, now, with fellow believers in the one infinite Divinity; and we can not turn aside to settle a thesis with the former. We feel safe in starting, then, upon the ground, that the existence of one infinite personal Being is the only source of true religion.

The **CHARACTER** of God, rightly understood, may help us to come at a safe conclusion, relative to the nature of His religion. We have two sources of information, upon this point, and

only two. Those sources are Nature and Revelation. The voice of Nature, may be considered the voice of God through His works. The voice of revelation, is the voice of God through direct interposition. We may look upon revelation as our surest guide, or upon nature, depending upon which we believe the most readily understood, or the most explicit in its teachings. Or we may look upon them as sister revelations; running parallel, though not at all points equally visible; confirming each other; to be interpreted with reference to each other; and teaching the same great truth. If we look upon the page of revelation, we see written there, in legible and prominent and flaming characters—‘God is Love.’ If we turn to nature, with an eye to the great design of creation, the spiritual sense discerns written there, in the same fadeless characters—‘God is Love.’ So, guided by the voice of either alone, or of both combined,—and no Theist will deny this authority *in toto*,—we come at the safe conclu-

sion, that God's character is Love.— And that Love may be defined, not to the intellect but to the heart, as the same in kind with, but infinitely higher and purer than the highest and purest human conception of, goodness, holiness or love.

Here I wish to distinguish between the essence or elemental nature of God, and the character of that essence or nature. It is presumed that no Theist can doubt, that God could have existed as an infinite Individuality, without having clothed himself with the character of Love: In that case, although existing an infinite Identity, yet being without a character of goodness or evil, we could expect no character in His nature and revelation—except it should be a character indifferent alike to goodness and evil. But if God could have been, without possessing a character of Love—or even with—we deem it perfectly sound to say, that He might have existed clothed with a character of Hate. In that case, the blackest gloom would have covered, as a pall, the now lovely

faces of nature and revelation. Why God should choose, when without a character of goodness or evil, and therefore indifferent to both, one of Love, is a point lying still further back; and one which, except because of the influence of His character upon the then future creation, we deem wholly incomprehensible to man. But that He chose the character of Love, while in the act of self-creation, the volumes of nature and revelation do abundantly prove. So much we have thought proper to say, with reference to the inherent nature of Deity, as distinguished from His character of Love.

Proceeding upon the ground that God does exist; and that Love is the character He owns; we now venture the assertion, that Wisdom and Power are the knowing and doing ATTRIBUTES of God, but subject to the impulsive direction of His character, Love. Love may not be able to see the distinction between right and wrong, goodness and evil; but it can feel it; and we believe it safe to say,

that the distinction between the good and the bad, which can not be felt, does not really exist. Wisdom, abstractly considered, has no moral quality whatever; but it may perhaps be regarded as the Eye of the infinite Soul; viewing at a glance all the particles of the Universe, material and spiritual, separated and combined before and after the creation; and having, as its peculiar work, the planning, and final perfection, of a magnificent scheme, which shall meet the approbation of Love, as the character of God. If God's character were Hate, Wisdom would have been obliged to devise by the dictation of a totally different master. And what does that prove, but that God's character is the basis of all His works and ways? If Wisdom may be regarded as the eye of the infinite One; Power may be viewed as His Arm. In itself considered, Power has no moral quality whatever; but if under the directive impulse, first of Love, then of Hate, it would work to directly opposite ends. This also shows that

character, in God, was the great determining, directing, ruling motive. If we suppose that God were destitute of character, good or bad, but possessed of Wisdom and Power; then we can but see, that the result of their action could have been neither good nor evil. And the conclusion to which we come necessarily is, that the infinite Wisdom and Power of God act in accordance with the impulse of His infinite character, Love.

One remark, here, touching the INFINITY of God. By infinity, we mean the utmost possible fulness of a quality, coupled with endless endurance. Infinite Love, as the character of God, signifies all Love, which may never end. Infinite Wisdom and Power, signify all of these qualities, with a never ending continuance. Infinity, therefore, can not be said to be a quality or attribute of God, but merely the limit, for fullness and duration, of God's being. Hence is it wrong to expect, that we comprehend infinity; for we only comprehend the fact, that there is

something beyond our comprehension. But to return.

If the Wisdom and the Power of God act from the motive furnished by the character of God, Love; then Love must be the great FOUNDATION, upon which the whole Universe, material and spiritual, rests. This view regards infinite Wisdom and Power as the instruments, by which the will of infinite Love is performed. It places Love, as the motive, back of the efforts and accomplishments of Wisdom and Power. If it be correct, we feel bound to reason, inductively, from Love alone, as the character of God, His great motive in creation, to Love alone, as the necessary result, the pervading spirit of the creation which is. The theologian of nature, therefore, although perceiving consummate Wisdom and Power all through the works of God, yet regards Love, as the basis or cause of those works, and Love, as the design wrought out through them. The theologian of revelation, also, if obedient to the premise 'God is Love,' must regard

Wisdom and Power as the agents for the accomplishment of the will, necessarily inherent in Love, while he looks upon Love itself as the deepest basis of all true revelation from God. Here, though the first follow one revelation, and the last the other, yet both reason from the same cause to the same result. The last may see farther in the heart of man, and into the future, than the first; and of consequence, he may derive a greater enjoyment from his theology. But both evidently start from the same point, Love, and travel in the same direction, as far as they go together, beholding and enjoying the evidences of Love, below, above, around and within them. And when the last leaves the first, and proceeds alone, he affords practical proof, that the light of nature, aided by revelation, is better than the light of nature alone; and that he has the greater confidence that the course, upon which they together entered, commences and terminates in Love.

If our premises, reasonings and con-

clusions, be correct hitherto, the result, bearing upon the nature of TRUE RELIGION, seems plain and unavoidable. If Love be the basis of God's character, Love must be the basis of the character of His religion; for it is not supposable, that He would be possessed of one character, and His religion of another. If Love shoot its life through all the works and ways of God, Love must permeate the true religion, offspring of God, and man's best friend on earth. And if Love be the end, at which the purpose of Deity aimed in the beginning, then Love, and nothing but Love, must be the grand attainment of the religion of God. But will that Love be devoid of knowledge! Nay, but the knowledge of all truth, will tend to increase the sum of Love. Truth is of nothing worth, except it add to the wealth of the moral Universe. As, in the beginning, truth served as hand-maid to Love, in the work of creation; so, in the intermediate and final, truth is but the servant of Love, in the basis, tendency and result, of true religion.

From what has now been said, it plainly appears, that any instrument or AGENT which God might select, for the purpose of sending His religion down to earth, would naturally base his mission, his religion, upon Love.— If this be so, although Christ's claim to the Messiahship, as the especially sent, the beloved Son of God, may be demonstrated by the exercise of miraculous Wisdom and Power, yet must the religion he leaves with man be Love-based, Love-fraught and Love-ending. Do we find this test in the religion of the New Testament? Most emphatically, we do. It is seen in a multitude of instances, only two of which now, they being of sufficient authority, need be mentioned. The beloved disciple John, reasoning from the character of God to the true religion for man, says: 'Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that LOVETH, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us,

because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.' This passage most clearly shows, that the true religion originated in the Love of God; is of the nature of Love; and was transmitted through the mission of Christ to the world. But Christ's own authority must be considered supreme, by him who looks far back of Christ for the divine origin of his authority. Christ says,—'By this shall all men know that ye are MY DISCIPLES, if ye have love one to another.' These references, being conclusive, are sufficient upon the point, that Christ's religion, having been based upon, permeated, and crowned with Love, is the true religion.

If our argument has been properly based, and properly carried forward thus far, it can but be seen, that the sole ELEMENT of true religion is Love. It shows; that Love was the motive, and the object, of God, in sending it into the world. It shows, that Love lies back of the action of Wisdom and Power, and may be con-

sidered the master of both. It shows, that truth is valueless in religion, except it tend to the production of the 'fruits' of Love. It shows, that Christ's religion has its centre, element, and circumference, in Love. In short, it exhibits, to my mind, the fact, that any semi-intellectual, semi-moral, definition of religion, has no real and substantial basis, in the character of God,—wherein only the true religion can be based,—but that, being once adopted, the correct logician must draw from it conclusions, widely at variance with the absolutely true.

Such are the grounds of my belief, that the true religion is a UNIT, expressed under the term, Love. If it be true,—if in accordance with fact in the moral Universe,—then, although a theory, it is the only true theory of religion. Theory should not be condemned, if only based upon fact.—Theory is not religion, surely; nor a part of religion; but if thought were, theory would be.

It will of course be perceived, that the practical ground we occupy is:—A

man may be a true RELIGIONIST, in a degree, be his thoughts or opinions whatever they may; but no man can be a true religionist, in any sense, whose life does not exhibit the 'fruits' of Love. I use the term 'religionist,' instead of 'Christian,' because of the manifest impropriety of claiming the Christian name, while denying that Christ—from whom the name cometh—was a perfect representative of the true religion. You may believe in Love, as the true religion; so may I: you may manifest your belief by your 'works,' which is the only criterion of real belief; so may I: you may think Christ a perfect exemplification of the true religion, Love; I may not. Now, the only point of difference between us is, not of the heart, but of the intellect; and it is involved in the question,—whether Christ was, or was not, a perfect pattern of goodness, holiness, Love. This point does not touch the religion of our lives; we are both true religionists; but it touches our opinion of the verity of Christ's religion. I

may look, through Christ, to God; you may look to God directly. Thus may we differ in opinion about Christ's religion, and be ourselves true religionists notwithstanding. This shows, that while I may with propriety call myself a Christian, you may not properly take the appellation to yourself; while I may see in you the spirit of Christ, and therefore may call you a Christian, you may not call yourself one; while I call Love pure Christianity, and true religion, you withhold the former term, and apply the latter. The difference between us is only in thought,—which is the element of theory, and in the more extensive sense, of theology,—while our religion, the motive element, is essentially the same; and this difference touches not the ground element of religion, Love, within our own souls. This truth should be brought out clearly before the eye of the world. If I call Christianity the true religion, I feel bound to call the true Christian a true religionist, and the true religionist a true Christian.—

The name of a thing, ought not to blind me to its real nature. The avowed Deist or Atheist, Jew, Mahomedan or Pagan, or the errorist claiming the Christian name, who has in his soul the element of Love, has what I would call the spirit of true religion, and the spirit of Christ. He really does honor to Christianity in his life, though he may not acknowledge the name. He abides the only test of the true religionist, the true Christian,—‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’ He may not have the degree of Love that he would, were his perception of truth clearer and stronger; he may not have the degree of happiness he would, were his amount of Love greater; but as the religious life, the Christian life, admits of gradation,—some stronger, some weaker,—so whoever manifests in his life the genuine element of Love, is a true religionist, a true Christian, in the degree of his Love. Such is our only conclusion, speaking of religion itself, instead of its several outward names.

The question of Christ’s possessing

supernatural Wisdom and Power, is not one which touches the nature of the religion he brought to man. Christ exerted that Wisdom and Power, for the purpose of attesting the divinity of his mission, which set forth Love as the element of true religion. After such attestation, the intrinsic worth of that religion itself was to commend it to the world. We are not required to receive, within our own souls, Christ's supernatural wisdom and energy; for we can not; but, as true religionists, as true Christians, we are required to receive, not by assent merely, but by a hearty, life-glowing practice, his religion of Love. The faith or confidence of religion is not grasped by thought, nor by forms of speech. 'Faith without works is dead.' While we look upon Christ as the especial agent of God, possessing the credentials of supernatural Wisdom and Power; we also regard him as a perfect illustration, in the life, of the religion of Love.

The great practical INFERENCE,

derivable from this view of religion, is:—Let the intellect do its perfect work, in the search after truth; but call not that truth, religion. Truth may help to increase the sum of Love, of religion, in the soul; but it is not Love or religion itself. He who calls Christianity the true religion, but denies the loving disposition the Christian name, proves his own faith defective thereby; albeit, the Atheist, or Deist, or whoever thinks Christ not a true religionist, may manifest inconsistency in claiming that name for himself. Religion in the soul, broad, deep, and ever-during, allows in men the broadest latitude of opinion. She demands no union, but
THE UNION IN LOVE.

WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

Thou God, the Father, and the Friend of man!

Thy dwelling is a spiritual dome,
Not visible to outward sense, nor can

The 'flesh' nor 'blood' e'er find within a home!
Thy residence is found within the life

That nature lives, untrammelled by the wrong
Which jars the universe, nor is it rife

With errors that have cursed the world so long.
Thy temple is where happiness is found;

Thy presence where the true and good are seen;
Thy blessing is the basis deep, profound,

Upon which 'heaven' is built—has ever been!
Oh, may we all unto that 'heaven' attain,
Then were earth's crosses, and even death, our
gain.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

Unto thee, Father, would we lowly bow,
Filled with a reverence devoid of fear—
That fear with torment fraught! and even now,
While thousands dread thy vengeful arm, we
hear,
Seraphic voices tuned to praise and song!
Forever hallowed be thy name, oh, God!
And may each darkened soul awake ere long,
Freed from the scourgings of thy righteous rod.
Oh, may the sinful learn to lisp thy name!
May each most humbly bow before thy throne!
May the freed bosom, fired with holiest flame,
Be blessed with raptures it has never known!
And above all, thy hallowed name be praised,
Till every soul shall be to thee upraised!

Religion Proven by Good Works.

‘As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.’ James ii : 26.



There can be no doubt, in the mind of the contemplative Christian, that the Gospel knows no separation between Faith and Works, but regards the last as a necessary sequence of the first,—as the fruit groweth upon the tree, or the stream floweth from the fountain. Neither can any one deny, that works are upheld in the Scriptures as the test, by which we may know whether a man have faith or not. St. James’ Epistle, from which we have taken our present text, presents this matter in a clear, a luminous, a strong light. He says—‘Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

For if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deeds.' This passage clearly teaches the lesson, that the man is practicing self-deception, who supposes he has religion, while at the same time he neglects or refuses to work the works of religion; or it teaches, that according to the vanity of the man, who looks at his shadow in the glass, and goes away and forgets but to return and look again, so is the vanity of him, who looks after and grasps at the shadow of religion, the outside profession, without even striving after its practical substance, its good works. Again he says — 'If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's

religion is vain.' Here we are taught, that the mere seeming is not sufficient, but if our religion be not vanity, deceiving our own heart, we must and will speak the words of truth and soberness. Again he says, that we must not hold our faith with respect of persons; that we must not welcome the man with the gold ring and gay clothing, and say unto him—'Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.' Such conduct, evidently, would be to grasp at the pride of religious profession, while we suffer the humble reality to escape our hold. Again—'If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the Scriptures, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.' Here again is the idea, that the Christian has a work to perform, a law to fulfil, a brotherhood to love, after the broadest pattern of equality and impartiality; and while the Christian will do the work, that

work proves the Christian. Again—
‘So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty;’ which proves, that our judgment shall be according to our works. Again—
‘What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.’ Again—‘Wilt thou know ‘O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?’ Again—‘Ye see then how

that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.' Again—'Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.' Again—'Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' And again, in the language of our text—'As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.' There is no possibility of mistaking the import of passages like these. They bring out with an incontrovertable clearness the great truth, that faith is a thing, not merely of the intellect, but of the heart; not of idea, but of feeling; not of truth itself, but of the confidence which truth produceth; and that, while we view faith as the cause of works, we must regard works as the proof of faith.

From what has now been said, it will be seen, that our present topic is:—
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

FAITH AND WORKS, AND THE BEARING EACH HAS UPON THE OTHER.

‘As the body without the spirit is dead.’ It would not require a great effort of the imagination, to conceive of a ‘body without the spirit.’ Such a conception would be very natural indeed. It would be based upon reality. The sight is before us almost every day of our life. When the spirit is gone, we do not behold the man, the image of God, the living proof of immortality, but only the outward material casement going to decay. It is a wonder, at first view, how we can gaze upon the dead body, and infer therefrom the fact of another existence. Materialists, skeptics, infidels, have always reasoned thus. But they reason falsely thus. We do not ask you to look upon the dead body, and from that look believe in a life to come. We ask you to look upon body and soul together, upon the living man, upon the speaking eye, and moving tongue, and thinking brain, and working arm—we

ask you to look at the living only, as proof of another life. The spirit, the soul, is that proof. The dead proves only death. The living proves life—that was, that is, and that is to be.—‘The body without the spirit is dead.’ Its life is gone. It is fit only to become food for worms, or to furnish strength for the soil.

‘So faith without works is dead also.’ The body, when the soul is gone, is a fit representative of faith, when viewed disconnected with works. The body, in fact, soon ceases to be a body; there is no life or power to keep it in being; so faith, if it produce not works, soon loses its caste, and is faith no longer. The text, then, should be understood thus:—As the body, without the spirit, is a human body no longer; so faith, without works, is faith no longer,—it is a misnomer, a thing of the imagination only.

Now, if faith without works be dead; we have no right to consider it possible, that faith can exist without producing works. It matters not what the seem-

ing may be; nor how ardent soever may be the profession of faith; if it be not attended by good works, whatever else it may be called, it is not faith. There is an indissoluble connection, existing between Christian faith and Christian works. Wherever you find the one, you will certainly find the other. The last is proof of the first; and the first is cause to the last. They can never be separated. If faith should die out, works would die also. If you mistake fear for faith, you need not look for the works which faith produceth, but for the fruits of fear. Neither do faith's works come, at profession's hollow call. Faith is the one cause, which only bringeth forth good works.

If, then, faith and works can not be separated; wherever we see good works, we may know that faith is not far away. Works may be regarded as a stream, flowing from a hidden fountain; the fountain may not be viewed indeed; but if you could follow up the stream, you would surely find the fountain at its source. Faith is a nonde-

script—a thing which may not be viewed, nor handled; but it is none the less a reality for that. It is a thing which may be felt, not by the outward physical sense indeed, but in the deep, strong, confidence of the soul. It gives a true life, to the otherwise dead man. It impels him to good works, by an irresistible impulse. And thus, as I have already said, and as the text and the Gospel prove, the outward works demonstrate the existence of an inward faith.

It may be, that, in many cases, good works may be seen in the life, when the doer little supposes that he has the true faith. This may be owing to a false, or a defective education. In the first case, the intellect, as the watchman upon the outward wall, is in the wrong. We may be taught to look upon faith, as a mysterious gift from Heaven; while we are conscious, that our good deeds flow from a natural impulse of love within. If so, we look too far from home for our faith. True faith is that emotion of confidence or love, which

never fails to send forth a stream of good works. Or in the second, our education may be defective respecting the religious nature, in which exists our faith or confidence or love, and from which proceed all good deeds. Every man, and woman, and child, has a religious nature; every kind thought, and word, and deed, is born of that nature; and in the exact proportion of these outward manifestations, is the religious confidence or faith developed in the soul. Hence am I right in saying, that people may manifest by their works that they have a religious faith, without their having an intellectual knowledge of that fact themselves.

And if faith and works can not be separated; then is there much more religion in the world, than we would at first suppose. I know, indeed, that it is a common custom with many a professed Christian, to cry out against works—against ‘mere morality,’ as it is called—as no part of religion itself; while at the same time it is admitted, that the religious man will be moral,

because morality results from religion. But I would like to know what authority the Bible gives us, to speak thus diminutively of morality, of good works, of the virtues of human life. Does it not tell us explicitly, that there is no such thing as faith without works? Does it not say, that by the fruits, the works, or the moral virtues of life, the religious faith is to be known? Does not the author of our text affirm, that to keep one's self unspotted from the vices of the world, and to practice the moral or benevolent virtues, constitute pure, practical religion, in the sight of God? And then the saying, that morality always follows religion—what does that prove, but that where you find morality in the life, you may know that religion in the heart was its cause? As the stream is the outward manifestation of the fountain; so morality is the outward manifestation of religion. Religion must first exist in the soul, that morality may exist in the life. The degree of morality, proves the degree of religion. Where religion is, there are the moral

virtues. And where the last are wanting, you need not look for the first. This decrial of morality, then, is only for the sake of diminishing the amount of religion in the world. It has the effect, to make religion supernatural and mysterious in its nature. It tends to confine it in the bosoms of the self-righteous alone. It is an argument refuting itself, inasmuch as moral works and religious faith can not be separated. And it comes directly in contact with the plain declaration of the word of God,—‘As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.’

Yes, brethren, there is a great deal more religion in the world, than we have been taught to suppose. Look at the mother’s heart, and see if you find it not there. Remember, the test of religion is good works. Do you find that test in her life? Yes—even among barbarous and savage nations. The mother is untrue to the religious nature God gave her, if she will not do good to her child. As a general rule, she

can not do otherwise than good. There have been exceptions to this rule, I know. The heart may be so unstrung by passion, or mania, or disease, as to know no other law, and maltreat its dearest friend, or the tender and helpless infant. But such, like the fierce blight of the lightning flash, rending open the body of peaceful nature, is only a transient exception. It proves that, between the first cause and the last result, there are numberless intermediate causes and results. The relationships between them need to be observed, or derangements ensue. And such derangements are blights upon the natural laws, as well as upon natural religion in the soul. But they do not prove the want of religion in the mother's heart. If she love her child, and will do it good, in that love and goodness she manifests religion. She may not call it religion herself; but it is what the Bible calls religion. It is a very different, a far higher thing, than the instinctive care of the brute for its young. That care ceases and is forgotten, the moment the

full fledged bird leaves the parent nest, or the young fox seeks another borough. The desire of the brute for society like its own, is based upon the instinct of self-preservation. There is nothing of pure thought, morality nor religion, in the brute nature. But the human mother's care for her child—how vast the height it occupies, when contrasted with the care of the brute! The mother's heart knows nothing of selfishness, when the good of the child is at stake. She can brave famine, pestilence, and even death, rather than her child shall suffer. Yes, and were the sacrifice possible on her part, a thousand lives would go in the preservation of one so dear. Thus does every mother exhibit religion by her deeds. She may labor on in poverty, poorly fed and worse clothed herself, that her child may have enough. And not only are these her works, proving her possessed of the purest religion in the sight of God, but if the child she so loves should enter the companionship of vice, her eye would also exhibit the unnatural fire of a frenzied

brain, her flesh would peel off her bones, and the upturned sod would soon press down her pulseless bosom. Is all this the result of that 'mere morality,' so dishonored and condemned of men? Think you God so hates the poor mother, so rich in affection for her offspring, even though a wandering prodigal from the home of virtue, that if she have no other religion He will damn her forever? Is such the character of the Father, we are required to own and bless? Or is the Bible true, which tramples each venomous creed-worm into the dust, which proves the faith by works, and which gives the true mother a religion, as much purer than human traditions, as the heart of Christ was purer than of the scoffing rabble? Yea, let God be true, though every man a liar! There is not a true mother, throughout the wide world indeed, that does not possess religion. Do not think, my brethren, that I mean to lessen the value of religion, by finding it in every mother's love; for such is the religion of the New Testament; and the only

religion that has worth. Neither need you have fear of the influence of such religion; for it is the religion of goodness, holiness, Love; and it never can do harm. Religion is only known by what it does. I most fervently believe, that every mother has religion, in the exact degree of her good works. I find this assurance in our text, and the whole Bible. And may we all labor and pray for it more and more.

So the good father is possessed of the religion of Christ. This is proven by the fact, that he labors to do his children good. It may not be what he calls religion, having been incorrectly taught; but it is nevertheless the religion of the Bible; and he needs to be untaught of his error. He may not know always what is for the best good of his child; and he may therefore at times do wrong. But if he does for his child the best he knows how, it is the religious motive that moves within him. Good works in the life, are the test of religion in the father's heart, as in the mother's.—Every good father is religious, in some

degree. And may we all become more so, through the knowledge and practice of our duty.

So the brother and sister are religious, if they do but practice good works toward brother and sister. The fraternal feeling is visible almost everywhere, in the domestic circle. It may at times be darkened by passion; but it will again shine forth, and be recognised in the good works it suggests. Every brother and sister has religion, in the precise degree of his or her good works. And may God grant us all an increase of goodness, day by day.

So the child is religious, if it manifest filial reverence and obedience toward the parent. Children are not always good to their parents; which only proves, that they are not perfect in their religion. But so far as the child performs only good, so far does it abide by the true test of religion.—The child may be trained up in religion; which is proof sufficient, that religion is not foreign to our nature.—And we do pray, and will labor, that

all our children may experience more and more of its divine influence.

So the friend is religious, if he give the evidence of friendly deeds.

So the neighbor is religious, if he act neighborly.

So the enemy is religious, if he try to subdue our enmity by deeds of love.

So the reformer is religious, if he labor with an earnest soul to rid the world of sin.

So is the patriot religious, if he render true service to his country.

So is the man religious, whoever and wherever he may be, if he only act up to the true dignity and glory of manhood.

And so the professed Christian is *not* religious, if he give no other test than his word—if he prove it not by good deeds—if he live not like Christ—if he heed not that Scripture which saith,—
'As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also !'

Perhaps it may be thought, that, as I present the common, every day, practical virtues of life, as proof that there

is more religion in us all than some would have us believe, there is no need of a Christ to make us religious. No, my brethren, that should not be thought; because, Christ came not to make over our nature, but to arouse its latent powers, and thus remodel our character. Religion existed before Christ came; but he was sent to teach us the fact, and to give us of it more abundantly. Christ had new and important truths for the world; and he brought them, that we might be made better and happier because of them, and that good works, like his own, might abound. He ever referred to his own good deeds, as proof of his religion. And we may be assured, that nothing but good deeds can prove the reality of ours.

Some may think, that prayer and praise are better proofs of religion. Such are mistaken, however, or the Bible is. What do we pray for? Why, for more goodness, holiness, or religion, of course. Then prayer is not religion; but religion is what we pray

for. Prayer is only the desire of the heart for religion; praise is the gratitude due for its bestowment; and good works are proof to the world that it has been bestowed, that we have it. God requires no such proof; man does. It is one which is infallible. And, my brethren, we should rely upon none other.

Let us ever remember, then, that as the body without the spirit, so faith without works, is dead; that the moral virtues in the life, prove religion in the soul; that our *quantum* of religion, is always determined by our works; and that our duty still requires, that we labor and pray for the world.

THY KINGDOM COME.

Father in heaven, may 'thy kingdom come,'
And through the world resistless speed thy
name!

The human heart make thou its peaceful home,
And in its depths light up the holy flame!
May the loved Gospel through the world be spread
As on the pinions of the viewless wind!
And may its accents rouse the living dead,
And burst the fetters of the captive mind!
Speed it from mind to mind, and soul to soul!
Bind it all hearts to be the same as one!
Flame its bright radiance from pole to pole!
And in its brilliant track 'thy kingdom come!'
Oh, may the Gospel take the wings of light,
And to the morn of truth give place the night!

THY WILL BE DONE.

Forever, Father, may 'thy will be done,'
Nor let a murmur in our souls arise,
Thou workest by the love and truth of One,
Given to guide us upward to the skies.
He is the one long prophesied of yore,
Who was to be at 'witness' to the world,
A 'leader' and 'commander,' by whose lore
Error and sin should be to ruin hurled!
Oh, may thy purpose ever have full sway,
And fashion our soul's likeness into thine!
May earthly things be lost in the full ray,
That glitters from thy throne, so pure, divine.
And when thy summons calls from earth away,
Then may we soar and dwell in endless day!

Truth Conducive to Religious Faith.

‘The truth shall make you free.’—JOHN
viii : 32.

~~~~~

It has already been intimated, that truth is not faith itself, but conducive to faith in the soul; and we wish, now, to direct particular attention to that point. True faith is a distinct Unit, in itself considered. It is the feeling of confidence in and reliance upon God. It is that by which we are enabled to say—‘I have no *will* but the will of God.’ There are, however, certain elements or things, which are productive of faith; and there are others, which tend to drive it from the soul. Faith is the confidence of the soul; the elements or doctrines of truth are the things, which tend to increase and give it a firmer texture and strength; while the

elements or doctrines of error, have the influence to banish it from the soul, and to fill its place with doubt and fear. Thus, truth is not faith, but it is that which generates faith; so error is not doubt, but none can deny that it fills the soul with distrust and alarm.

What, then, we may ask, are the chief ELEMENTS OF TRUTH, AND OF ERROR, which lead respectively to FAITH, and to DOUBT?

The first point of truth we shall name, is that *God is the Father of all*. He is declared in the Scriptures to be ‘the Father of the spirits of all flesh.’ He is not only our Creator, and our Ruler, but, dearer than all, our Father. Christ’s own language, not to the believers alone, but to the vast multitude before him, was,—‘Call no man your father upon earth, for *one is your Father* which is in heaven.’ Now, the peculiar endearment connected with the term ‘father,’ is that of love. A Creator might only wish to exhibit his power in creating; a ruler might desire only to exercise authority in ruling;

but a father, in the pure sense of the term, can exhibit only care, kindness, love, toward the child. If the father rules, making use of correction as well as persuasion, he means only that good shall result from it. And if he be wise, he is never mistaken as to the end. Such is the character and purpose of God toward us. A knowledge of this element of truth, as all can see, can but give us confidence or faith in Him. And that faith speaks to us, with a clearer than Sinai's thunder voice, of the reconciliation of the world to God.

But the tendency of error upon this point—what is that? It is, to the production of doubt and fear. But how? Why, it tells us that God is *not* the Father of all,—thus giving the lie to the Bible, as we have seen,—that all are by nature the children of the devil—that all are tending downward to his habitation, as naturally as sparks fly upward—that God through Christ has placed an invisible thread behind our back, and called upon us to turn and cross it that we may ascend to heaven



—that no man can know, to a certainty, whether he has passed the invisible thread or not—and that, without overcoming the very course of our being, which to us is omnipotent, we are lost, infinitely lost, eternally lost, from the presence and glory of God our Father. Now, how much of faith, of confidence and love, can such a view as this give to the soul? Who can wonder, that its believer is oppressed with uncertainty and dread all through life, and in the hour of death? And who can fail to see, that the tendency of error is always to distrust and fear? The tendency of a sentiment, is a fair test of its truth. If it be to faith or confidence in God, we may know it to be true; while the doctrine must be false, which leads to bewildering doubt and alarm.

The next great point of truth we shall mention, is that *all are brethren*. It matters not whether white, or brown, or black; rich or poor, high or low, distinguished or obscure; all are brethren. We may shun poverty as a loathsome reptile; we may speak of crime

with abhorrence; still, the occupants of both those states are like us. All are indeed brethren. Christ said to the multitude before him, touching this point,—‘Be not ye called rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.’ That truth also follows as an inference from the fact, that God is our Father; and from the fact, that we are all His offspring.—Now, what is the legitimate tendency of this truth? Is it not to the production of brotherly feeling among men? Is it not to that ‘love one to another,’ which Christ has given as the test of discipleship to him? Is it not to the elevation of the poverty and crime-stricken of our race? Is it not to the removal of war, slavery, intemperance, and all wrong? And is it not to the promotion of a strong confidence in God, as consistent in His relationship of Father to our race?

But look at the tendency of error, touching the brotherhood of man. It either denies that brotherhood *in toto*, or pronounces it a brotherhood in

crime. It says that all are naturally brothers in depravity, made so by the will or permission of a tyrant-God, and tending homeward to their devil-father; that a few of the race are induced to turn, and sever the demon-brotherhood, and cross the invisible thread; and that a small minority then travel upward to one home, while a large majority pursue their downward way to another. Thus does error break the great chain of human brotherhood, and lay the Savior in a lie. It tends to beget persecution between the two classes. It curses the new-born world with a worse than drunken, a demon father. It leads to uncertainty and fear, as to which party we belong. And it drives far away the calm, the unwavering, the Christian confidence in God.

One other feature of truth, and for the present the last, is, that *Christ is the Savior of all*. Christ was to save his people from sin; not from punishment in any sense, except by saving first from the very desire of sinning; not from endless punishment at all, but,

as the angel said,—‘He shall save his people from their sins.’ ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;’ not the punishment of the world after the commission of sin; for ‘God will by no means clear the guilty,’ and ‘though hand joined in hand the wicked shall not be unpunished.’ Now, Christ’s salvation, when experienced, is present. It does not mean existence, either present or to come; but it means a deliverance from sin, and a happy reception of holiness in the heart. We always live in the present; we will not know the future, till it ceases to be future. Existence, now and hereafter, is the unconditional gift of God; but Christ’s salvation, now and evermore, is a present banishment of sin and its woes, and a present holiness, confidence and joy of soul. Thus, the very nature and extent of Christ’s salvation, is proof sufficient of its faith-inspiring power; while the teaching of error respecting it, is fraught with alarm and wo.

Is not this so, my brethren? I wish

to settle this question beyond a doubt. Christ came to save from present sin; not from future endless suffering. That he came to save the world, there can be no doubt. His mode of doing it is, to bring the world progressively to the knowledge, and the practice, of the truth. The Bible says,—‘The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands;’ and His word ‘shall not return void, but shall accomplish that whereto it was sent.’ And suppose you believe it true, as it assuredly is, would not your faith be far greater in God and Christ, than though you believe it false, or though you doubt of its truth? I have not the least doubt of it. I speak from experience upon this point. Those who doubt, that Christ will accomplish the work committed to his charge, either wholly or in part, by just so much detract from the fulness of their faith and joy. This I know to be the case; and I doubt not, brethren, you also know it. If we fear that Christ will fail, we do not know but he will fail in our own case, or the case of our

relatives or friends. But he can not fail. God knew for what purpose He sent him. Christ was fully aware of the magnitude of the work, and the obstacles to be overcome. His Gospel is abroad in the world, performing its perfect work. God ruleth, within and around us, in heaven and on earth, after the counsel of His own will. And as God is true, the work will not cease, till the very last enemy is destroyed, the last sinner saved, the kingdom submitted to the Father, and God is 'all in all.'

Thus is it clearly proven, by fair illustration, that truth is not faith, but conducive to faith; and that error is not doubt, but productive of doubt in the soul. God as the Father of all; man as the brother of all; and Christ as the Savior of all; are leading points or elements of truth, which induces a firm faith or confidence in God. Without that truth, such faith can not exist; with it deeply settled in the soul, faith will wax brighter and stronger unto the perfect day.

## IN EARTH AS IN HEAVEN.

Where angels soar, and live, and ever love,  
And bend, and worship, round thy holy throne!  
Where all is harmony and joy, above,  
And all as children thou dost freely own!  
In the high court of heaven, where ever thou  
Dost rule according to thy holy will!  
And where, all sin excluded, spirits bow,  
And praise thy name on Zion's holy hill.  
Thither, oh God, may human eyes be turned,  
To emulate the spirits of the just.  
And from the earth be sin and error burned,  
By the quick flame of truth and love and trust!  
So shall the will of God 'in earth' be given  
The scope and influence it hath 'in heaven!'

## GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

Unto thee, Father, would we 'daily' bow,  
And humbly crave thy blessing to descend  
Of food and raiment on the world! and now  
Our need requireth that thou quickly send,  
From thy full store such tokens of thy love,  
As our decaying nature doth require,  
And as shall serve the purpose to improve  
The soul, and light within the holy fire.  
'Give us this day our daily bread,' oh, Lord!  
Nor bread of perishable kind alone,  
But with the food of earth, oh, send thy Word,  
Laden with treasures from thy holy throne.  
Give each to take whate'er he needs 'this day,'  
And move with pleasure on the heavenly way.



## What Christ's Kingdom is not, and what it is.

‘My kingdom is not of this world. . . . .  
To this end was I born, and for this cause came  
I into the world, that I should bear witness  
unto the truth.’—JOHN xviii : 36, 37.

~~~~~

Our text is composed of detached portions of two verses—the first declaring what Christ's kingdom is not, and the second what it is. The remaining parts of the passage have reference to particular circumstances; from which, after a clear understanding of them, we wish to be entirely freed, that the subject matter of discourse may be distinctly before us. After the circumstances attending the betrayal of the Savior, with which you are doubtless familiar, Pilate entered the judgment-

hall, called Jesus unto him, and inquired,—‘Art thou the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. And notwithstanding this decision of the governor, Jesus was scourged, and delivered to the soldiery amid taunts

and revelry and jeer, and crowned with a mock diadem of thorns, and condemned to an ignominious death upon the cross—for you, for me, for the world; while in death's deep agony his bosom heaved with love and compassion,—‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!’

Our present theme for discussion is suggested by the text,—*What Christ's Kingdom is not*, first; and second, *what it is*.

1. Christ himself has said, and his authority is sufficient upon this point,—‘My kingdom is not of this world.’ But what did he mean by it? He meant simply, that the expectation of the Jews was groundless, relative to the nature of the Messiah's mission. They looked for a temporal, national king; and when the Savior made his appearance among them, as the one that should come, they saw not the trappings of earthly royalty about him; and they condemned him at once for imposture. This is the secret of their strenuous deathful persecution. And when in-

quired of by Pilate concerning the truth of their charge, Christ answered: The Jews are mistaken relative to the nature of my claim—‘My kingdom is *not* of this world.’ Christ came not to wield the temporal power of the world, nor of the Jewish nation, nor of any nation under the heavens. But he came to make a distinction between God’s moral and physical government—between the government of the heart and the body. Christ’s kingdom was to be within, established in the soul; while the legitimate office of human government is, to restrain the body within the bounds of obedience to the moral law.

Human government relates exclusively to the outward body of society. In the very nature of the case, the law instituted by human government must look at a crime after it is committed, and not before. It has, and it can have, no power to penetrate the motive, before the outward act is performed—and thus prevent the commission of crime in its very conception. It must

look upon a man as innocent, until he is proven guilty; though the moral law may condemn him long before. It is perfectly blind as to motive, and knows nothing about guilt until the actual deed is done. Then, human government, human law, affixes a certain penalty as the consequence of the crime, without so much as knowing or caring whether the sinner shall be reformed or ruined by its infliction. The law says: 'Such a penalty for such a crime, and such a penalty for such a crime,' &c., from the lowest to the highest crime which man may commit. This is the principle, upon which human government is based. It can punish a crime, after commission; but it has no power to reach and rule the motive, and thus prevent the commission of crime.

Herein lies the distinction, between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the world. The kingdom of Christ is inward, and designed to rule the motive; and this accomplished, the outward act will of course be right. Some regard the kingdom of Christ, and the

kingdom of the world, as one and the same thing; or at least, that there is, and should be, an intimate sympathy and connection between them. It is sometimes said, that the man in whose bosom the spirit of Christ has a dwelling, will act in a particular way with respect to affairs of government. This, however, I conceive to be wrong. A man possessed of the spirit of Christ, will always do right so far as he can. But at the same time, his course may widely differ from that of another, who is equally honest and conscientious with himself. This may not be, in matters of simple and plain import; but in matters of an intricate nature, as those of human government often are, two honest men, both lovers of their country, may widely differ. And the practical inference derivable from this truth is, that no man should assume himself as a standard of action for the world beside; and affirm positively that his own course is right, and all others wrong; but each should acknowledge it possible that he may err, though he

means well, and denounce another just as quick for a difference of looks, as of thoughts or actions.

This distinction between the kingdom of Christ, and of the world, is, as I said, that Christ rules the mind, the heart, the motive; and leaves the mind, the heart or the motive, to rule the outward act. This view is conformable to Scripture. God's character is love. The influence of the spirit upon the soul produces love. The test of discipleship is love. He that loveth, is born of God; while he that loveth not, knoweth him not. The goodness or love of God leadeth man to repentance; and love worketh no ill to its neighbor, but is the fulfilling of the law. That state of the soul, therefore, which is made by the abiding presence of love, is the state which answers precisely to the kingdom of Christ. This kingdom, which is love, is directly opposite to the outward, unfeeling, selfish kingdom of the world. It prompts a man always to desire the right; and it compasses the greatest possible amount of

good for the whole number. Wherever two individuals are, in whose bosoms the kingdom of Christ is built up, however their intellectual conceptions may differ, their desires will be found precisely the same. Each will desire the best good of all; and beyond this point, the kingdom of Christ goes not one step. The outward means of bringing about that good, belong more properly to the kingdom of this world. Christ rules the heart, not of the individual only, but of the nation also; and the heart rules the outward act.

Let the distinction between the kingdom of Christ, and of the world, be kept in mind; and we can but see, that the only ground of difference among men, with regard to the measures to be employed for accomplishing the greater good, is the difference in the kind and degree of education, information and talent, among different men. The kingdom or rule of Christ in the heart, as we have seen, would prompt men to desire only the true, the good and the right. And wherever such men

differ, relative to the outward ways and means of bringing about the same end, that difference may be referred to one of three leading causes:—the first, a difference of early influence and education; the second, a difference of particular information; and the third, a difference of capacity to comprehend the bearing of evidence. Early influence and education have a lasting bias upon the mind and heart. A man may be in favor of this measure, and opposed to that; and yet, from having received an educational inclination in early life, he scarcely knows why. His views, sympathies and prejudices, are all one way; and such a man is a bigot, of some kind or other. There are bigots, in social, political and religious life; and the bigot, wherever you find him, has little tolerance and fellow-feeling for those with whom he differs. Different degrees of special information also, often has much to do with honest differences of opinion among men. One possesses, or can easily get, the means of information, upon any particular

subject; and he makes up his mind from an impartial investigation. Another looks at evidence bearing mainly upon one side. While a third, has evidence of the truth of the other side in his possession. And another prolific cause of dissention among men, is a difference in the mental strength of different minds, observable the world over.— This cause will lead men to put a very different estimate upon the same evidence. One is a better reasoner than another. And of course, different persons, from this cause, come at different conclusions from the same premises. Here are three prominent and fruitful sources of difference among men, even among Christians. All may be equally honest; and yet all differ.

Oh, how widely the practical inference derivable from this truth is departed from, in the present peculiar aspect of the world! How common a thing it is, in social, political and religious life, for equally honest people to denounce each other as dishonest, solely because of the difference of early edu-

cation, or of specific information, or of reasoning talent, which leads them to take different, and perhaps opposing ground! If there be one thing above others, my brethren, which should prompt to a serious self-examination and self-reformation among us, this is the one! And his claim to the Christian character exists only in name, who, in his intercourse with the world, forgets, that he alone whose heart is pure, and whose views are perfect, has the permission of the Savior to 'cast the first stone!'

From what has now been said, I infer, that one of the greatest lessons which the world has yet to learn, is the fact, that while the kingdom of Christ is destined to rule the kingdom of the world, each in its nature is separate and distinct from the other. Christ's kingdom, as we have seen, consists of love in the soul; it is within; and it prompts the desire for universal good. The outward kingdom of the world, consists of the ways, and means, and labors, by which the universal good is

sought. One pursues this course, one that course, and one the other; but all, who are prompted by the reign of Christ within, are reaching forward to the same great end, the universal good; and must, without the possibility of failure, reach eventually the goal. This being true, it becomes the paramount duty of Christians of all sects, though they differ in matters of belief, and outward observance, and public polity, to preserve ever the 'unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.' It is but reasonable and right,—nay, God expressly enjoins it in the constitution He has given man, as well as impliedly in His revealed will,—that Christians differ among themselves, relative to the outward government of the world. Though all Christians will desire and labor for the universal good, according to the best of their judgment; yet will each have his peculiar views, relative to this plan of social improvement, or this political measure, or this religious rite. And while each may labor, and will labor, for the prevalence of his own

views; yet should we never forget, nor refuse obedience to the dictates of the truth, that Christ's kingdom is not of this world.

II. 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.'—Christ here declares, that his relation to truth, and to the world, is that of a witness. He did not create the truth, set forth in his teachings, and visible in all his life; but he came to make it known, to become a witness of it. He was an instrument in the hand of God, to establish His likeness, which is love, in the hearts of men. And while his mission is going forward in the earth, it is denominated 'the kingdom of Christ,'—borrowing the figure of a kingdom, from the ancient expectation of the Jewish people. Christ has declared, that love supreme toward God, and love universal toward men, constitute obedience to the first and great commandment. And this obedience, love in the soul, the kingdom of Christ, is the result of the instrumentality of

Christ as a witness. Christ was a witness, of course, concerning the truth. And hence, the great end of Christ's labors, in disseminating important truths among men, is the production of pure Christian love in the soul.

Let this fact ever be remembered, therefore, that Christ as a witness of the truth, and Christ as a sovereign, signify different stages in the development of Christ's kingdom in the soul,—witnessing to the truth being the means, and reigning in love being the end. This, then, is the meaning of the text:—‘My kingdom is not of this world’—not composed of things outward, selfish and superficial; but ‘to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth’—thus producing in the heart the pure emotion of love.

But in the language of Pilate let us ask,—‘What is truth?’ We wish to know what truth it was, to which Christ witnessed, that we may be not only in heart, in spirit, in life, but also in

thought, in idea, in doctrine, one with the Savior, as he was one with the Father. To this question I reply, that the greatest of all truths witnessed to in the teachings and life of the Savior, is that love is God's character, and man's duty, and productive of heaven in the soul. Love is the test of the true Christian;—'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' Love constitutes the change of heart, or new birth, or regeneration of soul:—'Every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.' He who never experienced the generous emotion of pure love—pure and undefiled religion, which prompts to the relief of the widow and the fatherless in their distresses—though he may acknowledge the name of God, yet knows he little of the nature of God's holy religion. God's life is love. And before God can be loved, purely, fervently, supremely, that life must kindle up its own flame in the soul of man. This is

the great truth brought to light in the Gospel, and witnessed to in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. And the tendency of this testimony of the Savior, is to the subjugation of the soul to the reign of Christ, the reign of God, the reign of God.

This truth to which the Savior bore witness, is the only one upon which all Christians must agree. It makes no difference whatever, so far as Christian character is concerned, whether we accept or reject this doctrine, or that, or the other. I do not say, that other true opinions are not productive of happiness; for I believe they are, and would therefore have them believed; but I do say, that Christians may differ upon all other points, and still lay claim to the Christian character. Love in the soul, constitutes the genuine Christian, the follower of Christ, the spiritual child of love.

But how may it be known, that love exists in the soul? If men may differ in points of doctrine, and still be Christians, how do we know that love

is the element of life in the soul? As we know the tree by its uniform fruit, so we know the religious man or woman by the every-day life. If a man be kind to the suffering poor around him, instead of a great way off,—if he labor to do good whenever an occasion offers, instead of being selfish in small and benevolent by profession in great things,—if he strive to promote the cause of freedom and justice and benevolence at home, instead of mourning without hope over the wretchedness of those far away,—then do we know, whatever his peculiar views may be, that the fire of love is alive in his soul. But he who pursues the opposite course, lays claim with a very ill-grace to the Christian character, and answers well to the figure of a sepulchre beautifully garnished on the outside. Love, therefore, is the basis and element of the Christian life; and the only point, upon which all Christians must be fully and practically agreed.

Still, there are other points upon which Christians agree among them-

selves, and with some who profess not the Christian name. The existence of one only living and true God, is a point universally conceded among professed Christians; the Deist also holds the same truth; but relative to the compound being of God, or His oneness and indivisibility, there is a difference of opinion. This difference, however, should not bound the Christian's love. Whether there be One only, or three, or twenty Gods in one, therefore, the unity or plurality of the God-head need not interfere with the paramount duty of 'love one to another.' But I stop not here. If a man deny the very existence of God, being incorrectly taught, acknowledging himself a confirmed Atheist; and yet practice a life of love toward all; that man is in reality a spiritual follower of Christ, and a spiritual child of God. It is true, he deprives himself of the happiness of knowing, that he has a Father above who loves him, and that his is a life that shall never end. If a child be taught to believe that he had

no earthly father, and if his mind become so warped by education that the impression goes with him through life, is it then true that he had no father? So is not the Atheist the offspring of God, even though he acknowledge Him not? And if his heart be filled with love, which his supposed orphanage turns out of its upward channel, is he not in reality a spiritual child of the Father? The religion of Christ is not known by its name, brethren, but by its nature. And wherever you find a soul full of love, you find one full of the religion of Christ. It is scarcely possible, that the errorist should have the same amount of love that he would, did he possess only truth in the place of error. Still, as before stated, his degree of love, is also his degree of the Christian spirit. And this view, only, can ever win his consent to return to the visible fold of Christ. There is, by inference, a difference among Christians also, relative to the character and attributes of God. It is true, all nominally acknowledge infinite Love as

the character, and infinite wisdom and power as the primary attributes of Deity. But at the same time, some hold to doctrines which, inferentially, falsify His character, Love, or His wisdom or power. This difference, however, does not necessarily give nor withhold the Christian spirit. Christians differ, again, touching the nature, and the office, of Christ. While some view him as God in the form of man, others regard him, as he called himself, 'the son of man'—'the man Christ Jesus'—'the Son of God,' like other men, but His 'beloved Son,' in a spiritual sense,—having received of God the religion of love, attested by infinite wisdom and power, to live it and promulgate it in the world. This difference of doctrine, however, ought not to set Christians at war with each other. Neither should a difference of opinion, relative to the nature, duty or destiny of man, ever place the Christian world in the condition, answering to the figure of a house divided against itself; for the sure consequence is pre-

dicted by the Savior himself—it can not stand. A life of love is the point, upon which all Christians must agree, practically; but relative to cherishing this theological opinion, or observing this religious rite, or maintaining this political measure, each one must be his own judge, under God, and no one has the right to dictate to any other.

Christ, it is true, has revealed, through his life, teachings, death, resurrection and ascension, a system of doctrines and duties, which, if faithfully observed, can but build up his kingdom of love in the soul. Still, during the past and in the present, men and women have been, and are, so indoctrinated in early life, as to view this system of the Savior with a partial eye. Christ's doctrines and moral inculcations are not given in the form of a category, a particular class of instructions; yet we deem it not improper to apply the term system, to what is usually known under the name Christianity. The doctrines and precepts of the Savior, with the examples attending them, were the

spontaneous out-pourings of a soul filled with divine love. They fell upon the ears of the Jewish people, generally, as they were called forth by time, or circumstance, or occasion. They were not given in the form of a studied creed; yet we believe that a beautiful system embodies them all, under the name of the Christian religion. Christ named them not; but his name was given them, first as a reproach, now as a beautiful memento of their Teacher. Christ's teachings were definite, respecting God, His character, and government; respecting himself, his nature, and mission; and respecting the nature, duty, and destiny of man. These are the principal features of the beautiful system of Christianity; and we think, the unbiased, rational, enlightened mind, need not mistake this system in a single particular. But, as I said, there are so many influences tending to warp the mind in youth, that it would be strange indeed if Christians did not differ, in making up their opinions of this system. And had they

been given to the world in the form of a category even,—had Christ embodied all his instructions concerning God under one head, concerning himself under another, and concerning man under a third; still, the great variety of instructions given, and the differences in mental and moral constitution among men, must, I conceive, have made it necessary that each one be his own judge of truth after all. The man of unbiassed mind, therefore, with the full evidence before him, is the best judge of what is truth and what is error. And if men do come at differing conclusions, respecting Christ's doctrines and precepts, they should know that the fault lies with themselves, in imperfect early training, or the weakness of the mental powers, or the want of the whole evidence before them. And if they thus differ, they should know that 'to err is human, to forgive divine;' and that UNION IN LOVE is their duty still.

Indeed, brethren, Christ's kingdom is not of this world; but is built up of

love in the soul. It is not difficult to know the counterfeit from the true coin, in matters of religion; for the workings of genuine love, are seen only in a man's private, every-day life. There is much that passes for ardent piety in the world; but you examine closely for the fruit of the spirit, and you will find that a large portion of that which is named piety, is nought but a mush-room drapery and foliage. There are many points in the theory of religion, upon which Christians may conscientiously differ; there are many upon which they agree; but there is only one, my brethren, which is love in the soul, exhibiting itself in the life, that can prove our claim to the Christian title, and speak down upon us the constant favor of the Lord.

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS.

Our sins, O, God, are all before thee spread,
Mounting their blackened summit to the sky,
And each of all the human race is dead—
Dead to that love which should be ever nigh.
Father we pray that thou wouldst put away
Our every trespass of thy holy law,
Remove each tendency to go astray,
And for all sin inspire a fearful awe.
As thou wilt punish us for every sin,
That we may wear the spotless robe of love,
So may we ever walk thy way within,
And urge our course to heavenly realms above.
'Forgive' the trespasses of all thy race,
And fill our souls with treasures of thy grace.

AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

There is an impulse living deep within,
Which prompts us to avenge the slightest
wrong—
If to our eye it wear the mark of sin—
Unless 'tis borne by love and truth along,
And made the means of blessing to the vile,—
Unless it lose revenge, in hope of gain
To the dark soul, from holiness exile,
Whose future pleasure shall repay the pain!
Thy pleasure, Lord, is ever human joy!
Thy punishment designed for holy end!
And without any of earth's base alloy,
Thy frowns and smiles to the same purpose
bend!
As we by others do, Oh, God, we pray,
That thou by us wilt deal the self-same day!

True and False Religious Profession.

'Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.'—JOHN vi: 26.

~~~~~

After the performance of the miracle, of feeding to the full some five thousand persons, upon 'five barley-loaves and two small fishes,' it will be remembered, that Christ directed the disciples to enter their ship, and sail to the other side of Galilee, while he should send the satisfied multitude away. Having done so, he went up into a mountain to pray; but in the course of the night, when the disciples were out upon the turbulent waters, filled with fear, he went unto them walking on the surface of the lake—stilled the tempest—restored their confidence—and together they went the remainder

of the voyage. The day after the performance of the miracle, the people among whom it was performed, knowing the disciples had gone without their Lord, went in search of him on their own side of the sea. Finding him not, as the Scripture says,—‘They took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?’ They knew nothing of his having walked on the water; and they were, of course, surprised to find him there. Their motive in following him was, no doubt, curiosity blended with selfishness. And knowing it to be so,—‘Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.’ And then, in addition to this wholesome reproof, he said,—‘Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.’

This last passage is worthy of a brief remark. 'Him hath God the Father sealed,'—by which is doubtless meant, that Christ was endowed of God for the great work he came to perform, and so endowed as to convince the world of the divine nature of his mission. The seal which was placed upon Christ, consisted in the especial gift of goodness, wisdom and power, which was conferred upon him; and which enabled him to live the Pattern of holiness among men, and to perform miracles and foretell future events, in proof that God sent him. He was an instrument in the hand of God, like any other human instrumentality; but that which 'sealed' him for his especial work, was the gift of goodness, wisdom and power, which he possessed above other men, and without which he would have been inadequate to the task before him. Knowing his own true sphere, and the real need of those who followed him because of the food he had provided, he directed them to 'labor not for the meat which perisheth,'—that is, not for

such food only as he had given them the day before,—‘but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life,’—that is, for the food which elevates, purifies and strengthens the soul, and fills it with joy,—‘which the son of man shall give unto you,’—that is, which soul sustaining food Christ, whom God the Father had ‘sealed,’ should give unto the world through the Christian religion.

The analogy between natural and spiritual food seems to have been used, to convey the Savior’s meaning with power. It is indeed a forcible, not to say beautiful, illustration. What natural food is to the body, spiritual food is to the soul, and more; for while the first perisheth with the using, and has but a short lived being, the last accumulates in the soul, and will do its perfect office while the ‘soul endures. Let us, then, brethren,—‘Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.’ But to the text.

‘Ye seek me, not because ye saw the

miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.' Here are set forth two distinct, but opposite principles; following the Savior from a real and earnest love for him, and following the Savior from a selfish motive. There were those in ancient times, who adhered to Christ because they 'saw the miracles,' and could not disbelieve him the true Messiah; and there were those, as the text fully proves, who followed him only for the 'loaves and the fishes.' It may by some be thought a difficult matter, if not utterly impossible, to make the proper discrimination between the two classes, either then or now.—This, however, is a mistake. 'The tree is known by its fruit.' You may not, indeed, be able to tell by the look of the fruit, whether it be sweet or bitter, good or bad; but you can by the taste—by applying the proper test. So the two classes of professed Christians can easily be distinguished, one from the other, by weighing the circumstances and the motives which operate upon them. In the case of the true disciples

of ancient times, their disinterestedness is proven by the opposition and persecution, which bore with tremendous power upon them, but without moving their faithfulness in the least. In the case of the false, they are proven to be so, because of their following Christ in the hope of temporal gain. We may not always be able to tell, in what precise proportion the true and false motives are blended, in the same bosom; but if we can not, there is One who can, and who will not suffer virtue to go unrewarded, nor vice unpunished. There are, however, cases sufficiently marked, and about which, like judging of the fruit of a tree, there is no chance for deception. And our business, at the present time, is with such alone.

Let the two principles involved in the text, be distinctly noticed. The first is that of honesty, the last of dishonesty; the first of faithfulness, the last of unfaithfulness; the first of disinterestedness, the last of selfishness. The real Christian elevates his religion, as of superior importance to every other



thing; the merely nominal one makes his an instrument, by which he hopes to advance the other interests of life.—There can be no doubt, that, under institutions of freedom and equality, all the interests of life are best promoted, by living in accordance with the true faith. The real Christian sees this, as well as the false one; but while the latter values Christianity because it may benefit himself, the former values it chiefly because it may benefit the world. Thus, in the one case, the Christian profession is made from selfish and dishonorable motives—because of the ‘loaves and fishes;’ while in the other, the motives are benevolent and honorable—originating from sight of the ‘miracles,’ or a genuine confidence in the Gospel of Christ.

Bearing in mind the two distinct and opposite principles, the text contains; and we will endeavor to ILLUSTRATE THEM BOTH by reference to actual life.

I. The false principle is, to make every thing, even the Christian profes-

sion, tell to the promotion of the selfish interests of life. This principle is seen in almost, if not quite, every department of social life. Whatever the business or profession may be, the false religious professor hopes to advance his temporal, rather than his spiritual interests by such profession—hopes to gain, by following Christ outwardly, a few more of his ‘loaves and fishes.’

The farmer, for example, if he have half a mind, knows that the outward order and peace of society would be very insecure, were it not for the Sabbath, religious worship and religious instruction, both for the youthful and the adult portion of community,—knows that his lands might be overrun by the foot of violence, his crops wasted, and his possessions scattered to the winds, were it not for the duty of justice, which is urged upon the attention and practice of the people on each returning Sabbath,—knows that himself and his cattle would be over-worked, and consequently injured, were they not to have a resting day from labor, at

least one day in seven,—knows how misgoverned and untaught youth, as well as age, spend the Sabbath, in robbing the garden, the orchard or the field, or in using the fishing-rod or the gun, or in walking or riding abroad, if not held in check by his example of order and uprightness; and he may, for considerations like these alone, be led to profess the Christian faith, and live by the outward rites of such profession. But, weighty as these considerations are, because they bear upon the order and peace of society, and of course upon his own peace and safety, in and of themselves they indicate only the selfish devotee of Mammon, rather than the true and spiritual worshipper of God. The true Christian has all their force to urge him on; but he has in addition a motive superior to them all. He looks from self to the world around; who only seem waiting for the talismanic touch of God, through Christ, to raise them from ignorance and degradation, break their chains, give them enough to eat and wear, and make

the world a blessing to itself. The selfish Christian, thanks God for what He has done for himself only; while the real follower of Christ, thanks Him for all that, but still more for what He has done, is doing, and will do, for the whole race beside. Thus, in the pursuit of Agriculture—a pursuit upon which crowd the highest honors of earth—the false religious professor looks to the personal benefits, the ‘loaves’ and the ‘fishes,’ rather than to that high and pure motive, Love, which should swell in the bosom of every professed Christian.

Another illustration of the principle under consideration, may be found among the professors of the Mechanic arts. I refer not to any one branch in particular, but to the aggregate whole. The principal requisitions in carrying them on successfully, are thought and labor—thought that the mechanic may see how his work should be done, and labor that he may do it. These are required day after day; and if no day of rest were allowed they would be-

come so oppressive upon the artisan, that his life would soon be worn down to a shadow. Like the poor operatives in the factories of England, excessive toil would take the flesh from their bones, the spirit from their manhood, and break them to the bitterest bondage. And not only so, but no time would be allowed for the improvement of the mind, the social sympathies, and the religious faith. And thus, the highest and holiest objects and pursuits of life would be overlooked and disregarded, and the lower ones of sense and selfishness made to supply their place. But where is the man that does not see all this; and does not know, that the interests of his trade can not be successfully promoted, without the intervention of the Sabbath and religious institutions? There has been in past time a woful ignorance upon this subject; and that ignorance has deep root still, not only among different and distant nations of the earth, but also among many people nearer at home. The great truth is not sufficiently realized,

that excessive labor of the mind and body is destructive, not only of the mental and bodily health, but also of harmony, virtue and religion, and the peace of society at large. The world is beginning to awake to the importance of this subject; thought is beginning to probe it to the very bottom; and I devoutly thank God that it is so! But here a proper precaution is needed.—Men must not—if they will be regarded as real and earnest followers of Christ, they must not observe the Sabbath and profess religion for this sake alone. They may consider the bearing of religious institutions, upon their own temporal good; but it will not do to make that all the motive of obedience to Christ. Other and higher motives rest and press upon us. We should be careful, in consulting our selfish interest, that we do not tread upon the rights of our neighbors. ‘Godliness is profitable unto all things;’ it not only benefits self, but it also benefits the world; and while the true Christian seeks for it, for this last reason mainly, the false

one, intent upon gaining the 'loaves' and the 'fishes,' openly professes it because of the former. Whoever, therefore, among the professors of the mechanic arts, openly adheres to the outward trappings of religion, because of its benefit upon trade, and not for its benefit to the world, is an illustration of the selfish principle the text sets forth.

A third illustration may be found in the man, who deals out merchandise upon the strength of religious profession. Are there no such men in community? I have no doubt there are. I do not mean to say, that the sole object of any man is to trade upon such capital alone; but I refer to him who says, by his deeds if in no other way,—‘I will seek the favor of the most numerous, wealthy and popular class of religionists—I will join them perhaps, and boast of my faith and piety before the world—or I will pay liberally unto their church treasury; and by some one or all of these means, I shall most surely obtain a liberal favor and patronage

from them.' Are there not persons of this class in community?—or rather, are there not those, who allow motives of this kind to move them? I do not suppose they are confined exclusively to the mercantile class; but they are found in all professions and pursuits. And find them where you may, they are governed by the false principle set forth in the text—they rely for a livelihood upon the sympathy, drawn from kindred religious views—they follow Christ, nominally, because of the 'loaves and fishes.'

The professor of the law also, in many cases, is doubtless an illustration of the principle under consideration. It is a well known fact, that, in the present crowded state of that profession, and its constantly decreasing business, the study of the law is made the stepping stone to political preferment.—But very few of its members—scarcely one in ten perhaps—ever hope to gain an honest living by laboring to promote justice and equality among men. They must either starve, or strive to stir up



dissention and discord in community. Or if neither of these be done, the law profession must be used as a preparative for political station, and the emolument of office. There always must and will be professors of the law, without doubt; but there are this moment hundreds, if not thousands, who will be obliged to harden their delicate fingers in the soil, or be reduced, because of the much they know and the little they do, to gripping penury and want. But, aside from this class, and the real talent and strength of the fraternity, there are many who hope for nothing from their legal knowledge, except to gain the favor of the people, and to be advanced to stations of trust and worth. And will legal knowledge alone prepare them fully for such favor? In their own estimation, No. There is another cord to be struck. Religious preference is the strongest one in the human breast; the selfish and designing know it; and they are not slow in making it bear upon their own political advancement. It would be wrong to say, that all political, or

even party men, are hypocrites. But I think it can not be denied, that the popular religious sects have been courted, and flattered, and fawned over in hundreds of cases, solely because of the strength they are able to make bear at the polls. I do not know that any sect can, in all cases, avoid imposition on the part of individuals; but this I know, the man who seeks the favor of a class of Christians, from motives of selfishness, is one of the basest of men, one who professes Christ for the 'loaves and fishes,' and one entirely unworthy of the confidence he is striving to gain. So true is it, that many in the legal profession illustrate the principle, concerning which we are speaking,

A fifth illustration of the selfish principle in religious profession, may be found among the members of the medical fraternity. There are many excellent things among them; and some that are not so excellent. It has become almost a proverb, that no man can succeed in the medical profession, without raising up a party. People have the

right to think and act as they please upon this subject, of course, provided they do not contravene right; but there seems to be nearly as much party-ism, growing out of the different medical practices, as upon the subject of politics or religious views. It may be, that a moderate partyism tends, by controversy, to bring out the truth; and so far, we could not object. But that excessive feeling, which claims a man either as a friend or enemy, according as he may think and act—which claims the mastery of the bodies of all, by right of prior possession of territory—which claims the privilege of selling the right to cure, or kill, within the neighborhood—which goes to the formation of parties, and the promotion of asperity and bitterness among men,—all feeling of this nature, is unworthy the genuine medical professor, and alike dishonorable to the manhood of our race. It is not confined exclusively to the medical fraternity. But it seems encumbent upon all, to labor unitedly in the work of driving it from

the world! Neither is that all. Some physicians are too anxious to make the favor of this, or that, or the other class of professed Christians—taking a slip, perhaps, in several churches, and caring it may be for none—professing because of the practice they may get,—in short, so far as they go in the train of Christ's followers, doing so for the sole sake of the 'loaves' and the 'fishes.' Are there none of this class in community?—none, who care more for the favor of Christians, than for Christianity itself? I do not say there are many; I hope there are not; none but themselves, excepting God, can tell. But wherever you find a physician of this stamp, you find a clear illustration of the selfish principle in religious profession.

And finally, under this head, we would be doing injustice to our subject, were we not to say, that members of the Christian ministry may furnish an illustration of the principle under consideration. It is a truth beyond dispute, that all occupations and professions, however noble in themselves, can turn

out before the eye of the world bad members. We have seen it to be so among farmers, mechanics, merchants, lawyers and physicians; and why should it be otherwise, in the clerical profession? It certainly is so; and the very fact is proof sufficient, whatever the church may claim, that ministers are but fallible men, at the best. Add to that the fact, that some men enter the ministry, of all denominations, and live by the genius of other men; and the fact, that some are too indolent to thrive any where; and the fact, that play-actors and vaulters sometimes turn a somerset into the church, and then from one sect to another; and many other facts we need not mention; and what other inference can we draw, than that selfishness is too frequently clothed in the garb of the religious teacher's profession, which seeks, instead of the glory of God and the good of man, only a share of the 'loaves and fishes.' Oh, what dark hypocrisy is veiled from the common gaze, by the mantle of the church! I speak not of any one, but

of all religious sects. The ministry needs purification. And as God's right arm is firm, and His truth plain and strong, it surely will be accomplished; when a brighter and better day will have dawned upon our race.

Having thus spoken at some length, concerning the false principle in religious profession, thereby bringing out clearly its opposite; we shall speak, very briefly, in considering,

II. The principle which is true. We have already seen, that a real faith in Christ, and practice of Christianity, are conducive to the genuine temporal interests of every individual, and also of all men together. But here we are very liable to mistake. A man may think best for himself, what really is not best; inasmuch as it may injure his neighbors. The right Christian test is,—‘That is best for the individual, which is best for the whole.’ ‘If one member of the body suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.’ This, then, is the rule,—‘The

selfish good of one, is to be merged in a benevolent regard for all.' Such is the import of the Golden Rule. The real Christian will ever abide by this principle; and if so, he will follow, and believe in, and love the Savior, not alone because he is his Savior, but because he is the Savior of the world—not alone for the temporal and perishable 'loaves and fishes,' but for the spiritual 'bread of heaven,' which shall descend from God above, and give light, and life, and joy to the world.

The Christian profession!—when stripped of all selfishness, what glory rests upon it! It is more to be desired than gold, and sweeter even than life itself! God's rich blessing covers its simplicity with grandeur! It is, and ever must be, honored among men! It clothes the hideous features of death with a smile; and it opens wide the gate of heaven before the ascending spirit!

## AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

We pray, Oh, God, that thou wilt ever guide

Our feet away from the dark tempter's wiles,  
And place them on the Rock of 'Truth, beside

The foot prints of our Saviour! May thy smiles  
Beam brightly o'er our journey to the land,

From whose dark 'bourne no traveller returns,'  
To tell us tales of the rept angel-band,

Within whose bosoms the pure flame e'er burns,  
Of love and truth, by God's own bounty given!

There in that upper sphere, the tempter's art  
Allures no soul from the high bliss of heaven—

Plunges no dagger in the seraph heart!  
Thither, Oh, God, freed from 'temptations'  
power,

May we ascend in the last fearful hour!



## BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

We do not pray like thousands of our race,  
That thou, Oh, God, wilt not reward our good,  
Nor punish our vile deeds! But by thy grace,  
May all our duties be well understood.  
And with the knowledge, thou the practice give,  
That we may imitate thy lowly son!  
His life was given that we might learn to live!  
As Christ with God, may we with him be 'one.'  
Oh, save us from the 'evil' we *may* do,  
Not from a ward of that *already* done.  
Evermore prompt us to the just and true,  
And heaven in *prospect* is a heaven *won*!  
Father from 'evil' may our race be freed,  
But justly punish every 'evil' deed!

## Christ the Example of the Religious Reformer.

‘Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?’—MATT. ix: 11.

~~~~~

Our text is a question of the Pharisees, addressed to the disciples of the Savior. The circumstances surrounding it are briefly these:—Soon after the evangelist Matthew was called to be an apostle, he made, as Luke calls it, ‘a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans, and of others, that sat down with them.’ Matthew had been a publican himself—a tax-gatherer, or custom-house officer of the Roman government; and he probably invited many of that class to the supper, though his invitation also extended to others. The Jews were at

this time subject to the Roman power; and as a consequence, they hated the publicans, as they were called, or the public officers Rome had sent to rule over them. Hence, they coupled them with those they denominated sinners, and denounced them in the strongest terms. The sinners were probably those of the Jews, who were not of the sect of the pharisees, and who disregarded their traditions. The pharisees regarded both classes as outcasts from their society, and the favor of God. And when they saw Christ eating and drinking with them, they seem to have thought it a good opportunity to bring upon him reproach and shame. To that end, they inquired of his disciples, in the language of the text,—‘Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?’

Christ heard the inquiry. He saw their ignorance of his mission. They did not know, that he was to be the spiritual Savior of the morally dead—the great moral Physician of a sin-sick world. For the purpose of correcting

their error, he replied,—‘ They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.’ Here is a simple yet beautiful allegory, designed to teach the doubting pharisees the true object of his coming. He came to seek out and save the lost—he came to raise to new spiritual life the dead in trespass and sin. And still further to enforce his meaning, he directed them to their own Scriptures, and to this particular expression,—‘ I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,’—that is, acts of mercy, toward those who need mercy of course, the sinful, are far preferable in the sight of God to burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, on the part of the selfishly righteous. To render such mercy to the sinful, by leading them to the fountain of truth and holiness, was the object of Christ’s mission upon earth. This conclusion is abundantly sustained, by Christ’s next words to the pharisees,—‘ I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,—Christ’s great object, then, aside from bringing a future existence to the knowledge of

men, was to SAVE THE SINFUL FROM THEIR SINS.

It may perhaps be true, that the sect of the pharisees does not exist, in this age of the world; but I would not pretend to deny, with stubborn fact staring me in the face, that our age is free of phariseeism itself. The thing is the same the world over, and through all time, whatever the name under which it be known. And the deriding question it asks is ever the same,—‘Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?’

It is an old adage, that character is known by the company it seeks. This is doubtless true, so far as the ordinary associations of life are concerned; for every one naturally seeks his society, among those of kindred habits and feelings with himself. Still, a man may enter the society of those, with whose peculiar customs he has no sympathy whatever; though in such a case, if a good man, he would enter it in the character of a reformer. Such was the position of Christ on earth. He

not only entered the society of the most sinful, but he also entered the society of a sinful world. With whom could he associate here, of like purity, truth and holiness with himself? Living above and apart from the world, he yet came to instruct the public mind, to abide in the public heart, to elevate and perfect the public character—he came, in short, as the world's spiritual Reformer. God speed his mission among men!

Truth and Love, embodied in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, are the means by which a sinful world is to be reformed. The Gospel is most admirably adapted to its work. Like the Master, it moves among impurity, without being contaminated thereby, but giving out a healthful influence wherever it goes. Its appeal ever sounds in the ear of the sinful,—‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!’ It will continue on its way, like the leaven in the meal, until it shall diffuse its life through every fibre of the world's great heart. And when that time shall

come, the sword and the spear shall become the ploughshare and pruning hook; the lion and the lamb of man's nature shall lie down in peace together; and the Sun will again smile upon this Eden-crowned earth—which, as a mirror, will reflect upon the heavens his glory in liquid gold!

The pharisees thought Christ in the wrong, because he ate and drank with publicans and sinners; but how could he, upon earth, eat and drink with any others? They lost sight of their own wickedness, in their haste to condemn the wickedness of others. That all are sinful, in some degree—that all do sin against their own best good, and that of their fellows, almost continually—is abundantly testified in every individual's experience. This point is clearly proven in the self-condemnation of those, who, if clear of sin themselves, were allowed the privilege of casting stones at the sinful woman. The very best of earth, fall far short of the purity of Christ, and the cherub angel in heaven. All are subject to sinful incli-

nations, appetites and passions, in the present life. Hence, all are sinners. And hence again, Christ himself, and the Gospel of Christ, were sent as reformers of a sinful world.

Understanding the Gospel aright, the world aright, and the admirable fitness of the Gospel to reform the world; and it will not be difficult to answer the question of the text. To eat and drink with others, ordinarily, denote an intimacy and familiarity with them, which are indicative of the warmest friendship. Such friendship did exist between Christ and the common people of Judea, and especially between him and his followers. That friendship was the first thing requisite, to the reformation of the hearts and lives of the people. And Christ's purpose of reforming them, is the true answer to the question,—‘Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?’

The question now arises,—‘Is Christ's example, in the reformation of the sinful, the true *pattern* of all religious reformers?’ This is a very important

question, in its bearing upon the religious movements of the age, of the world. The rule by which we should be guided in solving it, is that of superior efficacy. If Christ's example be the best that can be adopted, with reference to effect, then that example is to be the guide of the world's true reformers; but if otherwise, it will and should be neglected.

Let it be remembered, that the Christ of the New Testament lived in a semi-barbarous age; that the prevailing customs partook largely of the features of heathenism; that the prevailing spirit was no better, at the best, than love to the friend and hate to the enemy; and that the character of existing reformers, was that of vindictive cruelty, instead of genuine benevolence. Taking the then existing state of the public mind and heart into consideration; and we can but see, that Christ's adoption of the rule of overcoming evil with good, and of going among the subjects of reform as their friend, denote most decidedly the heavenly origin of his

mission. What philosopher ever lived, whose system of ethics comprehended all goodness, without the least admixture of evil? Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the greatest and best of heathen philosophers, setting aside their vague conjectures of a future life, realized but imperfectly the power of goodness in overcoming evil. The prevailing opinions and practices among the leaders of the Jewish people; were also fraught with error and wrong. But the Christ of the Gospel came out from them all, elevated the standard of the Christian religion, and inscribed upon its banner the doctrine of spiritual life, of immortality, and of the divinity of Love as an all-conquering power. The prevailing lights of the age were but as feeble meteors, faintly glimmering for a moment, to be lost in the surrounding darkness; but his was the light of the Sun, fixed in God's own infinitude, and supplying to the spirit both light and warmth in all succeeding ages. The truths which Christ promulgated, we regard as the absolute truths

of God. They must remain eternally the same. Man may grow in his appreciation of their verity, their usefulness, and their unlimited applications; but the truths themselves change never. They have God for their Author; and they must remain as immutable as God's own being. This we say, with reference to all the truths which Christ proclaimed—whether pertaining to God, and His government of creation—to himself, and the nature, and end of his mission—or to man, his condition, and duty, and destiny.

But the particular truth of the Gospel, with the consideration of which we now have to do, is that which regards man's treatment of his brother man—which points out the true rule for the guidance of the reformer—which is seen in Christ's precept to overcome evil with good, and in his example when he ate and drank with publicans and sinners. The question,—‘Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?’—is answered by the fact, that he wished first to gain their attention,

then their respect, afterward their affection, and finally their heart and life to himself. Was that the true course for the reform *then*?—and is it his true course *now*? Or would it have been better, more efficacious, if he had followed the example of the pharisees—eyed the sinner with coldness and malice from a distance—refused him the ordinary civilities of life—acted the part of the Priest and Levite, instead of the Samaritan—and poured out words of cursing and deeds of malediction upon his head? Viewing these principles with the rigid severity of truth and utility, independent of their origin, which was the best rule for the reformer *then*?—and which is his best rule *now*? This certainly is a very important question; and upon its true solution, by the great mind of the world, depend the most important practical consequences.

From what we know of the elements of the human character, which are the same among all nations, and in all ages of the world, I think it will not be dif-

ficult to come at a satisfactory answer. The question, closely scanned, presents a choice between the two principles—overcoming evil with evil, and overcoming evil with good. Have you any doubt, as to their comparative worth? What says your own experience in the case? Suppose your neighbor wishes to win you from a course, which he believes to be detrimental to your own best good. He assumes the office of a reformer, on the principle of driving out evil with evil. He tells you, by his conduct, if not by his voice, he will have nothing to do with you, until you cease from your folly. He looks down upon you with contempt. He avoids your society. He will not speak with you, nor treat you with common civility. He trumpets your failings to the world, taking care to give you no opportunity of self-defence. In short, regarding himself as infallible in sentiment and conduct, he endeavors to reform you of your evil, by using his utmost evil as the means. Need I ask you, what would be the result? Nay!

—you would spurn him from your presence, and hug your vices with a firmer grasp! You would say to him, in tones of startling emphasis,—‘Physician, heal thyself!’ His very instrument of reform, is the thing which he wishes to drive out from his neighbor’s heart? And he will surely find, sooner or later, that Satan never makes war upon himself! But suppose he adopts the other principle. He meets your evil with the purest love. He uses the utmost familiarity, even to eating and drinking with you, taking care to practice none of your vices. He treats you *like a brother*, knowing his own liability to sin. He endeavors to inspire within you a high self-respect, which will prompt you to desire the good will of others. In short, he gains your friendship, your gratitude, your heart, by heaping the fire of love upon your head; and he may then scatter your vices to the winds! Such was the practice of the Savior. And such has been the practice of all true reformers, as the history of the world abundantly testifies.

What was the example of Joseph, of the ancient Hebrews, but overcoming evil with good? What the examples of Oberlin, and Howard, and Fennel, and Matthews, but overcoming evil with good? And what says the high moral sense of the present age, with reference to penal enactments, prison reforms, and the advancement of every feature of the public good, except it be, render not evil for evil, but overcome evil with good! As true reformers, can you hesitate which of these principles to adopt? I am sure you can not, unless you choose to serve Baal rather than God.

The example of Christ, then, is the true example for the world. It is the duty, and the pleasure, of all true reformers to be guided by it. And the professed Christian who refuses to do so, like Judas, is a traitor to his faith!

How is it with Christians, as individuals, as societies, and as denominations, in this respect? Do we see and feel the high divinity of the rule—overcome evil with good? Are we ever

careful, before we act, that the element of evil is no part of our motive? If we follow not the example of the Savior, with respect to those we think in the wrong, how imperfect is our obedience to him!—how much we need the work of the reformer in our own souls!—how pressing the necessity of our returning to the only true Exemplar of the world!

As individuals, we should ever be guided by the example of the world's true Reformer. As Christians, as believers in the Universal Gospel of Christ, it is our duty to extend our faith among our neighbors. We meet them as individuals; and there is a reciprocal influence between them and us. No man is without his share of influence, for bad or good, over his fellow man. We all have some signification in society; even the lowest form of human life, is by no means reduced to the value of a cypher. In extending the knowledge and practice of our faith, we as individuals assume the character of reformers of the faith and life of others.

Such was the position of Christ on earth; and as his true followers, we should ever manifest that familiarity, forbearance and love, which the language of our text attributes to him. If we meet with repulsion, we should bear it with patience. If the pride of the pharisee keeps him aloof from us and the world, we should treat all men as originating from the same source, occupying the same level, and tending to the same end. If error and sin inveigh against us, we must stem the torrent with firmness, and convince the world that their serpent bites have no poison for the pure of heart. If others denounce the sinner, we must help him to cast off his burthensome load—not forgetting whence we derived help in our time of need. In short, we must ever obey the precept of the Savior, dressed up into life by his example, of overcoming evil with good. If a man ask you what you believe, tell him; if he ask you the reason, tell him; and let your life be such, that he may not question the tendency of your faith.

We must associate with all, even the vilest of the vile, not as though we regard ourselves infallible, either in sentiment or conduct, but as true and earnest reformers, following the example of Christ. If we will but do this, great will be our reward of Christian peace and joy; and we will have the pleasure of seeing error and sin wither, and droop, and die, while truth and love shall arise to bless the lives of men, and rush onward to victory throughout the world.

As Societies or Churches we may also learn a lesson, from the answer to the question,—‘Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?’ What would be improper for the individual believer in Christ, would be improper for any number of believers in an organized capacity; and what would be proper for one, would be proper for all. The society stands out as a prominent light in community; and the least departure from the spirit of Christ would dim its splendor, and perhaps tend to quench its rays forever. The society

should manifest ever a perfect union in love. No member should have cause to feel aggrieved, because of the sayings or doings of another. Whatever is for the society's good, should be heartily adopted by all. The true interest of one member, can not conflict with that of another. And the highest good of every society, with respect to its own constituent parts, and to all beside, is to overcome evil with good. The society occupies the position of the reformer, though on a larger scale; and it should ever be careful to say nothing, and do nothing, which may tarnish the glory of its Christian profession. Members of societies some times feel as though if they are trampled upon, or their rights denied, they must do battle in return. This is undoubtedly wrong. It is well to maintain our rights with firmness; but we should never, by so doing, transgress the law of kindness. Christ's own life is our example, not as individuals only, but as societies also.

And as denominations, the example

of the Savior should never be forgotten. There may be those, who are so puffed up with denominational pride, dependent upon age, talent, attainment, or numerical strength, that they are disposed to look down upon those of another faith with contempt—refuse to acknowledge them as honest followers of Christ, according to their light—appropriate to themselves all truth, without any admixture of error, all right, without any admixture of wrong—place upon others the ban of anti-evangelism—refuse to go among them, like the Savior, for their reformation—will not even pray with them, and for them,—in short, whose whole policy of reform is summed up in the rule, of overcoming evil with evil. Such, however, is not the policy for the genuine followers of Christ. We must hold ourselves responsible for our faith to the world. We must labor to extend it among our fellow men, with all patience and perseverance, but making use of no underhanded, secretive, dishonorable means. We should say no-

thing, and do nothing, that we are not willing the world should know. We should be ever ready to hear all men, and judge of their cause impartially. We should go out among the subjects of reform, reach their judgment and their heart, and ever do them good. We should follow the example of the greatest and the best, the world's spiritual Reformer, faithfully and forever.

Thus, as individuals, as societies, and as Christian sects, we should ever render a true obedience to the rule—render not evil for evil, but overcome evil with good. It stands out prominently in the life of Christ. Its blaze of glory is destined to light up the whole earth and heavens. And the true Christian, the true reformer, will never depart from the standard of its high dictation.

‘Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?’ That he may overcome their evil with good. Why should the disciple be as his Master? That he may overcome the world's evil with good. What should be the government of the parent, the teacher,

the state? Overcome evil with good. Why do we call for reform in the world's criminal code? That we may overcome evil with good. What is the true course of the temperance and moral reformer? Overcome evil with good. And by what rule is truth best conveyed to the mind, and love to the heart of the world, but obedience to the Master's example, of overcoming evil with good? Whatever reformer disregards this rule, if his cause be a good one, will most surely fail of attaining the end at which he aims. But if he observe it faithfully, truth will spread wider and wider, and break up the strong holds of error; love will enlarge the borders of partyism, and from a strong rampart around the world; and both combined, making their home in the human soul, will relieve the great Heart of humanity of the dreadful bondage, which error and sin have so long held over it. May God hasten the day!

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM.

Thou hast no rival in the heavenly fold,
To wrest a portion of thy lawful realm,
Nor as was taught by heathen seer of old,
Does there another hold with thee the helm.
Evil by man's own wickedness abounds,
Not by the fiat of an *evil-god*!
And for the healing of its deathful wounds,
God's own exalted *goodness* bears the rod!
Christ's 'othersheep,' shall in due time be brought,
To hear the 'voice,' of God's anointed Son!
Then shall return the lost that long were sought,
And in 'one fold' be governed but by one!
'The kingdom,' Lord, is 'thine' forevermore,
Oh, may we love, and worship, and adore!

AND THE POWER.

Thy might is visible, Oh, God, where'er
The human eye can reach or thought can soar,
From the minutest atom, to the sphere
That moves along magnificently o'er.
Through all the starry throng that stud the sky,
In every leaflet on earth's wide domain,
On every zephyr gaily floating by,
Voices to voices loud thy 'power' proclaim.
The *soul* notes down this lesson taught without,
And its own *depths* prove strength more strong
within,
The soul sends back the echo of the shout,
Knowing no worlds without God's 'power' had
been,
Creation's voices join the echoes round
Ocean and earth and skies repeat the sound!

Religious Meditation and Worship.

'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.'—HEB. x: 25.

~~~~~

It is a truth of the deepest importance, that the institution of the Christian Sabbath confers inestimable benefits upon the world. Were it not for the Sabbath, man would either have no rest from the wearisome labor of life, or the period of rest would be desecrated by conversion to unworthy purposes. Were it not for the Sabbath, the mind would not have its due proportion of exercise on the lofty and useful themes, presented before it in the works and revelation of God. Were it not for the Sabbath, the soul would have no quiet time, freed from life's fatigue,

during which it might hold earnest, fervent communion with its Maker. Were it not for the Sabbath, the strong social ties, which bind each one to the race, would not be developed and directed to the general harmony of the world. Were it not for the Sabbath, the simultaneous praise and worship of God, and meditation of sacred things, would give place to an utter forgetfulness of God, and duty, and heaven. Were it not for the Sabbath, the Christian ministry, one of the most effective of the earthly instrumentalities of the government of God, would have no space assigned it for the performance of the work committed to its care. Were it not for the Sabbath, the order and safety of health, property and life, growing out of the blessed influence of the Christian religion, would doubtless be superseded by the anarchy and misrule of a people dead to all religion. Were it not for the Sabbath, indeed, the life with which God has blessed us on the earth would be rendered, to say the least, a gift of not much value, if

not a decided curse. The worth of the Sabbath to us, of this age and nation, is beyond all computation. It is the great surety of civil and religious freedom. I hesitate not, and I hazard nothing, in saying, that the influences sent abroad among the people of the Union, on each returning Sabbath, if the ministry be faithful to its duty, are worth more to the nation, bearing upon the preservation and purification of her institutions, than all the legislation of her public bodies, combined with the most powerful navy and army the world ever saw. Think me not extravagant in this assertion; but rather think of the intellectual and moral might, which is generated in the great Soul of the nation, by the influence among the people of the Christian ministry alone. The principles of Christianity are the strongest bulwark of our nation. Gathered up from the Bible, and sent abroad through the efforts of the ministry, on the Sabbath, they inspire a true patriotism in the Heart of the people. And so long as the Christian love of

country is alive among the people, we are safe; and without it, the deepest ruin would be mercy.

But we have something more than the rationality of this view, upon which to rely for its correctness. We have fact, moral fact, which is more weighty than the mightiest armed force, proving the truth of what we have affirmed. In the life of Washington, the martial hero of the world, there is fact, demonstrating all we claim for the principles of Christianity, for the Christian ministry, for the Christian Sabbath, in their bearing upon the weal of this nation. It has been nobly and truly said of him,— ‘History furnishes no parallel to the character of Washington. He stands upon an unapproached eminence; distinguished almost beyond humanity for self-command, intrepidity, soundness of judgment, rectitude of purpose, and deep, ever-active piety. Washington was a man of prayer. His exalted character was formed under the influence of Christian principles. In his Farewell Address to the People of the United

States, which ought to be engraved on their hearts, he gives his own deep conviction of the value of Religion and Morality, as the elements of national prosperity. 'In vain,' he observes, 'would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert **THESE GREAT PILLARS OF HUMAN HAPPINESS**, these firmest *props* of the duties of men and citizens.'

Such, then, is the worth of Christianity to us, as a nation; and by implication, such is the worth of the Christian ministry, and the Christian Sabbath, to the world. If this be so, every individual of the nation, of the world, should sustain these 'pillars of human happiness,' by every laudable means in his power. This duty does not rest upon the nation, as a whole; for we have, and should have, no national religion. But it rests upon the people, in their individual capacity. No man need expect that he can throw a part of his duty upon his neighbor, nor the whole of it. Each man, and each woman, of the nation, must do his and her appropriate

part of it, or the whole will not be done. It must be done now, this very moment; for every hour has its proportion of it; and if it be suffered to accumulate upon your hand, it will not be done at all.—Then let the people of this great nation awake!—let Zion put on her beautiful garments in her midst!—let the people seek now the favor of the Lord of hosts!—and the tide of our national prosperity will rise higher and higher, and finally overwhelm the whole world in glory! And let us, my brethren, to whom is committed a portion of this great work, from this time forward see to it, that our part of the duty of watching over the nation's religious character, be fully and faithfully performed.

Having thus spoken, in general terms, of the worth of Christianity, the Christian ministry and the Christian Sabbath, to us, as a nation, and to the world; we wish, now, to speak of the legitimate topic of the text,—

THE DUTY OF THE PEOPLE TO  
ASSEMBLE, ON EACH RETURNING

### SABBATH, FOR SOCIAL MEDITATION AND RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

We design not to speak at much length, of the divine institution of the Sabbath. Though one period of time is no more sacred than another, in and of itself; yet all time is sacred to some good purpose. The smallest degree of reflection will show, that the institution of the Sabbath was established of Deity for man's good. 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.' It is not an arbitrary institution; but the natural wants of the body and soul demand their satisfaction; and it furnishes a rich provision for them. The institution of the Sabbath, then, rests upon solid ground,—the will of God, and the wants of man.

The Sabbath furnishes an occasion for the people to assemble, for intellectual, moral and religious improvement. Religion is the same thing forever; but man's appreciation of it is constantly changing. Much of error and wrong is mingled with it, in the human soul. And the great effort should be, to root

out the tares, and nourish the wheat into a vigorous growth—to progress constantly in the truly religious life—to admit upon the soul, through the clouds of sense which envelope it, more and more of the real warmth of the sun of Love. Sabbath meetings are only the means, it is true; but without the use of the means, the end can not be obtained. We have the promise of seed and harvest times; but without a diligent use of the appointed aids, those times would be productive of no good to man. So, in things spiritual, a regular attendance upon religious meditation and worship, tends to the production of living joys in the soul.

We wish to speak, now, of *mental improvement*, as an important result of religious assemblings on the Sabbath. There are thousands of topics, based in truth, which need to be considered by the people. The labors of the week forbid that undivided attention, which is always necessary to the full consideration of any subject. By the discussion of a distinct topic before the people, all are



able to appreciate its real nature and bearings. For the future, each one has a fund of thought which he did not before possess. And thus is the mental strength of the whole assembly improved, even though error be sometimes blended with truth. What a vast fund of instruction is conveyed to the people, from the Christian desk! Its price is cheap, though it should cost the aggregate wealth of the world! The truths of the Bible, and nature, and the fair deductions of reason, are gathered up, and scattered abroad among the people, by the faithful branches of the Christian pulpit. This is done every seventh day, month after month, and year after year. These truths constitute the great fund of thought, in the Mind of the nation; and the motives they furnish, constitute the only ground of the actions of the people. True science is only the hand-maid of Christianity; it is the rule, by which God's works are interpreted. The pulpit, if only faithful to its high trust, ranges over the broad dominion of mind, and lays its treasures with

joy before the people. It ascends, and travels about among the stars; it descends, and penetrates to the very heart of the earth; it journeys through all climes; it searches the history of all nations; with the Bible, it visits the immediate presence of the Father; and returning to the earth, it lays His mandates upon the naked heart of man. The pulpit is the servant of God, for the instruction of the people. And the mental improvement of each individual, and of the whole, is one of its most obvious results.

If what I have said be true, then the plain duty of the people, one and all, is, to be ever present at church on the Sabbath, if it be a possible thing. It must be expected, that the mental interest and influence will be greater at one time than another. This may be owing to the nature of the subject discussed; it may be owing to the variable clearness and power of the speaker; it may be owing to the varied attention and capacity of the hearer; and it may be owing to influences beyond the control of both. But nothing of this kind will relieve the

people from the general duty, resting and pressing upon them. Nothing of a worldly nature may excuse any man, or woman, from a regular attendance in the courts of the Lord. The mental wants of the world demand constant labor of this kind; and if we are not faithful to our duty, we can not expect to reap its happy reward.

But we would speak especially of *spiritual advancement*, as the still deeper, the broader, the better, the all-important result, of religious meditation and worship. By spiritual advancement, we mean improvement in the true religious feeling, Love. Love supreme to God, and love universal to man, combine to form religion in the soul. This is the spiritual life, which lights up the Universe with its golden hue. There is a point in the experience of every Christian, when the darkness of the soul seemed to be gone—when the world became all bright and buoyant and happy—when the heart reposed in confidence upon God—when all men were viewed as equals—when the wind whis-

bled melody, and the birds carolled forth their joy—and when love seemed the proper employment of all God's creatures. Do you not remember the joy you then felt, Christian brother or sister? Do you not recall it to mind with the deepest satisfaction? Do you not feel it to be of more worth than the world beside? It really is. But, alas that it should be so! this spiritual life is liable to decline. The cares of the world soon cause it to fade from the soul's vision. And when this element is gone, all things look dark and cold. Such is the condition of the soul, relapsed from the spirit-birth.

But is it not possible to recover, and maintain, this high spiritual enjoyment? It certainly is, by the use of the proper means. Those means are religious meditation and worship. That bounding, hearty, happy condition of the soul, was not obtained at first independent of the appointed means; and it can not be preserved, without their continued use. The first sweet draught of happiness, which every true Christian remembers,

should not only be kept with a thankful heart, but it should also receive additions each week, each month, each year, as they fly. This can only be done, by using freely the Heaven-appointed means; and these means, I repeat, are religious meditation and worship.

The office of religious *meditation* is, to search out the various forms of truth, and draw from them the duties of practical life. One truth does not conflict with another; truth is consistent with itself. But for what purpose do we wish to know the truth? We wish to know it, only, for the sake of its moral influence upon the soul. There is, indeed, a satisfaction in knowing the truth; but that satisfaction is one of feeling, instead of thought. Truth is of no importance whatever, unless it shall influence the soul to love. Intellectual knowledge is barren of good, however large the amount we have, if it do not tell upon practical life. We may have a knowledge of science and art, and thus be enabled to gather around us the things of this world; but if that be our ideal of

happiness, we live for no higher enjoyment than that of the brute. Temporal blessings are important aids, to the production of happiness in the soul; but they are not happiness itself. Intellectual knowledge may gain those aids, and thus produce the outward circumstances that are favorable to happiness within; but true happiness itself lives in the element of feeling—the feeling of holiest Love. The intellect is the instrument, truth the material, and love the quality distilled—which falls, drop by drop, upon the heart—causing it to beat stronger and stronger, warmer and warmer, with the truest happiness of the soul. This view accords exactly with facts in nature. That knowledge itself is not happiness, is not religion, is fully proven by the fact that some men are eminently learned, and yet possessed of hearts almost too black to be human. How else may it be said of some, religion plays round their ‘head’ but reaches not their ‘heart’? Look at that ‘prince of philosophers,’ Lord Bacon, whom Pope denominates

‘The wisest, brightest, *meanest* of mankind.’

And look at the thousands around us in the world, who are respectable if not eminent as scholars, professional men and statesmen, but in point of real happiness, fall far, very far below the amiable, the loving disposition. Such have never felt the happy influence, of the love of Heaven and men. They may have meditated much; but not from a motive born of religion. Truth in their possession sparkles with its native brilliancy; but it has none of the warmth which the element of Love supplies.—They have not thought from religious motives, to religious ends; which is the office of genuine meditation.

The office of religious *worship* is to assist meditation, in the production and increase of the Love-element in the soul. We study the Word of God, because we love it, and that we may love it the more. We sing the praises of Heaven, because we have a love for the exercise, and that we may love it still more. We express our gratitude to God, because we love to feel grateful, and that we

may feel the more grateful. And we pray for the love-blessings of His providence, because we do feel happy in loving the Father, whose infinite love flows forth forever toward us. Such is the office of religious worship. It tends to the same end with religious meditation. And both, uniting like two rivulets from the same fountain, pour into the soul a copious stream of pure religious Love.

The *social* influence of religious meditation and worship, is another important consideration. Sympathy is the bond of social life. It is evolved by the natural relations which exist among men. It exists between husband and wife; between parent and child; between brother and sister; between friends and neighbors; between fellow believers in Christ; between entire strangers; even between enemies. The relations of man to man are universal. They are felt amid the ice-bergs of the North, and the cotton fields of the South: by the Hindo, crushed beneath his monster Idol, and the Christian, worshipping



the everlasting Father; they are felt by all—for which God be praised for ever! The social sympathies of life are of more value than rubies. They are pledges of the safety of our country, our homes, our civil liberty, our religious altars; and if stricken from existence, our life would be but a chilly blank.—Religious meditation and worship nourish, and strengthen, and perfect the social of man's nature. Pondering the same Bible truth, singing the same melody and sentiment, breathing the same prayer, weighing deliberately the same topic—all tend to render the natural sympathies of the heart active as lute-strings, brilliant as light, and warm as love. The social benefit of Sabbath meditation and worship, is indeed an important and valuable consideration.

And their bearing upon the *moral duties*, is also a striking benefit. The reciprocal duties of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, of relatives, friends, neighbors, enemies—all are brought out, and set in active

operation, by the union of thought and feeling in religious meditation and worship. The order of society, the education of children, the promotion of benevolent institutions, the diffusion of patriotism, the purification of government, the sympathy of man, the love of God—all the objects of good beneath the sun—are compassed in the meaning of the phrase, ‘religious meditation and worship.’ And to him, who has at heart the highest happiness of his race, the opportunities of the Sabbath are rife with the richest promises.

There are many ways of aiding in the spread of the Christian religion. We may do it by our own words. We may do it by our deeds. We may do it by ever living its spirit. We may do it by circulating the Bible. We may do it by spreading religious books. We may do it by defraying the expenses of the press and the pulpit. And we may do it, particularly, by our punctual attendance in the visible courts of the Lord.

Though all are important, and a holy life vitally so, we deem attendance upon

public religious meditation and worship as taking the lead, naturally, of all other outward means; and we therefore insist upon its general observance. As the text hinteth, we should forsake not 'the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.' There are, indeed, sufficient excuses for occasional, or even constant, absence from church; but these excuses apply only in extreme cases. Sickness of one's self, or attention to the sick, or some unforeseen hindrance which can not be removed, may justify you, or me, or our neighbor, in refusing to join the religious assembly on the Sabbath; in which case, a general duty is overruled, that one more immediately pressing may be performed. But it should be the standard maxim of every lover of humanity,—'The influence of my personal presence at church, every Sabbath, if possible, shall be given in favor of the Christian religion.' This duty may be performed alike by all. The young man, the young woman, the middle-aged, the aged, the rich, the poor, the

distinguished, the obscure—all may discharge this duty, to the individual and the public good.

But ‘the manner of some is,’ to say,—‘If it were not for certain inconveniences, either at church or at home, I would attend regularly every Sabbath.’ Of this excuse I would say, if such inconveniences do exist, the sole reason is, that you have not yet removed them. There are few obstacles in the way of regular church-going, which may not be removed. And every good citizen, every real Christian, will act in accordance with the maxim,—‘If the will be strong, the way is clear.’

But ‘the manner of some is,’ to say,—‘I must attend to my business, first; and then, if convenient, I may attend church.’ Foolish mortal! Have you no god but Mammon? Can you not manage your business in six-sevenths of the time? Have you no heart for the great realities of life? Most devoutly is it hoped, that no man will claim the Christian name, who intends that his life shall be governed by such a maxim as

this! He can have no influence for good in society around. He takes the very ground, which, in its tendency, would prove subversive to the order of civilization. And his maxim itself proves, that he loves Mammon more than God or man. A better maxim would be,—‘God and humanity, first; and self the last of all.’

But ‘the manner of some is,’ to say,—‘We have no church of our order, within a reasonable riding distance; and I can attend no other, with any degree of pleasure or profit.’ Such, without doubt, is the plea of thousands. But we do most seriously question the saying, that we can gain no profit from any church but our own. It is not so; especially, if the heart be right for the reception of good wherever found. And even if it were so, it is not a valid excuse for continual non-attendance at church. Be instrumental in organizing a church to your liking; and until you succeed, attend upon the public worship and meditation of your neighbors, even though you think them in error. The

aim of all Christians is the same. If you make your own meetings, you can have them such as will suit *your* conscience, at least. And whoever has a Bible, a mind, and a heart, can make a meeting for himself, and realize the promised presence of the Lord, where only two or three are gathered together in His name.

For the sake of our example before the world, then, brethren, and for the spiritual good of our own souls, we are admonished to forsake not 'the assembling of ourselves together,' every Sabbath, for religious meditation and worship. The wants of humanity are crying aloud to Heaven for relief; our own souls have heard the cry; and our duty demands, that the ample spiritual feast be spread before the world.

## AND THE GLORY.

'The glory,' Father, all belongs to thee,  
Designer, Architect, and Lord of all,  
Thy wisdom planned, thy power caused to be,  
Thy love is visible in great and small;  
In the broad earth, in all the stars, in sea,  
In all that dwell in vast creation's bound,  
Thy 'glory' shining forth we clearly see,  
Thy 'glory' is reflected, all around;  
Hear Oh, ye heavens, and give ear Oh, earth!  
'Glory' to God belongeth evermore!  
He startled chaos, and from nought came forth  
Suns, moons, and stars, and all that creep or  
soar,  
'Glory' forever! glory to the Lord!  
The world sprang into being at thy word.

## FOREVER.

Past, present, future, all are known to thee,  
Who wert, who art, and ever wilt endure !  
Oh, may earth's children all be taught to see  
In thee the Owner of their souls' tenure ;  
Far in the regions of the mighty Past,  
Thou, Father, wert the only living one,  
Thyself determined chaos should not last,  
Thou spakedest, and as quickly 'it was done ;'  
Now to the Future turns our searching thought,  
For thou alone art self-existent still ;  
And without thee the universe were nought,  
Thou only 'all in all' shalt ever fill ;  
'Forever,' Lord, thy kingdom shalt endure,  
Thy during nature makes it doubly sure.



## Religion the only true source of Consolation.

'Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'—  
1 COR. xiii: 12.

~~~~~

This text contains a very brief, yet beautiful contrast, between the present and future states. In it, St. Paul uses the figure of a mirror, to represent our present imperfect vision of the future life; and to show, that what we now regard only as an image, will then become a positive reality.

'Now we see through a glass, darkly.' The figure of a mirror is a very apt and beautiful one, when used to illustrate our present imperfect vision of the future state. In a mirror, we see not our own natural faces, but only their images; and those images are perfect

or imperfect representations, depending upon the perfection or imperfection of the mirror. The mirror is only the medium, through which we discover, not the reality, but the image of the reality.

The figure of a glass or mirror, may represent the true Christian faith. As the mirror is powerless, if the element of natural light do not rest upon it; so the faith of the soul is only an impulsive emotion, if it be not enlivened and directed heaven-ward by the light of truth. And as we see the image of our natural face in the glass, and not that face itself; so through the mirror of faith, we discover in this life only the image of a future blissful immortality. The mirror, then, represents enlightened faith; and what we see through its instrumentality is, not the real object itself, but only the image of the object.

The image seen through the mirror, is always faint and dim. We see through the glass but darkly. The image of an object is always unreal and imperfect, however well represented it

may be. The fact that it is an image, proves that it falls short of the reality in every thing but the resemblance. So of our faith in the future existence. It gives us at present, not the real enjoyment of immortality, undefiled by sin, but the anticipation of that enjoyment. We see now only the image of immortality, darkly, through the mirror of faith,—we see now only a faint resemblance of what shall be.

Another striking feature of this analogy is, that when we see the image of an object in a glass, however darkly and dimly that image is set forth, we know that the object itself is a reality. The object may be very faintly represented, and many beautiful features may be seen only in the dim and distant background; yet as truly as you see your own image in a glass reflected, so truly do you know that you have a real existence. This truth will not be called in question, by the most skeptical among men. And from it I infer, that although faith represents, to our present darkened understandings, only a dim vision of

immortality, yet that such image is true to the fact of a future life. If it be true, that every shadow has its corresponding substance, every image its original reality; then we know that the mirror of faith speaks the truth, when it promises us a future life that shall never end.

This dim vision or image of immortality, is peculiar only to the present state. 'Now we see through a glass, darkly.' To me, the reality of the future life is just one moment beyond the period of my death. I may have faith clear and strong enough to cast its anchor in the future life, and to sustain me in all the vicissitudes of my present being; yet one moment of the reality of immortality, would doubtless produce more happiness than a thousand years of our present anticipation. It is a peculiar feature of our present existence, that what we know of the future world, must be known only through its image or representation. As long as our present existence remains, this fact will remain steadfast and immovable. And even at the very last moment of

earthly life, though our faith shall give us the fortitude of a martyr, yet until that faith shall be lost in fruition, we must say that 'now we see through a glass, darkly.' This darkened vision of the future life is, therefore, peculiar only to the present state.

If what we have said be true, then it follows that what we now see darkly, relative to the future world, will then be seen with an unclouded vision,—it will then become a living and experienced reality. And this accords fully with the very next clause of the text. 'Now we see through a glass, darkly; but *then* face to face,'—then will the full reality of heaven break upon our enraptured vision, and then will we know what progress in capacity for enjoyment is. We can not become perfect in knowledge and holiness in a moment, either here or hereafter. But when the present rushes into the past, and the future becomes the present, then all liability to sin will cease, and the road of progressive knowledge and holiness will not be

blocked up, as now, by sin's trammeling and blighting influence.

There are many things visible in the present life, which are but darkly and dimly seen through and understood.

Who can tell why man is possessed here of a finite and fallible nature?—There is a process, by which we come at the rational solution of the subject—by which we see that God only can be infinite, while all other beings must be finite necessarily; but how few there are, who rely with confidence upon this solemn reality!—how darkly and dimly is the great truth seen and felt! Too many of us are constantly murmuring, at what we regard our sorrowful lot; we mourn and weep, that we have not strength to resist temptation's rushing flood; we lament our ignorance of the present and the future; we are inclined to be discontented with our present imperfect state, and to think, in short, that we would be much happier, did we possess the limitless qualities of a God!—But why do we think so, and feel so? It is because 'now we see through a

glass, darkly.' This darkness, however, will not always remain. It will give way before the intellectual flood of glory, by which all minds shall be filled, when the future state rushes forward to supply the place of the present. Then, what we now see darkly, will be seen with an unclouded vision; then, the mystery to thousands of our present imperfect, finite, fallible state, will be clearly seen and known, as man knows the face of his brother man; then, what now we see through a glass darkly, shall be seen 'face to face.'

Who can tell why suffering is permitted in the present life? We are aware that it does exist; we may trace out some of its physical and spiritual causes; and we may believe that, some how, it will and does have a disciplinary influence upon the sufferer. But after all, there are thousands of instances of suffering in the world, the good result of which man can not unravel and understand. Why is it? Because, 'now we see through a glass darkly;' God's ways are not our ways, neither are our

ways His ways; as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is God's wisdom, in the government of creation, deeper than man's capacity to comprehend. But man's ignorance, relative to why suffering should be, will not always remain; the darkness of the present will be dissipated, by the light and knowledge of the future; in the present state, 'we see through a glass, darkly,' but in future we shall understand fully, and 'see face to face.'

Will any one undertake to tell why ignorance and error prevail in the world? We know, indeed, that ignorance is the first state of the soul on earth; and that much of our happiness consists in rising progressively in knowledge. We know that error is always attendant upon ignorance; and that without error, we would have but a faint appreciation of truth by contrast. And we can but know, that ignorance and error are necessary dependencies upon man's finite and fallible nature.— Yet there are thousands, who seldom if ever reflect upon the subject; and who,

for the want of correct views, possess not a firm reliance on the wisdom of the providence of God. The many bow in ignorance, and are weighed down by error; but why it is so, neither they nor we can fully tell. Here is the need of faith, which can look to God with a child-like trust; faith, which murmurs not at the dispensations of the providence of God; faith, which, through the shadows of ignorance and error, reaches forward to the attainment of knowledge and truth; that faith, whose eye pierces through future years, and beholds the coming of the time, when what we now see darkly shall be fully unfolded to our view.

Why does sin canker and corrode the soul in the present world? We know that sin exists; but why it exists, none can fully tell. We may suppose that sin has being, as a necessary concomitant of the present life; as a scourge to compel man to virtue; and as a visible contrast with goodness. But the mission of sin can never be fully understood, till the future realities shall unfold it—

till the human soul shall rise above it, and enter the abodes of bliss. Why? Because, 'now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.'

Why is punishment inflicted upon the sinner? We may understand the object of punishment, under the circumstances which surround the sinner; but account for those circumstances, who can?—Punishment is, indeed, a means of discipline to the sinful soul; but why is the soul sinful?—and why does it need such discipline? Oh, the mystery of man's life! Verily, 'now we see through a glass, darkly'; but we rejoice that the time is to come, when all mysteries shall be fully explained.

How apparent, then, is the truth of the text,—'now we see through a glass, darkly.' The mystery of man's finite and fallible nature, is one which man may hope in vain to unravel, in the present state. The mystery of suffering is sealed up, to be opened only when time shall tread the high path-way of eternity. The mission of ignorance and error is one, which the future world alone can

fully develope. Why sin was permitted in the present state, can only be revealed when mortality shall be swallowed up of life. And when what we now 'see through a glass darkly,' shall be seen 'face to face,' then will all be fully convinced, that God's chastisements are consistent with the purest love.

The text is radiant with this truth,—
THE FUTURE WORLD WILL UNFOLD ALL THE MYSTERIES OF THE PRESENT. Here, we have error, vice and crime; there, they will doubtless be viewed as agents, used for the expansion and elevation of the soul. Here, man is finite and fallible; there, this state will be viewed as indispensable to progress in knowledge and holiness. Here, are suffering, and tears, and death; there, suffering shall have an end, tears shall be wiped from off all faces, and death itself shall die. Thanks be to God for the happy assurance, that the future shall unfold the mysteries of the present life—that though 'now we see through a glass darkly,' yet our present image of the future shall then become a blissful reality.

Thus, the sentiment of the first part of the text is, as already unfolded, that from the stand-point of the present world we view the immortality of the future, through the mirror of faith; and that when the future world shall become to us the present, the image will give place to the solid and blissful reality. The remaining portion of the text,—‘now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known,’—inculcates the sentiment, that man’s present knowledge is necessarily imperfect, but that the future shall so perfect it that he will know as he is known.

The imperfection of man’s present knowledge, has already received a casual notice; but let us look at this truth, with a broader and longer vision. When we view with a comprehensive ken the Universe of God, material and spiritual, we can but be struck with the fact of how limited our knowledge is, when compared with that wisdom which contrived and planned the whole. As Sir Isaac Newton, at the end of a long and useful life, had acquired only a few

pebbles from the beach of the boundless ocean of knowledge, so the wisest of earth's sages have only tasted of the infinite fulness of Jehovah's truth.—There is knowledge of the earth beneath us, whose depths can never be fathomed by the finite mind. There is knowledge locked up in the chambers of the mighty deep, beyond whose threshold man can never go. There is knowledge which escapes the keenest mental vision, in the very atmosphere we breathe. The stars are fruitful of knowledge, but occupying so stupendous a height, that man must ever continue to gaze after it in vain. The secret laws of nature, the grossest and plainest of which we only know, must ever furnish a field of inquiry for man. Man's own being is beyond the grasp of the loftiest human intellect. And our home beyond the grave is now seen only 'through a glass darkly.' How imperfect is the knowledge possessed by man!—how true the sentiment of the text,—'now I know in part'!—where should be the home of humility, except in the human bosom!

—how impious our boast of knowledge, when compared with the vast unknown!

‘Now I know in part.’ It were wrong to suppose man perfectly idiotic; and to regard him as a perfect sage would be equally wrong. Man does possess powers fitted for the acquirement of knowledge; and he should labor to that end, from infancy to the last pulsation of life. The power of progressing in knowledge is a noble thing. It is indeed a sublime work, to wander over the face of the earth, and to ascend and descend, in the earnest search for knowledge.— And the truth thus obtained, is an abundant compensation for the labor. If we will only work for it, we can gain all the knowledge which is needed in the present life. Our course is a progressive one. And though we attain to a height never before reached by man, yet should the truth go with us till we die,—‘now I know in part.’ But when will it be otherwise?—when will the scales drop from our mental vision?—when shall truth spread her folds of glory before the world? When the future

world becomes to us the present; for the text assures us, that though 'now I know in part,' yet 'then shall I know even as also I am known.'

But how is man known in the future world! This is a deeply, a thrillingly important question; for we are to know when there, only as we are known by the beings now there. Let us first consider, that of all the beings, who look down from the realms of bliss upon our imperfect abode, only One is infinite in knowledge, and He the Lord of all.—God is the only infinite Being; while the angels must be viewed as finite, progressive beings, some possessing greater and others less knowledge than the rest. And it is said, that we are to be as the angels are. The language of the Savior as given by Mark is,—'When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.' Or as given by Luke,—'The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resur-

rection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.' It is at once conceded, that Christ had especial reference to the sentiment of the infidel Sadducees, the impossibility of a physical resurrection and a physical immortality, in the language just repeated; for he tells them that they do not know the Scriptures, nor the power of God; and he then asserts the doctrine of a spiritual immortality, instead of a physical one, and declares that in the future state we shall die no more, but be equal unto the angels, and the children of the most high God. In that world, then, we shall be purely spiritual beings; and as progress in knowledge is indispensable in all beings who are less than infinite, we shall improve in knowledge while eternity shall wax, never to wane; and as some make greater proficiency in knowledge than others in this life, of course some will be higher and others lower in the scale

of knowledge there—even ‘as one star differeth from another star in glory.’—Thus it is evident, that the text refers to the knowledge, not that God has, but that the angels have of man in this life, by the phrase,—‘then shall I know even as also I am known.’ It is clear, that if man were to know in the future life according to God’s measure of knowledge, then man would be infinite in wisdom—and of course, in the attribute of wisdom, equal unto God. This can not be; for ‘there is none other God but one,’ nor shall there ever be. We will know there, doubtless, as the angels now know; we will know only truth; and with the angels, we will doubtless rise higher and higher, in the knowledge of God’s infinite truth—being free to rise, unencumbered by the snares of error and sin.

But again the question recurs,—How do the angels in heaven view man in the present life?—for the measure of their knowledge, is to be the measure of ours. They doubtless know the truth, and only the truth, relative to man here; they

must know him to be just the being he is, nothing extenuating, nor setting down aught in malice. If man has conceived wrongfully of the nature of man, the angels undoubtedly know it; and their pure hearts must sympathise with the soul of man, struggling in its bondage of folly and sin. Man once supposed himself totally vile and sinful, a fiend incarnate; but the angels must have seen the purity and innocence of little children, as inheritors of the blessing of Christ. Man once believed it his duty to love whom God loves, and hate whom He hates; but the angels, though knowing the rule to be correct, doubtless saw man's error to consist in supposing that God hates any. Man also thought he saw, in prospect, some of God's subjects rendered hopelessly wretched, in consequence of being 'made subject to vanity,' by Him 'who hath subjected the same in hope;' but the angels must know the strength of the omnipotent Will—that God is a perfect Ruler—that Christ came as the progressive Savior of the world—and that

God's Word shall accomplish the mission whereunto it was sent. All the ignorance and error of the present life, are undoubtedly discarded by angel-minds; and will be by us when we become like them: 'for now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'

Will we know our friends in heaven? This is a question, around which cluster the dearest hopes and wishes of the soul, and the answer to which is of more worth than all wealth beside. The enlightened confidence of the soul, the Christian faith illuminated by Christian knowledge, can alone give us satisfaction concerning it. The sorrowing soul reasons like this,—'If I am to meet in heaven the loved and lost of earth, where again the sympathies and loves of our being may be blended, I can say with fervent thankfulness, 'The will of the Lord be done;' but if, when we part at the brink of the grave, we part to meet no more, or to meet as strangers in heaven, God forgive me!—but I can

not bear the thought!—the tumult of my soul will not be still! Thus, the soul yearns for its former loves, though chastened by the atmosphere of heaven. Shall it be satisfied? I believe it will. If for the best, God must have so ordered it. And if we only view God aright, faith is an easy thing. Besides this, though our love there shall be elevated, pure and impartial, yet may the lineaments of our spiritual bodies be as dissimilar as here, and as easily distinguished from each other. Here, we see through a glass, but darkly; yet we know our friends and love them through life; and why should it be otherwise there, when we become as the angels, and see ‘face to face’?

Another question of deep importance is this,—Do the spirits of the just made perfect know their friends who dwell upon the earth? This question can only be fully answered, when our faith shall be lost in fruition, and the present world gives place to the future; but I may be allowed to say, I believe they do.—Memory of the past, is an attribute of

the soul; and it must go with it to the future world. If we forget the present world when we reach the future, we will not know that we ever existed before; and of course, the progress and discipline of the present life will be lost—we will have lived here in vain! Angels not only know this world, but have also visited the earth with messages from the Father; and we are to become like them. They once descended to the plains of Bethlehem, and sang,—‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men’;—which proves their knowledge of earth and human things. And from the whole, we have strong ground for the faith I have just expressed, that we shall be as the angels are—that we shall distinguish each other in heaven, and know our friends on earth—that we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known.

Such is the consolation, hope and joy, which the Christian faith affords. We are frequently called to part with our friends, for days, or months, or years; but the assurance is, that we do not part

forever. We have frequently to contemplate the prevalence of error, suffering and sin; but we are happy in the hope, that the future world will correct the apparent wrongs of the present. We now see things around and beyond us darkly, and have but a limited knowledge of things present and future; yet our joy is in the Christian faith, which teaches that, in the world of bliss to come, the mysteries of the present will vanish like mists of the morning, and the flame of love shall burn in each soul for ever and ever more.

Oh, the wealth of the Christian religion! Without it, the sun of human existence is extinguished forever! With it, the darkest events of life are gilded with light divine! How much it is needed in hours of affliction and sorrow, that we may through its mirror behold the reflection of heaven! Few there are, who mourn not friends departed. A cherished one, perhaps, has burst the bars of earth, and gone to the soul's pure home. But why should we grieve, that our friends are more blessed than we?

Is it not selfishness in us thus to do?—is it not fretting against infinite wisdom?—is it not saying to God,—‘My will is superior to thine!’ We may sorrow for ourselves, but not for the ascended.—The cup to us may be bitter, but it is sweet to them. The darkness of earth has faded from their vision, and our future has become their blissful present. Let us rather joy than weep, that with them the sorrows of earth, and the bitterness of death, are passed. Let us be admonished, that our time on earth at longest is but very short. And let us cling with the might of the soul to the blessed assurance, that we shall meet with the loved at length where parting can never be, in the only true Home of the soul, in Heaven.

From the subject before us in this little book, we see, that the spiritual progress of the soul, its advancement in the life of Love, is the ultimate aim of human existence. Every thing else will endure, in the comparison, but for a moment. Wealth will soon be gone. Fame is but a vapor. Food, and cloth-

ing, and houses, and lands, soon will be needed no more. The body will sink to its final sleep. Generations will have come, and passed. The moon may fade, the sun grow dim, and the stars fall away. But the soul! the soul! God's own protege! being's last form! It shall never die! it has just begun to live! The highest religion, the very atmosphere of Love, shall surround, and pervade, and give character to it! The soul's last life shall come from God!—God shall be 'all in all.'

Such is the happy result, for which we hope, and labor, and pray; such the result, at which God's finger points; such the result, attainable only through constant meditation, prayer and praise. Truth gleams in its full brightness before us, for meditation; Love, its distillation, in worship, will entrance the soul by flowing in upon it. And the spirit's life, a life in holy Love, shall light up at length the whole Universe in glory, and break from the lips of a heaven-born world in bursts of joy and praise!

AMEN.

Ye heavens, send down the joyous shout to earth,
Earth with your legion voices peal it back,
God ever reigneth. In him worlds had birth,
And of his Love and Truth there is no lack.
Shout ye aloud unto your Father, God,
His dwelling is the spirit's final home ;
His Goodness for the present holds the Rod,
That in the future *all* may to him come ;
To Christ, his Image, *all* shall be subdued,
Whose mission armed with God's undying Love
Shall like the leaven in the meal imbued,
Subdue, and guide to God, and heaven above ;
Earth, to your knees, and shout the hallowed
strain ;
And all ye hosts of heaven, prolong ' AMEN ! '