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Of the moral attitude assumed by Job when, at at last, he gives his sorrow words, we need only observe that, though he neither lets go his integrity nor renounces God, he is not quite the man who said, "Shall we accept the good from God, and shall we not accept the evil?" He does not as yet charge God foolishly, indeed; he still retains so much reverence that he will not even name God, except once, and that passingly. But he indulges in more than one impatient fling at the God whom he will not openly accuse. He feels that it is God who has condemned him to live when he longs to die, that it is He who has so fenced him in that he cannot stir, cannot even see a path out of his miseries and perplexities. Already, and before the provocations of his Friends drive him so to assert his own righteousness as to impugn the justice of God, we can see that his patience is beginning to give way, that his woe is heavier than he can bear.

S. COX.

A GREAT PROMISE.

ST. MATTHEW xix. 27-29, AND ST. MARK x. 30.

I.—THE HUNDRED-FOLD.

ST. PETER'S question was a vulgar and a selfish question, yet it received a very generous reply. Mere pity for the young Ruler who was sorrowfully leaving Christ ought to have kept him from asking it, or mere sympathy with his Master, who was at least as sorry to see the Ruler go as the Ruler was to leave Him, and to leave Him *so*. But for the moment Peter was occupied with himself and his few intimate companions; he had no thought, no

care, for the thousands who could not resolve to leave all they had for Christ's sake and the gospel's, and still less thought or care for the world at large. For the moment his spirit was at least as alien from that of his Master as was the spirit of the young Ruler himself. Nevertheless the Lord Jesus shews the most delicate consideration for his selfish pre-occupation. He asks for reward! Well, he shall have a reward, and a reward far greater than any of which he has dreamed. Hereafter, he and his brethren shall be kings under the King; when the Son of Man sits in the throne of his glory, they shall sit on twelve thrones and rule the twelve tribes of Israel.

But if they—and I suppose that, as usual, St. Peter was only the spokesman of the rest—can think only of themselves, Christ cannot think only of them. He gives them the promise they longed to hear; but, having given it, He forthwith generalizes it. Not they alone, but *every one* who leaves anything for Christ's sake shall receive a hundred-fold—"now in this present time," as St. Mark adds—and shall inherit eternal life.

Now this great generalized promise has perplexed many thoughtful and devout minds, the minds of many who do not doubt that Christ will be as good as his word. They can trust Him for their future reward, and leave themselves in his hands without misgiving or fear. They are conscious that they already inherit the spiritual and eternal life He promised to confer; and they can readily conceive that, in the world to come, this life, freed from the hindrances and restraints of their "mortal part," will

unfold energies and graces which cannot bud and blossom in this world's unkindly weather. But they do not see that any earthly possessions, or ties, or pleasures, which they have abandoned for his sake, are restored to them on earth, now, in this present time ; and not only restored, but multiplied a hundred-fold. It will be time well spent, therefore, if we meditate on this great promise until its hidden meaning grows plain and clear.

Its general intention or principle seems to be, that Christ will be no man's debtor ; that it is always gain to lose what we leave for Him ; that whatever we give to Him becomes more truly and intimately our own ; that whatever we lay up with Him will be returned again with usury ; that in his recompenses Christ uses large measures, " pressed down, shaken together, and yet running over."

This is Christ's general law of recompense, a law here stated in the paradoxical form commonly used not by Jesus only, but also by all the great Jewish teachers of his time. But in seeking to define and vindicate it, we must remember, first, that, though at times men may have to leave houses and lands, and even to sacrifice kinships both of blood and affection, in order that they may be true to Christ, at other times, at most times even, we can only be true to Him by using our possessions wisely and for the good of our fellows, and by our fidelity to the kinships in which we are placed and the attachments we have formed. No man serves Christ by simply renouncing all that he has, or by breaking loose from any tie of blood or friendship. Then only do we serve Him by forsaking our natural ties, or our

acquired possessions, when they come between us and Him, when we must renounce either Him or them. Throughout the Gospels He claims to stand first with us ; and He advances this claim because only as we love Him supremely can we love our neighbours as we should or use our possessions so as to get from them the full benefit they are capable of yielding us. In short, what his demand on us really comes to is, that our spiritual interests and affections should engage our chief attention ; and that where it is necessary, and *only* where it is necessary, our temporal interests and our natural affections should be sacrificed or subordinated to them.

We must observe, also, that in this great promise our Lord calls away our thoughts from that which is outward to that which is inward, from that which we *have* to that which we *are* ; and intimates that our true property, or wealth, consists not in any of the possessions from which we must soon part, but in the powers and gifts of that life which neither change nor death can touch. The Apostles were thinking of houses and lands, parents and children, thrones and princedoms ; Christ speaks to them of life, the life eternal, as their true inheritance ; the life which, when once it has been quickened, can never die ; the life which, as it unfolds its energies and graces, makes us ever more fully “partakers of God,” and even of that sway over all that is in the world which is the prerogative of God. It is as though He had warned them : A man’s wealth does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth, but in the power of an endless

life, in the vigour and variety of its energies and capacities, in his ability to get the real good of all that is around him, even though it be not, in the legal sense, his own. Once let him rise into a spiritual life, a divine life, and all things become his, since he can make them all—even loss and pain, change and death—contribute to his welfare and swell the volume of his life.

We must observe, again—what the Disciples, who were accustomed to his parabolic and paradoxical style, would instantly discern—that the promise of our Lord, while it has a very real and literal sense, has also a figurative and spiritual sense. Some of the relationships here mentioned, for example, cannot be literally multiplied a hundred-fold; others of them could hardly be thus multiplied without becoming a curse to us instead of a blessing. One cannot have a hundred fathers or mothers; and surely no sane man would wish to have a hundred children or a hundred wives.

What, then, is the meaning of the Promise, that which gathers into itself all its various senses and aspects, and reconciles them? Perhaps it may be summed up and expressed under these three heads: (1) That in Christ, in his love and service, we find all that makes our kinships and possessions of real worth to us; (2) That in Him we find corresponding, yet superior, possessions and relationships to those which we resign, or may have to resign, for his sake; (3) That in virtue of our oneness with Him we possess all things and persons in a deeper truer way.

i. *We find in Christ, in loving and serving Him, all that makes our natural kinships and our possessions*

of real worth to us. What are our possessions—as houses and lands, and our kinships—as the ties which bind us to father and mother, wife and child, good for? what is it that gives them their value? for what ultimate end were they conferred on us? If we consider that question, whether from the Christian or the philosophical point of view, I think our conclusion must be: that our kinships and possessions are valuable to us, and reach their true end, only as they minister to our welfare and culture, as they develop our various faculties and powers, as they furnish us with opportunities of serving our fellows, and both enable and incline us to avail ourselves of them. God has grouped us in families and bound us to each other by many sacred and tender ties in order that we may love and help each other, and that, by loving and serving each other, we may develop and train, in ourselves and in those around us, the virtues and affections by which both we and they are raised in the scale of being and are led on to the highest perfection of which our nature is capable. Out of the great common patrimony which He has bestowed on the race at large, He secludes a little for each one of us, makes it in a special sense our own, in order that we may learn to use and administer it—use it, not for our own ends alone, but for the general welfare. To have much, or many things, is not in itself an advantage; it may be a grave disadvantage: it is a grave disadvantage if we neither possess nor develop the power to use them wisely, so to use them that we become wiser and better men and help to make other men wiser and better. To have many kinsfolk and friends will not

help us towards the true end of our being unless we can so occupy the kindly relations in which we stand as to do good by them and to get good from them. No man is the better, or even the better off, for simply having a large account with his bankers, or for owning a large estate ; if he spend his money or manage his estate foolishly, if he uses what he has mainly for base and sensual purposes, he does but shew that he is incapable of using it aright, that it has got into the wrong hands, hands too, from which it will soon slip, leaving him the poorer and the worse for his temporary possession of it. And, in like manner, no man is the better or the happier simply for having a large circle of relatives and friends. If either he, or they, fail to cultivate these kinships for high and noble ends, if they employ the influence which kinship gives to degrade each other, to encourage one another in maintaining a low and selfish tone, they may very easily be the worse and the poorer for the very affinities which ought to have contributed to their well-being.

Now suppose any man to have come clearly and honestly to the conclusion that he can only be true to Christ and his own soul by parting with something which he possesses, and in which the world tells him that his wealth consists ; or suppose he finds—as he may very well do even in times when there is no persecution for conscience' sake—that he must break with some kinsman, or give up a former friend : put the case that he must sacrifice his wealth, or some considerable portion of it, or that he must conquer an attachment which is injurious to his moral and spiritual welfare : will he really lose anything by

making this sacrifice for Christ's sake and the gospel's? will he not rather gain by it? Goods were given for his good; if he is the better man, the more capable and serviceable, the more virtuous and noble and devout for sacrificing his goods, or some of them, he gains by sacrificing them the very ends for which they were bestowed on him, and is the richer for his loss. He has added to the power and value and quality of his life; and his "life" is the only thing that death will leave him. In like manner, if a man has to conquer an attachment which is weakening and degrading him, he may lose a friend and all the comfort or pleasure he might have received from and through him; but for what were friends and relatives given save that he and they should minister to each other's well-being? If his welfare can be secured only by losing a friend, is not the loss a gain? And may not the loss be gain even to the friend he renounces when that friend discovers the motive of the renunciation? The Twelve gave up home and livelihood, father and mother, wife and children; that is, they gave up the use and comfort of them for a time; but did not they gain immensely by the sacrifice, and gain in those very ends of moral and spiritual culture to promote which kinships and possessions are conferred on men? Verily, they had their hundred-fold, and that now, in this present time.

2. *We find in Christ corresponding, yet superior, relationships and possessions to those which we resign for his sake.* Houses and lands, kinsfolk and friends, are intended for our culture in virtue and righteousness and charity; they are also the express

types of higher kinships which are open to us, and of a more enduring riches. From the father of our flesh we derive our first and best conception of the Father of our spirits. The love of woman helps us to apprehend and trust the love of Christ. The obedience and simplicity of childhood speak to us of the wiser simplicity and nobler obedience of discipleship. The corruptible treasure on earth symbolizes, in many ways, the immortal treasure in heaven. And if we leave, or lose, any of these typical relationships and possessions for Christ's sake, we gain that which they typify—a house not made with hands, the treasure which moth cannot corrupt, the family in heaven and in earth, the Father of an infinite majesty, the Friend who is our Brother and who sticketh closer than a brother. Do we lose by such an exchange as this, or gain—gain infinitely? It is not often that men are called to forsake all they have and all they love in order to follow Christ. Commonly the more difficult duty is imposed upon us of using all for our own good and for the good of our fellows. But even those who have been constrained to leave home and country, father and mother, wife and child, have in very deed received the hundred-fold now in this present time if they have become free-men of the eternal city, and could call the house of many mansions their own, if they have found a tender and loving Father in the God whom they once feared, and a redeeming Brother in the Lord who was once rejected and despised of men.

3. In virtue of our oneness with Christ we possess all things and persons in a deeper, truer way. It is not only that when we suffer and lose for Christ's

sake—*i.e.* in order that we may be true to the principles He taught and incarnated—we gain a title to the great inheritance; but that in very deed all things become ours, and the power, as well as the right, to appropriate them all.

For, strictly speaking, a man's property is exactly what he can appropriate; *that*, and not a jot more. If, for example, a man buys a parcel of ground, fences it in, builds a mansion on it, lays out a garden, plants a park, no doubt it is his in the full legal sense; and yet no law, no title conferred by law, can make it really his. It may be mine far more truly than his. If when I go over his mansion and gaze on the works of art that adorn it, or walk through his grounds and study their exquisite complexities of form and colour, light and shade, I see in them innumerable beauties which, for lack of brain or lack of culture, he cannot discern in them; if they teach me lessons he cannot learn, and quicken in me deep and pure emotions to which he is insensible, they are mine in a far higher sense than that in which they are his; and they are mine, rather than his, simply because I can appropriate more of that which is in them, and of that which is highest and best in them. In me they have subserved a noble use; they have kindled my imagination, cultivated my intellect, touched and purified my heart. A thousand accidents may destroy his legal possession of them—a fire, a bankruptcy, a death; but no accident, not even death itself, can disturb my possession of them; they have entered into my life, shaped my nature, become a part of my very being. And so, “a thing of beauty *is* a joy for ever” to as many as can study and appreciate it.

But if a neighbour should follow in my steps, if he too should look out over the fair demesne and let its beauties sink into his soul ; and if, besides my merely æsthetic enjoyment of them, he can lift an unpre- sumptuous eye to heaven, and say, "*My Father* made them all;" if he feels that the varied loveliness of stream and sky, of cloud and sunshine, of tree and flower has been given by God in order that he and his fellows may enjoy and profit by them ; if he permits them to quicken new faith, love, hope, peace in his soul—they are even more fully his than they are mine : for he has got a still deeper and more enduring good out of them ; he has compelled them to minister to his highest welfare. They are *his* in a sense in which they can belong to none but those who are like-minded with himself, and whose spirits are as readily touched to fine issues.

Take another illustration of this important but too-much-forgotten truth. Here, say, is a picture by one of our great masters : it has for subject a noble landscape, or a fine historic incident. And here are two men variously related to it. One, very rich but very dull and ignorant, gives a few thousand pounds for it, hangs it on his wall, and hardly looks at it again except when he leads an acquaintance up to it and brags, "That is a Turner, or a Brett, or a Millais." The other—rich or poor does not matter—has only seen it half a dozen times ; but he has set himself down before it and studied it. He is familiar with the story it tells, and it is full of pleasant and instructive associations to him, reminding him of some great passage in the annals of a people, and of the various modes in which it

has been handled by historians, artists, poets. Or he has travelled through the scene it depicts, and recognizes its very details. And still it is crowded with pleasant or instructive associations for him. Not only can he see more in it than a stranger to the scene, because he knows exactly what to look for and where to look for it; but he recalls the adventures which befell him when he traversed the scene, the emotions it roused in him, the companions he travelled with, the very strangers he met, and all that made the time memorable to him. Now to which of these two men does the picture really *belong*? to the man who has paid for it and neglected it, or to the man who has let it creep into the study of his imagination and become a part of his very mind? In a sense, doubtless, it belongs to them both: in a legal sense to the former, in a spiritual sense to the latter. But which of these two forms is the higher and the more enduring? which ministers most to character and welfare, and which lasts the longest? A fire breaks out; the beautiful picture is consumed. And *now* which of these two men has it? Its legal owner has lost it utterly, and the guineas he gave for it; but the spiritual owner has appropriated it for ever: he can recall it when he will; it still hangs in some accessible chamber of his brain; it is still a treasure to him and a joy.

Really and strictly, then, we *possess* just as much, and only as much, as we can appropriate. But—and here we touch a still more important and practical question—on what does the power of appropriation depend? Obviously it depends on the kind

of life that is in us, on its volume and quality, on the vigour and variety of its faculties, and on the manner in which these faculties have been trained and developed. He who has most life in him, and in whom this life has been best cultivated, will infallibly possess himself of most that is really valuable and enduring. He will see farther into men, and be able both to do more for them and to get more from them, than those can do in whom there is less life, or a life less cultivated and accomplished. He will also see farther into the meaning and beauty of the universe, and appropriate them more largely and fully. All events and all changes, all kinships and possessions, will have more to say to him, and will more variously and profoundly minister to his culture and to his welfare. And it is precisely this great blessing which the Lord Jesus offers us. He offers us life of the highest quality, in the richest abundance. He offers us "the power of an endless life." If we truly love and serve Him, He gives us a life that is spiritual, eternal, divine—a life like his own, and one with his own.

Let us remember, then, what that life did in and for Him. He was poor, destitute even : and yet all things were his. He gently detached Himself from the common kinships of life ; and yet all men were his. All the events of history, all the wonders of nature, all the changes of life, all the occupations and doings of men—He compelled all these to minister to his intellectual and to his spiritual life, and to subserve not his own culture and welfare alone, but also the culture and welfare of the entire world. The divine life that was in Him enabled Him to

appropriate the teaching, the beauty, and the inmost value of whatever met his eye, from the flowers of the field and the ways of the streets to the purple heights of mountains and the unfathomable abysses of the human soul.

Might not He, then, who could give the power of his own life to men, securely promise that whatever they might leave or lose in order to lay hold on this life should be returned to them a hundred-fold? Was there not *in this life* all that made kinships and possessions valuable or dear to them? Did it not give them the power to make whom and what they would their own? And will it not confer a similar power, and an equal reward, on us? If the mind that was in Christ be in us, are not all things ours by the self-same right by which they were his? and have we not the power to make all that is really good and enduring in them our own?

Let us, then, prize and pursue that which is inward rather than that which is outward, that which is spiritual rather than that which is carnal, that which is eternal rather than that which is temporal. The kingdom of God is within us. All that is really valuable and enduring is within us. Accident may, death will, strip us of all else. We can take nothing out of the world except the life we have developed, the character we have formed. And even while we are in the world, our wealth, our well-being, our enjoyment even, depend not on what we can grasp and gain, but on our power to seize and to profit by the teaching, the beauty, the real hidden worth of all that is around us. With this power, and grace to use it, the very poorest of us may be the richest of men.

Strangely as this truth may sound, it is nevertheless familiar to us even to triteness. The only wonder is that we should ever be perplexed by it, meet it where we may. When one of our own poets sings,—

“How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will ;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill.
This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall ;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all,”

we do not simply admire the ring of his verse; we feel that he has given fine expression to a simple yet noble truth. And yet those closing lines,—

“*Lord of himself, though not of lands,*
And having nothing, yet hath all,”

are but a paraphrase of Christ's great promise; they do but put into another form the very truth He taught: viz. that if the true life, the eternal life, be in us, in our utmost poverty we may have all things and abound, receiving the hundred-fold now, in this present time.

II.—WITH PERSECUTIONS.

THE effect which any great truth produces on our minds depends in large measure, not only on the form into which it is thrown, but also on the place in which we meet with it. If it stand in a connection of thought plainly congruous with itself, we are prepared for it; it presents little difficulty, excites no surprise. But if it suddenly leap out upon us from another level of thought, if we meet it where we had

not looked for it, it not only takes us by surprise, but, presenting itself so unexpectedly and abruptly, it is apt to seem even more difficult than it really is.

Thus, for example, when we read in the Gospel that, for all we leave or lose for Christ's sake, and that we may be true to the principles we have learned from Him, we shall receive a hundred-fold in this present life, most of us are at first taken by surprise; we are perplexed by a statement which hardly seems to accord with the commonest facts of human experience. Yet when we meet with this same truth in certain of our own poets, and in connections of thought which have prepared us to take, and to appreciate, their meaning, we are neither surprised by it nor perplexed. When they tell us that he, who serveth not another's will, whose only armour is his honest thought, while simple truth is his utmost skill, is not only set free from the servile bands of hope to rise or fear to fall, but is also—

“Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all,”

we do not stagger at their doctrine; we rather confess that they have worthily expressed an obvious and accepted truth. Yet the truth they teach is the very truth Christ taught: viz. that to be true to our convictions at all risks and all costs is great gain; that to do right in scorn of consequence is the way to possess ourselves of all that makes life valuable to us; that for whatever we sacrifice for righteousness' sake we receive a hundred-fold even in this present time.

So, again, I suppose no man ever came on these

two words, "with persecutions," without receiving a mental jolt or shock. When we are perusing the long list of gifts and treasures with which Christ promises to reward as many as endure losses and make sacrifices for the sake of truth and righteousness—as houses and lands, brethren and sisters, father and mother, wife and children—it surprises and perplexes us to find "persecutions" in the list. Are persecutions, then, to be reckoned among our treasures? Are we to account the very trials and losses we endure in the service of Christ as part of the reward which He confers on us for serving Him? And yet, when we encounter the very same truth in other forms and other connections of thought, it does not perplex or distress us. When the most musical of living poets exhorts us to follow truth at all hazards; when he affirms that whatever we suffer and lose in this pursuit will contribute to form in us a high and noble character; when he bids us stretch through the years a hand "to catch the far-off interest" of our tears, and assures us that, if we are true to love and duty, we shall find in loss itself "a gain to match," we admit the truth of his thought as well as admire the beauty of the form in which he has expressed it. Yet, after all, what has he taught us save that which Christ taught? and why should the truth, except for its unexpectedness, sound so difficult and forbidding from the lips of our Lord, and yet be so easy and welcome from the lips of a poet who learned it from Him?

The fact is that this phrase, "with persecutions," should present no difficulty to any reflective reader of the New Testament. It is but an abrupt and

condensed expression of a principle which pervades the whole structure of the Christian Scriptures, a principle so frequently iterated and reiterated by our Lord and his Apostles, that it must be reckoned among the very rudiments of the Faith. I need not quote many passages in proof of this assertion, since a few will serve to suggest many more.

Among the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, then, we find this : "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake ;" and, again, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." St. James echoes the teaching of his Master and ours, his Brother and ours, when he writes, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials," and pronounces him blessed "that endureth trial," since, when he is proved by trial and approved, "he shall receive the crown of life." St. Peter echoes it when he writes, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye ;" and St. Paul when he bids us "rejoice in tribulation also," and invites us, by his own example, to "count all things but loss that we may win Christ and be found in him."

"With persecutions," therefore, does not stand alone : it is but a brief and abrupt expression of a pervading principle, of one of the first principles, of the Faith. What that principle implies, and how it may be vindicated and brought home to us, we shall discover if we examine with care any one of the passages I have just cited. Let us take "the beatitude," and ask Christ to be his own interpreter.

In the Beatitudes, then, our Lord, like other great teachers, raises and answers the question, "What is man's chief end, or good?" Like the philosophers of Greece, too, He places our chief good, not in that which is outward, but in that which is inward; not in anything that a man has or can get, but in what a man *is*—in the qualities and dispositions of the soul. The first element of blessedness, He says, is *poverty of spirit*, an inward sense of unworthiness and emptiness, which prompts us to expect nothing from ourselves, but to look for all from Heaven. But when we are thus freed from the self-dependence and self-conceit which would hinder the incoming of Divine truth and grace, we are not to be content with that whereunto we have attained; we are to *mourn* over this inward emptiness, to be sorry and ashamed that we have fallen so low and have lost so much. If we are thus conscious that we are unable to satisfy the vast desires of the soul, and are sincerely mourning over our incapacity and emptiness, we shall be of a *meek*, teachable, and receptive spirit. Nay, more, we shall be devoured with an intense craving, a *hunger and thirst for righteousness*, a sacred inextinguishable longing to become right in our relations to God and man. As this craving is met, we shall grow *merciful*—gentle and compassionate—in our judgment of our neighbours, making the most generous allowance for the emptiness and weakness from which we ourselves are only being delivered by the grace of God. This kindly consideration for others will react on the heart that feels it, making it *pure*, and set it on *making peace*, on bringing into our neighbours'

hearts the peace with God and man of which we have been permitted to taste.

Now if we thus connect the beatitudes pronounced on the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, we see that our Lord is laying down the lines of a very high and noble character ; and that He places our chief good, our blessedness, in attaining the several virtues and graces of which He speaks. But what is any grace or virtue worth *until it is tried*, and has stood the trial ? An untried grace, what Milton calls "a cloistered and unbreathed virtue," any quality or excellence of character which has not been put to the test, is one of which we ourselves can never feel sure. It is by use and exercise, by enduring hardship and encountering trial, that we at once assure ourselves that any virtue or grace has become ours, that we give the world assurance of it, and that this virtue or grace is trained, developed, brought to perfection. What wonder, then, that our Lord crowns the beatitudes He had pronounced on the distinctive virtues and graces of the Christian character with a blessing on the trials by which they are put to the proof, by which they are breathed, exercised, confirmed ? The list would have been incomplete without this. Our gifts and blessings would have lacked the last perfecting touch had not the trials by which they are tested and approved been included among them. "With persecutions," is a necessary and noble part of our reward as servants of righteousness, since it is by these tribulations that the various elements of the Christian

character are fused and welded into a compact impregnable unity. What do *we* think of a man who will risk nothing, and sacrifice nothing, for his principles, and that a noble and righteous character may be unfolded within him? And why should *Christ* think better of him than we do? No man can account himself faithful and true until he has been tried. The world calls no man faithful and true until he has been tried, and has borne the trial well. And, therefore, the "persecutions" which try us, which put our principles and convictions to the proof, may be justly reckoned among our chief blessings.

The fact is that, whereas we too often account a man blessed if he is exempted from trials, our Lord and his Apostles account him blessed only when he can meet the most searching trials and surmount them. They find "a man's chief good and market of his time," not in the number and variety of the enjoyments he can secure, but in the formation of a high and noble character. And whom does even the world itself esteem to be men of noble character save those who have achieved great and difficult tasks, who have braved much and sacrificed much for the sake of some great cause, for the defence and furtherance of some neglected truth, who have endured hardship and suffering, defeat and misery, with an unbroken and dauntless spirit? *Hence*, because of its bearing on character, which is a man's chief possession both in this world and in that which is to come, Christ and his servants have ever taught men to value the trials and sufferings of this present life, to find joy in them because they find good in them.

St. James, for example, bids us "count it all joy when we fall into divers trials ;" but why ? "Because the trying of our faith worketh patience," and if patience be allowed its perfect work in us, we shall become perfect and complete, lacking nothing. With him too, therefore, trial is good, because it forms character and helps to bring it to perfection. St. Paul, again, bids us "rejoice in tribulation ;" but why ? Because "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hopefulness." So that he, like Christ, like James, thinks trial good for us because it helps to form a noble and complete character in us.

Now the Christian ideal of human life may not be agreeable to us ; but we must not therefore deny that it is the Christian ideal, nor wonder that "persecutions" are counted among the blessings of a good man by those who place this ideal before us. We may shrink from it ; in our undue love of ease and success and pleasure, we may decline to make any resolute stand, or to risk any grave loss, for the sake of truth, principle, duty ; but we must not, for we cannot honestly, deny that the Christian ideal of character is one which the world has always reverenced and admired ; we must not and cannot deny that the only men whom we ourselves recognize as truly great are those who have lost or risked much in order that they might bear witness to neglected or unpopular truths, or that they might serve some good cause against which the prejudices or interests or passions of their neighbours were enlisted ; in short, men "of an incorrigible and *losing* honesty." In art, in politics, in civil strife, in war, as well as in

the Church and in our homes, the men and women whose fame is purest and highest are precisely those who have been the champions of what seemed a losing cause, who have sacrificed their personal interests and ease to the public interest and welfare, who have borne great sufferings with meekness and great losses and defeats with courage, who have loved those who had done little to deserve their love, who have given up all else that they held dear to succour and save the lost, the outcast, the wronged, the miserable, the vile. And can any man complain that Christ calls him, too, *to be great?* to tread the very path which those whom he most admires took before him, and by taking which they won his admiration? If not, let no man complain that among the gifts guaranteed to him by the word of Christ are the losses and tribulations by the faithful endurance of which they were made great.

But it may be thought that "persecutions," at least in the original sense of the word, are no longer among the trials to which men expose themselves by loyalty to the truths and commandments of Christ. Even if they are not, still "persecutions" were only a form which the trials of those who followed Him in darker times assumed; the forms which our trials take may be quite as keen and penetrating. But is it true that those who follow Christ honestly and resolutely are exempt from "persecutions" even now? I doubt it. No man, indeed, or at least no man in England can now be adjudged to the prison or the axe, to the halter or the stake, simply because he believes in Christ; no, not even though he should think out his creed for himself. But to be exposed

to the hatred, the suspicion, the contempt of our fellows is the very sting of persecution. And of those who faithfully follow Christ there are not many who escape this. To call and profess ourselves Christians may provoke nothing more or worse than a smile and a gibe even from those who are most dominated by the law and spirit of this present world. But if any man act out his confession, if he carry Christian principles into his trade or profession, if he shew a regard for the claims and interests of his neighbours even when they clash with his own ; if he insist on getting honest work and paying fair wages ; if he will not give in to sharp measures and lying labels, or the customary adulteration of goods by the intermixture of baser matters ; if he will tell the truth even when it tells against him ; if, in brief, he will be scrupulously upright, generous, considerate, will he suffer no loss and awaken no hostility ? Will those with whom he has business relations utter no complaint, think no scorn, take no advantage of him ? Impossible ! Even now no man can be true to Christ, no man can act on Christian principles even in the world which calls itself Christian, without having to pay for it, without exciting much suspicion and resentment and contempt. Even those who profit by his "weakness" will despise him for it. But there is this great comfort for us, if we thus expose ourselves to the contempt and hostility of the world : Christ regards, and we may regard, these "persecutions" as benedictions. They are the trials which put our principles to the proof ; and, by proving, strengthen and confirm them. If they are endured with patience and courage and good-humour, they

help to form in us that pure and lofty ideal of character which Christ at once commended, exemplified, and demanded. We are not to be pitied for them, therefore ; but rather to be congratulated on them. Because they help to make us perfect, they are part of the “ hundred-fold ” with which our Lord has promised to reward us even in this present time.

The persecutions of primitive times came at least as much from *the Church*—*i.e.* the Jewish Church—as from the world. Does the Church still persecute those who follow Christ ? If we consider how the case stands here in England, we can hardly deny it. Do those who claim in a special sense to be Churchmen never look down with contempt and dislike on their Nonconformist neighbours ? Do they never suspect their motives, their sincerity, or even their very right to the Christian name ? And the Nonconformists in their turn, do they entertain no suspicion of Churchmen, no ill-will toward them, no resentment of the superiority they assume ? Do they feel no surprise when they find certain members of the Church to be as simple, as sincere, as devout as themselves ? Do they never suspect its worship of formality, or hint that its ministers serve for hire, not for love ? But if suspicion, dislike, hostility, be the very sting of persecution, can we say that in the Christian Church in England there is no persecution, whether its members conform or nonconform ?

If, again, any man think himself into a conviction at variance with the popular creed, he will find many staunch friends to stand by him, no doubt ; but will he incur no suspicion, no dislike, no unjust and tyrannous rebuke even from the authorities of the

Church and from those who take a law from their lips? But suspicion and dislike are of the very essence of persecution; and so long as any man suffers, save from the weight of argument, for religious opinions honestly and thoughtfully framed, we cannot say that persecution has ceased even in the very Church itself. But to all who suffer from the tyranny of the Church we may say, "Be of good courage. Your trials are putting you to the proof, and shewing of what stuff you are made. To suffer, to make sacrifices, for a principle is the way both to get that principle more deeply wrought into your own soul, and to win acceptance for it at last even from those who now oppose it. Such 'persecutions' are blessings, if they be patiently endured. They are all in 'the hundred-fold' which Christ promised you, and which you are even now already beginning to receive."

Finally, as the years pass, and our relations with men multiply, and we look more searchingly behind the fair outsides of life, if our faith grows more settled and calm, trials are apt to accumulate upon us. Of those whom we love some pass away from us, and some fall into lingering sicknesses; some disappoint the fond hopes we had cherished of them, and others suffer much that is good and admirable in them to be blighted by a secret vice, or propensity, which threatens to be their ruin: cares of business and domestic cares throng in upon us; men who have claims on us push their claims vehemently and offensively; our health declines, perhaps, or we grow conscious that the spring and elasticity of earlier days is gone, and that all tasks are harder to us, and all burdens

heavier to be borne. There are times when one feels as though his heart were turned into a kind of hospital, or asylum, with a sick-bed for this neighbour, and another for that, until the whole heart is taken up with cares and solicitudes, and the strain grows well-nigh intolerable. If this be our experience—as at some time it is the experience of most kindly and Christian men—yet why should we complain? This, like every other trial, is Christ's gift to us; it is part of the reward He bestows on them that are his. We have served Him in easier tasks; and now He honours us by asking us to serve Him in a task that is harder. We have met the common tests; and now He applies a still severer test, that, being tried to the full, we may also be blessed to the full. When we thank Him for having called us into his service, and say that for aught we have done for Him we will ask for no reward save that we may serve Him still, and better,—do we mean what we say? Very well, then; in giving us harder tasks and trials more severe and searching, He is but taking us at our word, and giving us the very reward we have asked. Before we complain that life grows heavier to us, and that so many and such exorbitant demands are made on us, let us remember Him who had room in his heart for every man that breathed, and grace for as many as were sick, and strength for as many as were weak, and comfort for all who mourned. Do we not crave and pray to be like Him? And how can we become like Him who learned obedience and was made perfect by the things which He suffered, unless we partake his sufferings for others, unless we bear

our trials, whatever they may be, with a patient and a cheerful heart?

We do not escape our trials by grieving over them; but we may subdue and conquer them by taking them as Christ's gifts to us, as tests of our strength and obedience, and tests designed not simply to shew what manner of spirit we are of, but also to raise and invigorate our spirits by exercising them. It is easy to be cheerful in fine weather and when all things go to our mind; but give me the man who can be cheerful in foul weather and when all things seem to go against him. He is a true man, a man indeed; that is to say, he is a true follower of "the best Man who e'er wore earth about Him."

A clear alternative is before us, therefore. We cannot evade the inevitable burdens and sorrows of life; but we may either sink under them, or rise through and above them. We may take them as wrongs, as undeserved intolerable calamities, and resent them; or we may say of every trial which comes to us, "This is the gift of Christ. Because it is one of my trials, it is also one of my treasures. It comes both to put me to the proof, and to make me better than I am. I must play the man, therefore. I must shew that I am equal to all things, through Christ who strengthens me."

It is recorded that, about a hundred years ago, there occurred in America a day so gloomy and overcast that it is still known as "*the dark day*," the darkest for a hundred years. The legislature of Connecticut was in session, and its members were so stricken with terror by the awful and unaccountable

gloom that many of them supposed the day of judgment was at hand, and proposed that the session should break up. But an old Puritan (Davenport, of Stamford) stood up in the darkness and wild confusion, and said that, if the last day *had* come, he wished to be found in his place, doing his duty, and quietly moved that the candles be lit, and the House proceed with the business in hand. We cannot but admire a man of so constant and brave a spirit. Let us imitate him, then, for he breathed the very spirit of Christ; and whatever dark day or "day of judgment" may come to us, let us set ourselves steadfastly to do the duty and to bear the burden of the time; for so our heaviest trials, since they will do most to strengthen, establish, and ennable our character, will prove to be our choicest and most enduring blessings.

III.—IN THE REGENERATION.

As there are tarns in the mountains, and those not always the largest, so deep that their bottom has never been sounded, so there are passages in the Bible, and these not always the longest, whose depths we can never exhaust. Unfathomable scriptures, incomprehensible scriptures, we may well call them; and that not merely because they present great difficulties, but mainly because they are so full and hold so much. Such a scripture is the passage before us. We have already glanced at the *hundred-fold* reward which it promises, now in this time, to as many as follow Christ at all risks and all costs; and of the "*with persecutions*" by which that reward is conditioned, and of which it forms part; and we

now pass on to words, "*in the regeneration*," which yield a theme for meditation so vast, so suggestive, so quick with the inspirations of hope, that we cannot expect to sound its depths. Let us at least stoop once more, as we pass by, and sip of its living water.

And, first of all, what do the words mean? What is that which is here called "*the regeneration*"?

The Regeneration is the name of an age, an epoch; and of an age which is to immediately succeed that in which we now live. When we try to conceive of duration, limited and endless duration, we commonly divide it into time and eternity—a very neat, logical, and exhaustive division. And yet this conception, as commonly held, is utterly misleading. If we analyse it, we find that most persons have in their minds the image of a straight line, which may be indefinitely extended at either end; the central part they call "time;" the left-hand extension of it they call "the past eternity," and the right-hand extension of it "the eternity to come." Thus they both detach time from eternity, and cut eternity itself in two, pronouncing that which is endless to have ends. A far truer conception would be to imagine eternity as a vast circle, and time as a shifting point included within it, surrounded on all sides by an unbroken circumference; always remembering, however, that from this moving point of time influences may emanate which, for us at least, will tinge and colour the whole circle of eternity.

Our ordinary conception, whether of time or of eternity, is unscriptural, as well as illogical. For the Scriptures teach us, first, that time, so far from being

an unbroken line, is broken into epochs, or ages, in each one of which some counsel of the Divine Will is wrought out; thus, for example, it speaks of "ages that are past" and of "ages to come;" nay, even of "the age of ages," *i.e.* of the one great age which includes all others, of the immense period in which the will of God concerning man as he is at present conditioned will be revealed and accomplished. And, again, whereas we think of eternity as commencing when we die, or at furthest when the present order of the world shall terminate, the Scriptures speak of eternity as both before and beyond all ages, as encircling and interpenetrating them all; they teach us that there are ages, or epochs of time, or dispensations of Divine providence and grace, which will only commence after the present order of this world shall have been brought to an end.

With special emphasis the New Testament reveals an age beyond the present age, the next in succession to this, in which the life of man will be lifted to a higher power, tried and tested by a new discipline; an age in which all things shall be made new, in which Christ shall come in his glorified body as He once came in the body of his humiliation, and take to Himself his great power and reign on the earth; an age previous to that eternal age in which Christ, having brought all enemies to his feet, shall deliver the kingdom to the Father, in order that God may be all in all. This age is variously described as that of the new heaven and the new earth, as "the restitution of all things," as "the resurrection," and as "the regeneration."

And of all the names given it in Holy Writ,

perhaps the most beautiful and expressive is the Regeneration : for this name implies a cosmical renewal, a re-generation of the universe, a re-creation of all things in heaven and in earth. It implies, not simply that all things will be restored to their pristine beauty and perfection, but that a new and higher *spirit* will be infused into them, that a diviner energy will animate and pervade them all ; in short, it implies that a change will pass on the human race and on the whole universe similar, but superior, to that which passes on us now when we are renewed in the spirit of our minds, when we are born again, born from above. In the regeneration of individual men we have our best aid to an intelligent apprehension of what is meant by *the* Regeneration, the regeneration of the universe.

What, then, is the change which passes on us, personally, when we are regenerated, when we become new creatures in Christ Jesus ? That change, briefly expressed, amounts to this—that by the influence of the Spirit of all grace that which is spiritual in us is raised to its due and lawful supremacy over all which is merely carnal and temporal in us. We are so quickened that our old love of self-indulgence, our former lusts for pleasure and gain, our deference to the world and the world's law, if they do not wholly pass away, are nevertheless subordinated to our craving for spiritual knowledge, power, gifts. If we are truly regenerate, we care more for the grace of God than for the favour of men ; we lay hold on eternal life and relax our grasp on the mere life of the senses. Christ becomes our ideal of perfect manhood, and we try to become

men in Him. Success in business, in art, in politics, ease and prosperity in any of our earthly relations, no longer stands first with us. Our chief endeavour is to become good, wise, kind, by faithfully following the example of Christ, and by possessing ourselves of the spirit which animated Him. We are resolved and prepared to sacrifice any interest, any habit, any affection even, which would impair our fidelity to the principles we have learned from Him. We welcome any loss or suffering by which we are disciplined in righteousness and charity. If there is anything which we must let go in order to retain our hope of becoming perfect men in Him, we let it go, however reluctantly and sadly. All this is included in giving the supremacy to that which is spiritual in our nature ; all this, therefore, is included in the ideal which the regenerate set before them, and toward which they are always striving, however imperfectly they attain it.

Now even *this* new birth involves a new creation. To the regenerate man there is granted a new heaven and a new earth even in this present time. Not, indeed, that any physical change passes on the physical universe, making it a different thing for him to what it is for the unregenerate ; but that his relation to it is changed, his standard of judgment, his sense of its meaning, his measure and estimate of its worth. For him the universe is no longer a vast complex of mysterious forces working out into varied but orderly results ; it is also a revelation of the character and will of God, his Father. For him man's life is no longer only the long result of climatic and social influences modified by the bias and tem-

perament he inherits from his forefathers ; it is instinct with a tender gracious Providence which so portions out his lot as to secure his true and ultimate welfare. As he studies the past, what most attracts and impresses him is no longer the wars of kings, nor the triumphs of art, nor even the social and political changes by which men have won their way to an ordered freedom, or are still pressing on toward it ; not these things in themselves and for their own sake attract him most, but the signs he discovers in them that God is conducting the education and development of the world, leading it on to that final goal of good which lies beyond the range of mortal vision. As he looks around him, he, who was once engaged by the motion, splendour, and variety of the world, and eagerly competed with his fellows for the prizes of their ambition, now sees an infinite worth in much which they still despise, and pursues an aim too high and distant for them so much as to perceive. In short, throughout the whole range of human experience and thought, that which is invisible, moral, spiritual, lays its spell upon him ; that which he most cherishes and esteems is represented to him by such words as virtue, duty, faith, love, religion. Are not all things *new* to such a one as this ? Does he not walk beneath a new heaven and on a new earth, when all that heaven and earth contain are so differently adjusted and related to his spirit ?

Well, this process of regeneration, with which happily so many of us are familiar, will help us to conceive the main features of the coming age, to

picture to ourselves the kind of life which will obtain in the Regeneration.

The first and most natural conception to which it conducts us is, that this happy spiritualizing change, which has only been begun in us here, will there be completed, carried on to its perfection. We shall become *new men*—new, and yet the same. All that now impedes the development of a high and noble character in us, whether it reside in our inward nature or our outward conditions, will be removed. This mortal will put on immortality, this corruptible incorruption. The “natural body,” which in so many and subtle ways hampers the motion and growth of the soul, will be exchanged for “the spiritual body;” for a body, that is, sweetly and harmoniously tempered to the faculties and energies, the virtues and graces, of the spirit which inhabits it, a body exquisitely attuned to spiritual harmonies and visions of heavenly beauty, a body whose organs will be as receptive and pliant to all the perceptions, influences, motions of faith, hope, charity, as the eye now is to the impact of light or the ear to the concord of sweet sounds. And so also the hard and hindering conditions amid which we live—the folly, the vanity, the greed, the aversion to things spiritual, the passionate and exhausting pursuit of gain, position, power, enjoyment, which, so long as they are exhibited by our neighbours, are constant sources of temptation to us, and perpetually drag us down from any height of character we have painfully attained—all these will pass away; they will be exchanged for the fellowship of kindred minds, for the society of “spiritual” intelligences, for the companionship and sympathy and

aid of the good, the wise, the pure. In the new heaven and the new earth righteousness is to dwell; and hence all that now tempts and saddens and degrades us will cease any more to vex and afflict us. No noble thought, no pure emotion will then be suppressed for lack of quick and instant sympathy; no heroic task, no labour of devotion, of thought, of service and self-sacrifice will be resigned for want whether of inward power or of outward furtherance. All our conditions, often so unfavourable here and now to spiritual growth and excellence, will there be propitious to the development of that which is highest in us and best. And is not this a prospect to fire the soul? to kindle in it the fervours of a holy ambition, an unconquerable hope? To possess a body that shall no longer clog and impede the spirit, but help and further it; and to dwell in conditions favourable to the pursuit of wisdom, goodness, perfection—does not this include all that we most deeply crave?

But even yet the prospect is not complete. For as to the regenerate man old things pass away, and all things become new by being newly related and adjusted to him; so, in the Regeneration, we are promised a new heaven and a new earth. Then, so at least the prophets both of the Old and the New Testaments assure us, the regeneration, commenced in the spirits of men, is to spread and extend to the physical universe, to infuse a new force and life and spirit into it; so that in very deed all things shall become new, and the whole creation shall be redeemed from its subjection to vanity and corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Science standing wrapt in perplexity and astonishment before the mysteries of the origin of matter, of force, of life, of thought; and Philosophy standing no less perplexed and astonished before the mysteries of pain, destruction, death, and the origin and function of evil, have this for their last word for us: that, in all probability, the visible universe is only a manifestation in time and space, "a manifold phenomenon" of the *unseen* universe; that within and behind all that we see there lies a spiritual universe in which are hidden the causes of this great natural scheme and order amid which we live; that by "the dissipation of energy" it is very certain that this physical universe must sooner or later come to an end, and that, when it does come to an end, the forces and energies which compose and sustain it will be found to have been reabsorbed by the unseen spiritual universe from which it sprang. That is to say, Science and Philosophy are at last tending to the conclusion which Christ announced eighteen centuries ago, viz. that the origin of the material universe is purely spiritual; that all which is merely or grossly material will one day pass away; and that then there will come "the regeneration," some more spiritual and perfect manifestation of the Creative energy, in which there will be none of the defects and hindrances that inhere in all that is physical and temporal. In short, the invisible will shine through the visible, the eternal through the temporal, the real through the phenomenal. But all this, which we find it so hard to think out and express, and which Science and Philosophy have taken so long to reach and formulate, St. John beheld in vision, and has ex-

pressed for us in words as simple as they are stately and impressive: "*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. . . . And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. . . . And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away.*"

We gain a second suggestion as to the kind of life we may look for in the Regeneration, a suggestion of its infinite *variety*, if we glance at some other words of this great promise. "*Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" The first and happiest thought which occurs to any reflective reader of this verse is that in the coming age we shall be under the immediate rule of the Son of Man. By the very title He assumes—Son of Man—our Lord reminds us of what He was and did when He came to dwell among us in great humility; how pure He was, yet how tender; how righteous, and yet how kind. And surely it should fill us with pleasure and hope to learn that, in the Regeneration, we are to see Him whom we have so often longed to see, and to see this gentle righteous Man seated on the throne of the universe; that we are to be under the sway of his sceptre and his spirit. Fallen and sinful as the world is, I verily believe that, if it had to elect a universal King to-day, it would

elect the man Christ Jesus, finding no rival, no peer, to Him even in those who stand highest above their fellows. It were much to be visibly ruled by Him here and now; to feel that our whole life, social, commercial, political, were governed and controlled by Him, and not only our religious life—that He sat on the throne of the world as well as on the throne of our hearts. But what must it be, what of high and noble blessedness is involved in the mere thought of our being subjects of the risen and glorified Son of Man *in the regeneration*, when the renewal of our spirits shall be perfected, when they shall no longer be thwarted and oppressed by this mortal frame, with its weaknesses and biasses toward evil, and when all our fellow-subjects shall be at least as high in spiritual character and attainment as ourselves! We might well sigh impatiently for the coming of that day, if God had not taught us that we can only reach and enjoy it as we pass with patience and fidelity through the days which lead from this to that.

The reign of the Son of Man will give that unity to our coming life without which progress is impossible; but for progress, for growth, we need variety as well as unity; and the variety of our coming life is indicated by the promise made to the Twelve that, in the Regeneration, they should be kings with Christ, kings under Christ, judging and ruling the twelve tribes of the true Israel. Of course this language is figurative, and its details must not be pressed too far. But from all we know of Peter and James, John and Paul, and the rest of “the glorious company,” we should at least admit that

they excel the princes and kings of the earth who now rule over us, and that it would be well for us to live in an empire the several provinces of which were ruled by them. And even if we cannot positively affirm that the provinces of the coming spiritual kingdom will be dominated by the spirits of these twelve elect men, and that we shall be permitted to pass from province to province, and to learn what each of these ruling spirits can teach us, we may surely infer from the promise of Christ that in his kingdom an immense variety of spiritual forces and influences will be employed, of all of which we may take the benefit; that men of every kind of spiritual character and in every stage of spiritual development will find in it that which exactly ministers to their condition, their tastes, their needs; so that for each and for all there shall be enough and to spare. Nothing less than this, but much more, is implied in the promise that we shall all be under one King, and shall yet enjoy the ministry of many kings; that while Christ rules over all, and his spirit dominates all, He will also rule through the men who of all men are most venerable to us and most dear.

So far as this we go, but no farther; but is not this far enough? Does not this prospect content us? Is it not enough, if only we hold it stedfastly before our minds, to raise us above the temptations and allurements of the flesh, the world, and the devil? Dare we risk this great and noble inheritance in order to secure the gratification of a moment, to pander to that which is lowest in us and worst?

We may risk, we may even lose it; for only the regenerate can hope to share in the blessedness of the Regeneration. The work of renewal must be begun now, if it is to be completed then. If any of us should pass out of this present age unrenewed in the spirit of our minds, it is impossible to foresee exactly what will befall us in "the age to come," and still less in "the age of the ages." But the very best we can ever hope for is that, as we have failed to profit by the discipline of this age, painful and severe as it often is, we shall be exposed to a still severer discipline in the age to come, and, meantime, must inevitably lose the blessedness and glory of the Regeneration. There can be no clear hope for any man until by some means, through some discipline, he has been taught to put that which is spiritual in him first, and to value it most. We should not suffer half we do suffer even here, were we to yield to the gentler discipline of the Divine grace, and to let the Spirit make us spiritual men. What we may have to suffer in the unknown future, under what stern discipline we may be brought, if when we leave this world we are still carnal in our purposes and motives and aims, it is not for us to conjecture, and God forbid that we should ever know. It is our duty, rather, to dwell on the dignity and blessedness of those who walk after the Spirit, who honestly love truth and goodness and serviceableness above all the gauds of time both in this age and in the next, and thus to rouse ourselves to lay hold upon eternal life; that so, when the Son of Man shall sit down in the throne of his glory, we may be glorified together with Him.