

CHAPTER V - PRAYER AND ATONEMENT.

283

Thoughts unuttered are not unknown to the infinite Intelligence comprehending them, to whom a desire is prayer, and no loss can occur from trusting God with our desires, to mould and make higher before they are evolved in action. But prayer has its motives, and what are they? To make him better that prays, or to benefit his hearers, to inform the Infinite of what he is ignorant, or to be heard of men? First, are we benefited by praying? Were God a person to be moved by the breath of praise, or less than Infinite in understanding, or changing in Love and Wisdom, He might do more good because of our petitions, and grant them on the ground of the petitioner, in which case lip-service were an advantage not to be overlooked. But God is Love, and do we ask Him to be more than this to man? God is Intelligence, and can we inform the infinite Wisdom, or tell of our needs, the infinitesimal part already comprehended? Do we hope to change perfection in one of its arrangements, or shall we plead for more of the open fount, pouring in all we will receive, and more cannot be given? Does prayer bring us nearer the divine source of all being and blessedness? then it is the prayer of works and not words; asking to love God never made us love him, but this desire, expressed in daily watchfulness and assimilation

284

to the divine character, moulds and

fashions us to His image.

The danger of audible prayer is, that we fall into temptation through it, and become an involuntary hypocrite. First, by uttering what is not a real desire, and secondly, consoling ourself under sin with the recollection we have prayed over it. Hypocrisy is fatal to Christianity, and praying publicly, we often go beyond our means, beyond the honest standpoint of fervent and habitual desire; if we are not yearning in secret and striving for the accomplishment of all we ask, ours are "vain repetitions, such as heathen use." If our petition is sincere, we shall labor for what we pray, and be rewarded by "Him who seeth in secret and rewardeth openly." No expression of them can make our desires more, or less, nor gain the ear omnipotent sooner by words than thoughts. If every petition in prayer is sincere, God knows it before we tell Him, and letting it remain honestly before Him we incur no risk of overtalking our real state.

Prayer is sometimes employed, like a catholic confession, to cancel sin, and this impedes Christianity. Sin is not forgiven; we cannot escape its penalty. Being sorry for its committal is but one step towards reform, and the very smallest one; the next step that Wisdom requires is, the test of our sincerity, namely, a reformation. To this end we are placed under stress of circumstances where the temptation comes to repeat the offence, and the woe comes for what has been done until we learn there is no discount in the law of retribution, and we must pay the uttermost farthing. The measure we have meted will be measured to us again,

285

full and running over; Christians and sinners get their full measurement, but not here; a follower of Christ, for centuries to come, must drink his cup; ingratitude and persecution will fill it to the brim, but God pours the riches of joy into the understanding, and gives us strength as our clay. Sinners flourish as the green bay tree, but looking farther, David saw their end.

Prayer cannot change the science of being, for goodness alone reaches the demonstration of Truth. A petition for another to work for us, never does the work required of us. To address Deity as a person, perpetrates the belief of God in man, which impedes spiritual progress and hides Truth. We reach the science of Christianity only through demonstration, but here, our good will be evil spoken of, and falsehood will war against advancing Truth. Principle should govern man; person can pardon but not reform the sinner. God is not a separate Wisdom from the Wisdom we possess, and the talent He hath given to be used we must improve; therefore, to call on God to do our work for us, is vainly supposing we have little to do but to ask for pardon and re-commit the offence. If prayer cherishes the belief sin is forgiven, and man better because he prays, it is asking amiss; for he is worse if the punishment sin incurs is kept back, or he thinks himself forgiven when he is not. Prayer is impressive; it gives momentary solemnity and elevation to thought, but does a state of ecstasy produce lasting benefit? Looking deeply, and metaphysically into these things, we find a reaction takes place, unfavorable to understanding and sober resolve, and the wholesome perception of God's requirements; also that personal

286

sense, and not Soul, produces these moods of feeling. If spiritual sense guided men at such times, there would grow out of those ecstatic desires, higher experiences and a better life; self-examination, and more purity. A self-satisfied ventilation of ecclesiastical fervor never made a Christian; verbal prayer embraces too much error to forward this great purpose. First, it supposes God a person influenced by man, making the divine ear a personal sense instead of the all-hearing and all-knowing Intelligence, to whom every want of man is understood, and by whom it will be supplied.

Again, what we desire, and ask to be given, is not always best for us to receive, in which case the infinite understanding will certainly not grant our request; therefore what avails it with God how much a man prays? When we pray aright, we shall "enter into the closet;" in other words, shut the door of the lips and in the silent sanctuary of earnest longings, deny sin and sense, and take up the cross, while we go forth with honest hearts laboring to reach Wisdom, Love, and Truth. This prayer will be answered, inasmuch as we shall put in practice our desires. The Master's injunction was to pray in secret; to desire to be better, and let our lives attest the sincerity of that desire. Are we really grateful for the good we receive? then we shall have more, and never until then, and avail ourselves of the blessings we have, and this will thank God more than speech. >From the Intelligence that numbers the very hairs of our heads, we cannot conceal the ingratitude of barren lives by thanking Omnipotence with our lips, while the heart is far from Truth. When we vainly imagine

gratitude is a mere expression

287

of thanks, we had better examine our hearts and learn what is there, and this will show us what we are, and is the only honest expression of ourselves.

How empty are the conceptions of Deity that admit theoretically, the omnipotence and omnipresence of God, and then would inform the supreme mind, or plead for pardon that is unmerited, or for blessings poured out liberally. If we are not grateful for Life, Truth, and Love, but return thanks to them, we are insincere, and incur the sharp censure bestowed upon the hypocrite. The only acceptable prayer in this case is to put our finger to our lips and remember our blessings.

Praying for humility with however much fervency of expression, is not always to desire it. If we turn away from the poor and set aside their judgment, we are not fit to receive the reward of that which blesses the poor. When confessing to a very wicked heart, and asking to have it laid bare before us, do we not know more of this heart than we are willing our neighbor should know, and if a friend informs us of a fault, do we listen to the rebuke patiently and credit what is said, or rather join in thanks that we are not as other men? It is many years that I have been more grateful for a merited rebuke than for flattery; the only real sting is the unmerited censure, the wicked falsehood that does no one any good.

Do we love our neighbor as ourself, or because we do not, should we pray to be given this love and expect it because of asking, while we pursue the old selfishness

satisfied with having prayed for something better, without a single evidence of the sincerity of this re-

288

quest by living consistent with that prayer. If selfishness gives place in us to Love, we shall love our neighbor and bless them that curse us, but can never meet this great demand by asking for it; there is a cross to be taken up, before the reward is given.

Do we "love the Lord our God with all our heart, Soul, and strength?" This includes much, even the surrender of all personal affections and personal worship; it is the ultimate of being, the science of Life that recognizes only the consciousness, Spirit, wherein Soul is our Master, and sense without a claim. Are you willing to leave all for Christ, Truth, and be reckoned with sinners? Have you reached this point? No. Do you really desire to attain it? No. Then wherefore make long prayers about it, and ask to become Christ-like, when these are the footsteps of our dear Master; if unwilling to drink his cup, wherefore pray with the lips to be partakers of it? The only consistent prayer is, to do right so far as we understand the right, and to walk in the light so far as we receive it, even though it be with bleeding footsteps, and let our real desires and works be rewarded by the Father who, seeth in secret. The whole world will not understand Christianity for centuries to come. When we are good enough to take His cup of earthly sorrows, we shall have it, and until we are, and do drink of it, all the vain repetitions that heathen use can never reach the demonstration that Jesus gave and instructed his followers to give, as the test of Christianity, saying, "And these signs

shall follow you." We learn in science the necessity for Christians to suffer in this wicked world of sense, insomuch as they oppose it, and are

289

helping to destroy it, therefore it would destroy them. Anciently, in Japan, they conveyed a praying-machine through the streets, stopping at the doors to earn a penny grinding out a prayer. But in the belief of higher civilization, we pay for prayers in lofty edifices. Experience teaches that we receive not the good we ask for inaudible prayer. Petitioning a personal Deity is a misapprehension of the source and means of all good and blessedness; therefore it cannot be beneficial, and we receive not, because, as the scripture saith, "We ask amiss, to consume it on our lusts."

Suffering for sin is all that destroys it; every supposed pleasure of personal sense, will furnish more than its balance in pain, until the belief of Life and Intelligence in matter is ultimately destroyed. We are not rid of mortal experiences, of sin, sickness, or death, at the change called death; we cannot reach heaven, the harmony of Life, except we understand the Principle of harmonious being, that alone destroys personal sense and error. Seeking is not sufficient to destroy error; striving to enter into the straight and narrow way of science, is all that will enable us to do it. Spiritual attainments are the preparation for heaven, and that which opens the door to a higher understanding, even the Life that is God. The petitions to a personal Deity bring to man only the results of his belief; they cannot obtain Truth, Life, or Love. We know that a desire for holiness is requisite to

gaining it, but if we really desire this above all else, we shall lay down all for it; first learn your willingness to do this, and then you may calculate safely on the only practical way of reaching holiness. Prayer cannot change the

290

unalterable Truth, or give us the understanding of it; but a desire to know and do the will of God is necessary, and also a symptom that we are growing wiser; but this desire needs no expression from the lips; our lives express it.

Asking God to heal the sick has no effect to gain the ear of Love, beyond its ever-presence. The only beneficial effect it has, is mind acting on the body through a stronger faith, to heal it; but this is one belief casting out another; a belief in God casting out a belief of Sickness, and not the understanding of the Principle that heals being. Jesus said, a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand; a belief is not the science of being that heals the sick, and casts out sickness on the ground that sensation and Intelligence are not in matter; the Truth of being is what destroys error. Exchanges of the same commodity are the mere merchandise of mind, and not science. Deity interposes not in behalf of one, and not another, who adopts the same measures in prayer. If the sick recover on the platform of prayer, it is the result of individual belief. All may avail themselves of God in science as a present help in trouble. Love is impartial, and universal in its adaptation and bestowments; the open fount, that saith, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye, and drink."

Prayer to a person, affects the sick as a

drug that has no efficacy of its own, but borrows its power from faith and belief in matter. The drug does nothing in the case, insomuch as it has no Intelligence. The Principle of man, and not a person, produces all good.

Seeking the Science of Life, and not content with a

291

material sense of things, gives hungerings and thirstings after righteousness, because it reveals the perfect Principle on which Life and immortality are Avon. A wordy prayer may afford a sense of quiet and self-justification, but this makes the sinner a hypocrite. We never despair of an honest heart, but those spasmodically face to face with their wickedness, and always seeking to hide it, are the indexes that correspond not with contents, the counterfeits of true manhood, that hold secret fellowship with their own sins. Such are spoken of in the scripture as whited sepulchres full of uncleanness, "making long prayers," etc.

If the author of much apparent fervor and many prayers is sensual and insincere, what is the mental comment of those understanding the science of being? That if he had reached the standpoint of his prayer, this would not be the case. If our silent thoughts support the conclusion that we feel all the aspiration, humility, gratitude and love they pour forth, this is enough to know of our Christian estate, and it is greatly wise not to deceive ourselves or others; nothing is hidden that shall not be revealed. Professions and prayers, we regret to say, cover a multitude of sins. Christians rejoice that the secret beauty and bounty of their being, though hidden

from the world, is known to God; self-abnegation, purity and Love, are a constant prayer. It is the practice and understanding of our God-being, that gains the ear and right hand of Omnipotence, and calls down blessings infinite. Trustworthiness is the only foundation of faith; without a fitness for holiness we shall not receive it, nor yield faithful adherence to it.

"God is Love;" more than this we cannot ask; higher

292

we cannot look; beyond this we may not go. To regard God a person that forgives or punishes sin, according as His mercy is sought, or unsought, is to misunderstand Love, and institute prayer as the safety-valve for wrong-doing. Do we ask Wisdom to be merciful to sin, then "We ask amiss to consume it on our lusts;" and to forgive sin without punishment, allows the sin to multiply, and this is neither mercy nor Wisdom. A magistrate may remit a criminal sentence; but this is no benefit morally to the criminal, and has only saved him from one form of punishment. The moral law that alone is capable of justifying or condemning, still demands man to go up higher, or meet the penalty of a broken law that punishes to compel this progress. Personal pardon of sin -- and there is none other -- for Principle, never pardons sin, leaves man free to commit anew the offence; if indeed he has not suffered sufficiently from sin, to turn from it with loathing. Truth entertains no pardon for error, but wipes it out in the most effectual manner.

Asking God to pardon sin, is a "vain repetition such as heathen use." Habitual

goodness, is praying without ceasing, in which motives are made manifest by the blessings we bestow, whether these are, or are not acknowledged, and attest our worthiness to be made partakers of Love. We cannot pray aright, and believe that God, who is the same yesterday and forever, is changeable or influenced in the least by a mortal sense of what man needs. He who is immutably right, will do right, without being reminded of it; and the wisdom of man is insufficient to select from God. We would not stand before a blackboard, and pray the Principle

293

of mathematics to work out a problem for man; nor should we ask the Principle of all good to do a work already done, and which we have only to avail ourselves of, that is, to understand, in order to receive its blessings. The Principle of man must be reflected by man, else he is not the image and likeness of the patient, tender, and true, yea, the one altogether lovely; and to go higher than this, and understand "God is Love," is the work of eternity.

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door pray to the father which is in secret, and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

The closet signifies the sanctuary of Spirit, its door opening on Soul, and not sense, opening to Truth, God, and closing on error. The father in secret is the Principle of man, unseen to personal sense, the infinite Intelligence that knows all things, and rewards according to motives, regarding mind only and not speech. The "prayer of the righteous" that "heals the sick," is after

the manner our Master taught, when he bade his students enter into the Spirit of prayer, the door of personal sense closed, lips mute, and man in audience with his Maker, where, Spirit instead of matter, and Soul instead of sense are understood the standpoint of being, even the Principle thereof, that destroys sickness, sin, and death. Thus the power of Life, Love and Truth, will destroy sin, sickness, and death, and enlarge the capacities of man, revealing his God-given dominion over earth; but remember, also, that "none but the pure in heart shall see God"; shall be able to take this scientific position of prayer, in which personal

294

sense is silenced, and Spirit the master of man. After a momentary cessation in the belief and dream of Life in matter, whereby Life, that is God, unfolds itself, comes the understanding and consciousness of dominion over the body that casts out error and heals the sick, and you speak as one having authority. We have taught our students the footsteps to this prayer; let them answer to-day, have they followed them. A great relinquishment of material things must precede this advanced spiritual understanding; 'isms but retard it, and mediumship more than most things. This prayer is not faith; it is demonstration; it heals the sick and advances man in the scale of being; it recognizes the falsity of personal sense and the Life that is Soul.

Only as we rise above sensuality and sin, can we reach its standpoint. Prayer addressed to a person, prevents our letting go of personality for the impersonal Spirit to whom all things are possible. We cannot serve two masters, if we are sensibly with

our body and consequently our words, and regarding Omnipotence a person, whose ear we would gain, we are not Soul, Life, Love and Truth, and therefore not in the harmony of being and oneness with the Father, "In demonstration of the Spirit and power." Make it a conscious reality for a single moment, that Life and Intelligence are not in the body, and you are without sensation in the body, and if sick, will find yourself well; sorrow is turned into joy, when we become conscious Soul, able to govern the body with Life, Truth, and Love; hence those words of our Master, "I and the Father are one," that wrought such blessed works, and "greater works than I," (in the flesh) "ye can do, be-

295

cause I go to the Father." The scientific position of Intelligence is Soul triumphing over sense.

Absent from the body and present with the Lord is not ecstasy or trance, but a realization of the science of Life, as laid down in this volume; it is obedience to the law of God, governing the body by Spirit instead of matter; therefore our Master said: "After this manner pray ye"

Our Father, which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name;

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our debts as we

forgive our debtors, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever."

The following is the spiritual signification of the Lord's Prayer:

Harmonious and eternal Principle of man,

Nameless and adorable Intelligence,

Spiritualize man;

Control the discords of matter with the harmony of Spirit.

Give us the understanding of God,

And Truth will destroy sickness, sin, and death, as it destroys the belief of intelligent matter,

And lead man into Soul, and deliver him from personal sense,

For God is Truth, Life, and Love forever.

296

Atonement is oneness with God; it is Life, Truth, and Love fulfilled, whereby sickness, sin, and death, are destroyed. Jesus of Nazareth explained and demonstrated his oneness with the Father, for which we owe him endless love and homage, although at the time of his labors he received less gratitude and honor than other men. His mission was both individual and collective; he did Life's work right in justice to himself,

and to show us how to do ours, but not to do it for us, or to relieve us of a single responsibility in the case. He taught us the way of Life, its Principle and proof, demonstrating what He taught, that we might understand its Principle; how it healed the sick, cast out error, and triumphed over death. Jesus was more the idea of God than a man can be whose origin is less spiritual than his, therefore he demonstrated higher than others the Principle of being, even his oneness with God. He understood the science of those sayings of his, "I am the Truth and Life," "I and the Father are one." Any reference to himself was made to Christ, the Principle of the man Jesus, for he called not Intelligence man, but God. It was not to a person, but to Truth, Life, and Love, he looked to destroy sickness, sin, and death. The mission of Jesus was to demonstrate the science of Life, he was its idea, even the chosen of Principle to prove God, and what God does for man.

Belief had established the false conclusion that God was in matter; that Truth and Life were in man, and man was mortal, sinning, sick, and dying. He wished to show, this belief was the very opposite of Truth, and that Spirit was not in matter, hence the death of the cross and the re-appearance of Jesus according to

297

his scientific statement of Life, namely, "Though you destroy this temple (body) yet will I (Spirit) build it again." "I," the Life, Substance, and Intelligence of the universe, and man, am not in matter that you can destroy. His beautiful metaphors and parables of the tree and its fruit; the fount and stream; the tares and wheat; the

sower and husbandman, etc., explained Intelligence and Life not mingled with sin and death. He laid the axe of science at the root of the "tree of knowledge " to cut down all that embraced opposite doctrines; hence error's hatred of him, and Truth's approval. This more pure, and spiritual idea, named Jesus, destroyed the beliefs of Life in matter, and gave to man the understanding of the Principle of being. Those students who followed his instructions and example, loved and honored him, and those who did not, hated and dishonored him. The former cast out error, and healed the sick with Christ, Truth; the latter, only in the name of Truth. Of the seventy he taught, but eleven remained faithful, showing how far the science he taught and demonstrated, was apart from the acceptance of the world of sense. And when Christ, Truth, cometh again, will he find faith on earth? Over eighteen centuries ago, "He came to his own and his own received him not." Those professing Christ are sometimes the first to reject Truth, if it collides with their beliefs; even its severest persecutors have been of this class. The honest fishermen who had little to leave, were those who left all for Christ, Truth, until progress compelled the change, and the learned Paul stepped forth for Truth.

When a teacher of music demonstrates by some masterly performance, the harmony of music, he gives

298

the proof of a Principle that the learner must understand; but if this demonstration included also a nameless sacrifice, we should admit, the Principle of it was not only harmony, but Love. This was the precious import of our Master's teachings

and demonstration; he proved the science of being not only by destroying sickness, sin, and death, but the significance of Life without death, and in this proof was embraced big Love. Error had hoped to destroy Truth, and kill Jesus. Those for whom he laid down all worldly honors, and bore their infirmities that through his stripes they might be healed, were his accusers. So will it be to-day, Christian martyr; he who best understands the Truth of being, will be most falsified, pursued, and condemned.

The teacher of music who demonstrates for the benefit of others, has by no means relieved them from giving the proof requisite to show where they stand in science; he rather does this, for their example that they may understand that which they should demonstrate. Implicit faith in the teacher, whose self-abnegation and toil have bestowed blessings on man, will never make Musicians of the learners; they must go and do likewise, or they are not improving their talents, which, unimproved, condemned them. We must understand the Principle Jesus taught, at whatever expense, and practice it, or we are not Christians.

The science of Life that our Master demonstrated, was not a theory, doctrine, or belief; it revealed a Principle that brought its proof with it; and this proof was not forms, or systems of religion, but the science of being, that brought out all the sweet harmonies of Life. Jesus informed John what the proof of Christ's coming

299

was, saying, "Go and tell him the things ye see and hear; how the sick are healed, the

lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind see, and to the poor the gospel is preached." Tell him what its demonstration is; and the spiritual John will at once perceive God is its Principle. Materia medica professed the ability to heal, also, and the Pharisees to teach Christ, Truth, but they only hindered the success of Jesus' mission; many of the seventy he had taught, stood in his way also, together with one who boldly betrayed him into the hands of his enemies. If our Master had never had a student, he would not have come to the death on the cross; but his mission would have been unfulfilled, and his history lacked its sweetest pathos. Through his unmerited persecutions we see the fate of science in a world of error, and the reception a sensuous world gives the Principle that contradicts personal sense with Soul.

At the same time that I love Jesus more than all men of the past or present ages, treading alone a path of thorns, up to the throne of Wisdom, in speechless agony exploring the way for others, yet I cannot see that he has spared us one individual experience, or that we have not the "cup" to drink in proportion to our fitness to drink it and demonstrate God, above others. To keep the commandments of our Master and follow his example, is our proper return, and only evidence of gratitude for all he has done for us; but this is not a personal worship, nor reward to a person; it is to understand the Principle Jesus taught and proved, and follow, as much as in us lies, his example; to separate ourselves from the world of error and press forward to the Life that is Truth and Love. The

300

pleasures, frowns, or flatteries of earth, are

but ghosts of nothingness, compared to the prize set before us, "And laying aside every weight and sin that so easily beset us, let us press forward to the high calling of God in Christ," putting aside personal self and sense, for Soul, the Principle of being.

Every pang of repentance, every suffering for sin, (accompanied with reformatory efforts) and every good deed, stones for sin. But if the sinner is sorry, and continues to pray, and to sin and be sorry, he hath no part in the at-one-ment. TO understand God, "Whom to know aright is Life eternal," is to do the will of Wisdom; and none hath part in Him, who demonstrates not, in part, the Principle embraced in the teachings and practice of our Master. If not obeying the science of being according to its Principle, God, we should have no confidence in man's safety, because God is good, and man repents. But if we are growing spiritual, and error is yielding to Truth in our demonstrations of being, and our daily walk and conversation, we shall say at length, "I have fought the good fight and kept the faith;" for I am a better man. This is having part in the at-one-ment. If a man stands still, praying, and expecting because of another man's goodness, sufferings and triumphs, he will reach his harmony and reward; that man will vibrate, a pendulum, between sin and the hope of forgiveness; selfishness and sensuality winding him up to this action, and his growth will be slow. An at-one-ment with Love and Truth, is to apply the meaning of the Life, and not death of Jesus, to deeds and a Christian character, and not to cover, or forgive sin, but to destroy it in the most

301

effectual manner. When Truth lays the axe

at the root of error, saying, cut it down, then comes the experiences and sufferings that cause one, even as a drowning man, to make vigorous efforts to save himself, and these efforts are what save him.

"Work out your own salvation," is the demand of Life and Love; and to this end God worketh with you. "Occupy until I come," i. e., wait for thy reward and grow not weary in well doing. Although your endeavors are against fearful odds, receiving no present reward, go not back to error, nor become a sluggard in the contest, and you will find your reward when the smoke of battle clears away, so that you discern the good you have done, and your gain from experience. Love often delays to deliver from temptation, that it may try, and prove you as by fire. If you understand the science of being sufficiently to have faith in the right, and no faith in wrong, you will work more earnestly, though more silently, perhaps, in persecution than amid applause, for your labor is more needed; and the reward of your self-sacrifice is great, though it be never here. Final deliverance from error, whereby we rejoice in immortality, boundless freedom, and sinless sense, is not won through smooth footsteps, nor through doctrines, or pinning one's faith to personality. Whoso believeth wrath is righteous or appeased by the unmerited death of a good man, cannot understand God. Justice requires no propitiation but from the sinner; mercy cancels without pay or sacrifice, and revenge is inadmissible in Love. The wrath that is appeased is not destroyed, but indulged, and may require another sacrifice, one being found insufficient; but these are

302

the traits of heathen Deities, and not of our God, the Principle that is Love.

God's wrath vented on his only son, is without logic or humanity, and but a man-made belief. The beautiful import of this hard place in theology is, that suffering is an error of personal sense that Truth destroys, and sin falls, a broken reed, at the feet of Love. The Rabbinical teachings said, "He that taketh one doctrine firm in faith, has the holy ghost dwelling in him." But this receives a strong rebuke from our Master, who said, "Faith without works is dead." Faith, as a belief, is but a pendulum between nothing and something, holding on to no foundations; but the advanced understanding that is sometimes misnamed faith, is the evidence gained from spiritual sense that rebukes the belief of personal sense, and brings out of experience the Life that is God. In Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and English, the word "faith" embraces two meanings, viz., "trustfulness" and "trustworthiness." The first trusts all to another, and the second understands and relies on one's self. "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," expresses the helplessness of a blind faith, whereas "Believe, and you shall be saved," is self-reliant, trustworthy faith that implies the understanding that brings its own reward. The Hebrew gives the following signification of the verb, "to believe:" "To be firm, lasting, constant," and this certainly applies to Truth understood; for firmness in error will never save man from sickness, sin, or death. An acquaintance with the original texts, together with a willingness to give up beliefs founded on dynasties and the wont passions of men, for the advanced views of

303

civilization and the spiritual sense of Truth, makes the scriptures a chart of Life to man.

Christ and God are words synonymous. Christ signifies the Soul and Principle of the man, Jesus. The manner of expressing him in Scripture gives the meaning of this relationship, viz., Jesus, the son of God, i. e., the idea of Principle, and the offspring of Soul, and not sense.

Publius Lentulus wrote to the conscript fathers at Rome, -- "The disciples of Jesus believe him the son of God." Those who were taught by him the science of being, reached the glorious perception that God is the only author of man. The virgin mother first conceived this idea of God, and named it Jesus; the illumination of spiritual sense had put to silence personal sense with Mary, thus mastering material law and establishing through demonstration that God is the father of man. The science of being overshadowed the pure sense of the virgin mother with a full recognition that Spirit is the basis of being. The idea we call Substance, and Mary named Jesus, dwelt forever in the bosom of the Father, in the Principle of man, and woman perceived it because of her more spiritual nature. The belief that Life originates with the sexes, is strongest in the most material natures; whereas the understanding of the spiritual origin of man cometh only to the pure in heart. Man and woman, as ideas of God, i. e., Spirit, meet Soul's expectancy, and are immortal evidences that Spirit is harmonious, and man eternal. Jesus was the offspring of Mary's self-conscious God-being in creative Wisdom; hence he was more spiritual, more the idea of God, and demonstrated

304

the science of Life, as others cannot, whose origin is material. This idea of Truth came to rebuke Rabbinical error; to point out the way of Truth and Life, and to demonstrate, as it did, throughout the whole earthly career of Jesus, the difference between the offspring of Soul, and of sense; of Truth, and error; Christ was God; therefore the Principle of the man, Jesus, otherwise his Father; Jesus acknowledged no ties of flesh, saying, "Call no man your Father upon the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven." Again, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren, but they that do the will of my Father." We have no record of his ever calling a man father. He recognized God the only Principle of being, therefore, the Father of all.

Referring to the materiality of the age, he said,

The time cometh and now is that they who worship the Father shall worship Him in Spirit and in Truth." Again, foreseeing the persecution that must attend the introduction of this science, he said, -- "The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think he doeth God service." "And these things will they do unto you because they have not known the Father or me." In other words, are ignorant of the Principle of being; their father, on earth and in heaven, being personality instead of Principle; ignorant, also, of the origin of man, his nature and true existence. The world of error is blind to the Truth of man, and the world of sense, to Life that is Soul. Jesus was neither understood in his origin, his nature, or works; not one component part of his being did the world of sense get right. Even his righteousness and purity hindered not

305

the accusation, he is Beelzebub, the chief of sinners, a glutton, and the friend of the impure. Christian martyr of the nineteenth century, does it wrong thee one half as much? then remember, it is enough for thee "that the servant should be as his Lord," and that you be found worthy to unloose the sandals of thy Master's faith. To conclude persecution for righteousness' sake belongs to the past, and that Christianity to-day is at peace with the world, honored by sects and societies, is to mistake its Very nature. History will repeat itself; the trials of prophet, disciple, and apostle, those of whom "the earth was not worthy," await, in some form, the pioneers of Truth.

Scripture informs us, Jesus read the thoughts of man, discovering the hidden springs of action, and construing them according to motive. Perceiving their thoughts, as he walked with his students, he answered, unasked, questions that needed explanation. This mind-reading was not clairvoyance, it was absence from the body, a spiritual insight wherewith he shew the woman of Samaria her error, and convinced her of his superiority over man, and she went away, saying, "Is not this the Christ," the Truth of man that discerns the error? His marvellous works are readily accounted for when we remember, Christ is God, and that Jesus held all that he was, God, and wrought from the standpoint of his God-being, and this was the science of being.

A magistrate who lived at the time of Jesus, wrote,

His rebuke is fearful," and his strong

language in scripture regarding hypocrisy, confirms this saying, but the stronger evidence that his reproof was pointed and pungent, is the necessity there was for it when he

306

cast out devils and healed the sick. The only civility Truth exchanges with error is "Get behind me, satan." There is too much animal courage, and not sufficient moral courage in Society. Christians take up arms against error at home and abroad, grapple with sin in themselves and others, and continue this warfare until they have finished their course, and thenceforth receive its reward.

If you have triumphed sufficiently over the errors of personal sense for Soul to hold the balance of power in your being, you will loathe sin and rebuke it, under whatever mask it appears; and you can bless your enemies only in this way, but they may not so construe it. We cannot choose but work out our own salvation on the Principle Jesus taught and demonstrated, viz., casting out devils, healing the sick, and preaching the gospel to the poor. A moral coward is unfit to bear the standard of Truth, and God will never place it in his hands.

A member of the Methodist Church once said to us, 61 1 hope, when you write your work on science, you will dwell much on the atonement." After reading these pages, if the "arm of the Lord is revealed " to that mind, anew she will commence her own work, and with the unction of primitive Christianity, heal herself and others, and thus gain the liberty of the sons of God. This is regeneration, and to have part in the

atonement, and to understand wherefore Jesus suffered and triumphed. But Truth, lifting its voice above 'ology and 'ism, and requiring a reconstruction of man, must be persecuted, and those not having touched its garments and felt in their body it has healed them, will persecute it.

307

If all those partaking of the sacrament intended to commemorate the sufferings of Jesus, had drank "his cup," they would have revolutionized the world; or if all who partake of these symbols to-day, were Christians, taking up their cross, healing the sick, casting out error and preaching Christ, Truth, to the poor, it would establish the millennium.

But all who eat bread and drink wine in memory of Christ, are not ready or willing to drink his cup, and to leave all for Christ, the Truth and Life, that is God. Then wherefore ascribe to this willingness with a dead rite, before showing forth in your body, that the Truth has come to your understanding, that heals the sick, and makes the body holy and acceptable, that Paul said, was "our only reasonable service." And if Christ, Truth, has come to us in demonstration, no commemoration is requisite, for it is "God with us."

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take eat, this is my body.' And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink ye all of it.'"

The glorious sense or proof of that hour is lost spiritually, when confined to a literal sense, or the use of bread and wine. The

disciples were eating when he prayed and gave them bread. Now this would have been improper in a literal sense; but in its spiritual, it was natural and beautiful. Jesus prayed; was "absent from the body and present with the Lord." His followers silent, humble, patient, self-sacrificing, and strong, anticipating the approaching hour of their Mas-

308

ter's betrayal, sat eating the manna, that before had fed the persecuted followers of Truth in the wilderness. Their bread came down from heaven; it was the great Truth of spiritualized being, that often had healed the sick, and cast out error; their Master had broken, explained it to them before, and now it was feeding, sustaining them; they also had borne it from house to house, "breaking," explaining it to others; and now it comforted them. For this Truth their Master was about to suffer violence, and his cup of sorrow he must leave to them; he had drank it even with thanks, after a momentary weakness that said, "Let this cup pass from me," and now remembering also the cross and crown it bore, he said to his followers, "Drink ye all of it." Professors of Christ, are you drinking this cup? has the blood of the New Testament, the sufferings and persecutions that attend a new understanding of God, been shared by you? have you drank this cup? if not, have you commemorated Jesus in his "cup?" When the human struggled with the divine, our great exemplar said, "Not my will but thine be done"; not personal sense, but Soul be represented by me. This new understanding of the Love that is impersonal, gives up all for Christ, Truth, blesses them that curse it, heals the sick, casts out error, raises those dead in belief,

and preaches to the poor.

The rabbi and priest taught a material law, and it was "An eye for an eye," and "whose sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed "; not so did Jesus, the new testator of God, copy his will; his law was Love, and "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for a friend," but he did this for his

309

enemies, showing the Love, the Life and Truth, that is the at-one-ment with God.

First on the list of Christian duties, he taught his followers to heal the sick; he attached no importance to dead ceremonies; it was the living Christ, the Truth, that is Life, that made him the resurrection and Life to all who follow him. Thus keeping his precious precepts and following his demonstration in its understanding, we shall indeed drink his cup and be baptized with his purity, until we sit down with him anew in a fuller understanding of the Principle of that man, Jesus. "For as often as ye eat his bread and drink his cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come."

A belief can never show forth the works of understanding, and has never yet followed Jesus in his demonstration; to do this we must consecrate our lives to the Principle for which he was crucified, and be willing to drink of the cup it brings. "But for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

Rites fetter the pinions of Soul, they materialize, and prevent the Spirit, by holding us to the body; for matter separates

from Spirit. We speak of the atonement of Christ reconciling God to man; but Christ is God, and God propitiates not Himself, and there is nothing higher to conciliate. Again, Love and Truth are not irreconciled to the idea of God, and man is this idea. But man being the shadow of Almighty, cannot exceed Him in Love; or reconcile Truth to error. His students understood the sufferings, teachings, and demonstration of their glorious Master better than all this. When Jesus gave up the body material to

310

be slain, and afterwards presented it to his students unchanged, he had proved what he had taught, showing them he was act dead, and they knew it was proof of the Principle he had before taught, and disproved our opinions of a future resurrection, or a spiritual body at the change, called death; his body was a belief of matter, as before, until he rose to Spirit above the reach of personal sense, and triumphed over the last enemy, death, as before he had conquered sickness and sin, and this was what his followers were to commemorate in their lives, so far as they understood his teachings and demonstration; hence the saying, "The works that I do ye shall do, and greater."

Theology explains the crucifixion of Jesus, a pardon ready for all sinners; Spiritualism finds his death necessary only for the presentation, after death, of the personal Jesus; calling this "a spirit's return." We differ from both, and while we respect all that is good in the church, and outside of it, our later consecration to Christ has been on the ground of demonstration, and not profession, yea, to follow the commands he gave to those he sent forth. For

conscience's sake we dare not cling to the old belief, insomuch as understanding somewhat the Principle of his proof, the Life, and not death, that Jesus showed forth, raised us from hopeless disease, and gave us a triumph over sickness and sin, we never had gained from our former beliefs and profession of religion.

The efficacy of the crucifixion of Jesus is the practical Truth it demonstrated for our understanding, and that ultimately will deliver mankind from sickness, sin and death. This Truth he had before spoken in their

311

midst; but until they saw it triumph over the grave the disciples were not able to admit and demonstrate so fully its Principle. Thomas, beholding the idea of it in Jesus, (after his supposed death) was forced to acknowledge how entire was the proof. From all the disciples had seen and suffered, they became more spiritual, therefore could better understand what the Master had taught them. This, therefore, was the resurrection, for it raised them from the blindness of a belief in God to the understanding of Him, "Whom to know aright was Life." They needed this, for soon their dear Master that had just risen to their comprehension would rise again, higher in the spiritual scale of being, and so much beyond them in reward for all his faithfulness, he would disappear to their more material thoughts, and Biblical history would name it the ascension. Ancient prophets who wrought before Jesus, foretold his coming, and the reception the world of sense would give Truth; also there is a connection inseparable between their experiences, and those of every Christian

who perceives the idea and accepts the understanding of God. Jesus, born of a virgin mother, was more of a miracle to that age, than to this; for even the naturalist is now furnishing reports of embryology in some species wholly without the male element. The Bethlehem babe was the nearest approximation since the record in Genesis to the science of being, in which Spirit makes man; for man born of woman, was the usual advent of mortal man, and this material belief was what entered Mary's spiritual conception of Jesus, which accounts for the struggles of Gethsemane, but it made him the mediator between God and mortal man;

312

this lack of entire science in the advent of Jesus, produced its discord, and met its fate in death. Had his origin and birth, however, been wholly apart from mortal belief, Jesus would not have been recognized by mortal man; and "he was the light that was to lighten every man that cometh into the world;" therefore he must be the mediator, or interpreter of Truth to error that destroyed error and rebuked personal sense with the Principle of being.

Jesus never ransomed man, by paying the debt sin incurs; whosoever sins must suffer. This Christian martyr suffered for the Truth, that destroyed error, and while it blessed the whole world, was that for which it hated him; even the sinner must learn Truth, by the things he suffers. Love is no compromise with sin, and pays no debt of its contracting; but it can and does point out the way to escape from it and reach the harmony and science of being. The blood of that righteous man shed by sinners, was a crime that affords no ground for further

sin or a belief of its pardon, it was an injustice to humanity that the best man should be sacrificed by the worst men. Jesus taught the way of escape from sin, but that all that sinneth shall die, in other words, that sin must be destroyed. Wisdom punishes, instead of pardons, sin. The terrible effect of our false views regarding the atonement, is to make a sinner less fearful to sin, believing a tear or a prayer will secure its pardon; this heightens hypocrisy and suffocates conscience. The time is not far distant when our theological views of atonement will undergo as radical a change as those have already done regarding a bottomless pit, burning with fire and brimstone, and the

313

election and fore-ordination of a portion to be saved or be lost. But for these false views regarding the forgiveness of sin, ministers and laymen would never break the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and then talk of their love for God, and Christian experience.

The sweet and spiritual significance of the death on the cross, is Love laying down all of earth to instruct its enemies the way to heaven, proving what heaven is, and how obtained. We speak of the blood of Jesus as efficacious to save sinners; it is the efficacy of the Truth and Love that Jesus taught and demonstrated, which alone can destroy sin; and sinners are never saved. The blood of Christ was an offering of Spirit and not matter, a pledge of undying Love. O! highest conceptions of spiritual sense tell us, what is Love.

