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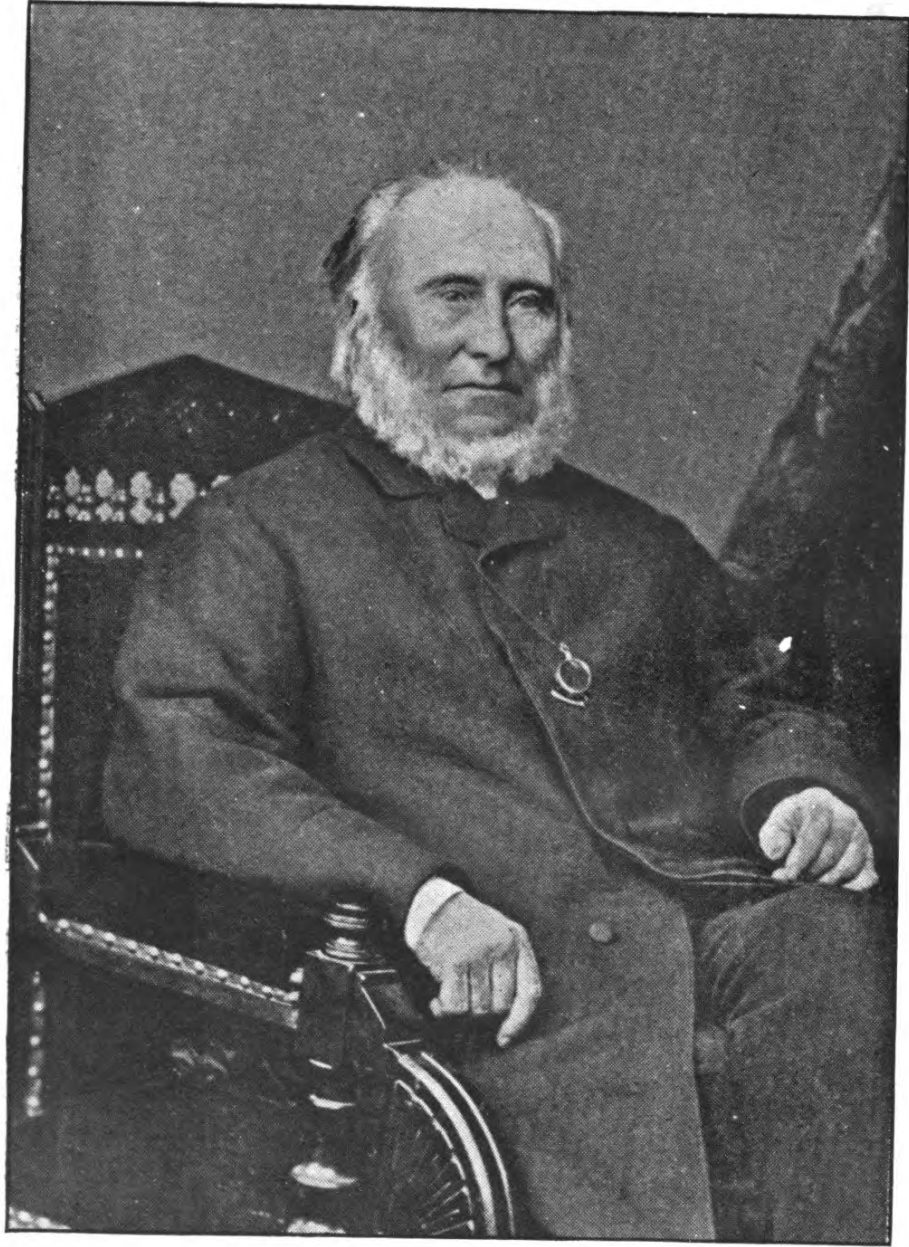
The Quiet Thoughts of a Quiet Thinker

Being Extracts from the
Diaries of the Rev. Robert
Smith, D.D., of Corsock





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Yours every truly
Robt Smith

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Diaries of the Rev. Robert
Smith, D.D., of Corsock

Published by Oliphant Anderson and
Ferrier, Edinburgh & London. 1896



THE FREE CHURCH MANSE, CORSOCK.

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Introduction

THE Rev. Robert Smith, D.D., although he spent the last quarter century of his life in one of the quietest of country parishes in Kirkcudbrightshire, had his full share of that adventurous life which seems to be the birthright of most Scotchmen.

He was the son of a well-to-do farmer, and was born in 1816, in the parish of Benholm in Kincardineshire. When he was about twelve years of age, the family removed to St. Cyrus. Dr. Keith, the author of the well-known work on Prophecy, and the real founder of the Church's Mission to the Jews, was then minister of the parish, and the boy soon came under the spell of his pastor, and received from him his enthusiasm for the conversion of God's ancient people. The parish school of St. Cyrus gave him the beginnings of his education, and prepared him for the Grammar School of Aberdeen and for the University of St. Andrews. Early friends assure us that from boyhood he had determined to be a missionary.

When Robert Smith was a student at St. Andrews, Scotland was stirred to its depths by that great spiritual revival which found its practical outcome in the Foreign Mission work of Dr. Duff and in the Home Mission enterprise of Dr. Chalmers,

and its ecclesiastical fruit in the Disruption. The St. Andrews student felt the full force of the movement, and was one of the band of fellow-collegians who early signed a declaration of their adherence to the evangelical side in the great controversy.

In 1829 the Church had ordained to Foreign Mission work Dr. Duff, also a student of St. Andrews, and in 1838 the subject of a Mission to the Jews was brought before the General Assembly, and was received with great enthusiasm. It was resolved to send a deputation of four of the Church's most honoured ministers to visit the Jews in the various lands of their dispersion, and to inquire about the most suitable place for a mission station, and into the most hopeful methods of carrying on work among them. One of the four was Robert Smith's revered pastor, the minister of St. Cyrus. Those brethren reported to the Assembly of 1840, with the result that it was resolved to establish two stations, one at Jassy, the capital of Moldavia, and the other at Pesth, the capital of Hungary. Dr. Smith has told the reasons which induced the Church to choose the latter town, and has described the work done there, in his *Early Days of the Mission to the Jews at Pesth*. The decision was arrived at after earnest pleading on behalf of Pesth by Dr. Keith; and it was also due to him that young Robert Smith was selected to accompany Dr. Duncan as a licentiate.

"We left Scotland," says Dr. Smith, "towards the end of June 1841, the company consisting of Dr. and Mrs. Duncan, his daughter and step-daughter, Mr. Allan, and myself. As we passed

through Germany, some of the Christian friends on whom we called shook their heads ominously, others held up their hands in amazement, when they heard of our intention to establish a mission within the Austrian dominions. They evidently thought that the proposal was altogether quixotic. We ourselves were not without apprehension that we might not be permitted even to enter the country. On approaching Linz, the frontier town, we became greatly concerned about our books, of which we had a considerable number, and over which there existed at that time the strictest censorship. Dr. Duncan was particularly anxious about a copy we had in our possession of the Church's admirable letter to the Jews in the lands of their dispersion, which he had hoped to get translated into Hebrew and possibly circulated at some future time. The discovery of it might have betrayed our purpose, and thrown a bar across our path at its very beginning. The first thought was to destroy it. But the happy expedient was hit upon to distribute its pages among us, to be learned by heart and reproduced from memory on the opposite side of the frontier."

After some adventures, the little band reached Pesth in safety, and were gladly welcomed by the Archduchess Marie Dorothea, who was a devoted Christian lady. The Archduchess, however, could do little to protect the missionaries, who had to behave very warily to prevent interference by the intolerant Austrian Government. Dr. Smith has himself related the trials and triumphs of the mission party. He returned in the winter of

1841-2 to Scotland for ordination, and in the early summer of the following year went back to Pesth, accompanied by Mr. Wingate, originally a Glasgow merchant, who had sacrificed the best worldly prospects to devote himself to work among the Jews.

Dr. Smith spent ten years of his life in Pesth. He married there Miss Emma Jackson, who proved a most devoted wife, and there their only child was born, a daughter named Marie Dorothea, after the Archduchess. During the revolutionary year of 1848, the missionaries were ordered at a day's notice to quit the country. Their child was very ill, and Dr. and Mrs. Smith wrung with difficulty from the priest-ridden authorities leave to delay their departure for a few days. To the end of her life Mrs. Smith could scarcely bring herself to speak of the terrors of those days of expulsion.

The missionaries returned to their posts, but the Austrian Government having, with its usual short-sighted policy, made a stricter concordat with the Papacy, they were compelled to abandon the mission.

Driven out of Austria, Dr. Smith and his wife settled in Amsterdam, in charge of the Mission to the Jews of that city. The work was scarcely so interesting; it was certainly much less exciting and less successful than it had been in the capital of Hungary. Dr. Smith, however, found a congenial position in acting as theological tutor, and some of his students still bear testimony to their affectionate recollection of their honoured teacher of more than thirty years ago.

Failing health made it necessary for Dr. Smith

to give up his arduous missionary work. He returned to this country, and spent some years as Presbyterian chaplain in the family of Mr. James Bannerman of Ellastone in Staffordshire. During his stay in England he received at least one tempting offer to enter the Episcopal Church of England, but refused. In 1867 he was called to the rural parish of Corsock, to be pastor of the Free Church congregation, in which the late Mr. Murray Dunlop was then an elder.

The last twenty-seven years of his life were spent in this secluded spot, the nearest railway station being Castle-Douglas, ten miles away. He was a model country minister. His people were proud of his learning and of his growing reputation as a leader in the local courts of the Church, but it was as a pastor that they clung to him with affectionate regard. Few have been so faithful in the house-to-house visitation of his people as he continued to be down to the very close of life, when he was considerably over threescore and ten. Dr. Smith was at his best when engaged in religious conversation in the lonely farmhouse or humble cottage into which sorrow had entered.

His earlier years, the period of life when a man acquires a practice in the arts he has to use throughout life, had been devoted to work too unlike what is required in a Scottish pulpit, to enable him to attain to the facility of a popular preacher. His sermons were frequently soliloquies spoken aloud, and when the hearer listened to the invariable opening phrase,—“The subject of our

meditations is—” he felt that the word most aptly expressed what followed. But his sermons invariably contained some fresh and striking thoughts which were always worth waiting for. They reminded me more of the discourses I used to listen to from the late Dr. Horatius Bonar than anything else.

In the Presbytery and Synod of Dumfries Dr. Smith was regarded as a trusted and wise leader. His early training, in a position where he was exposed to the continuous interference and police surveillance of the suspicious Austrian Government, had begotten a habit of almost instinctively weighing the consequences of every action on all its sides, and of firmly and resolutely though quietly maintaining his ground when once the decision was taken. Although he was a man whose natural habits of mind were rather dogmatic than historical, who was accustomed to test everything by referring it to some fixed general principle, and who could scarcely be said to be open-minded, he was nevertheless thoroughly fair-minded and singularly impartial and candid. He always appeared to me to be a living example of the advice Rabbi Duncan used to give to New College students,—“Have a strict and perhaps narrow creed for yourself, and a very wide one for all other people.” This enabled him in most cases to place himself sympathetically in the position of those from whom he differed, and no one could help feeling that he was a most fair-minded opponent.

His wide experience of life, an unusual gift for a country minister, made him a welcome guest in

many houses; and one gentleman, who had grown grey in the diplomatic service of his country, has often assured me that there were few men whose conversation he enjoyed more than that of the Free Church minister of Corsock.

He was a trusted adviser of the Jewish Committee of the Church, where his linguistic powers (he could preach in four languages), and his wide and varied knowledge of men and affairs, rendered him most serviceable in the delicate negotiations and investigations which had sometimes to be undertaken. In all disputes he was pre-eminently a peacemaker.

Dr. Smith was all his days a student. His library was carefully selected, and as carefully studied; but during his lifetime he had published nothing but a few pamphlets, and one or two contributions in periodical literature. He had made a special study of the Prophetical Books of the Old Testament, and especially of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. He was a firm believer in the idea that the whole Book of Isaiah came from one author, and he had a special theory about the book, which he was accustomed to expound to intimate friends,—that Isaiah was not so much the prophet of Israel as the prophet of universal history, and that the unrolling of the ages was depicted in the imagery of his predictions.

When he left the Rev. Gilbert Lawrie and myself in possession of all his manuscripts, and desired us to select for publication any that we thought suitable, it was a great disappointment to find that, with the exception of one or two short

writings, obviously unworthy to represent our friend's scholarship and quiet power of thought, we could not find any completed treatise. He had begun a commentary on the Book of Isaiah, and had finished verse by verse comments on rather more than half the book; but he had left no introductory essay or dissertation to expound his personal theories, and nothing to make his distinctive views known to scholars or to the public. We found, however, a very large collection of notebooks, in which he had with great regularity jotted down his thoughts on all manner of subjects, during a period of more than forty years; and we believed that the real and inner soul of the man would be better revealed in extracts from the diaries, than by publishing any unfinished manuscript. We had not known of the existence of these diaries until they came into our possession after his death, but they explained a good deal to us. No one could enter the Corsock manse study without finding Dr. Smith, with a pad on his knees, writing, or thinking about something which he was about to jot down. We often wondered what this constant writing meant. Few could listen to a speech of Dr. Smith, without remarking that he was accustomed to make little digressions to state some principle in an almost pedantic way, and few could listen to his sermons without detecting some passage which seemed to be more elaborated than the rest, and yet did not quite fit the context. In those digressions he introduced the notes which he had been writing year by year, and which we discovered in the collection of diaries which we

found among his papers. The series extended from his residence in Amsterdam till the year of his death. They are utterly impersonal. It is impossible to tell from the papers where the writer was or what he was doing. Nothing is noted but the date and the thought. Taken together, they are a record of the inner thinking life of the man, jotted down in his own quiet and impersonal way, and give a better idea of Dr. Smith than anything else.

It was left to me to make the selections thought desirable for publication,—a task of no small trouble. The jottings were certainly not meant for publication; the same subjects are considered over and over again; and the style is not what Dr. Smith would have used had he been writing with a view to publish. Still they recall to all who knew the man his ways of thinking, and the prominent ideas in his conversations on theology and on topics of personal religion. They are the Quiet Thoughts of a Quiet Thinker, and the reader will find many of them very suggestive. I have not arranged them in any artificial order; they are printed in the order of time, and the dates, the only distinctive marks in the diaries, have been retained on the margin. This little volume ought to have been ready for publication at least a year ago, but the pressure of other work, and some months of indifferent health, prevented me finishing my task as soon as I expected.

Dr. Smith fell asleep in Jesus on the 12th of June 1894. His wife had died on April 11, 1893. They are both buried just outside the walls of the beautiful little church within which this ripe scholar was de-

lighted to preach the simple gospel of Christ to a small country congregation. His grave is surrounded by the graves of his old parishioners; he could not have desired another resting-place.

To quote his co-presbyter, the Rev. Charles MacNeil of Dumfries, "After all, much as he was to be admired as a scholar and a minister, he was greatest in the genuine spirituality of his Christian life. No one could come into contact with him without feeling the influence of his intense faith, his devout reverence, his simple piety, his ardent enthusiasm for the service and glory of Christ. He always struck myself as one living consciously and constantly very near to God, and the beauty of his home life with his spiritually-minded and equally devoted wife, who predeceased him only a year, was a thing never to be forgotten by those privileged to see it. And the faith which animated and inspired him for service sustained and comforted him in his season of suffering. It pleased God to take him to Himself through an ordeal of painful disease; but his patient, cheerful resignation grew ever the more manifest. His one desire was that he might be enabled to bear his Father's will patiently, and he was so strengthened. He experienced that grace which is all-sufficient and that strength which is made perfect in weakness; and when the divine purposes were finished, 'having served his generation according to the will of God, he fell on sleep.'"

THOMAS M. LINDSAY.

CORSOCK, *August 1, 1896.*

The Quiet Thoughts of a Quiet Thinker

The Evangelization of the Masses

THREE considerations are to be taken into account in all efforts for the evangelisation of the masses— Dec. 17, 1856.

I. The importance of individual conversions in connection with the general elevation of the community. Both of these aims must be sought after, because they mutually support each other.

Sometimes error is committed in seeking the second at the expense of the first; sometimes in seeking the first at the expense of the second. Some people will listen to nothing which does not aim exclusively at individual and real conversions; others overlook this in the endeavour to reclaim the people to Christian habits of life. BOTH ARE RIGHT AND BOTH ARE WRONG. Success comes when the two things are aimed at.

Perhaps the present danger is to aim at broad, rather than at deep, results. But observe, conver-

sions are very seldom obtained unless they are aimed after. God must be looked to for His gifts, and they must be acknowledged. To open at any point a communication between heaven and earth touches the deepest chord in the human heart. A whole community (if once prepared by sufficient knowledge to understand it intelligently) may be moved by it. On the other hand, general knowledge is of the utmost importance. Without it the most glorious manifestations of individual conversions in the midst of a community may be of little avail if not understood, or may even give birth to a great deal of fanaticism.

2. Seek to get into contact with the heads of the people. There is never a dead level in human society. The hills are the sources of rivers, and if the eminences can be got to absorb the heavenly dew, it will flow in rills through the valleys. Only beware of looking for nature-energy alone. Thirsty souls are to be found, scattered here and there, who possess a great energy of spiritual life, or want of life, and exercise, in this respect, a great influence on their fellows.

3. The Christian worker has a kind of priestly function to perform. Believers are, in a certain sense, a kind of mediators between God and their unconverted brethren. This is different indeed from the mediation of Christ; as different as the prayer of believers for each other is from the intercession of Jesus. Nevertheless there is a point of resemblance, which, in fact, shows that the work of Christ is not something alien from us, but founded

on principles which are well understood and acted upon among ourselves. The one is the fountain, the others the rills which are dependent on it and flow from it. Believers must enter into the state of the unconverted by sympathy,—burden themselves with their guilt, and plead, on the foundation of Christ's substitution, for their brethren. On the other hand, they must enter into God's character, understand and sympathise with Him,—with His character and disposition towards the wicked,—and, again, on the basis of Christ's work, look for the blessing.

Romanism

A GREAT want in our theological literature is a book on the Papacy, written in a less antagonistic spirit, and with a juster appreciation of the important ideas which so frequently underlie the perversions of Rome, and which have so much influence on the minds of well-meaning and earnest people. Feb. 28, 1857.

A double advantage would thus be gained.

The real feelings of Roman Catholics would be better appreciated, and the sources of those mysterious influences by which they are spell-bound would be better understood. The idea itself is often right, and approves itself to their better mind, while the means by which they think to realise it are such as are suggested by a carnal and corrupt nature.

Good would be done indirectly to Protestants by pointing out to them those ideas, which, in their horror against the perversions of Rome, they are apt to lose sight of. The following are a few examples:—

1. The idea of Unity, which is grand and magnificent in itself. The error of Rome consists in her scheme to attain it—not by the Spirit, but by the flesh. It is the unity of the Spirit, enlightening each individual believer, and making him one with the rest in truth and in love, which is the real idea. Rome degrades this idea into an external unity, created and upheld by force, and reared not on the highest development of the individual intellectually and spiritually, but on his lowest degradation, and on the annihilation of his individual rights and responsibilities.

2. Regeneration in Baptism. The heart of every serious-minded parent desires this, and the assurance of it. This is the stronghold of Rome. Her perversion of this doctrine lies in attributing regeneration to an outward observance, and not to the Spirit of God offered in the Covenant, and to be received by a believing parentage and Church through faith. Protestants, because they abhor the *opus operatum* of Rome, are often inclined to let go their hold of regeneration in baptism altogether.

3. The same may be said of other ordinances; *e.g.* “The voice of the minister is the voice of God,” which is true under the condition that he adheres as a faithful ambassador to his instructions. Rome

casts away the condition, and makes the declaration absolute. Protestants, in rejecting the error of Rome, are apt to overlook a great and solemn truth which Rome perverts.

The Heroic in Faith

“I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”—
PHIL. i. 19.

A BELIEVER, a son of God, is heir of all things. **March 15, 1858.**
There is nothing really beneficial for him which he may not have; there is no evil, however great, over which he may not triumph, not merely by being supported under it and escaping from it in the main unscathed, but by extracting from it a positive good.

An important question, however, arises here, whether he obtains these benefits simply by being a believer, so that being a child of God he will certainly have them; or whether, victory over the world as a whole being assured to him in his character of believer, the special blessings in this victory are suspended on special acts of faith? Undoubtedly the latter must be the genuine idea. See above, Phil. i. 19, and other passages.

A believer, having the reality of faith in him, is assured of the reality of the victory, but the degree and the extent in which the victory is secured must depend on the degree and extent in which

faith, its correlate, performs its necessary functions. Thus a faith comparatively dead will fail to obtain many blessings—to extract the blessing from many adversities—which a living faith would have appropriated. Unless faith is afterwards aroused, and made to turn its own shortcomings into a source of spiritual profit, ultimate loss, stretching even into eternity, may be the unavoidable result. Not a believing man *simpliciter*, but a believing man realising his own character and the principles in his own life,—in the particular case in hand, overcomes the world. Victory, in the main, is secured to the possession of faith, but only in proportion as faith realises itself in living acts, can the full idea of victory be realised.

There is another instance of the same principle which is of great importance. God offers to make His covenant with us and with our children. But the children of believers are not necessarily regenerate, simply because their parents believe. Here, as before, not believing men simply attain this blessing, but believing men realising their believing character, acting faith in regard to it. Did Christian parents realise and act upon their faith in this particular, we should hear nothing of unregenerate and godless children growing up in believing households. The act of faith should accompany the begetting and bearing of children from the very first. In the first part of their existence they have a common life with the mother, every affection of her mind and condition of her body transmits itself to them. In the second stage,

although they possess more of a separate existence, they revolve round the parents' life, in so narrow a circle, that the transmission of mental states at least is not much less than before.

Let us not suppose that the view suggested transposes the actings of grace into operations of nature. There is, indeed, a similarity in the channels through which natural and spiritual benefits are conveyed; but the essential difference consists in this, that the channels of the former are open by nature, and the channels for the latter by grace or by its counterpart Faith. The blessings of grace are not less supernatural, because they flow, whether to old or to young, through the ordinary channels of the human constitution.

The blessings spoken of should be appropriated previous to baptism, a circumstance which does not in the least diminish the significance and importance of the ordinance. If the blessing has been obtained already, a confirmation may be expected there; and if it has not, there, if ever, faith may be expected to be stimulated to its intensest exercise. There the covenant is publicly signed and sealed; the individual and social principles are there brought into play in their mutual relations; the action of the parents' faith is, or ought to be, sustained and supported by the whole collective force of the congregation.

Love

March 24, 1858. LOVE is creative; love is inventive. A nature not under the dominion of love is ready to fall under the power of indifference. Justice, on the other hand, is a restraining power. The one limits; the other overflows. The one contracts; the other expands. When God created the world, love gave the impulse.

The Baptism of Christ

July 25, 1858. THE human consciousness has two aspects, a public and a private, and in both it is a personal consciousness. The first belongs to man's individuality, the second to his social character.

In respect to His private consciousness Jesus could feel no pressure of guilt, being absolutely holy. In so far, however, as He identified Himself with the Church, He bore the burden of her sin, and that not in a mechanical way, but inwardly and truly. As therefore on the Cross He groaned under the burden of human guilt, not merely suffering its effects, but homologating its proper substance, there can be no difficulty in admitting that in the baptism of John, which preceded it and symbolically pointed to it, He entered the water in an inward frame of mind quite suited to the outward act of the baptism which He underwent. His baptism was therefore no empty and unmean-

ing ceremony. We demand reality in all the actions of Jesus as a necessary condition of their perfection. But if Christ entered His passion itself, His inward state in all respects responding to the objective inflictions of His Father's anger, He sustaining and the Father imposing the burden as a deserved penalty, why should He not, by anticipation, pass through His baptism, in which His death was prefigured, with feelings equally real and conformable to the outward character of the baptismal rite?

Liturgies

THERE can be no doubt that the Liturgy Nov. 28, 1859. of the Church of England takes a powerful hold on the minds of the worshippers. An element of attraction must exist in it somewhere. It must adapt itself to some want of the mind. It seems to derive its power not from anything peculiar to any one class; it is equally liked by the living and the lukewarm, by the rich and by the poor, by the young and by the old. What is acceptable to all, must suit itself to some quality common to all.

A liturgy takes hold of the associations which link the mind to past generations, to the brethren who, in the same land or throughout the world, are using the same form, and to past seasons in the life of the worshipper.

There can be no doubt that all these are elements

of power. To feel one's self in spiritual contact with past ages—to pour forth the same confessions, petitions, and complaints which issued from the hearts of ancient saints and martyrs, and in the very words which they used—strongly affects the heart. The same may be said of the communion established between the heart of the individual worshipper and the hearts of his brethren in all parts of the earth, and of the link which binds the present and the past of one's own life. Such a tie is one to be prized.

It is true that all these ends may be attained in a more spiritual way. The unity of past ages with the present, the unity of true worshippers in all parts of the earth, the unity subsisting between all the various stages of the believer's life, may be felt and recognised without the necessity of a common form. But it is nevertheless true that in the present condition of the spiritual life, the existence of a common form helps the mind greatly to realise this unity. One feels the power of association most strongly, when, after a considerable number of years, the liturgy is once more heard. The soul feels great reluctance to stand alone and isolated when dealing with matters of supreme importance. The existence of a common form implies the existence of an outward organisation and unity, and thus helps to remove this feeling of solitude.

It will be admitted on all hands that there is a great danger of substituting external forms and an external unity for the spiritual substance of

which they are but the outward representatives. But the proper question remains, whether in acts of worship the introduction of these elements is founded on the weakness and imperfection of faith, and to be done away as soon as such crutches can be dispensed with; or on human nature itself, in its essential constitution, and not on its frail and feeble conditions as caused by sin.

The great evil of a liturgy is that it stereotypes the life of a Church. It takes it for granted that no new wants, no new exigencies, can arise. Hence it is a bar to progress. It is more than conservative, it is obstructive, and therefore tends to quiescence. Whenever the mind endeavours to stretch forward to an ideal future, seen but not realised, it finds itself, at its first effort, beyond the pale of existing forms. It must desert them in order to take one step in advance.

The only way of escaping this conclusion is by providing innumerable forms of prayers, suited to all emergencies, or by making the prayers so comprehensive as to include all possible cases. The first method supposes the Church, at one stage of her progress, to possess a degree of knowledge of her future destinies which she does not possess. The second method, besides this, requires the use of language so vague, that while it is in some sense applicable to all cases, it is strictly applicable to none. God alone is able to provide a form of words adapted to all successive ages. He alone can anticipate all His people's wants. He has done so in the Bible. There He has constructed

a typical machinery so multiplied and various in all its parts that the language founded on it is at once so specific and individual (so much in contact with fact and life), and yet so general and comprehensive, that it finds new applications and embodiments in all revolving ages. Thus, fact and idea, history and truth, are reconciled. How feeble and vague the language is which is intended to apply to a variety of circumstances, but which lacks this typical support, may be seen from the collects for the day in the English service. To all this it may be added that to put one age of the Church in the position of expressing the wants of all after ages, is to ascribe to it a divine function and to encroach on the prerogatives of Revelation. The Bible exhausts the wants of the human mind, single or collective, during the continuance of time, and therefore admits of no modification or addition. The same cannot be said of any book which comes from the hand of man.

Affliction

Jan. 31, 1860. A CRUSHING and bruising of the spirit seems necessary, or at least helpful, to its emancipation from present reality, and to enable it to rise to higher and more ideal conceptions of life. When the current of life runs smoothly, when the senses, intellect, and will have their natural and accustomed gratifications, the mind is apt to rest contented in the present, and neither to look upward nor forward.

The spiritual nature, strictly so called, that which brings us in contact with the ideal world, falls into a sleep from which nothing but a powerful stimulant can arouse it. When afflictions come, when the harmony of the outward life is destroyed, when the palace of earthly happiness is broken down and its fragments lie scattered all around, when the present and the actual is only a source of pain and grief, then the soul is, as it were, compelled to arise and seek for new habitations. It is forced to take refuge in the other world of ideas; hence the elevation and softness it so often exhibits under these circumstances. Those qualities are not called forth by the mere negative removal of that which was, but by the irradiation of the pathway of life by a new and higher light. The morning beams sweetly even on the wreck and ruins of the stormy night.

The Life of the Soul

THIS is the real life of the man. His body is but the machinery through which the soul communicates with the external world. The events of our external life are but the *occasions* in which the soul realises itself. Nor is there a single one of them all which may not be turned to the soul's profit. Prosperity and adversity may be equally improved to the gain of the soul. Even the assaults of Satan and the temptations of evil men are not excepted. A soul united to God in Christ, and bent on purify-

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ing itself as He is pure, bent on responding everywhere and at all times to His will, His promises, and His love, by obedience, trust, and love, may find in every turn of the wheel of its outward history an opportunity of attaining its object. Hence it is not only independent of them, but, through grace, can use them all to the best account. Instead of being their servant, it is their master. Instead of being crushed under them, it can triumph over them. There is not one of them all, however apparently adverse, which may not thus be appropriated for good. It is of great importance to keep distinctly and constantly in view this entire subordination of the outward to the inward life in both its sides of doing and suffering.

National Sins

Dec. 29, 1860. WHEN a sin ceases to be anybody's sin in particular, it has already assumed the dimensions of a national sin. When a wrong cannot be removed by the efforts of a single individual, or of a considerable number of individuals, it becomes a national wrong.

God will not the less on this account regard and requite it as sin. *We* are apt to overlook it, and consider it as if it were no sin. This would not be the case if our common and social conscience were as much awake as our personal conscience, which is not the case.

What individuals have to do is, first to purge

themselves of it, and then seek to eradicate it from the community.

To escape national judgments it is not enough to use the means necessary to ward them off. We must seek to remove the moral causes of the judgment.

Man and Woman

THE principles which regulate the mutual position of man and woman seem to be the following:— **March 14, 1862.**

Mankind exists in two capacities,—individual and social. Man and woman, considered simply as individuals, stand on a footing of absolute equality. They have the same immediate relation to God and to eternity. Both are endowed equally with all personal attributes of understanding, conscience, and will, under direct responsibility to God, and involving in their use and abuse eternal issues which attach to the individual as such.

Considered socially, and with reference to any social combination into which they enter by consent or by the law of nature, the woman is subordinate to the man. Thus in the marriage union the man is first and the woman is second. Their individuality, however, is not merged in the social unity; and therefore the essential rights of both are reserved. Both principles remain intact. It may be difficult in many cases to discriminate where the sphere of the one begins and that of the other ends. But however difficult the practical application, the principles themselves are clear.

In every properly individual act, woman occupies a position of parity. In every social act, that is, in every act which belongs to the particular social combination, the primacy belongs to the man.

By not attending to the above distinction of the individual and the social capacities, great mistakes are made. On the one hand, the social subordination in the special tie is made to override all individual rights, and the parity which still exists between the parties as individuals is lost; and, on the other hand, when individual parity is made too emphatic, the social subordination is drawn into its vortex and swallowed up.

There is a third principle which is also of much importance practically, namely, that the man in the way of grace ought to give honour and precedence to the wife. This extends to all things which responsibility and duty do not forbid. A man may not divest himself of the responsibility of his position, nor therefore of his natural rights as far as they are its natural basis; but voluntary services and honour should be gracefully rendered.

Thus the rights of the man, instead of excluding all that is gracious and graceful from their mutual intercourse, are their proper foundation. Were there no rights, there could be no grace in waiving them. If woman claimed precedence as her right, there would be no grace in yielding it. Nor even if there were a parity in right would it be suitable that precedence should always be conceded by the one and accepted by the other.

Preaching

A PREACHER should always have two texts—a **March 25, 1862.** text to preach from and a text to preach to—the one taken from the Bible, and the other found in the people's hearts. The difficulty lies in combining them. It is comparatively easy to preach from a text and expound a truth learnedly and connectedly; but then the subject may have only a distant and indirect bearing on the actual state of the hearers, and may be to them only an abstraction—a subject of contemplation, interesting to minds who look at truth for its own sake only. The preacher must remember that he has not only to deal with truth, but with living men and women. It is also comparatively easy to preach what may be interesting to the hearers, but at the sacrifice of truth, or at least so that no system of related truth may be before their minds. The preacher must attend to both interests; and there lies the difficulty of preaching. These two interests are in the highest sense coincident, but nothing is harder in practice than to reconcile them.

Further, the preacher must also have a most real sense of the presence, grace, and power of the living God of truth, enter into sympathy with Him, and be His mouthpiece; and at the same time strive to enter feelingly and by sympathy into the state, thoughts, and feelings, the difficulties, dangers, and prospects, of his hearers. He must seek to be one

with God and one with his hearers ; and in a sense, taking hold on both, mediate between them. A real apprehension of God, of his hearers, and of himself, and of the relations of truth to all the three, is what is required. But who is sufficient for these things?

Conversion

Jan. 1, 1863. THERE are frequently two steps in conversion, distinctly marked in the inward experience. In the first the soul is made to see that God is to be taken at His own word, and that His promise is something to be simply relied on as true because He has spoken it. In the other there is a revelation made to the soul of Christ's person and righteousness.

When the peace and joy obtained in the first of these manifestations has been lost, it is usually restored in the second. Though these are distinct experiences, they are not to be regarded as diverse ; nor though the first peace has been lost and has been restored at the second stage, accompanied by such feelings as might lead the person to suppose that then first conversion has taken place,—this is by no means a necessary inference. The vital change may have taken place at the first stage, and the peace when experienced may have been true peace. The one experience referred to in fact involved the other. The difference between them seems to be, only, in a different element coming

into prominence. It would appear that some discovery of the person and righteousness of Christ takes place in order to the soul being enabled to take God at His word, but it is by far too latent, and escapes the recognition of the consciousness. At the second stage this discovery is made in all its fulness, and it brings with it an increased and overpowering assurance of the truth of the promise. In other words, a conviction of the truth on the authority of God and a sight of the contents of the divine declaration are found commingled in both cases, but in the one the former, in the other the latter is the chief subject of manifestation.

Church Establishments

THE duty and responsibility of States to recognise, and by every competent means to promote, Christianity should be regarded as a fixed and fundamental principle. To maintain that a man in any one of his numerous capacities, or a community of men, is not under law to God, is of the nature of infidelity. Feb. 16, 1863.

It may, nevertheless, be doubted whether establishments of religion have not been ante-dated. A man may be under obligation to perform a certain thing, whilst yet this duty has for its essential condition another duty which, in the nature of things, precedes it. He is bound to perform both, but each in its order. Thus it is the duty of every man to commemorate the Lord's

death in the Sacrament of the Supper, but it is their duty in the first place to repent and believe. And it is not duty but sin to reverse this order. In like manner, it may be the duty of a nation to establish Christianity, and yet be its first duty to be a Christian nation.

The error of the Covenanters lay in attempting to uphold a constitution in Church and State, which could rest only on a very insignificant minority of the nation. The effort, had it been successful and had it been carried out in practice, could only have ended in despotism. Institutions, to be practicable and beneficial, must be the expression of the mind of at least a majority of those competent to judge; *i.e.* of those who by age and education have attained to maturity. Indeed, a large majority is necessary to form a sufficient basis. Small minorities have no right to expect, on the other hand, that institutions be marred in order to meet their peculiar and exceptional views.

Church establishments are founded on the supposition that the nation is Christian. In the established state of things a falsehood thus lies concealed in the very root. But error can never stand isolated. One wrong step drags other steps equally wrong at its heels. Hence it is utterly impossible for an Established Church to maintain purity and discipline; *i.e.* to exercise the essential functions of a New Testament Church. It will not do first to assume that the whole community is Christian, and, having established the organisation

of the Church on this basis, immediately proceed to exclude from church communion all those who lead unchristian lives. Were the Church of England, for example, to exercise the discipline of the New Testament on ministers and people, she would soon be left with such a small minority within her fellowship as to lead to her certain overthrow. She must therefore choose between two alternatives—establishment without discipline, or disestablishment with scriptural purity. In Scotland the Establishment never encountered any difficulty as long as she conformed to the world and was true to the fundamental idea on which she rested, that the community was Christian. As soon as she began to act on Christian principles the collision came, and it would have equally come, whether the first difficulty had taken the direction of ministers or church members.

In England the whole community are held legally to be members of the Established Church, except criminals, who are equally debarred from civil rights. By the Law of Toleration they are permitted to worship elsewhere, whether individually or socially, but they do not cease to retain all the immunities and rights which belong to the Establishment. Dissenters are therefore fully enabled to maintain their legal interest in the property of the Church, but it is difficult to see how they can assert this right on the one hand, without acknowledging on the other the corresponding obligation to uphold the property to which they prefer a claim, by Church rates or otherwise.

In Scotland the prevalent idea rather is, that by leaving the community of the Established Church one foregoes all the rights and immunities belonging to the Establishment. The cause of this seems to be that there the notion of a Church as something distinct from and not identical with the State, has attained to a much higher development than in England. In law, however, the property of the Church must be held not to belong to any one sect, but to the community. To tax the general community in order to support the worship of a sect is a position altogether untenable.

All Christian property which has descended from our forefathers must be regarded as belonging to the community, with the restriction expressed or implied in the original grants, that it be applied to religious purposes. In what form, the community must judge. Were it otherwise, the Papists would have a legal claim upon it. A Dissenter, therefore, as a member of the community, should he choose to worship elsewhere, does not lose his voice in the disposal of it. In England, at least the majority have decided in favour of the form of Episcopal worship. The minority have a full right to urge another application of the property. And though aggrieved by the present use of it, as every minority must be, their rights are maintained intact.

Even in the best and most harmonious state of things, no legal provision should be made for the Church, or the poor, or for missions, to such an extent as to supersede the exercise of the imperative Christian duty of free-will offering. The proper

idea of almsgiving, in its widest sense, as including every charitable donation, is that it is a *religious act* strictly so called, an act which has God for its immediate object. It is a thank-offering made primarily to God. It is primarily an expression of gratitude to God rather than of kindness to man. It must first be cast into the treasury of God, and then the donor, or another in his stead, according as the arrangement may be, becomes the almoner of God. The poor are God's special pensionaries, fed on His bounty; and objects more immediately connected with the rearing of His tabernacle in the world, as the support of churches and missions, must be supplied from the same source. Whatever economical provision be made for these things in a legal way, it is a great evil when the duty referred to is put in abeyance.

Prayer and Praise

WE all admit the necessity of the *spirit of prayer*, Jan. 18, 1864. in order to the success of our daily work, especially in that part of it in which we labour directly for God, as in preaching, etc.

But the *spirit of praise* seems to be as necessary, which includes the present lively remembrance of past help, and also that element in prayer which is *assured* of the blessings yet to arrive. "Thou meetest him that *rejoiceth* and worketh righteousness" (Isa. lxiv. 5). Hence the importance of encouraging and strengthening the spirit of praise

by giving expression to it in the singing of hymns, etc. Hence the prevalence of this practice in revived states of mind and in revival times, and the desirableness of it at all times, both for the individual and the congregation. It is not incidental nor accidental that an eminent evangelist commenced his addresses by singing aloud some hymns; it was a raising of himself up to the level of his work. Praise and prayer should go together, and the reality of each may be tested by the other.

Infant Baptism

Sept. 12, 1864. THE primary elements which enter into a just conception of this subject are two, each of which, severed from the other, has formed the basis of a distinct but one-sided doctrine. Some have held that the parent and family constitute one whole, the children (and in the Old Testament times the dependents) being merely, as it were, parts of the being of the father or head, without separate individuality. This is the one extreme, and, like every other extreme, cannot be fully realised in practice.

Others have thought that the children are separate individuals and nothing else. This is the other extreme, and equally impracticable with the first. It is a necessary inference that they are in every respect and in all things entirely independent of each other and of the head of the family.

It is in the combination and right adjustment of

these two polar ideas that the true natural basis of the doctrine of infant baptism is to be sought for.

The Greatest Idea in the World

THE greatest idea in the world is, that the whole visible universe is a type and symbol of the invisible. The external is the sign and manifestation of the internal; the language in which it expresses itself, and the language in which it can be described. Oct. 27, 1864.

High Churchism

IN High Churchism a constant attempt is made to return to the Old Testament dispensation, which as constantly fails of success. The New Dispensation is cast off, whilst the Old is not regained. Of the two mutually supplementary elements, the external and the internal, the former constituted under the Old Covenant the centre round which the other revolved; while under the New Dispensation it is the internal or spiritual which forms the centre of revolution. Under the one the internal emanated from the external, under the other the external emanates from the internal. This is in harmony with the two forms of divine communication belonging to the dispensations respectively. July 16, 1866.

Hope and Prudence

Feb. 10, 1867. HOPE and prudence are two chief factors in the regulation of human life. Hope is fed by the contemplation of ideals, and anticipates and strives after their realisation. Prudence is the child of experience. A truly sound judgment implies that hope and prudence are in due balance.

In the earlier stage of life hope usually predominates, and thus the judgment is defective. In the latter stage of life prudence tends equally to predominate, and so far the judgment again becomes defective. In normal cases the judgment may be expected to be at its soundest at the middle age, when hope is still vigorous, and yet has been sobered and mellowed by experience. Yet there are great diversities in individual men. Some are cautious even in youth, and some retain their hopefulness even to old age. Hope unchecked by experience and hope soured by experience lead to equally unsafe conclusions. If a right balance of hope and prudence be not found in a single mind, the same result may be attained by the united deliberation of young and old men, when they entertain a sincere respect for each other, and each party is humbly conscious of its own inherent tendency and weakness. In order, however, to the attainment of this result, both sides must be outspoken in the expression of their convictions, and mutually yielding only in the practical resolution arrived at.

Co-operation with God

THE proper idea of co-operation with God is that we enter into God's purpose and plan, and perform the part which He assigns to man in the execution of it. April 17, 1867.

We are apt to reverse this order and ask God to co-operate with us. We frame a plan for ourselves without consulting Him, and look to Him for help in carrying it into effect. This would make God follow in our wake instead of our following in His.

We must not suppose that because we seek only to carry out God's plan, our co-operation is of no use. On the contrary, our activity may be an essential element of its execution. Rightly understood, it may be said that, but for our performing our part, it would fail of effect. Of course, if He means a thing to be actually accomplished, He will see to the performance of the condition, as well as to that which depends on it. This remark is exemplified both in human action and in prayer. Yet such is the connection between the two things, placed in co-relation, that the existence of the one may be said to depend on that of the other.

The Family

GOD has appointed a great variety of conditions and relationships among men. Dec. 19, 1867. No proper estimate

can be formed of them, except in the light of their *end*. They furnish so many occasions or opportunities for bringing out and training the various Christian graces, and thus of glorifying God by the reflection of His manifold attributes. Did mankind consist of a vast number of unrelated individuals, exactly alike in character and position, this manifestation would be exceedingly meagre and incomplete.

Hence the value set by God on the Christian family. The family is a singularly simple yet complete institution. It includes a great variety of relationships—parents and children—(mutual)—husbands and wives—masters and servants, etc. It is a little world in itself. And yet, though so comprehensive, the relationships are intimate, direct, and personal, a peculiarity which gives them a special importance for the training of the spiritual graces; and also makes the family a nursery for the more extended and remote relationships of the world at large.

It is the part of each member of a family—from the youngest to the oldest in his own place and sphere—to aim at the fulfilment of the duties specially devolving on him. No one is above this obligation, and no one below it. When all of them are in Christ and endowed with much grace, a family becomes like a many-sided crystal glowing with spiritual light, the most beautiful object of contemplation in this world.

It is the duty of each member of a family, besides striving to fulfil the part directly assigned

to himself, to recognise the unity of the whole, and to seek the perfect working of the whole. Especially is it duty to seek this by prayer for each other, than which nothing tends more to make the whole machinery move well and smoothly. The grace thus obtained is like oil, which makes all the wheels, large and small, in their mutual connection and dependence, to work harmoniously and without jar, conspiring together to the common end. This end is like that of the family clock—to keep time with the movements of the sun, the grand regulator of the time of the universe.

Love

LOVE always contemplates its object in its ideal. **June 8, 1868.**
Hence, therefore, the halo in which its object ever seems enveloped.

When the real and the ideal correspond, love has the fullest scope and most unfettered exercise. It is accompanied by great joy and complacency in its object, and by a strong desire to please, to benefit, and to make happy.

When the real is marred by considerable imperfections, love perpetually endeavours to overlook them, and still behold its object in an ideal light.

Even when the character is utterly perverted, love is still capable of recognising the ideal, to which it might be brought by restoration. In this case, though unable to ignore the actual state of the

object, it pours itself out in strong compassion and in a desire to restore. Nor is its existence incompatible with a deep abhorrence of the perverting causes. On the contrary, the love of the object as seen in its ideal, and the abhorrence felt for that which mars and destroys it, will be correspondingly intense.

There is still a case beyond this, in which there is no knowledge of the special individuality, and consequently no conception can be formed of the personal ideal. There the object is looked at in the light of the general idea of humanity.

If the object seems worthy, interest and benevolence are excited, although these feelings have more of a general and less of a special and personal cast.

If it seems unworthy and degraded, humanity is still recognised there with all its inherent attributes and capabilities; and with a feeling of deep abhorrence towards those things which stain and deface the character, there springs up compassion for the object, and a heartfelt desire for its recovery, and the restoration to it of the image of humanity.

Mary

June 21, 1872. THE import of that word, "Blessed art thou among women" (Luke i. 28, 42), is obscured by the blasphemous inventions of the Roman Church. It must not be forgotten that to Mary, and to Mary alone, was given the faith necessary to

receive the announcement of the angel, and to conceive and give birth to the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare the case of Abraham.

Nor should we forget that in her mind was first matured the *faith* required in order to receive the first manifestation of miraculous power on the part of Christ (John ii. 1-11). As God's greatest gift was received on earth in the arms of faith, so the inauguration of Christ's public work was effected under like conditions. Though our Lord, on the occasions referred to, guarded against the notion of private or personal influence, which would have placed both Himself and His mother in entirely false positions, reversing, in fact, the positions to be assigned to the divine and the human respectively, yet Mary was the appointed recipient in faith of the first outgoing and manifestation of His mediatorial power. Her words to the servants show that her faith was not staggered by the apparent rebuke which she had received. She had no doubt been prepared for the new honour thus put upon her, by laying up and pondering in her heart the events of the preceding thirty years, as on more than one occasion is said of her. In a true sense, therefore, Mary might well be called the mother of the Church,—as Abraham of old was termed the Father of the faithful.

The Imitation of Christ

Dec. 24, 1872. THE work of the believer is like that of the painter. It is to take a portrait of Jesus Christ,—to produce his Master's likeness in the living colours of his own life. A good painter by much contemplation first receives the impression of the image which he wishes to portray in his *mind*, and from this living substitute he then proceeds to copy. To omit this process, to copy directly from the object, and without the internal image, is to proceed mechanically, and never succeeds. The internal image is the main thing; the external object, in the actual delineation, must be looked at chiefly for correction. So with the believer. The image of Christ in the heart is the first thing, and is obtained by contemplation and prayer. When it lives there, it readily reproduces itself in thoughts, words, works, and gestures.

A picture on canvas is merely a copy of the external features of a man. The picture of Christ in a believer's life is of a far more perfect kind. The resemblance is not external only,—it pervades the whole being.

Theology and Experience

March 4, 1875. A MAN'S theology, when it is not merely formal and traditional, springs out of his own practice, and is a reflex of his own experience. This is

quite consistent with the fact that he takes it, or seems to take it, from Scripture.

There is a bias in his mind towards those views which harmonise with and justify his practice. The will and heart find satisfaction in the discovery of a theoretic foundation on which to rest.

There is an incapacity in the understanding to perceive those truths which have not been inwardly experienced. We must of course distinguish here between the immediate and the reflective process of the understanding. The former must precede experience; the latter, which forms the basis of theology, follow after. The material of a man's theology is not derived from the statements of truth as they lie before him in the letter of the Scriptures, but from these as they have become the subject of his own personal experience. Only by experimental knowledge, resulting from the illumination of the Spirit, and the feelings of the heart thereby excited, can he be put into possession of their real meaning. Without this they are mere symbols or formulæ,—the things represented by them being unknown. A true theology requires more than the skilful manipulation of texts of Scripture. These are its sole objective source; but in order to be available for the purposes of theology, they must first be reproduced in the experience of the heart. This is the relative truth which lies at the root of Schleiermacher's theory, that theology is the product or fruit of the Christian consciousness. He detaches

it far too much from its objective and permanent fountain, but his position takes account of a legitimate and important element.

As an illustration of the close connection between theological views and personal experience, may be quoted the divergent opinions on the subject of the assurance of faith.

Temptation

Nov. 22, 1876. TEMPTATION is ascribed in Scripture to four sources,—to our own hearts, to the world, to Satan, and also to God. Concurrently with these, the fifth source is our fellow-men. Temptation cannot be ascribed to all these in the same sense. Therefore it is necessary to distinguish. To tempt means one or other of two distinct things,—to incite, to instigate; or to try, to test, to put to the proof.

Contrast together the first pair of sources, both of which are within our immediate cognisance, and not indirectly only through their effects, namely, the heart and the world, that is, the world within and world without.

The primary source of temptation in the strict sense is our own evil heart (James i. 14, 15; Matt. xv. 19). By it we are tempted in the first sense.

Worldly objects tempt in the second sense. They try us and put us to the proof. They are rather the occasions of evil than direct incitements

to it, deriving their main force from the state of the heart. The trial, however, may be more or less severe through the native strength or weakness of the temptation, through its adaptation to the special tendency of our heart, through the influence of concurrent circumstances, as poverty, prosperity, worldly glory, etc. Yet the proper instigation comes from within. A worldly thing is like a sword which may be turned against ourselves or against the enemy.

Contrast together the two last, of which we are cognisant neither by sense nor by consciousness.

God tempts only in the second sense. In the first sense it is expressly denied of Him (James i. 13).

He dispenses the objects and circumstances by which we are surrounded, so as to test and try us; or issues commands of a like nature. Thus Abraham. He may do so, though He foresees that we shall fall. But He never incites to evil. On the contrary, He puts forth a direct influence for good on all who trust in Him.

Satan tempts only in the first sense.

Scripture does not reveal to us the manner of his influence, but the fact. It may be by a skilful arrangement of external circumstances, or by direct instigation, or by both. So far as he may be allowed to influence our outward surroundings, his end is ever opposite to that of God, his object being not to test, but to induce.

Lastly, our fellow-men may tempt us in both senses,—according to the spirit that rules in them.

They may put us to the proof simply, or they may, and do, directly instigate to evil. And the latter they may effect by means of external influences, or by the more immediate means which spirit brings to bear on spirit by words and example, or by methods of communication still more subtle and mysterious.

The Field with Seed

April 8, 1877. IF a man have no seed-corn to put into his field, it is in vain for him to labour for a harvest in order to obtain it. God offers us the seed-corn of grace, to produce a harvest of holiness. Man's way is to put the harvest first—to raise our seed-corn out of the empty fallow field.

Perseverance

April 12, 1877. THE doctrine of assurance is the proper basis of the duty of perseverance. Belief in the former is the proper fulcrum by which to secure the fulfilment of the latter. Without some hope of success, there can be no effort. Without some hope of final success, there can be no continuous effort. In the things of salvation God gives us not a relative but an absolute hope, not an uncertain or partial hope, but the assurance of hope. In our temporal affairs we are content with the former, and it is

enough,—for those concern only relative blessings. In the matters of the soul, where blessings absolute in value and duration are in question, it is otherwise. We need an assured hope, as the basis of every fact and of all continuous acting. Hence God gives us a sure word of promise on which to rely, in order to encourage us to each particular act. And equally He gives us a sure word on which to rely for final success, in order to encourage us to continual effort, *i.e.* to perseverance.

Faith

IT is a difficulty to some that so many and great effects are ascribed to faith. **May 21, 1877.** “Only believe, and you acquire at once the forgiveness of sins and a title to heaven.” The secret suggestion is: “What gives to faith such a pre-eminence among all Christian acts and graces?” In truth, however, what is (rightly understood) truly ascribed to faith is due to the grace of God. What is really magnified is His grace and power in Christ Jesus. We need not be surprised that He should give, and that He should give bountifully. An immediate and complete forgiveness to the chief of sinners is His gift. Power to overcome the most powerful temptation from within and without is His gift. Faith simply accepts His gift, and has neither merit nor power in itself. The fallacy which underlies the objection referred to, is, that faith is being placed parallel to other Christian acts,

and singled out from among them as possessing superior worth to the rest. As a human act, it has no such special title to recognition. Its whole efficacy and value lie in the fact that it stands at the meeting-point between man and God, and *receives* the manifold grace and power of God. The real marvel, therefore, is not that faith secures such great things, but that God bestows them on the unworthy.

Calvinism

Nov. 15, 1877. IT is often said that Calvinism limits the freeness of the gospel. On the contrary, a free gospel has for its counterpart sovereign grace. The doctrine of human ability and merit shuts the gospel door. Salvation wholly of God is the co-relative of salvation for the *unworthy* and *helpless*. If the possession of some degree of righteousness and strength be a condition, the gospel is not absolutely free. On the other hand, God is doing all that He may do to bring men to a sense of their guilt and helplessness, that He may bestow on them the free gift of salvation. In point of *fact*, they are guilty and helpless, and the gift of salvation is free. They must be convinced of the former for the acknowledgment of the latter. We have no reason to say that all is not being done, short of force or compulsion, to bring men to that conviction,—on the one side by kindness to keep them from recklessness and despair, and on the other by rebukes, by thwartings, by chastisements, even by

leaving them for a time to a career of vice. A vicious man may seem far from salvation, but yet may be very near. He is not obviously far from a conviction of utter guilt and helplessness. And we have no reason to say that God ever withholds salvation from those who have reached this conviction. Even though they have, they may be and are entirely without ability to accept the gift of salvation. But it furnishes God with the opportunities for which He has been long waiting and working, to bestow it without violence done to man's free moral nature. The consciousness of helplessness, and, so far as man is concerned, hopeless bondage, is the proper antecedent to the free act of choice, but through the efficacy of grace he is moved and enabled to embrace a free salvation.

Resting-Place

(Jer. 1. 6.)

THIS term, with others of like import, as *portion*, *good*, etc., designates the object of supreme satisfaction to the soul, which fills it and leaves it nothing to desire beyond. It is the co-relative of want. When all the wants of a creature are fully, adequately supplied, it has found its resting-place. It depends therefore on the nature and wants of a creature what its resting-place will be. Some of the lower animals seem to find every want of their nature met in animal indulgence. Others rise to a stage much above this. But none

Nov. 26, 1877.

of them have wants which cannot be satisfied with creature objects in some sort. Of man alone it can be said, that in the fullest enjoyment of all creature good, there is still an unfilled void in his heart—a want still unsatisfied. If the question be asked, what object would fill every craving of the heart, furnish it with a resting-place, and impart to it a peace which passeth all understanding, the answer would be twofold, as it regarded man in his unfallen or his fallen state.

In the former, an adequate answer would be supplied,—“*God is a spirit, infinite,*” etc.

In the latter,—This one only living and true God (Father, Son, and Spirit), known to us as *our* God and Redeemer.

It would be interesting from this point of view to sum up all the wants and cravings of the human heart on the one side, and all the characters in which God has revealed Himself on the other, and compare these with each other. We are conscious of guilt, we need righteousness; of weakness, we need strength; of ignorance, we need wisdom; we need an adequate object of our love, of our trust, of our hope. He must be able to order and control all things for our good, to provide for us in eternity, as well as in time. He must be *God, our* Saviour, to be for souls truly a “resting-place,” leaving nothing besides, and nothing beyond to desire and long for.

Love

DOES not the law of equal love, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," which finds its practical exposition in "Do unto others as ye would they, etc.," properly contain two elements, one akin to justice, and the other to self-sacrificing love? If so, they must be regarded as still unseparated and undeveloped. Pure justice guards and defends right. Pure love parts with right freely. It sacrifices right and self, in the sense of personal right, for the sake of others. It may be doubtful whether the above rule, as originally given to Israel, conveyed more to their minds than the idea of obligation to respect the rights of others as they would have others to respect their own, and to perform towards them those acts of natural benevolence which, though they cannot be enforced by outward sanctions, are yet obligatory on the one side, and matter of moral claim on the other. It did not rise to the level of—"As I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Jan. 18, 1878.

Promises and Prayer

PROMISES are either absolute or conditional. Of all alike the fulfilment is obtained by believing prayer, with this difference. In the former case, the prayer is ordained as well as the fulfilment. The event is therefore sure. In the latter, the

Feb. 4, 1878.

fulfilment is contingent on the prayer, and may never take place.

An absolute promise secures the end, and therefore the means necessary to it. A conditional promise leaves the end dependent on the means. In all cases actual fulfilment is preceded by prayer. We may infer that the time of the fulfilment of an absolute promise is near at hand when men's hearts are stirred to prayer for it. And we may also anticipate the fulfilment of a conditional promise, when it can be said of a man, "Behold, he prayeth." In all cases grace to pray comes from God, but in the one class of promise we know that grace will be given in due time, in the other we know not whether it will be given at all. In the one the promise implies grace, in the other grace implies fulfilment.

Forgiveness and Remission

April 8, 1878. THERE is surely a greater difference between the ideas conveyed by these two words, than is commonly imagined. They are usually employed as practically synonymous. Yet forgiveness, which is a personal thing, and admits to favour and reconciliation and the free fellowship of love, materially differs from the remission of debt, punishment, or other consequences of sin. We can readily conceive of them apart, restoration of the personal relationship, with all the joy and happiness which attach to it, whilst the full penalty for the fault

committed is still exacted by the party offended against, and willingly borne, or even imperatively demanded, by the offender. On the other hand, there may be the remission of all penalties, without the personal relationship with its attendant feelings being affected, much less recovered.

Is it that the words really express different ideas? Or is it that they express radically the same idea, whilst forgiveness frees from the loss of personal privilege, and remission from the loss of something more external to us? or, to put it otherwise, the one removes the pain caused by personal displeasure, and the other that caused by the consequences of transgression, which are apart from and additional to this.

Evil and Good

A GOOD deal of ambiguity and obscurity of statement is connected with the use of these words. Sept. 6, 1878.

The only thing which is absolutely evil is sin, and the only thing (among our possessions) which is absolutely good is holiness.

All other things are good or evil, according as they are related to holiness or sin. This is the main estimate to be made of them, yet they are not to be held as in themselves indifferent. They are therefore good and evil relatively and conditionally.

Temporal or other good promotive of happiness is good in itself, but if it induces to sin, it changes

its character and becomes intensely evil. Or, putting it otherwise, that which is good in itself is evil in its effects. In like manner, temporal or other evil causing pain is evil in itself, but if it be productive of holiness, it also changes its character and becomes good.

Hence, therefore, all relative and conditional good and evil must be judged of, not merely as it is in itself, but in its relation to the states of those affected by it, and to its effects on them.

Thus temporal evil, though evil in itself and evil to beings who are perfectly holy, is good to sinful men. It is good in relation to their states and circumstances. And if it be the means of mitigating the power of sin, it becomes one of their greatest blessings.

In this sense all things work together for good to them that love God. The spirit of holiness ruling in their hearts is the one condition which intensifies the good in good things, and turns evil things into good. *All* things, good or evil, relatively, are appointed and intended by God for their good; and so far as they seek and obtain the needed grace to improve them, they actually do work out their good. So far as this requisite condition is fulfilled, they become invulnerable. No evil can befall them. On the contrary, evil is converted into good, and is triumphed over.

The like may be said in an inverse sense regarding them that love not God. Under a dispensation of forbearance and grace, it may be said, indeed, that all things are appointed and intended

for their good. But so long as they continue rebellious, and lack the essential requirements of grace, good and evil things alike work together for evil.

Forsaking All

WHEN a man is called of Christ, he leaves *all*. **Nov. 8, 1878.**
In that sense, he parts with *all* his substance in the usurped and false sense of property as a possession to be disposed of according to his own will. Even he himself is no longer his own. He does not divest himself, however, of his stewardship. He ceases to be a proprietor, as set over against God, and becomes a steward or trustee.

“I . . . Thy”

(Ex. xx. 2.)

“I AM the Lord thy God.” The use of the personal pronouns is specially to be noted. We must know and love God as a living person. And to know Him as a God of salvation, I must know Him in His personal relation to myself. It is a personal intercourse which He maintains with His people. It is also to be observed that the medium or the channel of communication is a person—*Christ*; and that the efficacious power by which it is established and maintained is a person and not an influence—the Holy Spirit. The truth, also, which forms the subject-matter of intercourse is a personally spoken word.

Yet man is also social as well as personal. But society is a union of persons, and possesses a personal character, as well as the individuals who compose it. It is personal in its component parts, and the whole is a kind of united personality. Man *as* a person is both social and individual, and his full personality is not sufficiently taken account of, unless both attributes are brought into it.

It is noteworthy how, in the books of Moses and the Old Testament generally, the singular pronoun, *thy, thee*, predominates, whilst, in the discourses of our Lord and the writings of the apostles, the plural pronoun, *ye, you*, prevails. The explanation is probably this:—

In the Old Testament—as, “I am the Lord thy God”—it is the community which is *immediately* addressed. It was desirable, therefore, to use the singular, in order to make it evident that in the whole the individual persons were also intended. They were a whole, but they needed to be reminded that that whole was composed of individual, responsible persons.

In the New Testament, on the contrary, men are *primarily* addressed more in their individual capacity, but they required a reminder that they, whilst possessing this character, also formed parts of a whole.

In the Old Testament, therefore, the whole was addressed, but also in relation to its parts. In the New Testament individuals were addressed, but also in relation to the whole body.

Directions to Anxious Souls

A VERY frequent complaint made by those who are Feb. 10, 1879.
anxious about salvation is their inability to believe. They are convinced of their sin and guilt. They are also persuaded that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour, and that He is offered to the chief of sinners. But they feel themselves unable to trust in Him, and get no rest for their souls.

These difficulties have usually their origin in the attention of the mind being diverted from the object of faith, and concentrated on the act of faith itself; on the state of the sinner, or on his past history and present experiences. They may also be caused by an imperfect and one-sided view of the proper object of faith. Therefore the first aim of the spiritual guide should be to turn away the thoughts of the inquirer from the past life, its sins and guilt; from the present felt darkness and hardness of heart; and from the act and exercise of faith itself. In a word, from self, its state and actings. And whilst the thoughts are drawn away from these, they should be turned to and fixed on the object of faith, *Christ* and His *finished* work, on the free promise guaranteed by the faithfulness of God, on the facts of salvation, which are true and wholly independent of us, of our state, or of our belief or our unbelief.

The evil does not arise from the vivid sense which the sinner has of his own state of unworthi-

ness and helplessness, but from his mind being so preoccupied with these as to shut out from the view, and it may be pervert and present as conditional, the great facts on which faith alone can find a resting-place.

Another point of equal importance is to present to the inquiring soul the true object of faith. Some direct attention merely to the *written Word*,—and when the inquirer complains of the inability to believe, direct him farther to the teaching of the Spirit, and urge him not to believe, but to pray for the Spirit's aid, that he may be enabled to believe.

There is an element of truth in both those directions, but they do not meet aright the case of the sinner, who needs at once a sure ground on which to rely, and the power to trust on it. Neither is sufficient; and when his attention is first turned to the one and then to the other, it is presented with a worthy object, without the power to believe in it, or with a source of power to believe, but without the object to be believed clearly in view.

The safest direction, therefore, is not to the Word apart or to the Spirit apart, but to Christ Himself, in whom both are united. He is the personal Word, the objective living truth. And at the same time He is the dispenser of the Spirit. *Truth* and *power* are thus in Him conjoined,—the (objective) truth in its most attractive, persuasive form; and the living, efficacious power to be breathed into the soul. These are all that the sinner needs. The written Word and the Spirit are separate though

co-related elements. In Christ the personal Word is the junction point of both.

The soul should therefore be led up, not to the mere Word (*litera scripta*), but to Christ speaking in the Word. In the former there is truth, but not power. In the latter there are both. This is illustrated by the miracles of Jesus. Also by His work after the resurrection,—He opened the Scriptures to the disciples, and He breathed on them. Hence it is said of the Comforter (John xv. 26), “Whom I will send from the Father,” etc.; cp. John xvi. 7; Luke xxiv. 49; Matthew iii. 11; Acts ii. 33.

Hence, also, He says, “The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life” (John vi. 63). And Peter, who felt this, in his reply to our Lord’s question said (ver. 68), “To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

Luther’s strong view of the inseparable connection between the Word and the Spirit was only true so far as the Word is listened to as coming directly from the lips of Christ. The mere letter of the written Word may be turned into a fetich, as the Sacraments in the hands of Sacramentarians. Not so the Word as spoken with living power by the mouth of Christ, *i.e.* Christ speaking Christ therefore is the true object of faith. In Him there is the fulness of truth and the fulness of the Spirit, light and life, truth (objective) and power (subjective). Therefore He meets the sinner’s whole need, and to Him, therefore, the sinner should be directed, as able and willing to meet it.

The principle of the direction is: Not to the written Word—not to the Spirit; but to Christ, who speaks the Word, who breathes out the Spirit.

Personal Belief

March 10, 1879. IT does not follow, as is commonly assumed, that because most men follow the religion of their fathers, of their country, or of the particular religious community in which they have been brought up, their faith is a mere matter of hereditary or common custom without personal conviction.

These things affect the materials on which we form our judgments, and the influences and associations which tend to give a bias to our minds in forming them. And as far as the materials are defective or the influences are pernicious, the effect will be deleterious. In other words, the judgment formed will likely be false. But in all the opinions we adopt, whether sound or unsound, we are dependent more or less on the materials within our reach, and on the influences which surround us, and yet the opinions themselves may be matter of personal conviction, making the best of its opportunities. Our beliefs may not be taken from others on trust, but the grounds on which we base them will necessarily be affected by the circumstances in which we are placed.

The general ideas prevalent in a community to which a man belongs, the literature which circulates in it, and a thousand other things, all tend to pro-

duce oneness of belief. This shows how important a factor the community is in the establishment of firm personal beliefs among its members; how therefore, for the sake of the latter, the former must be attended to; and how, also, the phenomenon may be explained, when, at a certain stage in the history of a community, a vast and sudden change takes place in the personal opinions of its members.

Charity

THERE is a charity that *blinds* to the fault of another. And there is a charity that *hides* it, *i.e.* forgives it and refrains from exposing it. **April 22, 1879.**

A Christian

A CHRISTIAN is a man who *receives* ALL *from* Christ and *renders* ALL *to* Christ. He dies to self—renouncing his own wisdom, righteousness, and strength—his own will, aims, etc., and, trusting in Christ, and seeking Christ in all, lives to Him. **April 22, 1879.**

Sanctified

THERE is nothing on earth which is not capable of being sanctified by separation from human and selfish ends, and by consecration to divine ends. The most unlikely things, little things, adverse things, receive the stamp of holiness when thus **Aug. 10, 1879.**

used, and become holy unto the Lord (Zech. xiv. 30). There is no duality in the true life, so much for God, and so much for ourselves. The true life is one. A lower stage of it is reached when the highest aim rises above all other aims, so that in a case of competition these cannot prevail. The highest is reached when all the lower aims are made the means of advancing the highest,—in other words, when the whole is consecrated to God.

Christian Liberality

Oct. 10, 1879. ONE of the best tests of the spiritual life of a Church is found in its liberality; not in large gifts given by the hands of dying men, but what is freely bestowed by those who really have the means and possess the power of employing them on their own gratifications. There is a direct connection between the consciousness of receiving gifts from God, and the desire of requital by giving Him something in return. Thus money, though among the carnal things,—and just because it is so,—becomes a kind of barometer of spiritual life.

True Religion

Oct. 16, 1879. THE essence of true religion consists in two things, which, when they are found, should secure for a man recognition as a Christian, amidst a thousand diversities of opinion on Christian con-

nection, and the want of which should exclude a man from the Christian brotherhood, however orthodox he may be in his views, or however strict in his church principles. These are—The renunciation of self, and the enthronement of Christ in the room of self. Not self-will, but obedience to Christ; not self-trust, but trust in Christ; not self-love, but love to Christ.

Self is a devil in embryo, though, lacking power to sustain its own usurpation, it often becomes a beast. Trust in Christ embraces trust in Him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and eternal redemption.

The Old Life and the New

THE root principle or the reigning power in the old life is, self, self-will, self-trust, and self-love. It has many ramifications and forms of manifestation; *e.g.* the lusts of the flesh, the love of the world, etc. Self as a ruling principle has no power to control the inferior lusts and passions. It is itself overpowered and becomes their slave. Oct. 19, 1879.

The root principle and reigning power in the new life is Christ. Whether we say, "Christ lives in the believer," or "The believer lives in Christ," we express the same thing from opposite sides. Christ lives in His people by His grace and strength; His people live in Him by the *acknowledgment* of Him as the source of their life, by submitting to His authority, trusting in Him as their wisdom, righteousness, and strength, and

“cleaving” to Him in love, making His glory their supreme end. Such a life has power to subdue all inferior appetites and desires; or rather, Christ, who reigns in it, and whose supremacy is acknowledged and submitted to by the believing soul, has this power and exercises it.

“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts” (Gal. v. 24.) “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (ver. 16).

The contest between God and us is primarily a contest of will. When man fell, he renounced his allegiance to and dependence on the will of God. The will of God is endowed with two attributes — authority and power — (to give, to protect, to bless). Man, in asserting his own supremacy, by two corresponding acts of will, refused the authority and the ground of truth, substituting in their stead self-will and self-trust. But the will in thus usurping dominion was unable to keep the other parts of our nature in subjection. It was like a usurper, who, having dethroned the lawful ruler, is too weak to maintain public order, and the state falls into a condition of anarchy. The appetites and passions, having no controlling hand over them, become lawless. In the interest of the rebellion of the will against its rightful superior, the higher affections (good in themselves) were transferred to other and opposite objects, so that the objects formerly loved were hated, and the objects formerly hated were loved. These are necessary consequences.

Let self (in the forms of self-will and self-trust) assume the supremacy, these two effects must follow. From its inherent weakness, it ceases to regulate and control appetites intended for the preservation and propagation of the race, which then run all excess of riot. By the creation of a new and absolutely antagonistic interest, it diverts all the higher sentiments into opposite channels. The love of God is turned into self-love. Justice, the guardian of right, is made to assert the assumed rights of self, not the true rights of God, and becomes selfish revenge. Its very steadfastness in the assertion of false charms becomes implacability. The new interest has falsehood for its natural ally instead of truth. It also perverts the judgment and the other faculties associated with it.

In a word, let human will assert its independence of God as the absolute ruler and the absolute source of help, and our nature becomes a ruin, a total wreck. The first step to restoration is its return to obedience and trust. The personality, which resides in the will, being a created and dependent personality, must be brought back to its right relation to God. The rest will follow, not of course without grace, which is necessary not only for the commencement, but for each succeeding act and manifestation of the new life, yet in the order now indicated. And when the soul has once submitted to the supreme authority of God, and has accepted Him as the sole object of trust, that grace is not withheld. For in this new and

rightful attitude, it is no longer the man himself who lives, but Christ who lives in him.

If this be so, however, the question may be asked, Why is the victory over sin not complete when self has been dethroned, and the supremacy of God has been established within the soul? In reply, it may be said that the acceptance of God, as the source of authority and strength, may be more or less complete. That it has taken place is implied in the fact of repentance. But though the principle of self-will and self-trust has received a death-blow, it is not eradicated, and may still retain much vitality. And a contest springs up between it and the new principle of life in God. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." This forms the very centre of the battle, and on its varying fortunes depend all the other issues. If the flesh, that is, self, prevail, the sinful affections enumerated by the apostle (Gal. v. 19) are the effects of this prevalence. And if the Spirit maintain the upper hand, love, joy, peace, etc., appear as *fruits* (Gal. v. 22, etc.). Hence it is said, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (ver. 25); "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (ver. 16).

God's spiritual discipline seems to be ruled by the relation in which these two leaders in the contest, namely, self in self-will and self-trust, and the Spirit who subjects the will to God in obedience and trust, stand to each other. When self again asserts itself, God withdraws Himself and His communications; He takes away love, joy, peace, etc., and

leaves often the soul a prey to sinful affections and overt acts of sin, that it may learn by its own weakness and be drawn back to its rightful allegiance. Whilst, therefore, every victory over sin is due to God, it is of importance to note in what order of events the victory is secured. He brings the will first into its true relation of subjection to Himself, and then makes it to prevail over every enemy by His divine strength. The will is at once brought low and made strong. It becomes a true servant and a true ruler at the same moment—a servant to God, a ruler over all else. “When I am weak, then am I strong.” “I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.” “Without Me ye can do nothing.”

Vacuum

GRACE as well as nature abhors a vacuum. When a vessel is empty, the air rushes in and fills up the void. So when the human heart is emptied of false trusts and aims, then the Spirit or breath of God enters in and fills it. Jan. 5, 1880.

It may be well to press the offer of salvation sometimes in this particular form. Faith is often viewed as a preliminary act, which a man must perform to entitle him to *accept* salvation, instead of being itself the acceptance. To obviate such difficulties demand *consent*. A man may be conscious of that, when of nothing else. Genuine consent implies faith, whether he be conscious of the latter or not.

Strength and Weakness

Jan. 24, 1880. GOD perfects His strength in man's weakness. Man perfects his weakness in his own strength. Hence the falls of many just men at the point in which they have been known as peculiarly strong. Abraham's faith, Moses' meekness, David's generosity, Jeremiah's tenderness, the strength of John the Baptist ("Look we for another?"), the love of John the Evangelist ("fire from heaven"), and Peter's boldness were the very characteristics in which temptation found them and triumphed over them.

Holiness in the Sight of God

Jan. 31, 1880. INCAUTIOUS language is sometimes employed regarding holiness, as if it had no value in God's sight. There is nothing in which He more delights. It is only as a ground of justification that all our attainments are utterly worthless. In this relation the holiness in which there is the slightest flaw is without value. Therefore, such expressions as, "All your efforts after holiness are useless, and of no account in the eyes of God," should be limited and corrected by the addition—"in the matter and for the purposes of justification."

Earnest efforts after obedience also are sometimes depreciated in relation to the administration of the Spirit. It is true they constitute no claim

of merit before God. It is true that if they be put forth in a bold spirit of self-reliance, they are only another and more insidious form of sin. For whether a man denies the authority of God, or whether he denies his own dependence on Him, he in either case exalts the creature above the Creator. It is true also that all such efforts, when made in another and better spirit, cannot be effectual without the aid of the Spirit. Yet is it equally true that "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given," a saying which we have no warrant to restrict wholly to the converted. He who makes an honest use of the gifts of nature is in a fair way to obtain higher blessing. The very fact that under the pressure of natural conscience he sets himself to combat sin, and among other sins that of pride, may, by its utter failure, be made the means by which God leads him to a knowledge of his own helplessness, and so prepares him for the revelation of Christ, as a Saviour at once from the guilt and from the power of sin. So much is manifest that a man can never really *know* his inability, but by experience, *i.e.* by trial. When a man tries his strength and collapses, he knows that he has no strength in a manner in which he cannot learn it from a verbal statement.

The Gospel Offer

MANY, to their own great discomfort, narrow the **Feb. 17, 1880.**
gospel invitation on account of such Scripture

terms as "thirst," "burdened and heavy laden." They complain that they do not thirst aright, and thus are excluded from the terms of the offer.

Sometimes words are used descriptive of the feelings or inward sense, as "hunger," "thirst"; at others, descriptive of the state apart from the sense of it, *e.g.* "poor," "needy." Sometimes the words may be understood both ways, *e.g.* "burdened and," etc. But the use of such expressions is not intended to limit, but to designate and describe, that the invited may recognise themselves as specially spoken to. There are invitations in Scripture where no such designation is employed, as Isaiah xlv. 22: "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." Those in the very terms of them are strictly universal. There are many others in which the invited are described in a great variety of ways. These two classes of texts supplement each other. The first make it clear that the invitation is for *all*. The second brings it home to particular men, by addressing them in terms which make it clear that they are particularly meant. And this is of great importance. For it is not easy for a man oppressed with a sense of unworthiness to translate an address spoken to men in general into an address spoken personally to himself. With a deep feeling of his sin, he is ever prone to single himself out as an exception. The scope, therefore, of the designation is not to exclude but to encourage those who are in danger of excluding themselves.

The term thirst often describes rather a want

(choice, the result of knowledge and judgment) than a state of feeling. A man perishing for thirst or want of food may have got beyond the point of feeling either thirst or hunger. The need is not the less on that account, nor his real desire, but all the greater. If, therefore, a man consents with his will, wishes in this sense to get salvation, he ought not to be deterred by the real or supposed state of his feelings. "Whosoever will, let him take," etc. (Rev. xxii. 2).

Many of those who make the complaint really thirst in the sense of lively feeling, though they do not recognise their feeling under that designation. Why else do they complain? They feel need, and long for relief. If it be not a sense of their sins which burdens them, it is the want of that sense. If it be not sins committed which troubles them, it is the blindness and hardness of their own hearts. They are troubled, though it may be on account of the want of trouble. This really the same thing in another department of it.

Whilst the invitation of Christ is addressed to all men whatever their state, it is true that the state of a man affects *his* acceptance of that invitation. Without a sense of need in some form, a man cannot from the very nature of things embrace the offer of help. To trust in Christ for might and strength, a man must of necessity have seen that his own might and strength are unreliable. Thus his apprehensions and feelings about himself do not prevent Christ coming to *him*, but they may prevent him from coming to Christ. They do not

limit the offer of salvation, but they condition the acceptance of it.

There are many things which accompany salvation, though they may not belong strictly to the essence of it. The chief thing to remember is that Christ is the author of salvation and of every part of it.

We must go to Him for all. The various experiences gone through by us are connected together in an orderly manner. Thus usually great joy and peace are preceded by a deep sense of sin. But the latter is as much an experience belonging to salvation as the former, and we must beware of the mistake of attempting to secure it from our own efforts and resources in order to warrant us to go to Christ for the other. We must go to Him for all, and therefore at once. Nay more, it will usually be found that just in the search for the higher blessings of joy and peace we shall be led to a deeper sense of sin. If we seek the latter as an end in itself, we shall probably not find it. We must apply to Christ for *all*, and for the highest things, in pursuit of which we shall most readily discover those things which are subordinated to it in the order of means, or precede it in natural sequence.

Women Speaking

Feb. 20, 1880. THE much-disputed passage concerning women (1 Cor. xiv. 34) seems to have no bearing at all on set orderly address, and to contain no injunc-

tion or prohibition on that matter. This is shown by the context, from which it is manifestly the apostle's aim to enforce the decent and orderly observance of public worship. For this purpose he lays down certain rules for the guidance of those who possess spiritual gifts, that the use of these might conduce to edification, and not lead to scenes of unseemly disorder and confusion. This part of his exhortation ends with words which clearly enough indicate his meaning: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (ver. 33). He then adverts to another subject, namely, the speaking of women, by which the solemnity and orderliness of worship was apt to be compromised, and, conjoining the two topics, he closes the whole paragraph with these words: "Let everything be done decently and in order" (ver. 40). The general aim is thus evident.

The only question which remains is, What was the kind of speaking which he forbade in women? The first point to be noticed is that the word to designate it is *λαλεῖν*, properly to *talk*. Much cannot indeed be made of this, for the same term is used frequently in the same chapter for speaking with tongues (vers. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, etc.). Light, however, is thrown on the subject by the verse that follows: "If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home" (ver. 35). The meetings of the Church, being held in those days chiefly in private houses, and possessing to a large extent a family character, were naturally not so formal as they are with us. There was less distance and

more familiarity among those who met together. Probably they resembled rather what we know as a Bible-reading in a drawing-room. And no doubt the tendency existed then as now for women, restrained by natural modesty and timidity from taking part in the more public addresses, to lapse into private conversation, asking questions, etc., of their nearest neighbours. To this the apostle evidently refers (ver. 35) when he tells them, if they want for information, to ask their husbands at home. Their doing so in the place of meeting was an interruption and source of confusion. It was private talk, therefore, to which women, from the circumstance above mentioned, were peculiarly prone, which was forbidden. This being the apostle's aim, it cannot be said with any fairness that he here gives any formal deliverance as to the position of women in the Church, or as to the permissibility of their using any special gifts with which in any case they might be endowed, for the good of all. The apostle indeed recognised the place of subordination assigned to women by nature, and which was enforced in those days by public opinion in an exaggerated form. That the position of authority belongs to man in the social economy is a permanent truth, and the modesty and retiredness of women, its proper outcome, must likewise be of abiding obligation. And even should what is due to men be asserted, as was then the case, beyond just measure, modesty would forbid a woman to outrage existing public sentiment, and would rather induce her to wait till that

sentiment itself was rectified. Undoubtedly the place of women in society has been greatly elevated since those days. And whilst the established difference between the sexes must not be obliterated, many things may now be permissible to women, and consistent with modesty, which, however consonant with abstract right, would at that time have caused scandal and seriously damaged the interests of the Church. As the position of women is ameliorated, restrictions imperative then on grounds of expediency may now be removed, provided the permanent relation of the sexes as appointed in the creation be maintained. Tact and good sense must here be our guides. Official position as a teacher or ruler is incompatible with the position of woman, though there seems no reason that her ministrations to the sick and afflicted should not be official. A distinction may also be made in the matter of teaching or exhortation between stated and occasional, and likewise between women in general and special women endowed with extraordinary gifts. No very straight line can be drawn between the respective spheres of men and women when you descend to particular acts, but the general principles by which the two spheres are discriminated are obvious enough, and ought therefore to be kept in view in judging of the things which are common to both or special to each.

The general idea may be thus expressed :

Every gift which God gives us is to be used for God to the edification of all, for why was it bestowed if it was to lie fallow ?

The manner of its use must be regulated by a careful regard to the fundamental and permanent relations of life, of which the distinctive positions of man and woman is one.

The use is not only lawful, but imperative. The mode or form must be adapted to the circumstances.

Is not prayer and prophecy by women expressly recognised by Paul (1 Cor. ii. 5) when he prescribes the attire?

Justice and Love

Feb. 24, 1880. THERE are certain men, especially in their younger years, who have a sort of craving for abstract justice, and make that their ideal, insisting upon it in all their intercourse with their fellow-men. This gives a degree of rigidity and harshness to the character. Justice should always be tempered with love, which is equally matter of moral obligation, though its behests cannot be enforced in the same way nor by the same penalties.

The Christian rule is—

To do justice and something more.

To exact justice and something less.

Doubting Faith

Aug. 3, 1880. THE doubting believer should look less to his faith and more to the stability of the foundation on

which he builds. The one assurance of faith begets the other. The strength of the support gives calmness to him who rests on it. When a drowning man has no confidence in the piece of wreck to which he clings, he clutches it all the more eagerly. And when he has nothing to cling to, he plunges wildly with his arms. So faith, when it has no clear view of Christ, and does not know His saving power, tries to make up by its desperate efforts for the insecurity which it feels. A sense of the Saviour's all-sufficiency brings calmness and rest.

Communion with God

IN order to have communion with God, every barrier must be broken down between us and Him. The chief of these are unbelief and disobedience. Feb. 18, 1881.

Communion with Him is often described as a mutual indwelling; without faith we cannot enter into His heart; without obedience He cannot enter into ours.

To have a completed circle of communication, both must be united. With the removal of the obstruction on either side, there comes the free circulation of life.

Anger

THERE is a great difference between those two things— Nov. 21, 1881.

That *I* have been injured by injustice; and that *justice* has been injured in me.

According as the emphasis is laid on the personal interest, or on the interest of righteousness, *i.e.* of God, it is selfish anger, or a holy anger.

Whether right be violated in my own person or in another, makes little difference to the higher interest involved. Still the personal is also a real interest, and as all things that come within our immediate cognisance naturally and rightfully excite more lively feeling, the violence done to it is fitted to stimulate the sense of wrong, and may be used for this end. We must guard, however, against the personal wrong usurping the place which belongs to wrong as committed against God, or against the welfare of mankind. In other words, the personal wrong should be less regarded in itself, than as a means of obtaining a more vivid sense of the injury done to righteousness in its higher relations.

“Thy Will be Done”

Jan. 5, 1882. THIS prayer includes not, as often interpreted, one, but two distinct petitions.

That men may be enabled to do the whole will of God; and that God may do His whole will.

The former contemplates man as active, the latter as passive. The former expresses a desire for obedience, the latter expresses acquiescence and submission, or a willingness and desire that

God would execute His holy pleasure, whatever trial or suffering may result. In other words, combining both parts in one, it is a prayer for the supremacy of the divine will, and for conformity or obedience to it, and acquiescence in it, on the part of man.

Obedience in Suffering

IT is said of Christ (Heb. v. 8), "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered," and again (Heb. ii. 10) that, as the Captain of salvation, He was made "perfect through sufferings." Jan. 9, 1882. Apart from its relation to atonement, suffering occupies a very peculiar position in the obedience of Christ. From His perfect holiness of character, every inclination and desire of His heart was in unison with the Father's holy will. The law within and the law without were in perfect harmony. We cannot conceive of any struggle taking place within His soul, even though the victory were always on the side of right, or, as some have imagined, to give an appearance of greater reality to His temptations. In Him was no sin, no germ of evil inclination or desire, which required to be repressed. In this department, therefore, whilst His will was always subordinate to the Father's will, there could be no exercise of self-denial or self-sacrifice, in the sense in which these terms are applied among sinful and imperfect creatures.

Pain and suffering, however, are no more congenial to a holy than to an unholy nature. And

here there was an opportunity even for Him to exercise self-denial and self-sacrifice to the utmost. There was no response in His nature to any solicitation to sin, to selfishness, to injustice, or to untruth. Yet, though holiness in all its forms was ever the perfect choice, not only of His will, but of His inclinations, it was otherwise with suffering, which is not matter of native choice, even to the most, but it is, on the contrary, a thing natively recoiled from and avoided. Here, therefore, could be self-denial and self-sacrifice in the deepest, strictest sense of the terms. Jesus undertook to endure the extremity of agony and pain, not because this was in itself desirable or desired by Him, but in simple obedience to the Father's will and from love to the souls of men. He did so willingly and cheerfully, yet He did it in the exercise of the purest self-denial, which consists in setting aside and crossing the impulses of nature, whether, as in His case, the nature be pure and holy, or, as in ours, sinful and impure.

Social Code of Morals

Dec. 12, 1882. SOCIETY may be said to have a distinct moral code of its own. It has been made up by the influence, unconsciously operating, of public opinion and general practice, and may be said fairly to represent the attainments of the community as a whole, in contradistinction from the views of individuals and of particular sections and

classes, which may have codes peculiar to themselves.

The three following statements hold good regarding it:—

Its standard is low, and it is in many respects artificial and arbitrary.

Such as it is, it is enforced with great strictness, exclusion from the privileges and amenities of society being its inexorable penalty, though this is inflicted with a greater or less severity according to the nature of the offence, and varies from the avoidance of intimacy to entire banishment from social circles. The stringency is all the greater that he who refuses to execute the sentence becomes himself exposed to the penalty.

In certain circles, as in the commercial, that penalty is temporal ruin. In ordinary social circles, a man is shut out from the enjoyment of a chief part of his natural happiness, as well as from a thousand advantages incidental to a good standing in society.

Thus, without organisation and without magistracy, this code is executed with great rigour.

It exercises an extraordinary power on the minds of individuals. Men who have no regard for the higher divine code would not, under the strongest temptation, violate this, and in multitudes of cases it becomes (together with the civil and criminal codes) the only substitute for the other.

The Coming of Christ

Jan. 8, 1883. THERE have been those in the Christian Church, from the days of the apostles downwards, who have expected, almost year by year, and especially at the more important crises of history, the immediate appearance of Christ. Others have with equal steadfastness postponed that event till after the termination of the millennial era. May it not be possible that both have been partly right and partly wrong in their anticipations? Should not the discussion rather have turned on the nature and manner of His coming? Should not His coming be regarded as a continuous event, having no doubt a consummation, but including in it a lengthening process, leading up to and terminating in that consummation? In this case, each of these events might justly be viewed, not merely as foreshadowing the final crisis, but as actually forming a part of it, just as a single battle or campaign is part and parcel of a great war, and of the ultimate triumph in which it issues. If thus the coming of Christ, though to be realised at last in an absolute form, is already in progress, those may be right who are always looking for it as just at hand, and those may also be right who do not expect its completion for a long while to come. And both may be wrong in failing to observe the relation between the earlier stages and the consummation, the former by identifying

them, and the latter by recognising no connection between them.

It is said (Rev. vi. 2) that Christ “went forth conquering and to conquer.” We ought to be ever watching His approach and longing for the final victory, though there may be a diversity of opinion as to the time required for its achievement.

“ *The Will* ”—“ *Self-Control* ”—
“ *Self-Reliance* ”

A RULING and a subject will may both be equally free. The difference between them lies in this: the ruling will freely chooses its course on grounds satisfactory to itself without reference to any authority outside; the subject will, on the contrary, chooses the path of obedience or disobedience. The will which has lost self-control, that is, which has fallen under the dominion of passion and sense, can no longer be accounted free. It is swayed by influences from without, and becomes the slave of circumstances, and of the feelings excited by its surroundings. Jan. 20, 1883.

Self-reliance is not incompatible with trust in God. Trust in God should take hold of divine strength, for the sustenance of the whole man in his integrity, of which integrity self-reliance forms a component part. Self-reliance, therefore, must not be confounded with self-trust. As a part of our manhood, it may be exercised in the way of self-trust, but also may and ought to be based on

trust in God. Confidence in the reliability of our faculties may be made to rest on their inherent strength, apart from God, or it may rest on them, as not only given, but sustained and supported by God. We frequently express this last by the term, confidence in God. It requires, however, both modes of expression to bring out the whole truth, in its divine and human elements. It is a false self-reliance which does not brace its stability on God. And it is also a false confidence in God which looks for success apart from the attributes of our manhood. In expecting a good result, we must neither ignore the source nor the channel of strength, and to this last the self-reliant use of our faculties in opposition to dependence on other men, though in full harmony with trust in God, essentially belongs.

Fact, Faith, Feeling

Jan. 22, 1883. IN the acceptance of the gospel three elements are at work, and these follow each other in a regular and fixed order.

God's order is — *Fact — faith — feeling*. The devil, when he misleads inquiring souls, reverses this order, and turns it into — *Feeling — faith — fact*. He sets them on the endeavour to get up an impossible state of feeling, that out of this faith may emerge, and again out of this last, an assurance of the facts of salvation. According to the true order, contemplation of the fact, which stands on

its own foundation and is independent of us, produces faith; and faith, which rests alone on the fact, and is independent of feeling, has feeling for its effect. The false order puts the effect for the cause, and the cause for the effect. It is as if a man began to erect a building by first laying the keystone.

Patience

THERE is a threefold form of patience, according to the nature of the objects which call for its exercise: Patience under affliction and trial, which is akin to *faith* (Heb. x. 36, and xii. 1; cf. Heb. x. 32, and xii. 2, 3, 7); patience under delay, which is akin to *hope* (Heb. vi. 11, 12); patience under injury, which is akin to *love* (1 Pet. ii. 20). **March 5, 1883.**

Sometimes the circumstances are such as to call for the exercise of patience in all three forms at once, or, in other words, for the joint manifestation of all the three counterpart graces.

The Social Unit

WHAT is the social unit? This admits of a double answer, for society rests not on one, but on two antagonistic principles. Here, as elsewhere, truth concentrates itself in two opposite poles. **March 11, 1883.**

In the earlier, and what may be termed the Old Testament stage of society, the family is the social unit.

Hence among the Jews the laws relating to the family inheritance, which could not be permanently alienated, but returned free in the year of jubilee; cf. also the levirate law, etc.

Among the Hindoos, whose social system became crystallised at an early period, the social unit is still the family in the strictest form. The family is a permanent corporation. Hence the absence of laws of inheritance. Hence, from the power of family influence, the hindrance to individual conversion.

In the later or New Testament stage, the individual is the social unit. Yet where two antagonistic principles are founded on the natural constitution of man, the question at any one period is not, which has exclusive possession of the field, but which is the predominating or ruling principle of the time.

Even under the New Testament, up to the age of manhood the family is the social unit, and under the Old Testament there must have been many men so individualised and personally independent as to separate from their families, and become separate units, with or without a family of their own.

Among the Jews the stability of the family rests on an agrarian basis. The possession of immovable property, which cannot be easily divided, tends to keep together in one community all those who have a common interest, and to make them mutually dependent. We see a reflection of this in the deference paid among ourselves, by the

other branches of the family, to the eldest son, who has been secured by the laws of primogeniture and entail. In a commercial community these family bonds dissolve very rapidly. The several sons stand more on an equality, each making his own way, and taking rank according to their success in life and social influence.

The position of the two elements may be stated thus. In both stages of society the children up to the years of manhood are, as a matter of course, members of the father's family. In the earlier stage, after that date, the family principle is the predominating one, though there may be exceptions. In the later stage the individual (in whom, however, are summed up all the minors) becomes the social unit.

By the social unit is to be understood the party who has independent authority in the management of his own affairs, and a voice in the affairs of the community of which he is a member. It consists of a "will," which rules within its own domain, and forms a consistent element of the general will which rules society. The man or woman who possesses it may stand alone, or may be a head of a family of minors.

Character

CHARACTER resides primarily in the conscience **April 23, 1883.**
and will.

A man of character is one who has a strong

conscience, and whose will is subject to his conscience.

To these must be added various modifying elements—an intensity or coldness of feeling, impulsiveness or caution, demonstrativeness or reserve, etc.

A man of no character is one without conscience or will,—who is swayed by the natural impulses of affection or desire. He may not be vicious, because his passions are weak and his disposition and temperament are kindly, but no reliance can be placed on him. He is like a ship without a rudder, wholly dependent on wind and tide.

A man of bad character is one who has a conscience, but wilfully disobeys it. With this there may come all the usual modifications. The more such a man chooses evil, with the smallest amount of instigation or temptation, the worse is the character.

On the Mount

May 3, 1883. THE believer needs to ascend every morning to the top of the mount, not only that he may have secret and solitary communion with God, but that from the height he may see the littleness of the things which usually so much preoccupy his thoughts, excite the eager desires and passions of his heart, and oppress him with anxiety and trouble. He will find that some of those which most agitated his mind, when seen from the

distance, and especially when looked upon from above, will appear quite insignificant, and some of them will be altogether invisible. A daily ascent is also necessary to show him the *right proportions* of things, and even of truths in their relation to each other. Without it he will spend his days in continuous contentions and wranglings, about matters which, though they may have their own place, are yet of comparatively little account. We have here the explanation why unspiritual men exhibit extraordinary zeal about all the lesser matters of the law, as if they stood in the foremost ranks of the faithful; whilst really spiritual men are more tolerant, and are often denounced by the others as lukewarm. The difference between them does not lie in the strength of their zeal, but in the objects toward which it is directed.

The Offer of the Gospel

IN presenting the free offer of the gospel to those who we fear have no adequate sense of sin, the point to be pressed is, not that they must *first* obtain a sense of sin, and *then* apply to Christ, for that were to make them joint-authors with Christ of their own salvation, and to nullify the idea of an immediate deliverance. It is rather that they must close with Christ's offer of a *complete* salvation. The offer of Christ includes the pardon of sin, but it embraces much more, namely, deliverance from sin itself. If a man will accept the whole salvation

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offered, he is welcome to, and may have it at once. But he cannot have a part without taking the whole presented in the promise, that is, present forgiveness and renewal, and further grace in its season. The thing to be insisted on, therefore, is not the fulfilment of subjective conditions, but the nature of the objective offer, its contents, and its indivisibility. What the sinner has to look to is—That he accept the offer as made, that is, salvation in *all* its parts, and that he practise no deception on himself, but do so really. The vital point is, that he simply accept *what is offered* in good faith. He need trouble himself less about the state of his feelings. That he is willing to take what God offers, and all that He offers, implies that he has already a sense of sin, whatever be his present sense of it; and if he does so take it, the other feelings of a renewed heart will follow in due time.

Salvation is offered to sinners, whether they know themselves to be so or not. The knowledge or sense of sin does not affect God's offer, though it may and does affect their acceptance of it.

Prayer and Work

Sept. 6, 1883. IN all *work* there ought to be a distinct *aim*, and in all *prayer* there ought to be a distinct *expectation*.

These are the tests of all true work and prayer. Besides the subordinate aims, the supreme aim should always more or less consciously be present

in the mind. When in prayer we are uncertain whether the thing we ask be really good, and therefore must pray conditionally, there ought still to be the expectation, namely, that God will give it if good, and will withhold it if evil.

The two above requirements should be clearly set before the mind at the commencement, and as far as may be during the progress of every engagement, whether of work or of prayer.

Experimental Preaching

THERE is a great difference between preaching Oct. 18, 1883. experience and preaching truth experienced. The former should be seldom indulged in; the latter should always be aimed at. Without experience of the truth proclaimed, a man conjures with mere words, or at best deals with abstractions which never move the heart. It is communion with reality and fact which prepares the mind of the preacher,—not words or notions, except as subsidiary to the other. And it is the same thing which forms the basis of true preaching, where subject-matter therefore is, strictly speaking, not truth, but truth experienced.

Perpetual Youth

THE recipe for perpetual youth is, cast the anchor Nov. 25, 1883. of hope within the vail, and be diligent to lay up

treasure in heaven and seek its increase—for it may be increased. One star differeth from another star in glory. He whose pound gained ten pounds was made ruler over ten cities; so five pounds, five cities. Youth and hope go together. Youth lasts as long as hope is strong; the spirit of old people, even old Christians, often becomes sour and peevish, and then they are old indeed, not only in body but in spirit. The reason is that their hopes have been too much centred in earthly things. In these disappointments must come, and all of them are fading away. Hence the shattering of hope. He who looks beyond, knows no decay. His hope remains fresh, and he himself remains young.

The Future State—Heaven

May 3, 1884. THE hope of future blessedness is implied in the knowledge of God as a covenant God and Father. The soul, admitted into His friendship, receives at the same time an assured conviction that the bond thus formed can never be broken, that the conscious mutual love established between God and itself can never be quenched. *Personal* knowledge and love differ not only in quality but in duration from all the things to which they bear some resemblance.

It is evident that the saints of the Old Testament not only anticipated a state of future existence, but of future blessedness (Ps. xvi. 10, 11, xvii. 15, and lxxiii. 24–26). Yet the language in which

they sometimes indulge looks as if their whole hopes were confined to this present world (Ps. xxx. 9, vi. 5, lxxxviii. 11, cxv. 17, and cxviii. 17; Isa. xxxviii. 18).

Certainly this did not arise from their affections being inordinately attached to the carnal pleasures of this life, for in some of the passages referred to they display a remarkable elevation of spirit above the things of earth. How, then, is it to be accounted for?

We must remember that the essence of blessedness or heaven for the soul of man is the manifestation of God, access to God, intercourse and communication with God, and co-operation with Him.

Now, the centre of God's manifested government during the Old Dispensation was the place where His throne was established, from which His behests were issued, and His judgments, both of mercy and of wrath, were executed on the earth. And where God was, there His people desired to be. Their hearts turned ever to Jerusalem, the seat of manifestation, the city of the great King. There they beheld His goings in the sanctuary, and His glorious operations in His dealings with His own people, and also with the heathen. There they had an opportunity to contemplate the institution which He had established, and the onward movement of the events which were to bring salvation to the whole world. God was there manifest, not as yet in the flesh, nor personally, on the human side at least, but as the Angel of the covenant,

carrying forward in and by His people the scheme of redemption towards its completion. What lay beyond the grave was to God's people at that time comparatively a blank. It must not be forgotten that no mere verbal description of heaven could have been of much use. It is from facts, not words, that all our ideas are primarily drawn. God's people knew that their life and blessedness would be prolonged and intensified; but how their life would be occupied, or wherein, beyond the simple fact of the friendship of God, their blessedness would consist, they could know little except in the vaguest way. Believing that God would deliver them and provide for them in His own way, they could leave everything with confidence in His hands. They could say, "All will be well."

But that is not enough for the human spirit. It is life, activity, and fact which fill and satisfy it. Here, on earth, they knew of the *facts* in which God magnified and displayed His character, and for which His people praised His name. No wonder, therefore, though practically they should regard departure out of this world as equivalent to going out from the presence of the Lord, from His manifestation, from the place where His wondrous works were being done.

By the appearance of Christ in the flesh, by His death, resurrection, and ascension into glory, a revolution has taken place in the government of God. Its centre of gravity has been transferred from earth to heaven. The pivot round which the magnificent scheme of redemption, with all its

immediate and remoter issues, is revolving, the centre of its operations, is no longer on earth but in heaven. He who would understand it and behold in it the glory of God, must draw near, not to the seat of government as it then was in Jerusalem, but as it now is in heaven. There every suit must be prosecuted, and thence must every commission and command be received. There our King now holds His court, and there the business of His kingdom is transacted.

It must be noted that with the change in the seat of government a change has also been introduced in the medium of communication. This change, however, is rather relative than absolute. Of old there were two elements, the outward and sensible, and the inward and spiritual. This last now stands on the foreground, and is receiving a mighty development in circumstances well adapted to its nature, to prepare it for the third and last stage, when immediate vision will be enjoyed. As formerly earthly sense aided the insight of faith, so this last, strengthened by present discipline, will in its season aid and perfect heavenly sense, when it shall become the established medium. The three stages of progress are—*symbol*, *faith*, and *immediate vision* of the things themselves.

Heaven is the seat of divine administration under the new economy, and it is directly from thence that all *present* divine messages, commands, *promises*, and warnings proceed. It is true all these, as to the letter of them, are already contained in the Word, which is in our hands; but the message

becomes a present, personal, special communication to a man's soul, as the result of an immediate act of Christ, from His throne in heaven, through the agency and operation of the Spirit. In other words, each message, each dealing, is an administrative act, in which the present mind and will of Christ is made known. Besides the book of teaching, the code of laws already in our possession, there is a personal direction given to the particular precept, encouragement, or rebuke, by a living, present thought, intention, and operation on the part of Christ. There is thus direct contact between the mind of Christ and the mind of men, between His will and theirs.

On the other hand, it is to the throne *in heaven* that the prayers of believers are brought. They have access into the holiest of all. Their worship, albeit in faith, is presented in heaven. Thither they bring all petitions, complaints, confessions, remonstrances, thanksgivings, etc.

The right apprehension of this doctrine, that the seat of divine administration is now in heaven, would entirely overthrow all Popish and ritualistic systems, which have their foundation in the notion that it has its place, as of old, somewhere on the earth.

It may be here noted that the earthly and heavenly centres run parallel to the two spheres, the visible and the spiritual. Wherever the locality of heaven may be, it is to us practically the sphere of the invisible, and it is in that sphere that we have access to Christ. It is there that we enter

the presence-chamber, and it is with corresponding spiritual raiment, not with outward splendour of attire, that we present ourselves in His presence.

What has been said above may help to throw some light on the precise state of mind of our Lord's disciples. They looked for an establishment of the kingdom and the seat of the government here on earth, certainly, however, not in a carnal sense, but as the centre of divine manifestation with its appropriate accompaniment, a reign of righteousness. (Premillenarians expect the same thing still.)

New Testament worship and administration is as much distinguished by simplicity as that of the Old by complexity and gorgeousness. The reason is the difference in position which they occupy respectively to the substance which appeared in Christ, and His spiritual, invisible kingdom. The Old Testament arrangements were symbols of that substance, intended to foreshadow its nature, and thus, for teaching purposes, they had to be very complex and elaborate. Those of the New Testament are merely the expression of the substance already realised, and therefore had to be simple and transparent, that the reality might shine through.

If heaven be regarded as the seat of the divine invisible administration, where all administrative acts are settled, a difference of conception must be conceded, as between those acts which terminate and those which originate in heaven. Thus, we enter the holiest of all, and present *our petitions* in

heaven, not on earth. On the other hand, Christ, by His Spirit, comes to His people and teaches, strengthens, and comforts them on the earth.

In other words, there is free communication between heaven and earth under the New Covenant, according to our Lord's own words: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the sons of man." Compare also Heb. xii. 25 ("Ye are come unto Mount Zion," ver. 22), "that speaketh *from heaven*," in contrast to "spake *on earth*," indicating a change in the seat of government, that is, in the position of the speaker, though in both cases the voice (by the outward or the inward ear) is heard on earth. See likewise Gal. iv. 24-26; Heb. x. 19-22. Also the peculiar form of expression (1 Pet. i. 12), "that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven." So John xiv. xvii. *passim*; Eph. ii. 6.

To get a full view of this subject, it would be desirable to examine all those passages of the Old Testament in which God is spoken of as "shining forth," as "uttering His voice" from Zion, etc. To translate the earthly Zion into its heavenly counterpart in all those passages, and thus to ascertain their full spiritual import, would greatly enrich the contents of the passages themselves, and at the same time our conceptions of the internal structure and constitution of the New Testament kingdom.

Facts

IT is striking how the confessions, thanksgivings **May 8, 1884.** (including with more or less distinctness prayers also), and sermons recorded in Scripture consist to a large extent of a detail of facts. The Scripture writers do not deal in abstract statements, but cause the facts to move past, as in a panorama, leaving them to elicit the true corresponding feelings. Compare Neh. ix., Dan. ix., Ps. cv. and cvi., Stephen's address, and the grand sermons of Peter and Paul as recorded in the Acts. A chief designation of Scripture for acts of worship, whether preaching or prayer, is "record," "cause to remember" (Ex. xx. 24; Ps. xx. 7, xlv. 17, lxxi. 16, and lxxvii. 11; Cant. i. 4; Isa. xix. 17, xxvi. 13, xlvi. 1, and lxiii. 7). In some of the recorded examples of Scripture there seems to be almost a dry enumeration of facts without exposition of their meaning. They are all the more powerful on that account. The facts are allowed to speak for themselves, instead of the writer speaking for them. If, as they are slowly repeated, the heart of the reader or hearer enters into them, or, to put it otherwise, they are allowed to drop their contents, the thoughts with which they are charged, into his heart, the effect will be to call forth all those feelings of adoration, humiliation, desire, and gratitude to God, which are the true essence of worship.

There are two tendencies to be here guarded

against,—to be content with a barren detail of facts, without looking beyond them to the thoughts which they express or imply; and to substitute an abstract statement of the feelings which they are fitted to call forth, for the feelings themselves.

The two elements of true worship are,—its material or objective basis, whether in God's acts towards us, or our acts towards God; and the inward feelings called forth by the contemplation of these acts.

To both of these expression may be and ought to be given, but we must beware of putting the expression in the room of the thing to be expressed, the word or sign in the room of the thing signified.

Uniformity

May 10, 1884. IN the Church of God more victims have been offered at the shrine of the Moloch of uniformity than have been sacrificed to any other idol.

To say nothing of the Church of Rome,—which has always concerned herself more with the outward profession than with the state of the mind and the heart,—Protestants have largely fallen into the error of putting "*form*" into a foremost place. Thus, in the matters of attitudes of worship, Scripture recognises as legitimate, standing, kneeling, prostration, stretching forth the hands, bowing the head while sitting before the Lord. No form is described as exclusive of the rest. The Church has no right to command what God has left free. In doing so

she usurps the prerogative of God. Her prohibitions have no validity unless she can back them with the authority of God. Thus, if at prayer one man should stand, and another kneel, and the third should bow the head in a sitting posture, she has no right to interfere. It is true that she has to see to it that "all things be done decently and in order"; that is, she must repress all that is unbecoming and causes disturbance, all irreverence or disorder, which are inconsistent with the nature of worship or interfere with the repose of fellow-worshippers. But here her power ends, and she must avoid interpreting this rule so as to repress a natural expression of feeling, lest by doing so she repress the feeling itself and the communication of it to those around. It seems to have been the subject of special effort in our congregations, to prevent every such manifestation of feeling as is implied in a living organism in which all the parts act and react on each other to the intensifying of the common life. This tends to bring down congregational worship to the private worship of a number of individual worshippers, and foregoes all the benefit which comes from a united life.

No text has been more abused than the one above quoted. It has been used to repress life in its legitimate expression, and thus life itself, especially as a life of communion. It has been used to warrant all the extravagances and follies of Ritualism; thus to foster a false life as well as repress the true.

Instead of insisting on the same attitude in

worship, whether that of standing or kneeling, or sitting reverently with bowed head, it ought to be *left free* to each worshipper to choose his own attitude, provided he does not disturb his neighbours. And it ought not to be regarded as cause of disturbance if it merely lies in their groundless prejudices or intolerance of spirit. In this latter case, the cause lies *within*, and there it ought to be met and overcome.

The Perfection of Heaven

May 14, 1884. IN heaven there will be found perfected persons, a perfected society, perfected environments, and adaptation of employments to gifts.

It may be safely assumed that the employments of heaven, and thus also its enjoyments, will be adapted to the human constitution. A life of indolence, or of one-sided, monotonous activity in the exercise of adoration and praise, would not make men truly and permanently happy. As human faculties are complex and various, the same variety and complexity must appear in the use of them. And as personal gifts and tendencies are diversified, we must expect corresponding diversity in the spheres assigned to them. Indeed, without this, the inhabitants of heaven might conceivably consist of perfected individuals, but they could not constitute a perfected society.

The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, in its Scripture idea, may be rendered in deeds as well as in words (Heb. xiii. 15-16; cf. Rev. xxii. 3).

Service also, in its Scripture idea, may be rendered in the form of words as well as in deeds (Rev. viii. 15).

What we usually term service becomes thanksgiving when offered with a grateful and loving heart. And what we usually term thanksgiving becomes service when offered in obedience to God's will.

In both these acts, though in each one element is more prominent, there is a combination of the principles of the free-will offering, and of respect to authority. And both of them find expression, either in the form of words, or in that of external deeds.

The Winning of Souls

THE complaint is often made by those who have **June 2, 1884.** been awakened by an earnest word from the lips of some friend or acquaintance, that no one had ever so spoken to them before. In some cases this may be true, but the likelihood is that this is not the first time some one opened their mouth to speak, but the first time they themselves opened the ear to hear. Till the Spirit begins to deal with a man, words of exhortation convey little meaning to the mind, and soon pass from the memory.

The Teaching of Christ

ABOUT forty years ago, when the new system of **July 6, 1884.** teaching came into vogue, great stress was laid on

the distinction between *instruction* and *education*. By the former was meant the communication of knowledge; by the latter, the drawing forth and training of the mental faculties by means of the stores already in the child's mind, and in the way of question and answer. Previously the former method had been employed almost exclusively, now the latter was made equally exclusive. An important principle is involved here. The error lay in its exaggeration. You cannot really teach by mere filling any more than you can feed the body by forcing food down the throat. There must be co-operation, digestion, assimilation. On the other hand, these functions are useless unless food is supplied. So with knowledge. The mental activity of the learner must be excited. The easiest book is not the most profitable, for it leaves the mind nothing to do. A beautiful combination and balance is found in the teachings of our Lord. He ever sought to stimulate the minds of His disciples (see John xiv. 16). This He did sometimes by assuming His hearers to possess knowledge which they had in the germ, but not in the developed state, sometimes by puzzling questions, and sometimes by enigmatic sayings.

There is co-relation between knowledge and intellect. Knowledge stimulates and develops the intellect. The intellect is the organ for the acquisition of knowledge.

Full light produces quiescence; it leaves the mind nothing to do. Complete knowledge has the same effect; it leaves the mind inert. What stirs

the mental faculties into activity is some sudden glimpse, or flash of light, which awakens curiosity but does not satisfy it.

The same principle is at work in the employment of our other faculties besides the intellect, for example the will, and even the heart. To have *nothing* and to have *all* are practically the same in their effect on the mental energies. Progress seems to be the intended watchword of a finite being,—not the stagnation which comes of emptiness or complete fulness.

Baptism

WHEN a number of separate elements are con- July 12, 1884:
joined in the same operation, the effect, according to the use of ordinary and also of Scripture language, may be ascribed to any one of them, and that one is selected which accords with the theme of discourse. Thus, regeneration is connected in Scripture with the Spirit's operation, with the Word, with baptism, and with faith. Which are essential, and which are merely useful, may be best known from the opposite or negative forms of expression. According to Scripture, no man can be regenerated and saved without the Spirit's operation, or, in the case of grown persons, without personal faith. But it is never said that a man will be lost through the omission of the outward act of baptism. Were the omission indeed to arise from contempt, we should be warranted to conclude against him on the general ground of

wilful disobedience to God's commandments. The case of infants must of course be determined on the principles applicable to their peculiar condition.

The Spirit's Operation

July 18, 1884. IN the operation of grace the Spirit of God does not supersede any human faculty nor the exercise of any faculty naturally required for the accomplishment of any particular work. The same effort and diligence, the same use of the understanding, the same guarding of the affections and inclinations, the same attitude of the will, must all be attended to, as if the result aimed at could be attained by the sole exertion of natural faculty without divine aid. The Spirit first renews the faculties,—not one or the other of these, but all of them in their several aptitudes and mutual relations. His operation is also necessary for each particular exercise of them. But He neither dispenses with any of them, nor in His operation does He overlook their mutual connection and dependence, or the natural order and sequence of their functions. In other words, He does not act mechanically, but works in and by them, in conveying blessing to man. Again, under His operation love does not first spring up and then faith, but first faith, which “worketh by love,” and is the root of the holy living obedience. These things follow each other in the order natural to the human mind, although the natural mind is utterly

incapable of bringing forth without the divine operation of the Spirit of God. Thus the effects of grace are not unnatural whilst wholly supernatural. In their form they may be even said to be intensely natural; for grace restores nature from its corruption and impotence to its natural condition. On the other hand, the efficacy and power by which they are produced are entirely supernatural. *God worketh in us.* The last word in the sentence is equally emphatic with the first. If a man therefore should say, "Because God works I need not work," it may be said, "If God indeed works, then you must of necessity work, for His work consists in making you work. And since you do not work, this is the clearest proof that He is not at work also."

Preventing Grace

PREVENTING grace may be said to prepare the way for efficacious grace, not, however, in the sense that as it increases it enables a man ultimately by faith to accept the grace which saves. By stimulating nature, indeed, it induces effort and prayer. Its effect, however, is shown not in success, but in despair of success. Such effort and prayer are the result of a sort of co-operation between nature and gracious influence. And were they successful, nature would still have a share in working out the salvation of the soul. Though aided by preventing grace, nature would still be

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one of the factors which contributed to the final issue. But, according to the Scripture, regeneration is a new life. It is not the old life of nature strengthened and developed. It must be preceded by a death. Nature must die in order that God may be the life of the soul. Hence, so far as the operation of preventing grace prepares the way for saving grace, it does so, not by making alive, but by killing the last hope of the soul that it will attain to salvation by any effort of nature, or by such effort in co-operation with divine influence. This death seems to be the dividing line between the system of Scripture and the co-operative systems of Arminianism, Romanism, etc. According to these, regeneration is the joint result of two forces, the one human and the other divine;—just as Rationalism ascribes salvation to the action of one force, namely, that which is inherent in the human will, so these ascribe it to two, namely, that which man in his fallen state still possesses, and that which coming from God is conjoined with it.

According to the Scripture system, salvation is wholly of God, and in no sense or degree of man. The new life is not a mere development of the old life, however stimulated and encouraged by divine grace. All preliminary influences end in death, not in life. Hence in regeneration man is purely passive, though its immediate effect is all active, living exercises of faith and repentance. It is a new creation, the result neither in whole nor in part of a human cause, but, as in the natural creation, of the immediate agency of God. To

this all other representations of Scripture agree. It is a new birth. It is a passing from death unto life. It is not the life of nature aided and strengthened, but a new life implanted and thenceforth fostered by God within the soul.

Regeneration is thus an immediate act of God, and is co-ordinated with His other acts of a like nature, with creation, the incarnation of Christ, His rising again from the dead, the inspiration of the Word, with all truly miraculous events, and with the final resurrection.

Though regeneration precedes the first act of saving faith, and man has thus no hand even in the recovery of it from God, his hope is not therefore cut off. The security for this lies in the graciousness of God, in His willingness and expressed desire to bestow salvation. When the soul dies to all natural and creature hope, God's opportunity has come, the set time when He hastens to show His mercy.

Despair of self and of every creature refuge, which is the result of experience, is the first condition, and perhaps a second may be expressed by the term "consent to be saved" by God, for God will not force salvation upon a man against his will. These expressions, however, may have a double meaning, and may describe the last thoughts of expiring nature or the first thoughts of living grace. But it is impossible to fathom the mystery of life, and especially to explain its new beginnings. Enough for us that we owe salvation wholly to God, and not to any effort or co-operation of man.

**“To Be,” “To be Manifest or
Shown to be”**

July 30, 1884. IN a vast number of cases which occur in the Word of God, the verb which indicates a fact includes in it the idea of a manifestation or discovery of the fact, whether to the inward consciousness or outwardly also to others. Thus, “I will be to them a God” means something more than the existence of the relation. It intimates that God will cause them to know it. Or, again, “So (by bearing much fruit) ye shall be My disciples.” This implies more than the mere fact of discipleship. It means, “So shall ye be shown to be My disciples.” It would appear that the fact is not regarded as fully constituted until it emerges into publicity, or at least till revealed to consciousness. And, indeed, a latent fact, however important it may be in its bearings or consequences, does not become a part of a man’s internal or external *history* till it is known and declared. So far as actual history is concerned, there is no appreciable difference between latency and non-existence. All our calculations, all our feelings and plans, are based on the idea of the non-existence of a fact, so long as we are ignorant of it. To us it is as if it were not. On the other hand, so soon as it becomes known, it matters not in what form, by what means, or in what degree, it is part and parcel of our conscious life.

A fact, therefore, may be contemplated as existent

in two forms, latent and expressed. The attribute of existence may without impropriety be ascribed to it in both. In the former it exists in a lower stage of development, in the latter it advances to the higher and is perfected. To attach the name to the last of the two is legitimate, and when this has been done, the interpreter ought to read into the name all that it contains, which is *manifested* existence.

By keeping Christ's word, we are told, "the love of God is perfected" (1 John ii. 5). It is not complete even as love, without manifestation. And apart from the entire separation from the dross of sin, a chief characteristic of heaven will be that all those elements of the spiritual life which are here hidden or imperfectly known will be openly and gloriously displayed. The things are the same, but the manifestation will be different. Believers have now "eternal life abiding in them" (1 John iii. 15). That life needs only development and *manifestation* to fill up the full measure of the term (Col. iii. 3, 4). "Then they shall know even as also they are known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). "They shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is."

Ministration of the Spirit

THE ministration of the Spirit is personal. In seeking His aid we must remember that we are dealing with a living person, and that every communication of His grace is the result of a personal

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act of will. Hence His influence must not be resolved into the operation of a fixed law. His acts are free personal acts. And He works when, where, and how it pleases Him. This does not imply that there is anything capricious or arbitrary in His dealings. Every act is ruled by infinite wisdom and perfect love. This gives to all His acts the stability and uniformity of a law of nature. But they are free and personal notwithstanding, and they have also for their immediate object, not the means of grace,—not the word and sacraments, however precious these may be,—but the personal soul of man. There is thus realised personal direct contact and converse between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man. Hence the close relation which subsists between the gift of the Spirit and prayer. He especially calls forth prayer,—“as the spirit of grace and of supplications.” And He is specially to be obtained in answer to prayer.

According to the Romish and Romanising systems, the influence of the Spirit is tied up in the means of grace, especially in the sacraments. His power is deposited in these, and is inherent in them so as to be operative efficaciously on all who make use of them. Thus it works after the analogy of the laws of nature, according to which (though the force must be ultimately traced to God, who created all things and gave them their constitution) the force is so resident in the thing created, that it invariably produces its effect when an opportunity is offered. Thus no one can touch a piece of red-hot

iron without being burnt, no one can swallow arsenic without being poisoned. A difference of result is admitted, to a greater or less degree, according to the state of the subject of the operation. Thus, a man with a horny hand will be less affected with the hot iron than he whose skin is sensitive. Food will be less nourishing to him whose digestive organs are deranged. But still the real power to burn is in the iron, and the power to nourish is in the food. This theory makes the scheme of grace to be only a higher form of the system of nature.

It eliminates from the former all that is personal and free. It reduces the soul of man to the position of nature, and treats it as a link in the chain of nature, and subject to its laws.

The gospel scheme of grace and of the Spirit's operations rests on a totally different foundation. The Spirit acts personally, consistently, indeed, with Himself, but freely. Hence it is that the same word and sacraments, though fitted in themselves to exert a certain moral influence, and always showing this more or less in practice, in one case produce no efficacious result, and in another are followed by the most powerful effects. And this is experienced where no corresponding difference exists in the state or circumstances of those who are the subjects of the change. The only reasonable explanation is the presence and operation of the Spirit in the one case, and His absence in the other. The truths which were told with such mighty effect on the day of Pentecost were known by the

apostles previously, and their own state was not materially altered from what it was on the days preceding. And yet, when the Spirit was poured out, they themselves became as new men, and 3000 men, who before were no doubt most of them callous and unconcerned or hostile, were pricked to the heart, converted, and saved.

It will thus be seen that the gospel aims at and secures the highest form of human dignity and blessedness, namely, free, direct, personal, face-to-face converse and communication between man and God. It provides for that, inwardly and spiritually, which was outwardly vouchsafed to Abraham, Moses, and other holy men of old. Man was intended to be the friend of God, to speak to Him, and to be spoken to by Him. The different forms and arrangements under which this noblest privilege was appointed to be realised, depended on the stage of human progress. But it could not be said of man that he was admitted into the personal presence of God, if the only point of contact and communication between them was some created thing, in which God was pleased to deposit some energy, influence, or gift for man's benefit. The position of the latter would be that of children who are cared for indeed by their parents, but never permitted to see their face, to lie in their bosom, or to rejoice in the sunshine of their loving smile.

The case is made worse when the administration of the ordinances, which are the nearest approach of God to His people, but which, in the circumstances, are really a screen between Him and them,

is put into the hands of sinful fellow-men, and made subject to their caprice, and to all the exigencies of time, place, opportunity, and inclination to which they themselves are subject. Nor does it mitigate, but greatly increase, the degradation thus put on God's people, that those on whom they are dependent for this indirect and imperfect communication with God, themselves claim a nearer and more immediate access to His presence. The exaltation of the priest and the degradation of the people go together, and neither is perfected without the other. God's method of salvation indeed humbles and abases man, but only that it may exalt him. Man's method falsely abases one that it may exalt another, and has for its result the abasement of both alike, but especially of him who aspired to a God-like exaltation above his fellow-sinner.

Society

THE life of the so-called "Society" bears a striking resemblance to that of religious formalism. The departments are different, but the underlying principle is the same. There is the same absence of reality, the same minute observance of and zeal for outward forms, the same horror for the breach of any prescribed rule, and the same contempt for the uninitiated. Both are hollow, for both move in a circle of inanities and shadows and shams without substance. In the one a solecism in conventional manners, and in the other a neglect

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of traditional observances, is treated with severer reprobation than known vice or the commission of serious crime. Life in both is artificial, taking chief account of whatever addresses itself to the eye, neglecting whatever may lie underneath.

Miracles of Jesus

Oct. 20, 1884. THE miracles of Jesus are full of instruction, as containing a reflection of the operations of grace. Especially do they throw light on the communication of divine power to the mind and heart of man. Through the overdue exercise of the reflective faculty, we are accustomed to separate too far from each other the several elements of our mental constitution, so as to make those acts and processes consecutive, with even a considerable lapse of time between them, which are really simultaneous, and, though distinguishable in thought, really form one operation. And as we conceive of ourselves, so are we like to entertain like conceptions of God. Thus:—

When our Lord healed the sick of the palsy, we may distinguish, but we ought not to separate from each other, His word and the outgoing of His power. These two elements were conjoined. His word was power. And His power found utterance in a word.

In like manner, when the man rose up and walked, he did not first believe, and then, after an interval of more or less duration, rise up. But the

faith and the effort were instantaneous, power for both being conveyed at the same time. Understanding, heart, and will were moved at the same instant, each exerting itself after its own manner. Or rather, the mind, having received power, put forth effort in a way conformable to its several faculties. The body also received power so as to yield to the behests of the mind. That the word of Christ took effect on both is manifest, for His power did not operate on the mind through the body, nor on the body through the mind, but on mind and body at once, so as to enable the man to obey the commandment of Christ in the joint exercise of the functions of both.

The decisive act of faith must have followed the authoritative word of Christ, although it may have been preceded by an antecedent state of faith, whether in the highest form of belief in the divine power of Christ, or in that lower form of acquiescence and consent to be operated on by Christ. So it is still that men, conscious that they cannot save themselves, and hoping in a vague and uncertain way that Christ may or possibly will help them, seek after and secure some powerful word from His lips, and at once believe and are healed. In such cases a kind of faith existed beforehand, induced by the representations of friends or otherwise, and sufficient to make them inquire. But the decisive act of faith and the healing took place at one and the same time.

We must distinguish between the act of will to forsake all sin, that is, repentance which is the fruit of

saving grace, and a general willingness to be enabled so to do. A willingness to renounce the way of sin, and a willingness to be made willing to renounce it, are two different things. The former proceeds alone from the operation of efficacious grace. The latter is more or less competent to a state of nature.

Public Religion.

Oct. 29, 1884. THERE cannot be a doubt that, apart from those who live under the power of Christian truth, there is also a diffusion of Christianity over the mass of certain communities, which, if not entitling them to the name of Christian communities in the strict sense, yet constitutes a vast difference between them and those which are heathen and Mahomedan. There is more here than the mere reflex influence of the example of those in the community who are really Christian. It seems to spring from the adoption by the community at large of various fundamental Christian ideas, which affect and modify all their thinking. These, when accepted by the multitude, are not only valuable in their immediate bearing on the moral and religious state of the nation, but they become as axioms in all its thinking and reasoning about things. They form a common ground on which men can meet, a basis on which they can interchange their views in all the other things on which they at present differ.

Divine Illumination

IT is extraordinary in how short a time an ignorant man becomes acquainted, and can even show familiarity with, all the leading truths of salvation so soon as he is illuminated by the Spirit, and obtains a personal experience of them. Nov. 4, 1884.

Many gathered in from the streets, who have had almost no previous instruction, become at once intelligent Christians, and begin to speak as it were with tongues, the wonderful works of God. The doctrines of the atonement, of the divinity of Christ, of the Spirit, of repentance, faith, etc., become all of a sudden quite plain to them. In some cases this may be the effect of early teaching never understood and long forgotten. Even then the change in their intelligence is marvellous. In other cases the material of knowledge appears to be derived from those fragments of truth which float about in the mind of a Christian community, which, however, when they accidentally come in contact with them, had made no impression on their minds, whilst now, under the teaching of the Spirit, they come together bone to his bone, and are covered with flesh and inspired with life. Even where no such opportunities have existed previously of obtaining a knowledge of the most elementary truths of salvation, the bare reading of a few chapters of the Bible conveys a wonderful amount of information when the Spirit is really at work, giving to every word and evoking at every

step those facts of experience without which words are little else than mere sounds. Whatever may be the circumstances attending each particular case, the light which springs up in the mind has frequently the appearance of a new and sudden revelation.

I have often been struck myself with the case of Jews, on whom pains have been expended for their instruction without apparent results. They have exhibited an evident incapacity to understand spiritual truths, able neither to speak nor to answer any question intelligibly regarding them. And yet, when the Spirit has begun to work, and to impart to them His divine illumination and a living experience in their hearts of the things meant, all at once light has burst forth, and they have been able to speak with all the force and clearness of experienced Christians, stating every truth with precision, and placing it in its right relation with other truths. The case has seemed like that of a man groping about among the objects around him on a dark night. He has some feeling that they are real, yet they are also to him like shadows which he attempts to grasp unavailingly for the most part, nor can he ascertain their relative positions. When the sun is up, he sees all plainly, or, should it arise suddenly, it is like a new revelation. Or, to vary the simile, he is like a man blindfolded, trying to find his way. And the effect spiritually resembles that experience when the thick covering is removed from his eyes.

The effect of the Spirit's illumination is also seen

in believers themselves. How unmeaning to them is a passage of Scripture when it is withdrawn! How full of truth when He shines upon their hearts! Here also two things are conjoined to produce this result,—first, the operation of the Spirit on the faculties of their minds, and next, the experience in their hearts of the facts, which puts substance and meaning into the words.

A last illustration of the same thing is the amazing darkness, in spiritual matters, of men otherwise highly intelligent, and even learned, when they are not enlightened by the Spirit of God. Without this a man of understanding is truly a babe, and the wise man becomes a fool. By means of it the foolish is made wise, and a child attains to ripeness of understanding.

Internal Life

BY inner or internal life is meant one or other of two things, which are often confounded. Jan. 29, 1885.

It is used to designate the so-called life of introspection, which is purely subjective, and when carried too far is unhealthy. We ought indeed to take cognisance of our thoughts and feelings, taking note of the operations of our own minds, and how our various faculties perform their several functions. But this must be within strict limits. A man who is constantly poring over the state of his own mind is unfit for the work assigned him in life. It promotes self-consciousness in a bad sense, and ends in insanity. His mind should

turn outwards; instead of perpetually scrutinising the manner in which he does a thing, he should do it.

The other and truer form of the internal life consists in an abiding consciousness of God, of His character, and of the relation in which the soul stands to Him, so that all may be thought, felt, said, and done in Him and to Him. Now this consciousness of God has its starting-point in our own self-consciousness. The world outside forms no such point of departure for a living conception of God. It is His workmanship, and reflects the glory of many of His attributes, but it does not bear His image. It is from self-consciousness that we derive the initial idea of personality, and of personal attributes. Hence, to have a true conception of the loving God, we must have an abiding sense of our own personality, and of our personal relations to Him. There is thus a subjective element at work, but the life itself, which has this as one of its conditions, is truly objective. It has God for its object, receiving all from Him, and rendering all back again to Him. There is a constant reaction between the two elements,—subjective and objective, the consciousness of self and the consciousness of God,—and the two advance and recede together. If we inquire into the originating impulse, God always precedes. By the ordinary operation of His Spirit, common more or less to all men, He stimulates and quickens the natural faculties of a man, giving him to recognise himself as different from the system of nature, and to

realise his own personality, and from this standpoint the personality of God, as distinct from a mere impersonal power which is all that can be reached from the contemplation of external nature. This, however, conducts only to the natural, as distinguished from the saving knowledge of God. In order to this higher attainment, God reveals His whole character in Christ, together with the method of restoring the lost relationship to Himself caused by sin; and further, by the gracious agency of the Spirit, He regenerates the faculties of the soul, imparting the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Christ. The same relation is thus established spiritually between God and the renewed soul, as subsisted naturally before between Him and the natural man, through the ordinary operations of His Spirit. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The sense of *personal* existence, and the spontaneous consciousness of all holy affections and feelings, furnish pedestals from which may be obtained glimpses of the nature and character of God. Thus, whilst the true internal life has its point of departure in the inner consciousness, it does not end there, but goes forth to God as its great object. It does not confine a man within the prison of his own thoughts, but, starting there, it leads him straight up to God. It requires of him to realise, with calmness and recollection, his distinctness from the world, that is, nature, and his relation to God.

Prayer

Feb. 5, 1885. DOES prayer change the will of God? It cannot change the permanent mind and will, nor cause Him to deviate from the external laws of righteousness, wisdom, and truth. As to His particular acts of will or volitions, these are dependent on conditions found in those who are the objects of them. A man who earnestly desires a good thing, and seeks it from God, is in a very different state from him who has no regard for the thing itself, nor for God as the giver of it. God, therefore, all whose dealings are wise and just and good, will bestow on the one what He withholds from the other. Thus, suppose a son of godly parents to be endowed with suitable gifts for the work of the ministry, they may be quite willing to give their consent, and may also use means to stimulate his desire in that direction. But inclination on his part is an indisputable condition. And if he shows no desire, and never gives expression to a request, that they would provide him with the means and opportunity of study, they will naturally and properly refrain from bestowing these. They may even refuse a first request, and allow him to repeat it again and again with increasing urgency and importunity, before they see fit to comply with it. They are willing all the time, and in this, which may be called their permanent will, there is no change. But they wait for the fulfilment of the

necessary requirement. Should he express no desire and make no application, the thing will remain undone. Nor will they readily grant the first request. It may be the result of a momentary impulse, and they wait till it be urged repeatedly, and approves itself to be the real desire of his heart, cherished amid all the fluctuations of temporary feelings and situations. Then they will to grant, by a positive volition, what they had always been willing to consent to.

God, of course, who looks on the heart, sees from the first what is the exact frame of feeling, and does not need to wait for successive requests in order to ascertain it, as is necessary among men. And yet He usually follows the same course. And the reasons are obvious.

According to the normal rule which regulates human action, the desire of the heart and the utterance of it by the lips keep time. Where there are no special hindrances, they may be taken as the measures of each other. It may be taken for granted that when there is no expression of desire, the desire itself does not exist, and when the expression is not urgent and repeated, the desire itself is feeble and evanescent. The point of time, therefore, when men judge from the outward acts that the desire has become paramount, is also the moment when God, who needs no such external demonstrations, but reads the heart directly, sees in it the fully ripened desire. There is this further difference between the two cases. Men must wait, in important

matters, for successive manifestations of desire, before they can be sure that they can be relied on. A single request, even though expressed with great vehemence, may possibly deceive. But God, who searches the heart and tries the reins, requires no such delay. And therefore a first request, if it comes from the bottom of the heart, He answers at once. When He delays, it is not that He needs time to ascertain the real mind of the petitioner, but because, whether known or unknown to the petitioner himself, his mind has not finally been made up. This alone God waits for. The desire must not only be real in itself, but real, that is, supreme, relatively to all other things which stand in the way of its fulfilment.

As subsidiary to the former ground, it is of importance, not only that the desire which finds utterance in prayer be sincere in the eyes of God, but that its sincerity be matter of consciousness to the consciousness of the petitioner himself. In a normal state of experience these two things go together and coalesce. But they are often far from doing so in practice. And when such is the case, there is apparent delay in the hearing of prayer. The delay, however, is more apparent than real, and may be described thus:—

When the desire is real, and the sincerity of it is also conscious, there will not only be an immediate answer, but a conscious sense of the answer given.

Where, again, the desire is real before God, but

no consciousness of it in the mind of the petitioner, the answer will be received, but not consciously. And generally in the measure of the conscious sincerity of prayer, will be also a conscious sense of the answer obtained.

It should be noted that the first essential requisite in prayer is sincere desire, however it may be ascertained. Without this there can be no answer, because there is no request. By sincerity of request or desire is implied not merely some wish for the thing asked for, but a real preference and choice of it, above all the things that may come into competition with it. If it be for the highest blessing of all, the favour and fellowship of God, then this must be sought above all other things whatever. If it be for a subordinate blessing, that blessing must occupy a place in our choice, above all the things that are incompatible with it.

What has been said concerning desire will hold equally good regarding the other great element of successful prayer, namely, faith. It is necessary that we truly desire the thing we ask for, but it is equally necessary that we go to God for it in the name of Christ, instead of trusting to other helpers.

With reference to the ascertainment of the reality and sincerity of all requests, our fellow-men can judge only from the outward expression of desire, viewed in the light of attendant acts; we may judge by our own consciousness; but God alone judges infallibly, being dependent neither on the

form or manner of our words, nor on our conscious impressions regarding ourselves. And He acts on His perfect knowledge in dealing with our requests.

Special Promises

Feb. 22, 1885. SPECIAL promises are given to special qualities and states of mind. Thus there are special promises to the meek, to the forgiving, to the pure in heart, etc.

Two reasons may be assigned for this.

God in His wisdom is unwilling to bestow the blessing except on these conditions. They are not otherwise adapted so as to be blessings indeed. And the withholding of them is the special correction and penalty for the neglect to cultivate the particular graces named.

If God be unwilling to give, men are not in a condition to receive particular forms of blessing, except they possess certain frames and habits of mind. Thus, how can an impure heart see God? How can a revengeful spirit entertain truly the thought of God's forgiving love? Certain states of mind interfere with the exercise of faith, and darken the light and weaken the confidence implied in it.

It may be true that by faith all blessings may be appropriated, and so much has God promised. But where is the faith, and how is a man to attain to it, who allows his heart to be filled with idols, and defiles his conscience with known sin, or cherishes unforgiving or revengeful thoughts?

The Psalmist says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." In such a case neither can God hear nor can man ask in any true sense, or with such desire as implies a willingness to part with all that is inconsistent with the thing asked for, or with that faith which trusts in God and expects the blessing.

We have here an example of what we so often meet with in human life, and also in nature, namely, forces co-related, acting and reacting on each other. If a man found faith to ask God for forgiveness, and with such confidence as to be assured of an answer, the immediate result would be a forgiving spirit in himself towards his neighbours. On the other hand, a forgiving spirit makes it more easy for him to trust in God's forgiveness. Therefore we might justly counsel a man to seek assured forgiveness of God as a means of promoting a spirit of forgiveness within his own heart; and in like manner to seek the attainment of the latter, in order to the removal of his distrust in God's forgiving love. We judge of God largely by what we find in our own hearts. On the other hand, it is the true knowledge of God by which the evil that is in our hearts can be effectually remedied. Our relations to God and our relations to our fellow-men mutually affect each other.

Our efforts to exercise a forgiving spirit towards others, or to attain to any other good thing, constitutes no claim whatever on God, all whose communications of blessing are purely of grace, through the merits of Christ. Such questions,

therefore, as those mooted above, have no reference whatsoever to the one ground of our acceptance with God. They rather relate to the work and administration of the Spirit, who, in leading men to repentance and faith, must necessarily take account of the whole state, habits, and dispositions of a man, and adapt the procedure accordingly.

Confession

Feb. 27, 1885. THERE is an impression in the minds of many that there is a want of reality in the confession of sins to God. God is already acquainted with them, and knows them far better than we ourselves do. But the truth is, the conveyance of information concerning what was previously unknown is no part of confession properly so called. It is a mere accompaniment, and by no means a necessary or invariable accompaniment. This is true even of confession made to man. The person sinned against may have a full knowledge of all the circumstances, so that the party confessing tells him nothing which he did not know before. And yet the confession may be real. Nay, the guilty party may admit all the facts, and yet make no confession. The reality of confession, therefore, does not depend on the communication or acknowledgment of the things done. It is true that between man and man this is usually a necessary preliminary, but it does not belong to its essence. A knowledge of the facts on both sides is an

indispensable basis, but these may not be denied on the one side, nor may new information be necessary on the other.

Confession in its essential element has to deal not with facts, but with their character. It includes three things:—

An acknowledgment of wrong-doing, and therefore of guilt.

Adam in Paradise, when charged with his sin, did not deny the fact that he ate of the fruit. He excused it, and justified himself, even indirectly throwing the blame, if blame there was, on God. This was not confession.

A willingness to accept the just penalty, and to make full repentance of the evil done.

A sincere purpose of heart not to commit the same offence.

These three things are all linked together, and involve each other. Together they constitute a full admission of the claims of justice, and this not merely by an act of the understanding, acknowledging these things to be done, but by the act of the will, practically yielding to the demands as just.

The leading element is the acknowledgment of the wrong done. If this be genuine, the others follow as a necessary consequence. A willingness to accept the penalty does not exclude a readiness to accept the remission of it at the hand of mercy, if that be possible. But it does imply submission to it as just, should there be no forgiveness. The resolution to sin no more is an acknowledgment

of the justice of the law or rule the breach of which has been confessed.

It will thus be seen that the confession of sin is essential to its forgiveness. There may be remission, in the exercise of mercy, where the claims of a just law are admitted. And God has made provision for this without detriment to justice in the scheme of the gospel. But where the justice of a law is not admitted, and consequently the breach of it is felt to be no wrong, forgiveness and the maintenance of government in any shape are things incompatible.

Of course it must be understood that the bare acknowledgment of wrong-doing with the lips is not enough. Words to have the least value must express realities, and in this case, a deep sense of the wrong done, a conviction of it as founded on truth, with corresponding feelings of the heart.

The purpose to turn to God and sin no more is perhaps not to be included within the idea of confession strictly speaking, but belongs rather to that more comprehensive act which we designate by the name of repentance. But these things are closely allied, and are the elements of one and the same great change, which may be viewed as a whole, or in its component parts, according to convenience.

From the nature of the case, there cannot be the exercise of mercy in forgiveness, except on the footing of a violation of the law of right.

He who professes to forgive must necessarily proceed on the idea that he has suffered wrong. And even though he be convinced of this, and thus be in a position to offer forgiveness, the wrong-doer

is incapable of receiving it as forgiveness, unless he be satisfied that he has committed wrong, or that the thing which he knows himself to have done was a violation of the law of right. There must be a sense of injury on both sides, to make the passage of forgiveness from the one to the other possible. Confession and the assurance given of pardon are nothing else but the open, deliberate expression of that which already exists in the hearts of both, the confession and the forgiveness alike being founded on the sense of violated right, and the justice of the penalty, should it be enacted.

The Moral Law

THE moral law presents itself in two aspects:— Dec. 28, 1885.

1. As clothed with moral beauty,—as an ideal to be pursued, where its violation is defilement, loathsomeness, and the ultimate result, if there be no recovery, is loss, corruption, and suffering, in the way of natural experience. 2. As clothed with authority, by the imperative will of God. In this case its violation is *guilt*, and the ultimate effect, unless there be deliverance by satisfaction, is punishment, as a penal sentence.

Both aspects are separately combined, but they do not always necessarily assume an equal prominence. The moral element seems to have more prevailed in the earlier stages of the world's history. The idea of sin as transgression, and of consequent guilt, appears not to have entered largely into the

experience of Abraham and the other patriarchs. This side was not, however, unrepresented, as we see in the penal infliction of the flood by way of judgment, and the overthrow of the cities of the plain. It was Moses by whom the legal or judicial element was first brought fully to light. The law was given by authority. Ideas of guilt, expiation, and punishment were developed. In Christ both aspects are perfectly conjoined.

Our forefathers were inclined to lay stress too exclusively on the judicial element: in our day the tendency is quite in the other direction. This may be partly the result of reaction, and partly the effect of greater familiarity with the process of natural law in the material creation. The proper way to meet those who are under its influence, and despise the opposite view as antiquated, is to show them that their own conception is equally one-sided, and that the whole truth requires the combination of both.

The question is one of great importance, for an exclusive adherence to the one view makes the whole government of God to be impersonal. Granted that moral ideas are the basis of His nature and of His administration, it is by these being embodied in authoritative enactments—whether tacitly through the conscience, or expressly by revealed commands—that He has personal dealings with us. The perfections of His nature must find expression in acts of personal will, to make either personal obedience or personal punishment possible.

There is a kind of morality, if it may be called

such, which is based on mere expediency and conformity to moral law. Its happiness is found in harmony with environments. Another and higher form consists in the pursuit of a moral ideal. The effect to retain it requires a man frequently to put himself in opposition to his environments, and incur the consequences of the transgression of natural law. Thus a man rushes into fire or water to save a fellow-creature, regardless of the fact that fire burns and water drowns. He may thus suffer, but the resultant happiness is higher and better than that which he was prepared to sacrifice. This second kind of morality may be designated virtue. The third, and indeed the only true form, is holiness or obedience to the will of God. In the pursuit of this, it is not necessary that a man pass by and ignore ideas of moral excellence, for the will of God is "holy, just, and good." It is not moral excellence, however, in the abstract form which he has to aim at, but moral excellence as embodied in and enjoined by the will of God. Strictly speaking, he has not to pursue two ends,—partly the attainment of an ideal, and partly obedience to the divine will,—for these are combined in one. All moral ideals are concentered in the nature and find expression in the will of God. They have no existence apart from Him, and though they may be contemplated apart, they are simply the attributes or perfections of His character. They thus reach us in a personal form, and constitute the basis of personal love, personal obedience, and personal happiness, all of which

have not only a person for their subject, but a person also for their object. We may admire an ideal, conform to it, and find enjoyment both in the contemplation of it and in the effort to attain it. But in strict terms we cannot love it, obey it, nor find our happiness in it. All these things are personal, even the last, for true and satisfying happiness consists in true communion between person and person. Nor is there any danger that, in having respect purely to the will of God, we shall deviate from the true ideal of moral excellence, for in Him these two are eternally and unchangeably united.

As in the pursuit of a mere abstract ideal a man is often called upon to run counter to natural law, and to sacrifice happiness in order to gain it, this apparent discrepancy finds its true solution, if, instead of aiming at an abstraction, or for its sake bidding defiance to natural law, we make our sole end to be conformity to the will of God. "Thy will be done" is a perfect watchword for human life. God has so constructed the material world, so fixed our environments, that in pursuing a higher end, even were it simply an ideal, we must often sustain loss as regards our external surroundings. In this case, however, two antagonistic claims press themselves on our notice, and we must sacrifice the one to the other. We cannot yield satisfaction to both. But in the perfect will of God both are reconciled. In seeking conformity to His will, we yield satisfaction to both. He has ordained the material laws of the universe, and appointed our natural environments for our

moral probation. In our relation to these, we are sometimes called upon to do His will, and sometimes to bear it. But whether in the way of obedience or of submission, it is His holy and perfect will with which we have to concern ourselves. The natural laws and their inevitable consequences are not enemies which we have to contend against, but wise and gracious arrangements, which, though sometimes causing us pain, are intended for our good. No idea can be more shallow than that broached by some who call themselves thinkers, that nothing more is needed for complete human happiness than a perfect knowledge of natural law and perfect conformity to its requirements. Neither our knowledge of it, nor the regulation of our life by it in the most complete manner, will prevent it, according to the existing constitution of things, from coming to us charged with much suffering. It is not the less benevolent on this account, for it is adapted to our present imperfect condition. It is not therefore conformity to the laws of nature which we need, but conformity to and acquiescence in the will of God, who uses the former, sometimes with our cooperation, sometimes without it, to convey to us enjoyment or pain as it may be most for our good.

As we may not put natural law in the room of the personal will of God, still less may we make an idea of moral excellence a substitute for it. For, as already stated, the will of God is that moral excellence we are in quest of, only endowed with personality and clothed with authority. As such

it is fitted to be the ultimate aim of man, possessed as he is of personality and a rational will.

Yielding ourselves unreservedly to the will of God, we are put into harmony at once with our environments, and with the highest ideal aims.

It will be observed that in the first of the positions referred to above there is a confusion of thought, from not distinguishing between the reign of natural law and providence. Natural law is one of the factors by which God carries out His scheme of providence, and fixes our environments. But it is only one. And there are others equally beyond our control, and beyond the scope of our knowledge and effort to influence. To say nothing of the operations of grace, which are not here in question, there are the voluntary acts of our fellow-men, which, singly and in their vast multitude affecting and affected by each other, largely determine our situation, without knowledge or ability on our part to change our course. Besides these, there are the acts, intermediate between natural law and free volition, by which animals of every kind may bring us good or evil. There are those, also, which we usually term accidents, which no human foresight can provide against. If a man's horse stumble, and he is in consequence thrown to the ground and breaks his neck, natural law may have to do with the event, but there is something besides which brings natural law into operation, but which the rider with all possible care cannot always avert. Yet his welfare depends upon it. We can find no security for our well-being and

happiness, either in the fixed order of nature or in the events which befall us independently of our control, or in our progressive knowledge of these and endeavours to adapt ourselves to them, unless all to the will of God, on whom both they and we depend, and who, being acquainted with our need, so directs them as to promote our good. And thus His discipline may take the form of enjoyment or suffering, as may seem best to His perfect wisdom. The theory which makes man's happiness to consist in harmony with his environments, and its progress to be the result of a constant war between free volition on the one hand and unalterable law on the other, leaves out the main element, the personal intervention of God, on whom the one and the other alike depend.

Logical Definition

IT has often been observed that the most effective and most impressive discourses are not those which make every point absolutely clear; but those which, whatever the amount of perspecuity, still remain covered with a certain haze and obscurity. The observation is just. No subject, however unimportant, can be fully exhausted by the human mind. Besides what is known, there is always something beyond, enveloped in a mysterious halo. All our knowledge ends in mystery, to which the soul by its very constitution is powerfully attracted. As a child of immortality, its aspirations ever

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stretch away into the unknown. Now the effect of strict logical definition is that, whilst it makes clear what is known, and is thus far beneficial, it shuts out what is unknown or what is but imperfectly known. It includes within definite outlines the former, but in doing so equally excludes the latter, and thus converts what would otherwise be poetry into plain prose. It may be said that no amount of definite knowledge would satisfy the mind, unless it saw clearly before it unemployed regions, still lying beyond. If attainment affords it delight, still more does it live by aspiration and hope, as becomes a finite being.

Socialism

Feb. 5, 1886. THE real source of Socialism is the assertion of the rights of property to the neglect of its responsibilities and duties. If the possessor of large property, whether in capital or in landed estate, would but regard himself as the head and leader of a little community, and instead of the increase of his wealth would make it his aim and boast to be surrounded by a well-ordered, prosperous, and happy body of dependents, if he sought his standing in society in their condition, not in personal display and extravagance, there would be no danger of the inroads of Socialism. But if he neglects the responsibilities of his social position, the temptation and even the necessity is near at hand for the State to step in and compel him to

fulfil his obligations. And so far as State control is obliged to supersede private responsibility, the principle of Socialism is at work.

Modern political economy has done much to aggravate existing evils. Its aim has been the accumulation, not the right distribution of wealth; personal aggrandisement of the capitalist, not the well-being of the general community, and especially of the workman he employs; or it has put the former of these things first, leaving the other to shift for itself under the iron despotism of supply and demand. It has assigned to the man of property the task of increasing his own wealth at all risks, instead of making the welfare and comfort of those dependent on him his main end, at whatever risk to the increase of his personal wealth. This leads to Socialism by a straight road. For the only alternative to a voluntary performance of duty is its compulsory performance; or, putting it in another form, the only alternative to the denial of responsibilities is the deprivation of rights. Yet the assumption of all private rights and responsibilities by public bodies, which is Socialism, would lead to a worse extreme. Perhaps it is best that the two powers, public and private, should check and counteract each other's evil tendencies. Even in the best state of things they will be co-operative factors, and a mutual stimulus in seeking the good, moral, intellectual, and material, of society.

When through private greed and selfishness large masses of the population fall into a state of poverty and degradation, it is not enough to raise the cry of

Socialism, nor the cry of infringement of private rights, when by public law means are taken to rectify the evil. On the other hand, it must be remembered that if there be not virtue enough in the community to restrain the gross abuse of private rights, the elected representatives of such a community, tainted with the same selfishness, cannot be entrusted with very large powers of control, lest in supplanting one form of evil they substitute a worse.

Salvation

Feb. 24, 1886. TWO things are necessary to salvation. They are distinct, and are placed under different laws of distribution:—The objective provision in Christ, which is unconditional, unlimited, free, immediately available, and accessible to the chief of sinners; the subjective appropriation of it through the Spirit. Here there are restrictions and limitations, not to the offer of divine help, but to the acceptance of it. Whatever may have been a man's conduct down to the latest moment, whatever may have been his resistance to the gospel call, he is still welcome to Christ. It does not follow that his past and present state exerts no influence on his appropriation of Christ by the Spirit. To resist and grieve the Spirit is to shut himself off from the only source of power by which he can embrace the gracious offer. Hence the distinction drawn between sin committed against Christ and sin against

the Holy Spirit (Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 23-30; Luke xii. 10). Perhaps we have here an explanation of that remarkable passage (Matt. vi. 14, 15), "If ye forgive not men . . ." and other utterances that seem to involve the same principle (John xiv. 15, 16, 21), and make human conduct a condition of divine grace. No kind or degree of sin can stand between a sinner and the free offer of salvation. It may, however, interfere with his personal appropriation of it, or with the gracious influences of the Spirit, by which alone he can appropriate it. The indulgence of sin quenches the Spirit, and disables the soul from the exercise of faith, and also excludes those blessings which can only be received by faith. We cannot say to a man that continuance in any sin places him beyond the scope of the free offer, but we are warranted to say that it may cause the Spirit to cease striving with him. The gift of the Spirit and indulgence in sin are co-related. Through the Spirit we overcome sin, but through sin we may make the Spirit to withdraw. The like may be said of faith and sin. Faith gives the victory over sin, but sin deadens and darkens faith.

Thus there is no limit or restriction to the objective offer of salvation or any of its blessings, but we may put restrictions and limitations on our subjective appropriation of them.

The Plea of Prayer

March 8, 1886. THE promises of God are free, yet discriminating. Though they are all full of grace, yet *all of them* are not made to all men. They are adapted to the various characters, states, and circumstances of those to whom they are addressed. Hence it behoves them who wish to plead them before God carefully to inquire whether they be the parties meant, and whether, therefore, they have a warrant to ask for the blessings contained in them. If the petitioner finds himself exactly described in a promise, he may as certainly assume that he is spoken to, as if his name were inserted in it. Otherwise, he has no title to plead it. The universal blessing of salvation is contained in a universal offer or promise, and is therefore free to all men, simply as sinners. Special blessings are for special men marked off from others by special states, circumstances, or attainments. They are therefore conveyed through special promises, in which these restrictions are intimated, and their fulfilment can only be obtained by special discriminating prayer. It is of great importance thus to examine the terms of any special promise, in order to ascertain our warrant to plead it before God.

We find here an explanation of a difficulty which presents itself in many of the prayers which occur in the Book of Psalms and elsewhere. The Psalmist appears at the first sight to offer his petition and to expect an answer on the score of merit,

for example, Psalm lxxxvi. 2. He seems to make his attainments in holiness the meritorious ground of the acceptance of his prayer. In reality it is not so. He does not regard his state as a legal ground entitling him to the desired favour, but simply the fulfilment on his part of the moral condition to which, in His grace and wisdom, God has been pleased to attach the particular promise. As the promise, though purely of grace, was restricted to those whose state coincided with its terms, it was needful to assure himself that the terms were implemented in his own case, in order to be warranted to appropriate it to himself and make it the basis of his prayer. Prayer may be grounded on legal claim or right, or in moral adaptation as set forth in the divine promise. It is the latter plea alone to which the Psalmist appeals, and it would be well for us all if we were more careful to follow his example, instead of presenting our requests at haphazard without inquiring whether it be in accordance with God's wisdom or with His promise to grant their fulfilment.

There are other cases in which the Psalmist asserts his righteousness in connection with his prayers as a reason why they should be answered. It will be found on examination, however, that in these he is not speaking of the righteousness of his cause in relation to his God, but in relation to his fellow-men who persecuted and oppressed him.

The Two Wills

March 19, 1886. APART from moral character and the designations, "Will of the flesh" and "Will of the spirit" which rest on it, there are in man "two wills" according to his natural construction,—that which springs from the impulse of desire, passion, etc., and which man possesses in common with the lower creation; and that which belongs to man's higher nature, and is conditioned by the possession of reason and conscience. This will is personal, self-determining, and free; but it is a dependent will, being subject to God's authority, and incapable without His sustaining power to perform even its natural functions. On the other hand, God, whether in His ordinary or His higher communications, does not supersede its natural constitution, but enables it to do its own proper work according to its own proper nature. In all men He upholds that constitution, so that in their worst conditions they differ from the lower creatures. And by His special grace He renovates it and restores it from the degradation and bondage of sin, without, however, doing violence to its external prerogatives.

Though the distinctly human will is a created and therefore a dependent will, it may in a true sense be termed an originating cause. The other side, common to man with the lower creation, is an effect. It is determined, so far as left to itself, by influences* from without acting on external sensibilities, appetites, and the like. The higher will is

appointed to control and govern it, which, however firm the strength of the passions which it ought to hold in subjection and its own weakness, especially as caused by the renunciation of divine allegiance, it often fails to do. Instead of overcoming them, it is often overcome by them. And thus acts follow, of which it can be said that man wills a thing against his will. That is, the will of impulse and desire makes a choice which the higher will of the mind was unable to resist.

A regenerate will is truly subject to God. But, not being yet perfected, it is still encompassed with weakness. And thus it too often yields to or rather is overpowered by the solicitations of the lower will. Even then, however, it shows its true character by resistance and earnest struggle. It does not acquiesce in the evil done or voluntarily choose it. It is on God's side, and though it is not always victorious, it fights against its own and His enemy.

The Effect of Sermons

IT does not follow, because a sermon is almost or altogether forgotten, that it has produced no permanent effect. If it has made one truth *to live*, to become a living experience within the soul, it has conveyed an abiding possession, changing the state of the mind, and modifying, it may be, the whole after life. A truth is not influential till it takes force and burns its way into the heart. From that

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time it becomes a power within the character, having a life in it, and though sometimes it may fall asleep and become latent, it retains its power, —unless, indeed, it be wilfully quenched.

Union with Christ

March 29, 1886. THROUGH faith we become one with Christ, and He with us. We change places. Or rather, an identification takes place between Him and ourselves, so that, as members of the same corporate body, we have, legally and morally, the same liabilities, the same responsibilities, the same common life with our Head.

It is not a physical unity, like that between the parts of the same natural body, which, though they have a common life, have no life at all singly and apart from each other.

It is a moral unity, *i.e.* a unity of person, each retaining in the united state his own separate personality, whilst yet in conjunction they possess a common life.

This is the highest kind of unity. It involves far more than sameness of character, similarity of aims and purposes, mutual sympathy. All these may exist among beings as much separated from each other as are material atoms before they are formed into an organic structure. Even should they affect each other in various ways, the influence which they exercise is still from without. The grand characteristic of the unity referred to is a

common life, which is indeed the unity itself in active operation. This common life in its perfect state implies entire harmony between the body regarded as a whole and its individual parts. In an imperfect condition this is not so. But the parts (if indeed they be parts, and not a foreign substance within and yet outside the organism), so far as they do not harmonise with the central life of the body, are gradually assimilated to it, whilst the incongruous material is cast out.

The archetypal form of the common life is to be found in God, on the basis of the same infinite nature and the threefold personality.

The next in order is the common life, established in Christ, between God and man. To lay its foundation, Christ assumed our nature into personal union with Himself. And in order to its realisation, it is necessary that we, laying aside our own independent separate life, by faith become one with Him, and enter into His life. Without parting with our personality, we thus become partakers of that common life of which He is the central source and foundation. He and all that He has become ours, and we and all that is of us become His. As in every form of organised life, whilst there is a material relation between the parts, all of these together are related to a central organ, on which they equally depend; so all believers jointly and separately are united to Christ the Head, and are dependent on Him. He is answerable for them in all respects legally and morally. He answers for them against all charges

from without. The energy of His life penetrates their hearts, expels therefrom what is contrary to His character, and conforms them to His own. Being one with them, He must answer all charges against them, as the head of a family is responsible for every offence committed by one of the children, or as the head of a nation is responsible for damages done by any of his subjects to foreign powers. But this by no means does away with the necessity of internal discipline within the family or nation itself. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son" (John v. 22). Whilst those who are in Christ are freed from liability to punishment, they are not exempt from chastisement. And in like manner, though in Christ and because so, they must endure much suffering in connection with the process by which corrupt affections are expelled and their hearts and lives are purified.

When we speak of the oneness or identity of a body, we do not mean that the parts, considered in themselves as parts, are identical with each other. Nor do we mean that they are merely like or identical in character. The identity lies in the body itself, of which they form the component parts. They are one because they are members of one and the same body. The hand is not identical with the foot, nor the eye with the ear,—viewed simply in themselves,—but they possess an identity as members and organs of the same body, mutually dependent, with common interests, and with a common life circulating through them.

No earthly figure fully represents the identity or oneness which subsists between Christ and believers. It is, however, so complete, that if anyone should ask a believer, "Are you assured that your sins are forgiven?" he is warranted to reply, "Yes, for Christ has died." "Are you sure that you possess the true life in your soul, to be completed hereafter in the body also?"—"Yes, for Christ has risen." "Are you assured of victory over the world of sin?"—"Yes, for Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." "Do you know with certainty that you have access to the throne of God?"—"Yes, for He maketh intercession for us, and every just request of mine is His also."

It is this oneness with Christ which puts such a depth into the Scripture term "in" as opposed to "by" or "through." We are "redeemed" in Christ (Eph. i. 7); "chosen" in Christ (ver. 4); "accepted" in Christ (ver. 6); "obtained an inheritance" in Christ (ver. 11); "sanctified" in Christ (I Cor. i. 2).

The Love of God

THE love of God to the world at large is the love of the Creator to His own offspring. It is a pure, generous, pitying love. There is in it the love of relationship, though now disowned by its object. He longs for the restoration of both, and He hates the sin which stands in the way. The

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more He loves the person, the more does He loathe the cause of debasement.

The love of God to the redeemed is the love of a Father. It, too, has in it the love of relationship, for He has begotten them to a new life in Christ. And there is in it the love of complacency, for His children bear His image.

Outward and Inward Ministry

April 17, 1886. JOHN "baptized with water," Christ "baptized with the Holy Ghost" (John i. 26, 33). There is a like distinction between the ministry of the Spirit. Moses, the prophets, the apostles, and all messengers of the truth, inspired or uninspired, are simply ministers of the letter. Christ alone is the minister of the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18; John vi. 63). Their ministry is confined to the outward and objective sphere; His extends to the heart. Theirs, indeed, may be also termed a ministration of the Spirit, so far as they pray for and obtain the gift of the Spirit to accompany the outward ministration. But they do not dispense the gift of the Spirit. They only ask that Christ may do so. They do not address themselves to men, but to God. They are purely ministers of the letter, when they prophesy to the dry bones. So far as they may be called ministers of the Spirit, they prophesy to "the four winds."

Inspiration of the Scripture

IN the written Word, as in Christ the Living Word, **May 13, 1886.** we hear two voices, the voice of God and the voice of man, and these are so blended together that each utterance bears the stamp and impress of both speakers. It is not possible to separate the different statements, and to say this one proceeds from God, and is infallible, and that one proceeds from man, and is liable to mistakes. Nor would it be desirable, for the Bible is a book of facts, and its truths, though often doctrinally stated, are mainly the interpretation of the facts in which these are embodied. Of course there are some facts which are more important than others, just as all truths are not equally important. But the two elements belong to each other, and must be looked at in each other's light. And they both proceed from the same double source.

This holds good, however, only of Scripture as originally written. The preservation and restoration of the text, as well as its exposition, have been committed to men under the ordinary discipline of God and teaching of His Spirit. If it be asked, What difference does it make to us whether such mistakes as exist belonged to the original text or were introduced afterwards? it is answered, The difference is vast both in the critical and expository departments. In the latter a main stimulant to exertion is the knowledge of the fact that the truth is there if we could only understand it. And

in like manner, the existence of a perfect original causes us to strain every faculty to ascertain what it was,—an effort which it would hardly be worth making if the original itself were not to be depended on. No man of science could exert himself with zeal to explain the phenomena of nature if he believed that some of them were abnormal and inconsistent with the laws of nature; in other words, mistakes or blunders in the system of creation. On the contrary, the certainty that every obscure fact is reducible to harmony with the rest, and the earnest attempt on the basis of the fundamental assumption to solve the difficulty, often lead to his most important discoveries.

There was a great truth contained in the designation given by the older divines to prophets and apostles, as the penmen of the Spirit, though they somewhat mechanically applied it, as if the sacred writers were dead instruments in the hand of God, and their own personality were wholly suppressed. The Spirit of God took hold of the whole man, with all his faculties, tone and temper of mind, experiences, and acquired knowledge, and as thus endowed used him for His purposes.

German Christianity

May 29, 1886. ONE of the most signal causes of the low condition of religion in Germany is the tendency of the German mind to connect the idea of obligation with inclination or felt want, instead of authority;

in other words, to base Christian practice not on the law without, but on the law within. Thus the ordinary Christian German does not feel called on to keep the Sabbath, or to attend worship, or even privately to pray, because God has commanded these duties, but because, and when, he feels an inward need. He regards it as a species of formalism, and almost of hypocrisy, to observe them, unless at the call of internal impulse. Instead of obeying the law at all hazards, because given by God, and seeking the right disposition wherewith to fulfil it, he suspends the first of these things on the presence of the other. He resists and resents all authority from without, and considers submission to it as mechanical and slavish. It is true that mere external observance, without corresponding disposition, is the "form of godliness without power." But both are imperative, and we must have respect to both, if we would have blessing from God. And there is this difference between them, that the fulfilment of the outward duty is within the compass of the natural ability. Unless, therefore, we do what we can without the aid of special grace, how can we expect God to impart to us that which He alone can give?

It is the comparative want of the self-determining will, or, as it is or ought to be in the case of a creature, will in subjection to the authoritative will of God, in contrast to that form of will which is the mere resultant of the desire or impulse of the moment, which impresses its peculiar type on German Christianity, and on that of other

countries, so far as they have succumbed to the influence of Germany. The German refuses either to believe or to obey on the ground of mere authority. He has little disposition to receive a truth on the bare authority of Scripture. It must commend itself to his reason. Nor can he yield himself readily to obedience to a command,—on the basis of authority,—unless it be responded to by the impulse and inclination of the heart. Thus in both cases his tendency is to subordinate to the subjective element the objective, and to make the latter to be dependent on the former. Both ought to be united, and, in the case of learners, the objective should take the precedence. The pupil must first believe, and then understand. He must first obey, and then seek to be raised inwardly to the level of the command. *Our* special danger lies in being satisfied with the first, which leads to a cold, lifeless creed and practice.

Human Society

Aug. 28, 1886. A COMMUNITY is not a mere agglomeration of individual men. Nor is it, strictly speaking, a personality. It is something intermediate between these. Unlike a multitude of mere atoms, having no relation to each other but that of juxtaposition, it is a living organism, all the parts of which affect and are affected by each other. Thus it has a common life, which modifies and is modified by the life of each individual member of it. On the

other hand, it has no single seat of consciousness such as a person possesses. As all the thought, feelings, and passions of a man centre in his personality, which forms thus a *single* and undivided unity, so all the persons thus constituted form together a complex unity, possessing a complex intelligence, heart, and will.

Humano-Divine Acts

IN faith and repentance, and those other acts in which God and man have a share, the divine and human operations are strictly simultaneous. A serious mistake is often committed by conceiving them as consecutive. Thus an anxious soul, instead of accepting simply God's offer in Christ, perplexes itself about the act of faith, and wears itself to obtain the gift of the Spirit *prior* to believing. But the grace to believe and the act of believing are simultaneous. Neither precedes the other. It is well to cherish a sense of our own helplessness and of the need of the Spirit; with this it behoves us, in humility and simplicity, to accept the offered gift. This is a distinct *act of faith* by which we receive salvation. The other belongs to the frame or state of mind out of which that act proceeds, and which may be described generally as a sense of need and willingness to accept salvation, as a sense of helplessness and dependence on God. But these antecedents do not constitute the positive act of faith or trust, which is an *act of will*. Whatever may have gone

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before, faith in Christ is the act which brings salvation. The act of faith precedes the possession of Christ, but the operation of the Spirit (causally) precedes or accompanies the act of faith. What, therefore, we have to do is not first by an act of faith to receive the Spirit, and then through His aid to believe in Christ; but, at once, to exercise faith in Christ, assured that the grace of the Spirit will not be withheld in our effort to obey the command of God.

Throughout the whole Christian life we must keep in mind the simultaneousness of divine and human acts. We must not first trust and then do, still less first do and then trust, but we must trust while doing, and do while trusting, recognising at once the authority and power of God. When He issues a command, He is ready to impart the grace required to obey it. His will is clothed both with authority and power. In yielding our will to His will, we must recognise both these attributes simultaneously. We must pray and work *in God*, working-trusting (looking) and trusting-working, the trust being akin to that leaning with which a man leans on his own resources.

Covenanters

Sept. 21, 1886. THE aim of the more extreme Covenanters was to bend the reality into the mould of their lofty ideal. The aim of the more lax party of Presbyterians was to accommodate the ideal to the existing reality. The principles of both parties were

the same, but in the attempt to reconcile idea and fact, the former paid too little regard to fact, and the latter to idea. Had the former obtained the upper hand, they must have had resort to persecution. The course adopted by the latter led to declension. The *nation*, by which alone the ideal could have been realised, was not prepared for it. An outward acceptance could only have been secured by force and hypocritical profession. The goal, therefore, lay still in the future.

Papal Infallibility

WHAT helps to make the doctrine of papal Feb. 11, 1887. infallibility plausible in the eyes of Romanists, is that they look at it in the light, less of its relation to the individual soul, than in its relation to the religious community of which the Pope professes to be the head. In every society there must, of course, be some supreme head (whether composed of one or many), which shall finally decide in all questions of dispute between its members, or between any of the members and the society generally to which they belong. That judgment must be final, else the society must fall to pieces. This is the ground taken by De Maistre. He identifies supremacy with infallibility, which last, though confirmed in this case by Divine Providence, is a necessary attribute of all true government. This is the lawyer's or politician's point of view. It does nothing to settle the real question at issue. It lies at the root of the assertion frequently

made, that "there must be some ultimate authority to appeal to in cases of a difference of opinion." There must be an ultimate authority to decide on all social questions, and its mind and will must be accepted as final. But this has nothing to do with private opinions and actions, unless a man parts with his personal responsibility, and submits both mind and will to some human authority.

National Churches

May 15, 1887. THE only proper idea of a national Church, if the term is to be used at all, is that the nation has been christianised and organised as a local branch of the universal Church. Every nation possesses a peculiar type of life, just as each particular individual does. Christianising does not annihilate the type, but transforms it. Every nation, therefore, ought to be provided with a separate Church organisation, that it may have an opportunity to develop itself, and, by perfection of its ideal, to enrich the whole Church of Christ. It must, however, in no case include all the individuals of the nation, unless they have all been converted and have voluntarily become its members. This idea must not be confounded with that of a Christian nation, which embraces the whole people, and deserves the appellation, if the majority, by their representatives, guide the legislation and administration on Christian principles.

A Christian Nation

WE must not confound together the ideas of a *Christian nation* and a *National Church*. The former is a thing to be earnestly aimed at, though it has as yet been very imperfectly attained, or rather, has not been attained at all, except in the diffusion of certain Christian sentiments through the general mind of the nation, and by the testimony of those individuals to whom they have become a principle of life. These last are their real standard-bearers, without whom they would speedily perish. They reach the masses only in an indirect way, and as it were by reflection. July 20, 1887.

A National Church proceeds on a false assumption that the nation is Christian, and hence all the anomalies and abuses to which it invariably and necessarily gives birth. Besides, even were the nation already Christian, it rests on the false notion that under the New Dispensation Christianity proceeds from the nation to the individual, not from the individual to the nation. The former was the principle of the Old Testament, and in accordance with it God kept Himself in living communication with the nation through the prophets, etc.; whilst under the New, the *living* communication is maintained with individual man through the Spirit. The Word and the Spirit are indeed necessary in all circumstances, but, under the Old, the Word (outwardly spoken)

took the foremost place, and under the New the Spirit.

Divine Teaching

Aug. 5, 1887. WHEN God teaches us by His Spirit, He does not supersede our faculties, but quickens, strengthens, and directs them. We must read, inquire, consider, reflect, and observe all the conditions necessary to the right working of our mind, in its relation to the heart and will, just as much as if the whole result depended on ourselves alone. The old direction, *do* as if all depended on us, and *trust* as if all depended on God, must not be understood in the sense that our effort is not necessary to the result. Were it superfluous, there would be no reality in it. No truth can enter our minds except in the right use of our faculties; but they cannot be used aright without divine aid.

Humility

Sept. 16, 1887. ONE is sometimes humbled by the evident vanity and want of humility in those who profess to be, or otherwise give tokens of being, the children of God. In such cases we cannot but feel that the work of holiness is far from complete. Yet it must not be forgotten that with all their defects there may be in them a spirit of creature humility towards God, and a sense of their dependence on Him, even for those things in which they glory

before men. Nevertheless this practical divorce of religion and moral habit turns the former into a species of hypocrisy. Our relations to our fellow-men prove the sphere in which our relation to God has to manifest itself. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen," etc. In receiving from God and rendering to man, the right attitude to God and the right attitude to man are the reflection of each other. If the one cease to be, the other must disappear with it. To receive, stands first in order; but unless it is followed by its legitimate effect, God will not continue to give, and the capacity of receiving will be reduced and ultimately destroyed.

Forms and Modes of Worship

THE analogy has often been pointed out between many of the religious forms and practices in Israel and those prevalent among their heathen neighbours, and this has been used as an argument against divine revelations. Sept. 22, 1887.

It must be remembered that the object of revelation was primarily to *sanctify*. It did not create a new civilisation in art, science, natural culture, etc. It did not, in the first instance at least, raise Israel above the natural level of their time. Its aim was to infuse moral and spiritual ideas, not to supplant nature, or the attainments of nature, but to animate them with a higher and a new life. This required, no doubt, the modification or

rejection of many things, in themselves the natural outcome of the stage of civilisation attained to, because they had been debased by idolatry and social impurity. But otherwise, revelation did not dispense with what was proper to the particular age, and was common to Israel and the surrounding nations, or was even borrowed by Israel from them. Its aim was not to supersede natural growth, but to turn it to moral and spiritual ends. Thus, Israel got many natural ideas in Egypt, and later, in Solomon's time, from Tyre. In New Testament times, Christians accepted the aid of Greek culture.

Even the practices and methods of the schools of the prophets in the time of Samuel sprang from the stage of civilisation then reached, and in outward form have appeared among heathens and Mohammedans, though morally quite distinct.

Heaven

Oct. 31, 1887. IT is of importance to note that the inhabitants of heaven will not be made up only of a vast multitude of perfected individuals, but will form a perfected society. Yet from what we know of a society on earth, and of the mutual dependence and helpfulness of its component parts, it implies a great variety of gifts, qualities, functions, etc., in the exercise of which, and in their manifold relations to each other, the fulness of its moral beauty can alone be disclosed.

May it not therefore be true that the state of

each believer at death, whatever be his gifts and capacities, whatever his spiritual attainments, and whatever be his age, will form the basis of his condition and of the place assigned him in glory? Should this be so, should the state at death be, as it were, stereotyped and perfected, freed from all disloyalty to God and from all admixture of self, we can readily see how in heaven there should be a difference in the measure of reward, how there might be a difference of position and rank, how there might even be the freshness of youth intermingled with the ripe experience of age, thus conserving for the glorified society (though in a sinless form) all the characteristics of a society on earth.

The difficulty of this conception lies in the idea of perfection, which we perhaps think of too much under the notion of uniformity. The perfection of heaven is the perfection of type,—possibly of the type of character, only so far as developed by the discipline of earth and modified by earth's experiences. In any case, we may assume that there will be variety in heaven, and that this variety is immediately connected with the moulding received here below.

The Word of God

THERE is a vital connection between the *personal Word* and the *written Word*. This connection has subsisted from the beginning of time. The written Word throughout is the voice of the personal Word. It was He who inspired the prophets and

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spoke by them. It was He who conducted the whole divine administration from the beginning, raising up prophets, priests, and kings, and infusing into them, in single and scattered rays, something of that which came into full realisation when He Himself became incarnate and clothed Himself with actual humanity. There was progression, not, however, in the form of a gradual incarnation, but of a gradual manifestation and communication, through chosen men, of those qualities, ideas, and truths which blossomed into fruit when He assumed our nature and embodied them in His own person.

Apostolic Succession

Jan. 29, 1888. WE all are, or ought to be, desirous of a rightful claim to apostolic succession. We ought to seek it in outward organisation and in the spiritual life of the Church. Only, if these part company, we must prefer the spiritual succession. As for an invariable transmission of grace, it comes neither through the one channel nor the other. "Not of blood," etc. Every man must be directly and personally taught of God. Those who preceded us can only be ministers to our faith.

Knowledge of Truth

July 28, 1888. IT is striking to observe how little the knowledge and conviction of truth is dependent on strength of intellect and favourable opportunity. The *form*

is greatly affected by these things, but not the *reality*. The essential condition of attainment lies far deeper. Men of large capacity are found wandering in the snares of error. Men of small capacity are found walking in the light of truth. This forces us to look deeper down. The determining causes will be found in humility, simplicity, and honesty—that is, willingness to know and obey the truth—“hid from the wise, etc.”—“as a little child, etc.”—“if any man will do the will, etc.” The organ of truth is not exclusively the understanding, but the whole man in the use of all his faculties, intellect, heart, will, and conscience. These must be in harmony. It is vain to seek light by attending to one faculty alone. To attain the results usually associated with any one of them, they must all work in unison. The Bible does not split them up, as we are accustomed to do. By the terms soul, heart, mind, understanding, though there may be a special reference to one kind or form of exercise, it means the whole man—the person. And by the person it means even the body as well as the mind.

Sovereignty of God

Two ideas may be associated with this doctrine:— **Aug. 19, 1888.**

1. *Pure Grace.* This is the Scripture sense. God excludes every *kind of claim* in men. He acknowledges *no obligation*. He shows mercy to whom He will. In giving or withholding He is accountable to no man. All have sinned.

2. *Arbitrariness* or caprice. This cannot be attributed to God. He never acts without a reason. This reason is found, not, however, in any claim, but rather in the repudiation of *all claim*. He rejoices to help the poor. The rich He sends empty away. Hence, publicans and sinners often enter the kingdom first. Not that vice brings them nearer to God. On the contrary, it blunts the conscience and hardens the heart. But when they come to themselves, they are more ready to abjure all claim and reliance on self-power.

It should be admitted, however, on the other side, that if a man set himself in sincerity to keep the commandments of God, he is on the road to learn his insufficiency and his shortcomings.

It is right for a man to endeavour to lead a virtuous life, but not to commend himself to God, in the sense of constituting some claim on God. It is an insult to God to present our own righteousness, even were it ten times better than it is, as a fulfilment of His law and a ground of merit. If this be done, a man may be receding from the kingdom, in the measure in which he seems to be approaching it.

The Gospel Call

Jan. 10, 1889. IT is difficult to get men to take in the idea that the gospel is really a message of good news, and a message to them.

We are warranted to say to every sinner still in his sins,—

1. God loves *you*. He hates your sinful ways, but in the measure in which He hates them He loves you.

2. He desires and yearns for *your* salvation.

3. He invites *you* to come to Him at once, and He means what He says.

4. Whether Christ was your substitute on the Cross, cannot be known till you have accepted Him as your substitute.

5. He made sufficient atonement for you, but it is not available for you without your own consent. Without this it is not valid in law on your behalf. For until you believe, the wrath of God abideth on you. "He that believeth not is condemned."

6. If you accept the offer, you will be inwardly freed from your guilt and condemnation.

7. God will not force you to accept the offer, but He makes it in good faith to you, and He strives with you by His Spirit to move you to the acceptance of it.

8. If you are willing to be saved, He stands ready to impart the necessary ability to repent and believe.

9. You cannot be saved without your consent. You will be saved if you consent, and as soon as you consent. (Note the great difficulty how one free will can act on another without destroying its freedom. Man can act by persuasion—God exerts power and imparts ability "to will and to do.")

Baptismal Regeneration

Feb. 23, 1889. FEW parents are sufficiently impressed with the obligations they lie under with respect to their infant children.

God's covenant promises are made to their seed equally as to themselves. See Gen. xvii. 7.

These promises are given that their fulfilment may be obtained by believing prayer.

The parent is equally warranted to pray in faith for his infant children as for himself.

When the children have grown to maturity, they must act faith for themselves.

If they have been regenerate in infancy, they will *always* do so.

When they do not, their parents have incurred guilt, through defect in believing prayer in the time of their infancy. They ought to feel it.

Regeneration is, of course, not restricted to the time of baptism. Baptism is only the time of the formal covenant.

Injudicious bringing up even of regenerate children will mar the Christian character, but not destroy it;—just as a man, converted in mature life, may be marred in his Christian life by temptation or unworthy associates.

We must distinguish between the living seed of grace and the favourable and unfavourable conditions of its growth.

Emotional Religion

AN objection is sometimes raised against what is termed Emotional Religion. Sept. 17, 1889.

All religion ought to be intellectual (or at least intelligent), emotional, and practical. Emotion divorced from intelligence runs into extravagance, and divorced from practice it is worthless.

Under these conditions emotion cannot be too strong, if it be of the right kind.

It may have its seat in the senses, in the coarse and uncultured or in the refined and cultivated form. Or it may have its seat in the heart, from righteous apprehension of God, of His character and works, especially of the work of salvation. If it spring from a believing, trusting contemplation of God in Christ, the emotion is *Spiritual*. If it spring from the other sources mentioned, and be made a substitute for spiritual emotion, it is not only without value, but is strongly deceptive.

Æsthetic sense, indeed, is in itself not antagonistic to spiritual emotion, but is naturally in harmony with it, and ought to be helpful. In a perfect state the natural and the spiritual would flow together in one stream. But the former is so frequently put in the room of the latter as to lead many to demand a total separation between them, and to discard beauty in form and in sound altogether, as a hindrance, not a help.

Prayer

Nov. 22, 1889. MANY think that God must be induced and made willing to bestow benefits on man. He requires no inducement; He is always willing; He delights to show mercy. But a blessing requires a giver and a receiver, and a means of communication between them. Prayer is the medium by which the communication takes place. All blessings are received by prayer, and no blessings without prayer. We may receive thousands of good things apart from prayer, but they do not profit us save in so far as they induce us to pray, and prayer alone can change them into blessings. God cannot bless, because we cannot be blessed, without prayer.

Instead of God requiring to be moved and made willing to bless, He is always waiting for the opportunity to bless, but cannot do so until we are moved to pray. All the blessings which flow from His previous dealings have for their end to move us to pray. He requires importunity in prayer, but only that He may find a larger opportunity to bless because we are the more fitted to receive.

Those who say that prayer has no effect except on the mind of him who prays, fall into a double error. It is true that prayer does involve a change in the mind of the petitioner, but it makes it possible for God to impart a blessing along with what He might have done apart from prayer, and it makes it possible and expedient to change the outward event itself in adaptation to the new state of him who asks.

Disinterested Action

CHRISTIAN men often impute impurity of motive to themselves if the thought of self-interest has in any sense or degree entered into their efforts for the glory of God, or any feeling of self-congratulation has accompanied their success. Now it should be remembered that God recognises a personal interest which we have in all the good we enjoy and in all the work which we perform. What He requires is that all our interests be entirely subordinated to the higher interest of His glory. He is pleased that we should have the enjoyment of possession and success, provided that we recognise Him as the real Author of both, and enjoy them in Him with a humble and grateful heart. The very fact of gratitude implies that we have an interest distinct from His, though in entire subordination to it. This is in accordance with the fact that He has endowed us with personality, with a personal will, personal possessions and enjoyments, and that He permits us to pursue personal aims. Yet we hold all these as gifts from Himself, and we must acknowledge Him in them, both as their source, and as the ultimate end to which they must be directed. When we eat and drink we subserve a personal interest, but our higher aim must be the glory of God. When we do spiritual work, we promote our own well-being and happiness, but we must acknowledge God as the source of the ability, and as the ultimate end for which it is to be used.

Jan. 16, 1890.

Death and Life

Jan. 23, 1890. IN the use of these terms we seem to have laid far too much emphasis on them in relation to the body, *i.e.* on natural life and death. But the true life of a man resides in his soul, the seat of his personality, and it consists in likeness to God, and fellowship with Him in love. Death, in like manner, consists in separation from God. Life and death in the body are the adjuncts of the other, and modes of their manifestation, in accordance with the general fact that the body is the mere organ of the mind, the medium by which that which is spiritual merges into visibility. To Adam it was said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Had the sentence been executed at once in all its rigour, the state of retribution would have immediately begun,—at least, so soon as the sin of our first parents became wilful. We may suppose that this was not its character in the first instance. They yielded to temptation, the lower impulses of their nature asserting their supremacy over the will of God. But they do not seem to have chosen evil for its own sake. Had this been so, we may suppose that recovery would have been impossible, as in the case of the fallen angels, who sinned through pride and defied God. Our first parents fell away from God, and therefore died. God interposed with a scheme of mercy. The seeds of death were already implanted in both soul

and body, but they had not reached the stage of fully ripened fruit.

Believers, that is, those who are one with Christ by faith, have this life in Him, and between this life and the seeds of death that are still in them there is maintained a constant conflict, which is ended by the final victory of life, in what we term natural death.

In unbelievers, the death which is in them runs its natural course, ending in the final victory of death when the season of grace is ended.

Natural death is therefore a totally different thing to those who are in Christ and to those who are not. In the one, it is the final victory over real death. In the other, it is final subjugation to its dominion.

Charles Kingsley and the Church of England

THE picture which Charles Kingsley gives of the Church of England in the western counties during the reign of Elizabeth, and indeed indirectly of his own mind, is almost an exact transcript of the Judaism of the Old Testament in its better days. A firm hold of certain objective truths. Christianity based on profession. The faithful observance of outward ordinances. The absence of the inner spiritual life. A noble spirit of manliness, sincerity, and trustfulness. An abhorrence of idolatry. Strong patriotism and confidence that the nation was on the side of God. Jan. 25, 1890.

Equally strong assurance that the Spaniards were the agents of the devil, and deserved to be exterminated like the Canaanites of old.

I and We

March 26, 1890. MUCH in human life depends on the substitution of *I* for *We*, and *We* for *I*; *Thou* for *You*, and *You* for *Thou*.

Thus, in our relation to God, how slow are we to turn God's *You* into *Thou*, whether He speaks in the way of rebuke or promise.

In the relation between man and man we are inclined to do the opposite. In all family interests and arrangements, much depends on the use of *We*, including the servants among the persons meant, as having a common interest. Missions are often wrecked, because *I* is substituted in thought or word for *We*. Ambition, and even pride, so far as they exist, should have for their object the mission, not the individual. The *I* should be absorbed in the *We*.

High Churchism

April 4, 1890. IT may be doubted whether the Evangelical part of the Christian community will be able to meet effectually High Churchism, which exercises so powerful an attraction on many serious minds, until it accepts more scriptural views regarding

the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Church, her offices and her ordinances. Evangelicals urge His relation almost solely to individuals, and this is the safer extreme. High Churchmen urge His relation to the Church, and exaggerate its effects.

The aim should be to recognise both, and to reconcile them to each other. High Churchmen identify outward and inward acts. They confound together the divine and human elements, assuming that the natural and the supernatural flow in one channel. Evangelicals separate them too far from each other, acknowledging both, indeed, but regarding them as two parallel streams, with little or no recognisable relation between them.

Thus, as to authority, every individual man must seek for himself the authoritative teaching of the Spirit, and rest on that finally. He may not rest his faith ultimately on the Church, ancient or modern. At the same time, if a company of men are all taught by the Spirit, they will be able to bring out the truth more fully and clearly than any individual man can do, and will thus also greatly aid the latter in reaching his own independent conclusions. In both cases the Spirit of God is the ultimate judge, but the human side is more amply provided for. The Spirit of God teaches the individual believer in answer to individual prayer, but He teaches also a company of believing men in answer to united prayer. Still, His teaching given to any individual man is no authority for the company,

nor is His teaching given to the latter authority for the former. Only in the one case guidance is got for the personal life; in the other, for the united life of the Church, the individual helping the Church and the Church helping the individual, in both cases ministerially, to right conclusions.

As to ordinances and offices, which are not mere human contrivances, but divine appointments, God speaks and acts in them and by them, but only so far as, on man's part, the inward is joined with the outward, and the Spirit is sought by prayer.

Partnership with God

April 28, 1890. WE ought to be in partnership with God, and to view every part of life from this point of view. Instead of *I* and *Thou*, *Mine* and *Thine*, the idea of *WE* and *OUR* should be introduced, of course with a recognition of the entirely subordinate and dependent position we occupy in the partnership.

There is an absolute partnership in all divine works between Father, Son, and Spirit. We are admitted into the partnership of each separately, and thus into partnership with the Godhead. (1 Cor. iii. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 1; Acts xv. 4; 2 Cor. v. 20.)

Whatever be the human instrumentality employed, the identity of our interests with those of God should be ever kept in mind. His glory is our good, and our good is His glory. Rightly apprehended, we have never to subordinate our real

welfare to His glory. They are one and the same.

Ritualism

WE all admit that the ordinances of God produce a certain influence on the minds of those who possess any measure of receptivity. The fundamental errors of Ritualism are :— Sept. 8, 1890.

That they make them the exclusive channels of grace.

That they describe the impressions produced by them in the language which Scripture employs for effectual grace, *e.g.* regeneration ; and

That they lower the meaning of the terms in which Scripture describes receptivity. Thus *Faith* is understood in the sense of a vague general acquiescence ; and *Repentance*, in a vague acknowledgment of sin, with contrition.

We see, however, notwithstanding this false teaching, a man really taught of God may put the real meaning into the form, and obtain the spiritual blessing.

We need to be reminded that, though ordinances are not the exclusive, they are the ordinary and appointed channels of grace, where God is to be met. (In all cases, personal contact with God is the essential thing.)

Sacraments, etc. etc.

IN the ordinances of God, there is an objective and subjective element. The body and blood of Christ Sept. 9, 1890.

are *there*, by God's appointment, in *presentation*, in order to be *received*. Conveyance cannot take place unless there be both presentation and acceptance. In like manner God is present in the word, whether we hear it in faith or not. The fact remains, GOD HAS SPOKEN, though we have not heard Him. So also in baptism. There is an objective relation between God and the water of baptism, for it is provided by His appointment. He says, "I am here to bestow regenerating grace" (whether in its first or after communication). But actual conveyance cannot take place, without RECEPTION by faith. Until the personal will is developed, the faith of the parents and the Church is sufficient for that purpose. After that period, personal faith is indispensable. In the intermediate period between the two the objective and subjective elements must both be carefully guarded.

Romanisers lay stress exclusively on the objective, and ascribe all the effects to it. Their recognition of the subjective element is of the most superficial kind. Hence also the effect looked for is of a superficial kind, though they clothe it in strong and misleading language. It does not establish a real covenant, never to be broken, between God and the soul, and amounts to little more than a mere external relation in a visible form.

Protestants generally do not pay sufficient regard to the objective element. They do not realise as they ought the presence of God in His ordinances, apart from and independent of acceptance by faith.

Both are required for the *conveyance* of blessing.

Without the one faith has no object to rest upon. Without the other the object is presented in vain. God giving, and man receiving, are both necessary to actual conveyance.

Solidarity

TWO principles underlie all human history ; that of individuality and of personal responsibility, and that of solidarity and joint responsibility. Neither of them can be merged in the other. The individual influences society, and society influences the individual. When one member suffers, all the others suffer with it ; when one is blessed, it is a blessing for the rest. Jan. 2, 1891.

In all God's dealings with man He has both elements in view. If a man receives a spiritual blessing, he gets it not for himself alone, but for others also, and it is his sin, so far as he does not use it for that end. If he has grace, not only to receive, but also to impart, the forces that exist in the world for good are enlarged. The blessing he has received may tell directly only on individuals around him, but through them it will extend to others also, and through them to a still wider circle. For God is engaged in redeeming society by means of individuals, and individuals by means of society.

Faith

PERHAPS we restrict the idea of faith too much to what we call saving faith. When our Lord healed March 10, 1891.

the sick, He only partially restored them ; when He cast out devils, that was a partial deliverance from the power of Satan. In such cases our Lord always required faith in His divine power, but that faith did not necessarily imply the faith which leads to conversion. Conversion requires the knowledge of a deeper disease than that of the body, and a deeper knowledge of God than almighty power ; it means a knowledge of His moral character. Who ever believed in Christ for the cure of the deeper malady was undoubtedly saved. Perhaps the germ of this deeper faith existed in the minds of all who received the bodily healing ; and in any case the latter was a first stage fitted to lead men to feel the sense of the need of, and to make application for, the higher deliverance.

The two kinds of cure are sometimes coupled together, apparently for this very end, as in the case of the man sick of the palsy, to whom the Lord said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. ix. 2). Probably our Lord saw in this man a preparedness for the higher blessing. The whole manifestation of Christ among men was fitted, not only to convince them of His divine power, but to awaken them to a sense of their sin in contrast to His holiness, and by His love and grace to reveal to them the holiness and power of the Father. These form the basis of true spiritual conversion.

Blessing

ALL real blessing depends on adaptation. The same event may be for evil or for good, according to the state and wants of him who is affected by it. June 2, 1891.

Hence the element of time must be taken into account in estimating the nature and value of any event. Every true blessing has its set time; and therefore its character as a blessing depends upon its adaptation in time to the inward conditions, and by the actual results which flow from it.

Conditional Promises

THERE is a reluctance to acknowledge that any of the promises given in the gospel are dependent on conditions to be fulfilled by us in order to their becoming effectual. Men are afraid that this would amount to a claim to have a share with God in working out their own salvation, and to get divine help on the ground of their own merits. Now salvation is of God from first to last. Yet God does not bestow His blessings promiscuously, but in wise adaptations to the state of those whom He blesses. Without this His end would not be attained. Inward blessing could not otherwise be conveyed, and were this possible, it would not prove blessing indeed. The state of the receiver becomes a **CONDITION** of the new divine communications. June 24, 1891.

The Millennium

July 9, 1891. THE Millennium in its more ideal form cannot possibly be realised all at once or in a short space of time. It must necessarily be a process or development.

The beginning will correspond to the conversion of the individual soul. It implies that the community as such turns its face towards God instead of its being turned away from Him. But as in the case of the converted soul, which turns its face to God, a vast amount of work and many struggles still remain to be encountered, and many new victories have to be won.

Spiritual Life

July 13, 1891. THE depth and intensity of the spiritual life depend on the standard which the believer measures himself by. If his aim simply be to maintain an orderly walk and conversation before men, its exercises will be feeble and indistinct. It is otherwise when he makes conscience, not of words and acts only, but of his thoughts, feelings, aims, and motives,—especially when he strives to make God his ultimate end in all things, and to live in and for Him. In this effort, made faithfully and continuously, he learns the depravity of his own heart, and its alienation from God; and this again leads to clear, conscious acts of trust in God, and to deep experiences of love and joy.

Communion with God

GOD desires not only that we have the same thoughts about things which He Himself has, but that we have converse with Him regarding them. Two earthly friends will never feel satisfied with the assurance that their thoughts are alike. The highest joy of friendship is found in their mutual communication. Its very life consists in the thoughts and feelings of the two parties being occupied with the same idea or object at the same moment. It is thus that their hearts are knit together. To know truth, and to have personal fellowship with another in the truth, are two different things. Personal enjoyment of truth is precious, but present mutual sympathy and converse regarding it is much more so. Among men whose minds are occupied with objects in succession, this necessarily requires communication between them. It is even so between man and God. Man then only fully enjoys truth when he opens his heart to God about it, knowing that God's mind is occupied with it at the same time. And God, after whose image man was made, has a like enjoyment in conversing with man. This implies present communication. For, though all truth is ever present to the mind of God, it is not so with us, and therefore, in order to personal fellowship with Him in the truth, there must be special mutual communication between Him and us at any given moment. July 23, 1891.

Christ in Us

Aug. 30, 1891. WHEN Christ enters our souls, it is He primarily who does all holy works, and to Him they ought to be ascribed as their proper author. In a subordinate sense we do the works, but He is the prime agent. In the ploughing of a field, it is the man who ploughs, not the implement which he directs and controls. There is indeed a difference between the two cases. The plough is purely passive. In us there is a free intelligent will, which is made to concur in Christ's operations. The instrument is of a higher kind ; but the energy and the guidance are Christ's, who works in us and by us. Where several factors are engaged, we may ascribe the results in a general way to any one of them, but in doing so we must keep in view the place and function belonging to each of them respectively, and not assign to one that which properly belongs to another.

God . . . Protector

Oct. 17, 1891. GOD sends us trials, that we may learn to know Him as our Deliverer. Might He not as well simply save us from the trial? In such a case He would be our Deliverer or Protector, but we should not be *taught*. He leaves us in straits till all human help fails, and then puts forth His hand to help. Thus we are made to know ourselves in our impotence, and Him in His grace and power.

Inerrancy of Scripture

BY historical or other criticism, we can neither prove the errancy or the inerrancy of the original Scriptures. No one possesses an original copy. Oct. 31, 1891.

The real question at issue between contending parties is, what conceptions we are to form regarding the inspiration and authority of Scripture. This can be determined mainly by the testimony of Scripture regarding itself; also subordinately by an examination of the real needs of man, and the requirements necessary to the attainment of the declared end of a salvation from God. For example, is man fitted to be a judge? Does he or does he not need an authority external to himself?

Intercession of Christ

IN a sense our prayers precede the intercession of Christ, and in a sense the intercession precedes our prayers. Nov. 3, 1891.

He presents our prayers to the Father, and by His mediation He obtains an answer. In this respect our prayers precede.

But by His intercession He obtains the grace and ability, whether in answer to a previous petition, or in the execution of the gracious work which He has undertaken for our salvation.

Our prayer comes from Him, and the answer comes from the Father through Him. These

several acts are simultaneous in point of time, but they follow each other in point of causation. If we go back to the beginning, Christ is first in every step of our salvation.

Inquirers

Nov. 5, 1891. THE anxious who seek but do not find belong to two classes: to the one the suitable direction is, "*Trust in God*"; to the other it is, "*Submit to God*."

Sometimes the hindrance is unbelief in God's promises, sometimes it is rebellion against His precept.

The act of faith in the one case, and the act of submission in the other, will bring peace.

Self

Nov. 11, 1891. WHEN we say that a man in his *natural* state is dominated by self, we do not mean that he must be what is usually termed a *selfish* man.

It implies that his ultimate rule of conduct is his own will, not the authority of God. This is so even when He seems to obey God. He does not part with the assumed right to choose for himself. He so far makes a good choice, but he does so on the ground of the supremacy of his own will. It is a question of *right* between him and God. Whatever he does, he claims for himself the right ultimately to decide. This is to make the human will a master, not a servant.

It implies that his own judgment is the *ultimate* criterion of truth.

It implies that he is to himself an ultimate ground of truth.

It implies, in like manner, that he makes his own ends the ultimate objects of pursuit.

His whole life is rooted in self, in his own personality, not in God. The innermost principle is the spirit of independence, as if it existed of, by, and for itself.

Such a man may be just, kind, and even generous. He may even sacrifice himself for the sake of others. But self is still the root,—not necessarily the aim, which may be the good of others, but the originating impulse, which springs from within, not from regard to the authority of God.

There are men of less robust temperament, who surrender their will, judgment, etc., absolutely to a fellow-man, not to God. These belong to the same category.

The Holy Spirit

THE HOLY SPIRIT does not supersede any faculty of the mind, nor set aside any activity of the human constitution. He regenerates the faculties, and enables them to perform their proper functions, which, in their fallen condition, they are no longer able to do without supernatural power. Divine grace is thus indispensable to every holy act, but so also is the activity of the several human faculties in their mutual relations to each other, which ordinarily go to the performance of it. It is not

Nov. 21, 1891.

properly a case of co-operation, in which two parties unite their strength to do the same work. The whole is done by the communication of Divine power. And the whole is done by the human faculties in the power thus communicated.

The Image of God

Dec. 2, 1891. WE usually employ the passage (Gen. i. 26) to illustrate the nature and character of man: it is equally available to throw light on the nature and character of God. It clearly intimates that it was the purpose of God to project into the finite a representation and reflection of His own infinite Being. We learn from it much of man, but we also learn much of God. From the constituent elements of man's constitution, viewed apart from the fall, which follows afterwards, and was the perversion and abuse of it, we learn that God is personal, that He is possessed of a free moral and intelligent will, that He is holy, that He is capable of communion or fellowship, which as an external attribute points not obscurely to a plurality of persons, and possibly to a Trinity, as representing the number of perfect fellowship, and so also many other qualities, in their infinitely varied forms and modifications. All that is in God, who is infinite and internal, must be not relatively but absolutely perfect. Imperfection necessarily implies limitation and the possibility of progress, which is inconsistent with the idea of eternity. Unchange-

ableness is the attribute of infinity, as change or progress is the law of the finite existence. Absolute perfection in all qualities admits of no further advance.

Progress, therefore, which on its negative side is the removal of limitations, belongs to the creature. Unchangeableness belongs alone to God. This, however, does not forbid that in His manifestation of Himself to and by the creature there be constant and endless progress. For aught we know, self-manifestation may be inherent in the nature of God. But if so, it is contingent on a free act of His sovereign will, and, however far back we may go into the past eternity, its fruits are pure effects, and have nothing in them of the nature of self-existent causes. They are the results of antecedent volition, and continue to be wholly dependent on it.

In point of fact, purpose and will in the sense in which we use the terms have no meaning for God, who is eternal. On the supposition that He meant to manifest Himself through creature existence, all the details of it were fixed in one eternal volition, in their due order and sequence, together with the element of time, in which it behoved them to subsist, and which indeed is a necessary counterpart of that limitation which inherently belongs to them. Time is limited duration, place is limited space, and created existence is limited existence. These all go together and imply each other. If God chose to manifest Himself in creature existence, He necessarily fixed a limited

space and a limited time in which to accomplish this work. It was free to Him to use any portion of space or duration for His purpose. In truth, all were alike to Him, for all were alike in themselves. It is not necessary to suppose that *all* space and *all* duration are filled with *finite* existence, as pantheists must do, though it involves self-contradiction. The question of when and where has no significance. The one thing to be kept in mind is that limited beings cannot have an unlimited subsistence, and that they are all dependent on a sovereign and eternal will, which they are bound to obey.

Perfection

Dec. 3, 1891. MUCH confusion often arises in the use of this word.

God alone is absolutely perfect. He is incapable of progress, in knowledge, in holiness, or in any respect whatever.

All men and all creatures can be said to be relatively perfect only, that is, under certain conditions and limitations of their being.

Thus Adam in his state of innocence was perfect. His heart and life were free from every taint of sin. But that did not preclude advance from innocence to virtue, as it may be termed, that is, to that state of conformed holiness which was to be the result of trial or probation.

Believers at death will be made perfect in holiness. They will be freed from all error and

from all the contamination of sin. But that will not prevent their growth in knowledge, and with it in intensity of love, in depth of humility, and strength of all holy perfections.

Christ was perfect in holiness from the moment of His conception.

As a child, He was perfect as a child. As a man, He was perfect as a man. But this did not reverse the conditions of childhood and manhood. We are expressly told that "He grew in wisdom and in stature." And also in relation to His work of bringing "many sons unto glory," that "He was *made perfect* through suffering."

A redeemed soul will be perfect in happiness as well as in holiness, immediately after death, but its happiness, we know, will be increased at the resurrection. Redeemed souls will be all perfectly blessed, yet one star will differ from another star in glory, chiefly from the measure in which they have been faithful under the discipline of earth, and have profited by it.

Several bottles may be equally full of water, but the quantity they contain is dependent on their capacity.

The perfection of a creature must be judged of in relation to the limitation of its being and its stage of progress. It may be perfect at one stage, and yet that not the highest stage which it is capable of reaching. It may thus be said in a sense to be perfect and imperfect at the same time.

God also possesses all kinds of perfections, and

that in infinite measures. Creature existence may ever advance towards His perfection, but can never attain to it.

Access to God

Dec. 3, 1891. THE first thing necessary for every man, and for every man each new day, is to have access to a *holy God*. This, and a conscious sense of it, is a primary requirement of the whole Christian life. And it can only be found through Christ. A man may persuade himself that he finds access apart from God, but the God whom he approaches is not a holy God, or is a God divested of His true character, which amounts to the same thing.

Having obtained access, a man can deal with God as a friend. He asks and receives light, strength, impulse, comfort, hope, rest. The *first* thing, therefore, is to meet God *personally*. Then, and then only, is the way open to obtain all gifts and blessings, inward and outward, which are needed by him.

Importunity

Jan. 15, 1892. WHEREIN lies the power of importunity in prayer? We are not to suppose that God is unwilling to answer, or that He requires to be urged; still less that importunity gives any claim upon Him. He waits till our desire becomes deep, strong, and decided. He waits, also, that He may test our faith in Him. He waits, that our desires

and our faith may become more clearly seen by ourselves. He is always prepared to give, but we are not always prepared to receive. Importunity implies a change in us, and then a change in the will of God, who can now do what He could not do before. Desire may be a passing emotion; trust may be feeble and easily discouraged. Hence He WAITS.

Prayer

WHILE the promises of God show that He is willing to bestow blessings on all men, these blessings are given with special adaptations to particular states and wants. Their fulfilment is therefore due only where these special wants and states are found. A promise, to be a real promise, must contain not only a blessing, but an adapted blessing. Jan. 20, 1892.

When we perceive the adaptation and recognise that the promise is meant for us, we must pray with expectation. When we do not perceive, or are in doubt, we must pray with submission.

When we cannot recognise the adaptation, and yet desire the blessing, we should carefully contemplate the condition, and prayerfully endeavour to place ourselves in the suitable state.

Much of the life of prayer is an underground and hidden thing. It is rather unreflective than conscious, guided by aspirations and longings which God has planted in the heart, and which He alone can interpret (Rom. viii. 26, 27). We

must therefore seek to live near God, and to have our minds well stored with His promises.

The Basis of the Spiritual Life

Jan. 25, 1892. THE basis of spiritual life lies in an entire acquiescence in the wise and good will of God, and in a whole-hearted trust in Him.

It consists in willing obedience and in submission without murmur. We must thoroughly trust Him that He will impose no duty on us which He will not enable us to perform, if we ask His help in continuous prayer; that He will send no trial or suffering on us which is not wise and good, and which He will not remove in answer to prayer as soon as His wise end is attained.

The God-Man

March 20, 1892. THE validity of the whole work of Christ rests on the doctrine of His Person. He is, and was from eternity, the Son of God, co-equal with the Father. And He assumed a human nature, that in it He might carry out the work of our salvation in all its parts. But it was He, the Eternal Son, who did all, suffered all, and now governs all, through the medium of His humanity. All His works bear the impress of His twofold nature, and of each nature distinctively, although, according to the nature of the work done, the

one or the other nature may come into more prominent manifestation. In His work on earth His human nature stood more in the foreground, and in His work from heaven the divine. In His death upon the cross, a work specially appropriate to His humanity, the Son of God made an atonement for guilty men. And in His intercession and exercise of power at the Father's right hand, a work specially appropriate to His Godhead as requiring both infinite knowledge and power, it is done by One who is endowed with the sympathies of humanity.

In a past generation His Godhead was kept too much exclusively in view, to the neglect and injury of His humanity, through which His divinity is manifested and known.

In our own day, His humanity is made by many almost the whole object of contemplation, and His divinity is overlooked or practically ignored, except in its character of a perfect example, although from it the whole significancy and efficacy of His work are derived.

Reciprocity

ALL the blessings of salvation are of pure un-
merited grace. God ever precedes man in the
bestowal of them. Yet is there not a certain
reciprocity in the bestowal? God is ever desirous
to bless. But He ever acts in wisdom. To be a
blessing it must be *received* as well as *given*. And

March 21, 1892.

it must be adapted to the state of the receiver, else it will do harm instead of good. Hence, faith is required and a certain condition of heart and mind is presupposed in the recipient. Without the first the blessing could not be conveyed, and without the second it would not be beneficial. These things, however, do not produce the blessing, nor do they give any claim on God for the bestowal of it. But they furnish God with an opportunity *wisely* to bless, which He ever delights to do. Even this opportunity is not provided by man of his own natural power. It is the result of the antecedent dealings of God, which have been based on the same principles as those which follow.

The first abiding and effectual blessing which God bestows is faith and repentance, which is bestowed not capriciously, but with a wise regard to the whole conditions of the case prepared by God, and known only to Him.

When by grace the will of a man has been subdued to an acknowledgment of the authority of God and of its own entire dependence on Him, and this has been sealed by a solemn pledge or covenant on both sides, a new situation is introduced. That covenant can never be abolished. God has engaged to bestow eternal life on that man, and the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. But the measure or degree of the glory to be conferred is not fixed, only the permanent relation to God. More or less of present grace, of conscious fellowship with God, of delight and freedom in His service, of

victory over sin in this world, and of glory in the next, will depend on his own fidelity to his covenant engagement. Here, as before, his attainments, however great, are not the efficient cause of the higher blessing, nor do they confer any claim on God, but they furnish Him with the opportunity of which He ever in love avails Himself to bestow it of His mere grace. Thus, by remissness and unfaithfulness, a man, though in covenant with God, may deprive himself largely of the enjoyment of its benefits here on earth, and come far short of the glory to which he might otherwise have attained in the world to come. Hence the conditional form in which God's promises to His covenant people is so often expressed. By His grace they must do their part, in order to the enjoyment of larger blessings yet to come, and to the avoidance of severe covenant chastisements. The relation to God, if once really established, is not abrogated, but the benefits here and hereafter flowing from it are greatly modified.

The peculiarity of Israel's covenant is that it was established, not with individuals, but with a nation. And, notwithstanding all Israel's sins and apostasies, it cannot be dissolved (see Rom. xi.). And there have ever been some to plead for its fulfilment, whether among the Jews themselves or among the Gentiles, who are also interested in it.

(Illustrations of the above—Deut. vii. 12, and xi. 26; John xiv. 21, 23, and xv. 10; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.)

The idea of grace does not exclude the idea of

conditionality in divine benefits. It excludes wholly the idea of human power and of human merit or right, but not that of suitableness and adaptation in the gifts bestowed. Faith is the universal condition of their bestowal on God's part, and of their reception on ours. But, besides this, they are conditioned among themselves. Each gift is the condition of that which immediately follows. For without the possession of the one it would not consist with God's wisdom to bestow the latter, nor, were it bestowed, would it prove to be a blessing in its results. What God's covenant secures is the continuance of grace, and the bestowal of its several benefits, in their due order and adaptation to our natural state, and this whether in the form of blessings usually so called, or of chastisements, which are blessings in disguise.

In a true conversion there is a turning of the whole man to God in submission and trust. This may take place with full, clear consciousness, or hesitatingly and obscurely. But whether dimly or clearly realised, it must be done, else there is no conversion. God on His part accepts the *person* of him who thus turns to Him in Christ. The union between them can never be broken. God bestows on the man thus reconciled the gift of eternal life, and He engages meanwhile to place him under the discipline of grace. But that discipline is wise as well as gracious. All that God can do for him wisely, according to the rules of His grace and in adaptation to the man's own state, will be done. The rapidity of his progress

and the final result will be affected by the manner in which the man responds to the manifold grace of God.

All Fulness

No age can exhaust the fulness hid in Christ, or in the Scriptures, which are the transcripts in words of His person and work. As the ages roll on, new problems arise, which only Christ can solve. When the time of solution comes, it is not men who discover it. In all moral, social, and spiritual progress man attains only to a negative result, to a sense of need, incapacity, and helplessness. This is, however, a kind of progress. For it prepares the way for the teaching of Christ. Rationalists think they know all already, and therefore they know nothing. Christ and His word give forth their teaching slowly and on two conditions: The question must be raised; and men must feel that of themselves they cannot solve it. March 30, 1892.

An Ideal

To have an ideal in life and to hope are equivalent. April 4, 1892.
A man without an ideal is a man without hope. It is not necessary to hope that he expects fully to realise his ideal, at least in this world. There may, however, be a cherished ideal without much hope of attainment, but there cannot be hope without an ideal of some kind. We advance

towards the perfect life in the measure in which we pursue the perfect ideal with a perfect hope.

An ideal is a complex object, embracing many mutually related elements. It may be a true or a false ideal. And the element of which it consists may be in mutual harmony, or to a large extent antagonistic and mutually counteractive.

Sanctification

April 21, 1892. SANCTIFICATION does not eradicate any of the faculties or feelings of our proper nature, but delivers them from the bondage of *self*, and consecrates them to God. Grace through sanctification quickens them all, it does not destroy their original balance and relative strength, but overthrows the power of self, and brings them back to their right relation to God. It delivers them from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the child of God.

The Trinity

April 26, 1892. WE are unable to say how far the term "person" exactly represents the idea contained in the ascription of a threefold personality to the one living and true God.

The Sabellian doctrine is false, which makes the three persons to be only three aspects or manifestations of the one God.

The threefold personality belongs not to the

mere manifestations of God *ad extra*, but to His divine life in its internal operations and activities from eternity.

The life of God is not only a personal, it is a common life. It is a life of eternal fellowship between Father, Son, and Spirit, between those who, in their mutual intercourse, can use the language of "I, Thou, He," and who do use this personal language in all communications *ad extra*.

We cannot analyse and define what is meant by personality as applied to man, nor the nature of that mysterious bond which unites several persons or many in one community.

The perfect fellowship subsisting in the life of God, may be the basis of its adumbration in the life of man. And our experience of the latter furnishes us with the primary notions, which enable us in some measure to apprehend what is revealed to us of the life of God. Of course there must be many points of difference between the finite and the infinite. Each human person is a separate individual; the plurality of persons is also a plurality of individuals. God is one, the One. Various attributes are also distributed among men. God is the sum of all perfection.

The Testimony of the Spirit

AN infallible assurance regarding any divine truth rests on the *same objective grounds* as are required for ordinary sound conviction. **June 1, 1892.**

The difference between the two cases lies in the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit. To full assurance of the truth no additional external proofs or grounds are required, beyond those which are accessible to all men. In other words, all that is objective is common. What is special in the objective operation of the Spirit? Not the object to be seen is different, but the seeing eye. To the illumination of the Spirit belongs the communication of power, together with all those internal conditions needful to the perception of truth.

Perfection

June 14, 1892. THE redeemed will be all perfected. But there are different types of perfection. God alone is *absolutely* perfect. A finite creature can only be relatively perfect, and is perfect in relation to its place and use. Thus a carved stone, duly moulded and shaped, may be exactly fitted for the place which it is to occupy in a building, and any alteration would be a diminution, not an increase, of its perfection. The perfection of each separate stone, in this sense, is the perfection of the whole building. Its perfection lies partly in itself, but partly also in its relation to other objects around it, and to the whole of which it forms only a part. Thus will the whole Church be perfected at last (Eph. v. 27), and thus will God be glorified in every aspect of His character—first in Christ, the perfect man, and then in His manifold perfections, as reflected

in the company of the redeemed (Col. ii. 9, and Eph. i. 23). Then will God be unveiled in His fulness to the eye of His creatures, and this by the adumbration in creature life not only of His glorious attributes, but in the eternal fellowship of the three persons of the Godhead.

Some have said that the only reason why believers are not at once translated into heaven, is that for the sake of others they may remain as lights in the world. This is rashly spoken. They are continued here also for their own sanctification and preparation for the place they are appointed to fill in the heavenly world by the special discipline of this present life. It is said, indeed, that God could perfect them in a moment if He so willed. This may be true so far as perfection consists in whole-hearted consecration to God. But the moulding and training of all the faculties thus consecrated must not be overlooked. We must take into account, not merely the consecration of a thing, but the thing consecrated. Now, to prepare the soul for its appointed place in heaven, training is ordinarily necessary, and such training as is only to be had amidst the conflicts of earth. God might indeed create a soul and endow it as it pleased Him. But it is we whom He redeems and perfects. And He works along the lines of our constitutions. To maintain that constitution, and at the same time to suppress or ignore it, would be self-contradiction.

“*My God, My God*”

June 29, 1892. THIS cry of our Lord unveils the very essence and substance of His atoning work. His other sufferings, in His body and in His mind, from the revilings of the multitude, belong rather to the circumstantials and the accompaniments of His death. This is its innermost centre.

The essence of sin lies in voluntary separation from God. The essence of its penalty was in enforced separation from God, with a full apprehension and consciousness of what this meant.

Christ as our substitute endured this to the uttermost.

He endured the whole with entire submission and with unbroken trust and confidence.

Humanity in Adam separated itself from God. And it was humanity, in personal union with the divine nature, which endured the utmost penalty, and restored the breach.

The darkness over the land, which lasted three hours, and passed away on our Lord's appeal, seems to have symbolised the internal experience. All the other words spoken during the crucifixion appear to have had for their end—or at least their result—to give outward expression and manifestation to the internal workings of our Lord's mind. “*Why hast Thou*” does not imply doubt or ignorance, but is rather an exclamation, pointing the thoughts of all to the most amazing event that ever happened in the universe. A parallel passage

is, "Now is My soul troubled, what shall I say?" Compare also, "If it be possible, let this cup . . ." which shows the shrinking from the suffering, but at the same time entire submission to the Father's will.

The *nearness* of God (manifested) in *love* is light, is heaven; separation from God, in anger or judgment, is darkness, is hell.

The Christian Unit

THE old conception still lingers in many minds, **July 15, 1892.** that the unit of the Church (universal) is the community, not the individual man. This notion has its warrant in the Christian family, and it had its relative warrant in the Old Testament constitution, though it is superseded under the New Dispensation by the manhood of the Christian life.

It was dominant in the Middle Ages.

It bases the Christian state on profession, not on personal faith.

It warrants the employment of force when required for its realisation.

It tends to the identification of Church and State.

It makes national religion dependent on the mere fact of the State.

National religion is properly the religion professed and acted out by the nation in its corporate capacity, and within its own civil sphere. It is the practical outcome of all true religious life within the nation, whether found in individual men, or several Christian communities or churches. The

Church is not the nation, but a witnessing body within the nation. So far as the testimony emanating from her various branches takes effect on the mind of the nation, the nation becomes Christianised, and exhibits its Christian character by ordering all its civil affairs in conformity with Christian principles. Its action will be regulated by the major Christian mind of the citizens. It is not the function of the State to publish a creed, or to teach religion, except in the case of orphan minors, to whom it stands in the relation of parent. It is its duty to listen to the testimony of the witnessing body, the Church (whether in her individual members, or in her corporate capacity), and, "proving all things" by the infallible standard of the Word, to give effect to the truth in its whole civil legislation and administration.

In selecting the administrators of its laws, it is warranted to judge of their physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual qualifications. This last is no breach of religious equality. If the laws be based on Christian principles, those who administer them should be in harmony with them.

Confession of Faith

Aug. 12, 1892. THE primary object of a confession of faith is to give a *public* and *united* testimony to divine truth. A personal witness to truth, if genuine and practically attested, possesses great influence: much more so that given by a community of men.

The grand requirement is genuineness. Hence, a confession should be limited to those truths in regard to which there is real unity. Reality is of far greater value than extension. Looseness of adherence invalidates a whole confession. Dishonesty on the part of individuals, and lack of discipline on the part of churches, destroys public testimony for the truth. Into this state many churches have fallen. There is much private testimony to truth at the present time, but the public testimony is being largely submerged. Should it go down altogether, judgment is at hand.

Sin and Crime

A SIN is an offence against God, in the personal relation as King and Head in which He stands to every man. Oct. 2, 1892.

A crime by which a man injures his neighbour is an offence against God, as King and Head of the community, and is to be punished by the magistrate, who is God's representative as Head of the community. The criminal is punished in the name of the community, and of God its Head.

There are many doubtful cases in which it is difficult to say whether the offence should be regarded as private or public.

The Millennium

WE are certainly not wrong in expecting in the Millennial reign all the glory which we usually Oct. 2, 1892.

associate with it. But we may be wrong in expecting that all this glory will be realised at its very beginning. It might fairly be said to have begun when the balance of power in the world, both natural and spiritual, has turned in favour of God and Christ. The analogy of the individual life seems to point in this direction. At conversion the reign of God is established in the soul. But it requires a long time to reap the full fruits of victory. There may in the Millennium be a like process of development. The end of the period may be the culmination after which there will be a decline.

Inability to Believe

Oct. 2, 1892. THIS is a frequent complaint. It should be remembered that both God and man have something to do even in the initial stage of a man's salvation, and before faith. There are certain things which a man can do by natural power, and other things which he cannot do. The rule therefore is twofold.

Do your own part faithfully in all that you know to be incumbent on you.

Do not attempt to do God's part. If you by mistake attempt to do this last, in your own strength, you will soon learn your own helplessness, and then God's opportunity has come. We do not need to move God to be merciful. He is ever delighted to bless. But He lacks opportunity so long as a man in self-trust is hoping to do what

God alone can do. Divine faith and hope spring out of the soul of human despair. The cry of inability is an appeal which God never fails to hear. He is moved by His own compassion to send relief.

The Person of Christ

IN Christ there are two natures, but one person. Oct. 3, 1892.
He cannot therefore have a double self-consciousness. And if His personal consciousness be one, His acts and sufferings, though shared in by both natures according to their respective attributes, are still His personal acts and sufferings. The person of Christ has human sympathies and feelings, and the person of Christ is conscious of supreme Godhead. The human nature of Christ, which is finite, cannot be occupied with innumerable petitions at the same time. But the person of the God-man can. And the divine nature as such cannot have human sympathies, but the God-man can. In a sense Christ has two wills, for each nature is complete, and there is no admixture or confusion, neither the divine nature becoming human and finite, nor the human nature becoming divine and infinite. But in every case the volition is one, shared as by both natures, and having in it that which appertains to both. Christ's sufferings were endured in His human nature, but by one who is divine. The intercession of Christ is conducted in His divine nature, but by one who is human, who knows our weakness, who

was tempted like as we are, and can sympathise with us.

That Christ should have a human will seems necessary to the completeness and perfection of His human nature. And here lies a difficulty to our conception, for we usually associate will and personality together as practically identical. But personality stands higher than will. It resides chiefly, though not exclusively, in the will, and uses it as its organ of manifestation. In a mere man it resides and manifests itself in a single will. In Christ, who is both God and man, it does so in two wills, the personal act, which is both divine and human, realising itself through the medium of both in perfect unity of operation. A remote analogy is in the joint action of soul and body, with this difference, that the body has no separate will, and shares in the resultant act only by impulse.

Missions

Oct. 16, 1892. WE can never estimate aright the progress of missions, unless we keep the eye fixed on God's ultimate end. It is not the salvation merely of a few or even of many individuals, but the salvation of the race. Hence two methods of planting seed, dibbling and broadcast. Chief value of individual conversions is the modification of the *general mind*. The best, but not the only means, must almost necessarily be few at first. We need not feel discouragement though the converts be few, if

only the leavening process goes on. It may go on long without manifesting itself in many individual conversions. We must have in view both individuals and society.

The Agony of the Cross

WHENCE came the agony of Gethsemane and of the Cross? If the life and death of Christ was but a supreme example of obedience to the will of God, even in suffering and death, it is no new thing in the earth, and many saints and martyrs have endured both, with at least more appearance of composure and fortitude than Christ Himself. Dec. 4, 1892.

Many martyrs also have died with the words of exuberant joy on their lips. Why did the Father desert *Him* in His great need? Or if there was nothing special in His suffering, was His faith perfect? Nothing can explain the facts, but that He bare the sins of the world.

The Living Word

THERE is a great difference between written and spoken words, between a message received from a friend and a personal interview. In the last case, besides the truth conveyed, there is a living energy behind the words spoken. Mind is in immediate contact with mind. There is a vast difference between truth and a living mind charged with it, Jan. 2, 1893.

thrilled by it. To which of these two categories does the Bible belong?

The Bible is a *message* from God to all men; but it requires the living, personal, present energy of the Spirit to give it effectual power. In this last case there is conveyed not truth only, but divine energy and power. There is the action of mind on mind. The Spirit of God does not convey (reveal) new truth, for all He wants to say is contained in the Bible, but He communicates it to the human soul, whose faculties, debilitated by sin, cannot apprehend the truths of God. He does not illuminate by acting on the truth, but directly on the mind, enabling it to understand and receive the truth. He is the source of energy. And He is the Holy Spirit because He imparts the energy, which is required by the corrupt, enfeebled heart of man, to know and obey the truth. He does not act morally and spiritually without the truth, and the truth does not act effectually without Him. Thus God speaks personally to man. Believers are truly taught of God. There is significance in the fact that Jesus breathed on His disciples.

Power in preaching and prayer comes from the energy of the Spirit personally infused. He does not supersede our faculties, nor change the laws of their operation, but, by the gracious communication of His divine power, enables them to do their spiritual work. The transmission of natural energy in the material world is always dependent on delicate, subtle conditions. The Spirit is a moral

agent, and His spiritual influences are speedily obstructed by adverse conditions.

An essential element of power is the *assurance* that the word is of God. No man can call Jesus Lord, nor know any word to be His, but by the Holy Spirit.

Divine Limitations

THOUGH God is omnipotent, His acts and words **May 12, 1893.** are subject to certain limitations or conditions.

Some of these are within Himself. He can never put forth power apart from wisdom, righteousness, etc.

Others are external to Himself. His revelation of Himself had to be slow and progressive. Prophets and apostles could not have been fit recipients of new truths unless they had already received and appropriated the old; nor unless a language had already been provided in which to express them; nor unless a people had been prepared to understand and profit by them.

Heaven

NOT only the conceptions of men about heaven, **June 5, 1893.** but heaven itself must have changed from what it was in Old Testament times, by the entrance into it of the risen, glorified Christ. All human blessedness springs from the manifestation of God, and increases with its increase. In Christ, the

perfect man, it was manifested in full measure here on earth. And now that in the completeness of His human nature He is glorified, heaven possesses a new centre, and in Him God is seen and known as He never was before. His glorified body is a fitting organ for the manifestations of His internal glory, which was partly revealed and partly hidden in the body of His humiliation. It is impossible for us to form any clear conception of the heavenly state antecedent to the resurrection. Its constitution may perhaps be best estimated from the subjective or negative side. Here on earth contrast and communication with the material world are effected by the bodily senses. Until the resurrection, the saints are without bodily organisation. May they not know something of the things which transpire on earth through the immediate vision of God?

Man and the Lower Creatures

June 25, 1893. THE distance between man and God is infinite; that between man and the lower animals, if not infinite, is at least absolute. We can have fellowship with God, and we can unite with our fellow-men in our fellowship with God. But who would think of having fellowship with God in company with a beast? In his natural framework man is at great distance from God; in his moral nature, whether original or restored, man is very near God. In his natural framework man is very near the lower animals, and this nearness is not confined to the

body, but extends to various mental faculties. In his moral nature he is at an absolute distance from them. This difference is not one of degree, but of kind. Man can have fellowship with them in the lower sphere, but none whatever in the higher. He can therefore converse both with God and with the lower animals. He is an intermediary between both. The whole effort of the Evolutionists is to drag man down to the level of the brute, not to raise him nearer God.

To Know Christ

To know about Christ and yet not to know Christ **July 28, 1893.** brings no life to the soul. We find many Jews, infidels, and others who know about Christ, and actually express admiration for His character, and yet these men cannot be called Christians. The fact is that each man has his own Christ, which is nothing else than his own particular ideal, and gives the name of Christ to that. His Christ is purely a fiction of his own mind, and not the historical Christ of the Gospels.

Romanism

THE basis of New Testament Christianity is direct **Aug. 26, 1893.** personal fellowship between the individual soul and Jesus Christ. All other means of salvation are mere adjuncts or instrumentalities. The

Romish and all Romanising systems interpose a medium, declared to be efficacious, between Christ and the individual soul. They put the Church in the place of Christ, and make the Church to be a necessary medium between the soul and Jesus.

They put the Church in the place of the individual soul. The Church is not a ministry with them, but that which is in direct communication with Christ.

Christ's Method of Teaching

Sept. 16, 1893. IN our methods of teaching we depend by far too much on definitions, propositions, and logical argumentation. Our Lord did not begin by announcing that He was the Messiah, and by offering logical argument to establish the truth. He MANIFESTED HIMSELF by word and by deed, and left His disciples to draw the inference for themselves.

