

Veraysheeth Or

In the Beginning

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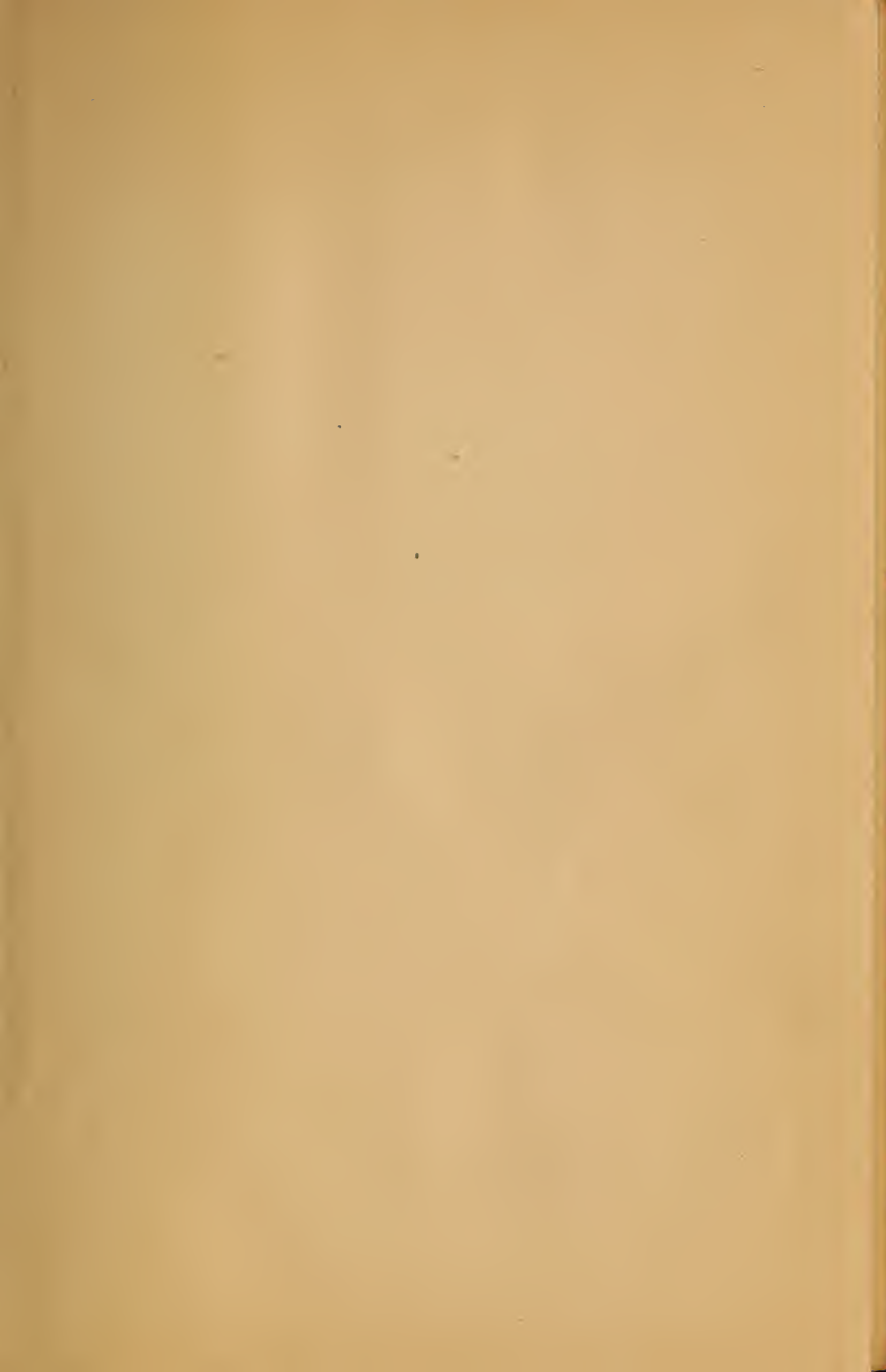


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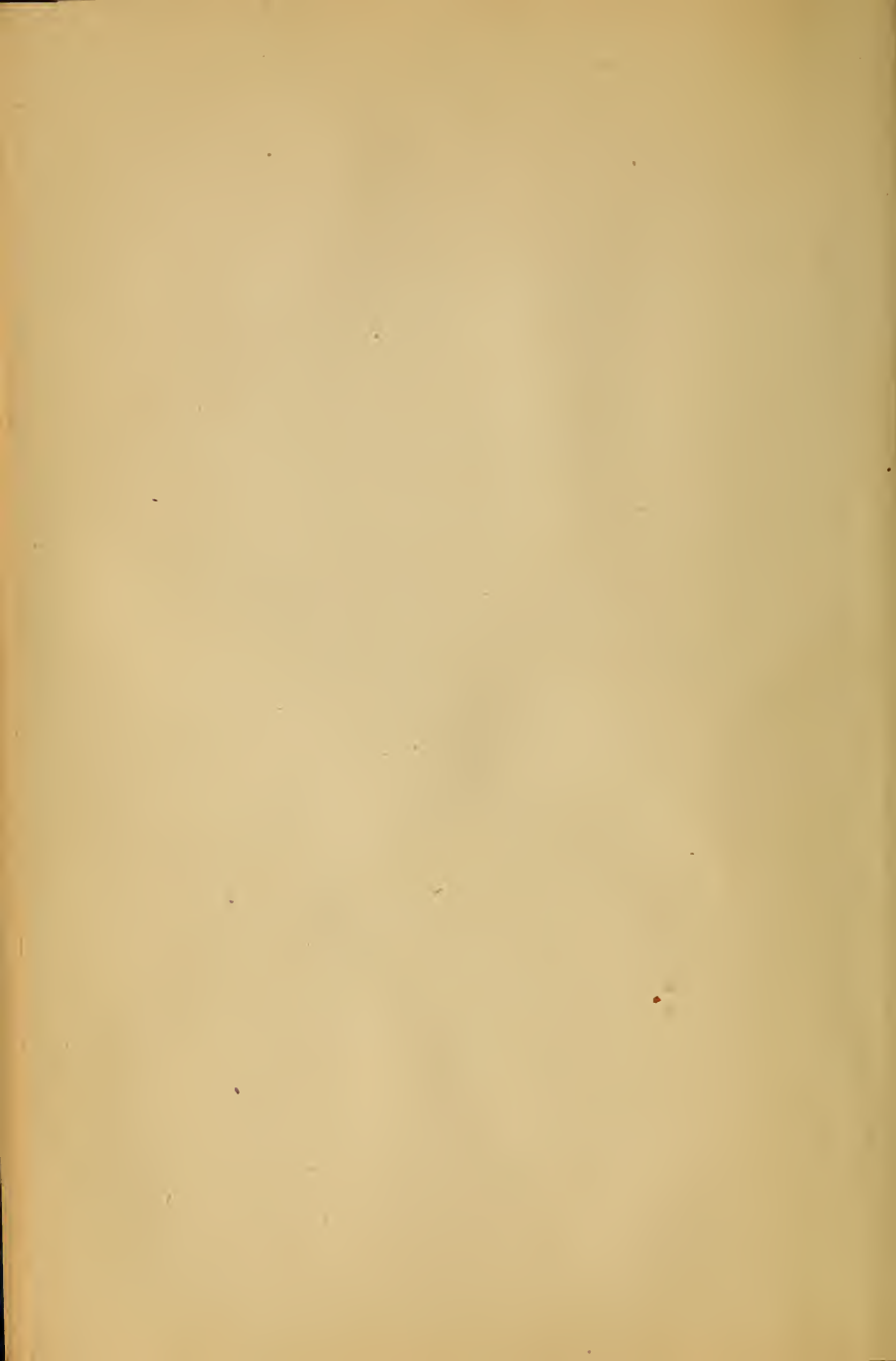
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Beraysheeth, or In the Beginning



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“Praise the Lord”

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“ God is Love and Nothing Else.”

“BERAYSHEETH,” or “IN THE BEGINNING.”

PREFACE.

All who truly preach the Gospel by pen or tongue are **inspired**, in a very important sense. I do not mean to compare that inspiration with that of “Apostles” or “Prophets”—inspired to give us an **infallible** code of belief and practice. “Comparisons are odious,” we say, in current speech, and the aphorism has much that is true in it. Not “comparing” then, at all, but simply **affirming**, I repeat that all true preaching is an “Inspiration of God.”

If any thing I have ever written or spoken, on holy themes, was “inspired,” this volume bears that stamp more unmistakably than any other I have penned. It was written with “only a step,” as I thought, between me and “the other world.” All concede, that at such a solemn time, man’s utterances have peculiar weight. Whatever then of authority this book may claim on that account, I want it to have; not for the glorification of the “Earthen vessel” but for the “treasure’s” sake of precious truth, “committed” to so insignificant a medium, between God and the Soul. The circumstances were these: I had for years been troubled with a cancer on my left cheek, which, about two years before this writing, had become developed into a running sore, slowly but surely taking its deadly course. With the diabolical delusion, attached to all deadly disease, I had been hoping and trusting that it would not go on to a fatal termination. But in the autumn

of 1897 these hopes had vanished. The sore had assumed a malignant form, and I was face to face with an awful fact, that I could no longer trifle with. I came to Florida to meet the inevitable termination of that fell scourge, as I, and my family and friends, supposed. In this sore strait I turned to the work (long delayed, and which the Holy Spirit had often gently reproved me for neglecting) of putting on record what the Good Lord had been specially teaching me for years; so that it might "be made known to the generations following." I began with almost feverish haste, fearing that I had neglected it so long, that the end of earthly existence might find an incompleated work. I sat down to write November 4, 1897: and writing continuously and perseveringly, the task was finished December 28th, or in less than two months. Now for the remarkable fact. **As soon as I began the work, my face began to heal. When I had finished, my face was well and has been ever since.**

I did not ask the Lord to heal me, in all that time, I only asked for life to be lengthened till the work was done. But, as ever, "exceeding abundantly, above what I asked, or thought" the good Lord gave me. I praise Him for it. The healing was from Him in such a way as to make it unmistakable. Wherever this book shall go, I want this brief narrative to go with it, if peradventure my readers may learn a valuable lesson, viz.: that there are certain moral conditions, the violation of which, **prevents the loving Lord from "stretching forth His hand to heal."** When those conditions are fulfilled, the healing touch follows. **I neglected, for long, a known duty.** That gave the Devil ("author and finisher" of unbelief, as certainly as Jesus is that of "Faith") power over me, to afflict;

and the matter would have been **rushed** to a fatal termination, had I held on in the course of disobedience. But, by the Lord's Grace, I turned, in time to baffle him and give the Blessed Healer a chance to do, what **He** always wanted to do, for me, as He did for the afflicted when he tabernacled in flesh, viz.: "**healed all who were oppressed of the Devil.**" O that all men knew that "He is the **same**, yesterday, today and forever," "He changes not." His name, "Jehovah Rophi," is for all time.

I think it right, in this connection, to mention, that my wife **unknown to me**, had put my sad case (just at the time I had "repented" and begun neglected work) before John Alexander Dowie—General Overseer of the "Christian Catholic Church"—for prayer that I might be healed. I have no doubt that prayer was answered. I have not been able to compare dates, accurately, but that prayer "mixed," as Scripture puts it, with my fulfillment of inexorable "conditions" put Satan to flight, and the "Balm of Gilead," and the Great "Physician there," did the rest. Not all the prayers uttered by the best of earth, or by the best in heaven, could have saved me in a state of known and wilful **disobedience**. God Himself cannot save an **unbelieving** sinner; nor prevent the Devil from afflicting a **disobedient Saint**.

"Of the making of books there is no end," because all who think they have aught to say are ill content until they have it in shape that will insure something of perpetuity. We all wish the children of our brains to live; as is natural; though they be awkward, malformed and even monstrous **to others**. Our progeny have beauties, that eyes less partial than paternity do not discover; and we imagine charms, where, to others.

there is "neither form nor comeliness" to be seen, and this is well, else life would be full of added miseries. "No one hateth his own flesh, but loveth and cherisheth it." Even God loves us, unlovely as we are, because we are, after all, in "Spirit," part of Himself, being—the worst of us—"made in His image and likeness." No one can be reproached for "loving his own." Jesus did it. (Jno. 13:1.) We do it.

So we "rush into print" now, as our predecessors, who knew not type, rushed into manuscript, lest, peradventure, these "children of promise," or "brats" of ill-begetting, should be lost to others, whom we hoped to benefit or amuse. Thus "of making of books there is no end;" nor will be, so long as human brains are active, and human ambitions remain, to spur to action, even the most supine.

Of course the Holy Scriptures, dealing as they do with subjects of deepest import to humanity, are bound to excite the thoughts of men; and these thoughts must take permanent form, whether they be the mere cogitations of curious brains: or the deeper ponderings of exercised souls. Hence of "making" of religious "books," especially, there seems to be an almost endless succession.

Perhaps the great bulk of what men have thought and written about the Bible, is, more or less **trash**,—unworthy of preservation and unfit for the help we all need. But the residue—Spirit-taught—is "pure gold," that will enrich both writer and reader. It must needs be that this "treasure" should come in "Earthen vessels;" but the responsibility of "separating the precious from the vile" is ours, and none may relieve us of it. Woe to those, who—because the walk in "By-path meadow" seems easier to tender feet,—accept, lazily,

their views of truth **from others**, instead of patiently "**proving all things, and holding fast that which is good,**" for **themselves**. Such, only, "enter in." The rest remain in "outer darkness," where "ignorance" complacently gropes its way, until the "shining ones" flash the truth upon it in an hour of **judgment**—too late to rectify the blind blunderings of a life of glorious opportunities—lost through careless and indolent neglect.

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“BERAYSHEETH,” or “IN THE BEGINNING.”

A Preliminary Essay on

THE FORM OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Why is it, that what many esteem the word of God; on which depends our eternal destiny; where ambiguity is most out of place; and where Divine compassion, addressing itself to the miserable and helpless, might be supposed to wear its gentlest mien; yet comes to us, in forbidding and repulsive garb oft-times; and ever in obscurity, so dense, that the wisest are puzzled to make out its meaning. For even when the light breaks through the clouds, at intervals, it soon goes out, and darkness hides it, as the night the day, leaving us to grope again.

This is the question of questions, still unanswered to the satisfaction of thoughtful men; and which, unanswered, will always be the stronghold of scepticism. I pity the one who can approach such a topic lightly, or answer, carelessly, the burning query that, at this moment, is wrecking the faith of thousands within the church's fold; and confirming the unbelief of myriads who stand without, and will not enter till their doubts are, in measure, at least, solved. Whoever can throw the least authoritative light on this dark subject, is a benefactor of his race. I would fain be helpful to my fellows, and, moved by this desire, I will tell as plainly as I can, what has helped me, unspeakably, since first the clue to the mystery dawned on me, in reading my Bible; and what now grows

clearer and clearer, with every thought on the clouded subject.

Let me, first, state the issue between the contending parties, as impartially as I can. Both have honest grievances to be respected. Personally, I am, heartily, on the believing side of the controversy. I am a Christian—an old fashioned one—by steadfast and joyous conviction; and I believe in the Bible "from cover to cover."

But, just for that reason, if for no other, I have no right to evade the plain questions, sceptics ask, as is so persistently done. The Bible requires me, in set terms, to "give a reason for the hope that is in me," and it does not lessen my responsibility, one whit, that the questions are asked by open cavillers, so long as they are queries that ought to be answered, in the interests of Truth.

For example, it is perfectly fair, in them, to ask, whether the Bible really teaches that a Holy God is responsible, by **command** or **permission**, for the robbery of the Egyptians, the slaughter of the Canaanites—old and young; the cruel mutilation of dumb brutes; and the drowning of a world full of His creatures—sinful and innocent—in one wild, indiscriminate deluge of His wrath. Either the Bible teaches these horrors as emanating from a sovereign God, or it does not. If it does, we ought not to evade the confession of the facts, but should glory in them, however mysterious, as the righteous actions of a good God; and not preserve a suspicious silence on the subject, when broached by others. If, on the other hand, the Bible does not teach thus, we ought to repudiate these acts with loathing and disgust; deny them as slanders against our God; and, on all occasions, try to convince

others that the Lord is too good to do such things. Silence, in either case, is criminal. For whether "yea" or "nay" be true, all can see that the cause of sound morality; of right and wrong; of truth and error; is inextricably bound up in the answer. If God be not responsible for these dreadful atrocities, then, it is fully incumbent on us, to explain, in some coherent way, as best we can, the reason why Scripture asserts, in the plainest, and most unequivocal way, that the Lord did do, all these dreadful things, with others, of like character, too numerous to mention. All of which are so diabolically bad, that apart from the mention of God's name as the Author or permissive cause of them; taken as simple actions, having a moral character, we should without a moment's hesitation, brand them as infamous, cruel, fiendish and abominably bad. It is vain to "set the battle in array," and attack easily captured outworks, while this unassailed stronghold of unbelief affords a safe shelter for the whole brood of scepticism, call them Agnostic, Atheist, Deist, Rationalist—what you will.

All are not alike, I am glad to think. Some, and not a few, will welcome any way of escape from the "Valley of Achor", if only it is a fairly reasonable "door of hope". Others there are, I grieve to think, who only care to "make points" against a hated christian faith. To these, this paper will do no good. The **heart** is bad; and what can one do with organic heart disease? It is fatal, sooner or later, and quite beyond the reach of medication to effect a cure.

Some, unjustly "lump" all sceptics under one category; dismissing all, together, as "infidels", on the down grade, to hell. The writer has seen enough of his fellow-men, during a long life and ministry, to en-

able him to discriminate between the things that "differ" and to "separate", in a measure, "the precious from the vile". And this he knows, that many esteemed "Orthodox believers" are really "infidels", and ignorant of God, in His truest character; while many **called** "infidels", are only unbelievers in a God, manufactured by man; and **are** believers in a God, who comes nearer the reality, though not found in Orthodox creeds and Symbols. This paper is written, especially for such, with a depth of sympathy that I can find no words to express; and I beg them to believe that I can fully enter into their difficulties, since I have felt them all myself, in time past, though, now, happily delivered by the means I am about to indicate. I can recognize the validity of their perplexities, while yet believing there is an honest way out of them.

This, then, is an **honest** effort, however feeble and unsatisfactory it may seem to some, to grapple with the central difficulty that tries many upright souls so sorely. It essays to answer those oft-asked but seldom answered questions that so seriously impeach the character of the Blessed God, and which it is criminal to ignore, or lazily put away with the easily repeated, but misplaced Scripture: "What we know not now, we shall know hereafter."

In trying to settle so important and far-reaching a subject, it behooves us to feel our way, cautiously, along the line of known facts, and not get lost in a jungle of speculative fancies, however attractive and dazzling they may be.

I think that the root difficulty, in estimating the **form** of the Bible, arises from the assumption that the Scriptures as we have them are in the best possible shape; and that shape the one selected by infinite wis-

dom, as best, in making communication with man, for man's good; and perfectly approved by God, their Author. Certainly this assumption, recognized as true by the defenders of the Bible, furnishes the vulnerable point of attack by sceptics, in all ages. But for this fatal admission, nine-tenths of the books published by an infidel press would be waste paper.

I think it can be shown that this assumption is thoroughly unwarranted, and, moreover, thoroughly dishonoring to the Blessed God. If this can be made clear, it will help us, wonderfully, in disentangling the complications that, like an almost impenetrable undergrowth, hinder the right understanding of the Bible.

We may, fairly, premise, as axiomatic, in pursuing this line of thought, that "God in Nature", is exactly the same as "God in Grace"; because, being "**Jehovah**, He changes not", as He declares. This unalterable unity of the Godhead is formulated in the first creed of Scripture. "Hear O Israel; the Lord your God is One God." Not one in Person, for that is tripartite, as all christendom asserts; but One in Nature and attribute; ever the same; not one thing here, and another there; but, as the New Testament has it—"the same yesterday, today, and forever." Rabbi Ben Oliel says: "Achad, translated 'one' (Deut. 6. 4) is not one, numerically, as generally supposed, for "Achduth", which is an abstract word having close affinity to Achad, means fellowship—the opposite to 'one', numerically."

Our God's revelation of Himself, in Nature, must therefore agree with His manifestation of Himself in His written word. If He is obscurely seen in one, so in the other, and vice versa.

Now I ask any candid person this question: "Is God, as revealed in Nature, transparently clear, or do

'clouds and darkness' hover about him?" To ask the question is to answer it. "Nature red in tooth and claw", the strong oppressing the weak; wrong triumphing over right; these are some of the mists of earth, through which the character of the Good God must shine to reach us. In these the sceptic entrenches himself, and denies that superintending goodness; that beneficent providential oversight and direction, which the church affirms and unbelievers deny, in many a bulky volume. These attacks and defenses; these "alarums and excursions", of sceptic and believer, would have no meaning, if the "Book of Nature" were simple and easy to read.

Is everything we meet in our daily walks, as God wishes it to be? Is His holy "will done on earth, as it is in heaven"? If so, why should He command us to pray that it may so be done? Would He bid us ask for a thing already accomplished?

And bear in mind, ever, that it is not, simply, sin in man, and confusion among men, that needs rectification. The disorder is as widespread and fully developed among the unsinning "fowls of the air; the fish of the sea; and the beasts of the field", as among sinful men. The hawk pouncing upon the pretty songster of the grove; the great fish gorging itself on myriads of "small fry"; and the lion pulling down the timid deer, to make a bloody meal, all obscure the character of God as the refuge and helper of His sinless, but oppressed creatures.

All these things tell us of the presence of a malignant "enemy"; thwarting the Divine will; "sowing tares among the wheat"; puzzling mind and heart with entangling problems; and obscuring the light of day in the darkness of night.

But the mere facts, patent to all, do not explain "the reason why" he has the power to do all this. Some, blindly deny facts, they can not explain—like the ostrich burrowing its head in the sand. Others admit them with a sad confession of the mystery in them, and the quotation of that convenient verse—"What we know not now, we shall know hereafter." This may be faith or laziness, but it does not help an honest, sceptical inquirer; and it is our business to do that. We are our "brother's keeper", whether we like the responsibility or not; and we ought to help every one in distress, whether of suffering body or perplexed mind. We are bound by every dictate of humanity, as well as by the authoritative command of Scripture to give "a reason for the hope within us"—not a quotation, that explains nothing.

Now, if this perplexity in "Nature" exists; and the "Book of Nature" is hard to be understood, why should I expect the "Book of Grace" to be any clearer? If Satan obscures one, why not the other? Is God in Providence, a less sacred personage than God in the person of His Son? For some reason this arch enemy has blotted the record in every way—the Written Word; the Living Word; the face of Nature; and the revelations of grace. There were those to whom the Christ of God was never any one more than "Joseph, the carpenter's, son". There were others to whom He was a Prophet; a "Teacher sent of God"; yet others to whom He was an imposter from first to last. Only to a "little flock" was He "the Christ—the Son of the living God"; "God over all, blessed forevermore." A mere handful of obscure men knew Him as He was.

As with the Living Word, so with the written. The differing views of different men—scholarly and ignor-

ant, multiply with such appalling rapidity that it will not be long, unless the tide turns, until those who believe in the old fashioned Bible as God's Holy and inerrant word, will be like the fishermen of Galilee compared with the inhabitants of Palestine.

All these divergent opinions tell me of the inherent obscurity of the subject, and not only of the blindness or semi-blindness of those who seek to know the truth. "**Search** the Scriptures" is an exhortation that admits they are hidden and obscure. Jesus, for some reason, spake in "parables" that tried the faith and patience of His disciples, once and again. It was, even, predicted hundreds of years before His coming, that He would "open His mouth in dark sayings." Some spell of obscurity seemed to shadow His every utterance, so that even in matters of life and death His words were obscurest, where they needed to be crystal clear.

And more than that. The Divine Master is made to say in the cruel "letter" of the word that He spoke to the overwhelming majority of men, in all ages, this side the Millennium, in obscure parables, that "seeing they might not see; and hearing they might not hear; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and be converted." That is, if the surface meaning of the words be the true import of them, He purposely spoke obscurely, so that they could easily misunderstand His meaning, and then damned them for not understanding. The Devil himself could hardly occupy an unlovelier position than the Master's in this Scripture. Truly "the letter killeth". We must read between these lines, or throw away our Bibles in despair of fathoming its meaning, if not in deep disgust.

When Jesus, in miracles, "manifested forth His glory" so that His half convinced disciples "believed

on Him", what did the manifestation prove but previous concealment? The treasure is hidden and must be searched for. Patient waiting on the Lord, and "following on to know" Him, can alone disentangle the confusions of the Word—living or written. Some, in olden time, because they would not patiently sit at His feet, until He made plain the frowning words His dear lips were made to speak, "went back, and walked no more with Him". Other some, amazed and stumbled, yet staggered on after Him; in spite of everything believing on Him; and to those, in due time, the light that revealed the hidden mystery broke in. And thus will it be till the light of glory dawns. Till "in His light, we see light", it must be a "narrow way" in which we walk, where there is only room for two, with all the rest shut out. Then, only, shall we not "wrest Scripture"; to our "own", and others', "destruction".

I once heard a good minister read a lesson from Job xviii, containing the words of Bildad, the Shuhite—platitudes that the Lord not only did not own, but denounced as follies worthy of stripes, in summing up the long logomachies of the four theologians. As he closed the book, the preacher solemnly repeated the formula: "May the Lord bless the reading of His Holy Word". It shocked me at the time, I remember. But the preacher was right, though he little dreamed of the storm, his repetition of the familiar sentence, raised in the minds of his thinking hearers, who knew something of Eliphaz, Zophar and Bildad, and remembered how these "candid friends" of Job had poured vitriol upon his wounds by their sententious prattle. Yet it was the "word of God", as well as the words of a foolish man, at the same time. This is the riddle of Sam-

son—God's riddle—we are set to solve; by patient research, bringing "meat out of the eater"; "separating the precious from the vile"; digging with persevering painstaking for the golden ore, that is to reward our industry. "Gems from the mountain, and gold from the mine", only thus are brought to light; and, even after that, must pass through the workshops of Amsterdam, or the smelting pot, to rid them of encrusting impurities, or mingling dross, before either can glitter on the diadems of monarchs, or enhance the charms of beauty. There are texts of Scripture that must be crushed by violence, and ground to powder before they will yield up their hidden wealth of meaning. There are others that need the careful handling that only the Spiritual "expert" can bestow; but, which, thus treated, flash diamond truth upon the eye, anointed to behold it.

No need, in all this, to charge the dear God, with the crime and folly of hiding truth; or concealing gold and gems, till it costs the lives of men to rescue them from useless imprisonment. That were to ascribe to Him the folly and wickedness, described by His own Word as "damnable" (Rom. iii:8), of "doing evil that good may come". This is the blunder—and worse—of a false theology, along the ages. Let us ascribe the gold to God; the gems to God; for His heaven is built of both. And let us lay to the Devil's charge, where the wrong belongs, all the obscurement of this wondrous beauty; whether of Truth, hidden by enveloping error, or nullified by the "earthen vessel" that holds it; or the diamond, plastered with mephitic mud, till one can hardly suspect the presence of a precious gem.

These generalizations being, undoubtedly, true, it,

by no means, follows that those who are dragging the "Written Word" from its proper pedestal of Authority, by criticisms "Higher" or lower, are right. On the contrary, this view of the "Form of Holy Scripture" convicts them of being in the wrong. They may have made discoveries that are true. They have saddled them with theories that are false, as false can be.

It is a short step from convicting the "Written Word", in the 1st chapter of Genesis, of scientific errancy, in the suborned court of a spurious criticism; to the charge against the "Living Word", that He deliberately accepted current error, and passed it on without a word to show His disapproval of it, or disbelief in it; thus leaving us to grope and flounder, with Him, who is "The Truth", doing what he can to lead us astray; yet laying us under condemnation, if we either follow, or do not follow Him. What "confusion worse confounded" is this? Now, with all these modern or ancient attempts to make our Bible less than the infallible Book it is, what is here written holds no fellowship, whatever.

We have, then, advanced to this point: we deny no fact of all that are advanced by the most vicious adverse criticism. We do not defend wrong, in any shape, even though it were possible for God to do it, which it is not. A thing is not right, because God does it, any further than God does it because it is right. Everlasting right stands back of every action of the Omnipotent. Indeed we cannot think of any act of the good God, without this prior thought, to build that thought upon. This may seem metaphysical, but it is not. It is axiomatic.

Returning then, we only deny unscriptural deductions from admitted facts. We brush aside all human

theories that dishonor God, or sap the foundations of a living faith, come in what guise of orthodoxy or prescription, they may; and with reverent step lift the curtain that admits us to the "Holy of Holies", where the Godhead dwells; and standing with uncovered heads, and unshod feet, listen to the sacred oracles, that, alone, can explain the mysteries of life.

"Cur Deus homo?" (Why did God become man?) is the question the school-men have attempted in vain to answer, simply, because they made the fatal admission, to begin with, that a good God can "do evil, that good may come". Sift all their theories to the bottom, this is the dreadful residuum. Anselm's answer to the question has shaped the current theology of all the sects for 800 years, and it is based upon as black a lie, as the "Father of lies" ever deluded a good man with. It charges God with the death of His Son—the crime of all crimes—in order to satisfy His own sense of justice. A frightful wrong committed—the "just dying for the unjust—to make the right appear right". It is difficult to think or speak patiently of this monstrous slander, given currency for ages, without serious protest, on the character of the Blessed God. It matters not that millions have been educated to believe it. Millions do not sanctify error. And let us always remember that millions only mean one, when their opinions are reduced to the last analysis. Men follow leaders, as sheep a "bell-wether", and as blindly, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Calvinism, Wesleyism, Lutherism, Campbellism, all resolve themselves, severally, into the dogmatic opinion of one man. When this is clearly seen, as indisputable, it robs the whole subject of the imposing element of preponderant numbers. As a freeman in Christ, I

have full liberty to challenge the views of one man, however great his following.

Anselmism, therefore, which, with its stupendous following of eight centuries, can easily be traced to an Italian monk, of the "Dark ages"; bred under the shadow of a false system—loses its title to respect, from its vast concourse of advocates; and if its founder's system can be shown to bring dishonor upon God, he simply stands out, on History's page, as another "blind leader of the blind", heading for the "ditch", and an inevitable fall into it, with his deluded followers.

Let no one, therefore, be afraid to investigate or believe, because the "broad road" of current opinion is crowded with passengers; for

"Wisdom shows a narrower path,
With here and there a traveller,"

And Truth ever has for its following "a little flock".

The answer here given to "**Cur Deus homo?**" (Why did God become man?) may leave us a God whom we pity. That is bad enough. But we will not, at least, despise Him as sceptics, boldly, now do; and as we, who believe on Him, have all that we can possibly do, to keep ourselves from indulging in contempt, born of our 'better nature', whenever we set ourselves to impartial and unbiassed thought, along the line of current theory.

Let us go back to the Garden of Eden, and the beginning of the sad history when "sin entered into the world and death by sin". The crowning act of positive disobedience, in eating the "forbidden fruit" has been performed by both our first parents, and now, by

their own free wills, they have put themselves into the hands of the enemy of God and man.

Their act was an act of unfettered **free will**, which creates the frightful difficulty in the way of their deliverance. Had “that old serpent, the Devil, and Satan” done anything but tempt them; had he exerted a pennyweight of **force** to drag them into his “Kingdom of darkness”, the task of freeing them had been an easy one. God is “stronger” than the devil, as Scripture declares; and He could, at once, have put forth His countervailing strength, in a triumphant recovery of His hopeless creatures. But the free will lapse of Adam and Eve, rendered Omnipotence helpless to deliver, by the **mere putting forth of power**. Even now, when we stand on the ground of grace, with all its precious promises sounding in our ears, how helpless it is to save the sinner who **will not** believe, and what is belief but the surrender of the free will of man? The weakness of a child, can baffle the might of God, till that surrender is made. Fourteen hundred millions of human free wills prop the Devil on his **usurped** throne, to-day; and keep our God from His right to rule the earth in joy and peace. When even a “working majority” of these free wills come over to the Lord’s side, the Millennium will be here; and when **all** yield, heaven will come to earth, and His “will be done on that earth, as it is in heaven”.

Returning to Eden—what is now to be done? The sentence of death has gone forth. Satan deluded but to slay. He is “a murderer from the **beginning**”, and will not now forego his hateful purpose to destroy his victims. The “Lord-God” had **warned** His creatures that speedy death would result from eating the poi-

soned fruit of the fatal tree that Satan had planted "in the midst of the garden". It was no holy infliction of God's justice, but a warning of the Devil's cruelty that breathed in that solemn sentence: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die". And yet they did not die. That is clear, from the narrative. Something died in their stead, as all Scripture declares; but they did not die. Evidently, there was an interposition that saved them. What was it?

Now, my reader, try and take in the situation. Satan is triumphant, and with a right to kill his cowering victims, who have, too late, discovered the frightful mistake they have made. A pitying God looks upon the scene, intent on rescue, but helpless, by **mere power**, to save. It is a case for **diplomacy**. It is wisdom, not force, that now comes to the front. And we are compelled, knowing what we do of the results of the tragic interview; knowing, as we do, that Calvary begins in Gen. iii, with a destroyed serpent and a "bruised heel"; and Paradise is regained in the promise of what the "Seed of the Woman" should do; we are compelled, I urgently insist, to fill in the missing links in the chains of the skeleton record of Gen. iii; always premising, that it must be an entry in accordance with the analogy of Scripture, and, in nothing, a violation of its Truth.

This, then, we are forced to admit, by the proprieties of the narrative, that the overture of deliverance for Adam and Eve must come from the "Lord-God", if they are to be rescued, at all. Satan is master of the situation, now, much as we dislike to think it. But facts are facts; and this is the awful one, that the Lord of Heaven and earth must sue for terms from the Devil, if He carries out His plan to deliver man. It

is the one great tragedy of sacred History. Gethsemane and Golgotha are mere consequences. Here is the fountain head of all that follows, terrible as it is to write it, or even think it. Satan has God in his accursed power. The Lord of Glory must submit to a malignant Devil or forego His plan to "save us sinners".

That one opportunity—our Adversary made the most of. That one direful mishap explains all that has since gone wrong, and as nothing else can possibly explain it.

True, Satan overreached himself, without knowing it; and risking all, lost all, in the end. But O, the misery he has strewn through human lives, notwithstanding ultimate defeat! We are now sweltering in the wretchedness brought about by him, that fateful day in Eden, which our loving God would fain have averted, but could not. Our sin and Satan's subtlety fettered Him, and He was compelled to yield—O so much—in order to carry out His benevolent design, and gain a victory in a far distant future.

The first thing, as all can see, to be done under the distressing circumstances, was, to turn aside the imminent death penalty that hung over the doomed pair. If Satan relinquishes his right to slay, it must be because some equivalent is offered, dearer to his heart of flinty hatred, than the immediate delight of slaking his thirst for blood in the death of his cowering victims. There is only one thing a deeper object of desire with the "enemy of God and man". That fell title of the Devil has passed into current speech, for long. He hates the creature much, but the Creator more. He can forego present vengeance on his victims, if he can inflict a deeper stroke upon that pitiful

heart of **Love Divine** that, already, is willing to pay any price to “ransom” these captives; to “redeem” these bond-slaves. I can easily imagine something of the gloating look of triumph on the face of this cruel fiend, as he sees the look of self-sacrifice upon the face of the “Lord-God”, and knows that he may safely propound his own atrocious terms. We speak of dramatic situations. Here is one, the like of which was never seen before and never will be seen again. An eager buyer; a wily seller; human destinies, numberless, to be bargained for! “Hear, O ye Heavens! Give ear, O earth!” Listen to this interview on which Heaven and earth depend: These sinning creatures are to be bought and sold, if only the price demanded is paid. What else can that Scripture mean “Ye are bought with a price”? God is our “Redeemer” because He bought us back, for Himself, with Blood. “Not with such corruptible things as silver and gold”—deemed by man incorruptible—but by “precious Blood”. “Ransom” can have no other meaning than the price paid by the Captive’s friend, to rescue from the hands of the captor. The “*dramatis personae*”, in this scene of bargain and sale, are all apparent. We are the captives to be ransomed; the slaves to be redeemed. Satan is the slave-owner and captor, God is the Redeemer and Ransomer.

Who but a theologian, bent on propounding a brain-wrought scheme, could change this simple, intelligible transaction into the jumble of the “schools”? In belief, it is this. God buying us from Himself, for Himself; taking the Redemption and Ransom price out of one of His own pockets, and putting it into another of His own pockets; one department of His holy nature demanding of another department, a bloody price

for permission for that department to display itself at all; and God slaying the innocent for the guilty, in order to teach us moral rectitude, by an object lesson for all the ages!

Nothing but the existence of a Devil, whose favorite work is to blind the eyes of men, can account for the widespread belief of such contradictory folly. And all this, originally, the folly of one man; a blinded monk of the "dark ages"; born in Italy; bred in Rome; and, of necessity, morally shriveled by his environments and education. It is well for us to look a fact like this squarely in the face, when we are disposed to grow dogmatic in doctrine. Let us return to Eden.

"What is your ransom price?" Divine Love asks of diabolical malignity. The response comes, quick as a flash. "You are the only ransom I will accept. If you will die for them, and on the terms I have the right to specify, you may have these sinners for your own. Otherwise they are mine, to die this very day, as you forewarned them."

The "Lord-God" answers as promptly; "I accept your terms; name them; and in so far as these my unhappy creatures have given you a right to demand those terms I am bound and will abide by them."

The Devil speaks, "First, then, you are to die; it must be life for life."

The "Lord-God" responds; "I give My pledge to die for them, in due time. What next?"

"Secondly, I demand, that as they came to me of their own free will, notwithstanding all you could do to prevent them; so, if they come to you, it must be in the **same free will way**, notwithstanding all that I can do to prevent them; you may save them from death, by dying for them; but you shall not win them back

to loving allegiance, save in the way I won them for myself; with no compulsion on either side."

"To this demand I yield, also," saith the "Lord-God".

"Thirdly," the Adversary continues; "they came to me, with the Light, in its full effulgence. beaming upon them. Thus I won them; and you must win them back with all the darkness I can bring to bear, enveloping them. Through darkness to light their road must run."

"That, too, I accept, as I may not prevent," the Lord, in sorrow, responds.

"Fourthly," the Arch-fiend goes on, "I require a perpetual memorial of this transaction to be observed, by your command, and that the naked facts be presented, without explanation; the innocent suffering for the guilty, by your order; leaving men to believe, if they wish, that all is by your wise approval, and **according to your desire**; or find some other explanation, if they seek one. I am to be free to persuade them, if I can, that you are responsible, and willingly so, for the object lesson, in Blood forever shed by your authority, and because of your good pleasure. Thus I am to do all I can to induce your creatures to believe that what **I do, you do**. I will lead men, if I can, to doubt your love, as I did at first.

"And, fifthly, I demand as of unholy right, that, as I beguiled them, in this garden, with words of double meaning; with a trace of mingled good and evil; so, you must win them back in the same way. You must 'speak unto them in parables', easily misunderstood by the disobedient; 'hard to be understood' by the faithful. You must 'open your mouth in dark sayings'. Everything you utter in instructing them must have a

'savor of death unto death', as well as 'life unto life'. While the 'Spirit' may 'give life', the 'letter' may 'kill'. Men must 'read between the lines' to find the truth; or failing that, read a lie.

"And so long as this fight continues, I must hold what I win, though darkness envelop the earth, and 'gross darkness the people'. If you bring day, I will blot it out with night; if you bring a calm, I will raise a storm; if you bring health, I will scatter disease; and all this, till one side or the other wins a decisive victory. I will limit and curtail human life; turn 'dust to dust'; yield earthly sustenance only by the 'sweat of the brow'; grow thorns in every field; inflict sore travail in child bearing; and blight life in every way that I can. These are my rights that fit the wrongs your creatures have brought in, and I demand their enforcement, as the price of refraining to slay them here and now."

And the God of Love, to save us all, gave answer thus: "All this shall be done, as you say. I do not deny your rights nor sue for an abatement of the price I am to pay. Well do I know that all suing for easier terms will be in vain. This is your hour and the power of darkness."

Thus the drama of Gen. iii. was enacted, and the curtain falls upon a lamb slain—the first memorial of the "innocent suffering for the guilty"; the first forerunner of those innumerable crimes of like character, that more than anything else have darkened the history of our unhappy world.

The guilty but redeemed and ransomed pair go forth from the garden of innocence; clothed with skins of innocent and helpless lambs, to begin a new history in which, evermore, grace—"God's kindness to the

helpless and unworthy"—is to be the chief factor; and, in which, that peerless form of Divine Love, which otherwise would have remained "a spring shut up—a fountain sealed"—now gushes forth a mighty river, "proceeding from the Throne of God and of the Lamb".

And still we are "prisoners of hope"; waiting for the day to dawn that has no night to follow it; longing as "they who wait for the morning" for the perfect victory of our God, over all His enemies, that is so sure to come. Meanwhile the chequered history of man; inaugurated in Eden on that fateful day, goes on; with its mingled joy and sorrow; life and death; light and darkness; heaven and hell; and must go on thus until Satan and "all his works" vanish from the scene.

Now, tell me, dear reader, as you look at the outcome of that interview in Eden, if all this, in substance, may not have occurred. Nay, more than this; tell me if the solution of life's history and mystery, can fit into any other theory half so well. Something must have taken place of which we have no specific record in the third of Genesis. A casual glance at the chapter will impress you with the fact that more remains to be written than the skeleton record of the facts narrated, however important the things written may be. The why of the fact, that our first parents did not die the day they sinned, as the Lord-God said they would, is a query put by any careful reader of the momentous history. All agree, among believers, that the substitution of God for man; the just for the unjust; the innocent for the guilty, alone can explain the after facts in the case. And why should I, needlessly, accept a solution that dishonors God, and

plunges the world in doubt; when another offers itself that exalts His love; leaves His honor without a stain; and lays the shāme and blame of subsequent events on the Devil?

There remains nothing to countervail this view, but the sentimental objection to allowing so much power to Satan. Yet the Bible asserts that power—second only to God's—on almost every page. Why should we deny it, seeing, as we do, the tokens of it on every hand? And why recoil from it? I would, a thousand times rather, feel sympathy—even pity—for a God of Love; trapped in a corner of helplessness, by a cunning Devil, made strong by man's sin; than to blush for a God of infinite power doing things that would degrade the worst of men, in doing the same.

It may help us in getting at the truth, to give a Scriptural reason for the eagerness of Satan to get God in his hands by death. The Bible, not more obscurely than in other things, gives us a hint of the reason in the parable of the "Wicked Husbandmen". "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours". To vault into a throne of universal dominion, vacated by death; this was an ambition worthy of the "Prince of Darkness," already seated on a throne of power and authority, second only to God's.

Happily, resurrection foiled him. It was not possible for the King of Glory to be holden of death, though He might die, and did, to save our lives. Therefore, resurrection is the keynote of all gospel. Indeed there is no "good news" without it.

Here then we end our quest. A good God and a bad Devil; the key to History, and the touchstone to Truth. I confidently challenge a faithful, reverent

trial of this touchstone; and then an honest denial of its power to turn into Gospel Gold all the baser material of the ages, over which men have wrangled, while denying that wrong was wrong, because they thought it done by God; and blindly following an Italian monk of the dark ages, whose morbid speculations concerning the character of God have been crystalized into the slander of the centuries.

Take, for example, the flimsy solution of the cruel wrongs we see all round us. "Nature red in tooth and claw"—Prof. Huxley's favorite quotation against a Divine Providence,—and helpless innocence suffering for swaggering guilt. Here men coolly argue that such horrors are permitted in the plan of an allwise and merciful God, in order to bring out, more clearly, His infinite perfections; in a word, "doing evil that good may come"! We all know how St. Paul stamped upon this affront to God, in his epistle to the Romans. It is the assertion, or concession that a good God allows such things to go on in His government, when He might prevent them, that has made infidels and agnostics in shoals.

I quote, in this connection, a paragraph from an English morning paper with a circulation of 50,000: "An inquest was held at Aldershot, yesterday, on the body of private Sanford, who had been killed by lightning on Saturday; and a verdict of 'Died by the visitation of God' was returned. It was stated, that, but for the efforts of Surgeon Track, six other men would have died, but they had been saved by his persistent efforts in maintaining artificial respiration." I suppose that not one of those 50,000 readers saw anything wrong in this announcement, or stopped to think of the slander conveyed in this brief item. Here was

a God who killed one man, outright, and would have killed six more, but for the interposition of a kind and skilful surgeon, who saved them out of a "visitation of God"! Such is the paralyzing effect of early training on us all. It is pitiful to think that any of us, "caught young enough", could have been trained in cannibalism even; and to look upon a slice of broiled baby with as much relish, as now, we smack our lips over a veal cutlet or a lamb chop. Is it not horrible?

All these distressing difficulties vanish, when we allow a Scriptural Devil to appear upon the scene. And because his work solves all unsolved problems, he bends his infernal energies to persuade unbelievers, of his non-existence; and to rob Christians of their one available weapon of attack and defense. Few "saints" believe in the Devil's awful personality, at all. His existence is frittered into a vague recognition of "evil", in the abstract; a sort of miasma in the moral atmosphere. But a "roaring lion"; a royal Devil; second in **power to God**; a dread **personality**; this they regard as a sort of nursery hobgoblin; an "unscientific" fancy; not to be gravely asserted and reasoned from. They seem ashamed to be confronted, by "educated people", with such a weapon in their hands. O, had all the research and learning that have been expended by good men in trying to maintain untenable defenses of God's ways, and impracticable explanations of God's word, been directed to the separation of "the precious from the vile"; and finding the hidden treasures that lie hidden in obscure prophecy and parable; always refusing to "call darkness light"; and never putting "bitter for sweet", and wrong for right; how would the Bible, long since, have been an open book, "understood of the people": and not, as

now, a "bone of contention" for rival and snarling schools of theology.

Again, here is a family circle broken up—the commonest thing in this Devil's world. A lovely, pious wife, is taken from an affectionate husband and helpless children. Hear these expositors of the ways and works of God—the merciful; the just; the good. "He has taken that lovely wife and mother, who wanted to remain, to bless husband and children, in order to save that unbelieving husband's soul, and bring him to God." As if the good Lord kept an assortment of lovely wives to kill off, as needed, in order to convert godless, but faithful husbands.

Or, here is a sweet child, with its beautiful life nipped in the bud, by death. Hear these "comforters" explain the mind of God, to hearts that bleed. "I fear you loved your child with an idolatrous love, poor mother, and God, in mercy and judgment commingled, took it from your arms, to turn your thoughts heavenward." As if God kept another assortment of innocent babes to snatch from maternal arms, and slay, as required, in order to wean worldly parents from earth and earthly things. Or, if this vitriolic "comfort" seems too cruel to pour into bleeding hearts; this "consolation" is offered, as balm to the bereaved ones. "Your Heavenly Father knows best, and has sent this affliction in chastening love, for some wise purpose of His own." How common this is! And it is all that the cruel system, under which these good people have been reared, can offer.

And what better than this sickening "comfort" can be offered, while Satan, as the Author of all suffering, is kept completely out of sight, and the good Lord has to bear the burden of these awful catastrophes?

I have carefully perused the works of Col. Ingersoll, in which he so crushingly presents his valid and invalid objections to the Bible; and I am bound to acknowledge that if you admit his premises, his conclusions are unanswerable. Of course, all know, who have read his brilliant books, that his one central argument, however varied in form, is leveled at the essential immorality of God's character, as set forth in the Bible. And from the standpoint, where his assailants allow him the right to stand, he makes his point triumphantly. No one of all the seven Spiritual Athletes—here, and across the water—has so much as touched his stronghold. What avails it, that along a wide skirmish line, a few useless victories can be claimed, while the citadel of scepticism is unassailed? What possible good can come of showing that the "great Agnostic's" substituted theories are wrong, so long as he triumphantly demonstrates that theirs are still more wrong.

Now mark the reason of all this humiliating betrayal of the cause of Truth. Col. Ingersoll denies the existence of the Devil. His opponents make not the slightest allusion to the existence of the Devil. They may profess to believe in his existence, but they make no use of his personality and power to ward off the attacks of the Sceptic. They concede all that Col. Ingersoll asks as to the central charge that the Bible represents God as doing these dreadful things that are in controversy: and upon that concession he delivers his victorious attack upon the christianity of the Bible. What wonder is it, that they, one and all, flee, discomfited, before him, leaving him still shouting; to this very day, across the Valley of Elah, to the cowering hosts of Israel: "Send me a man that I may fight him."

How can a theory be correct that makes death—God's enemy and man's—to come to all "in God's good time"; or disease—which Jesus always attributed to the Devil, and "rebuked" as from him—to be the chastening rod of a loving Father, sent for our good. And this, notwithstanding the fact—that ought to make its advocates blush for the inconsistency of their theory—that the moment this "wise chastisement" comes upon them, they immediately send for the most skilful medical practitioner, to deliver them out of their good Father's chastening hand; and are willing to swallow any quantity of nauseous medicine, and pay a doctor's bill, in the bargain, to get rid of the wisdom and love that are supposed to be combined in afflicting them for their good.

Finally, I appeal to the best that is in you, dear reader; to the "Image and likeness of God" that, in us all, underlies the prejudices of education and the blindness of nature, to cast off these God-dishonoring shackles of early training, and to believe nothing that makes of our God, not simply, "One altogether like ourselves", (Isa. 14:10; Psalms 50:21) but one much worse than ourselves. Let it be your best ambition to clear God's holy character of the prejudices of ages that have gathered like encrusting dross and dirt around it. "Wisdom, ought to be justified of her children" at least. And I again appeal to the "Image and likeness of God" that is in you, and that I am sure responds to this appeal, to tell me why you will with patient perseverance work at the uncomely ore where gold or silver lies; or delve in the blue earth that holds the diamond; or the mephitic mud that enfolds the ruby, while the priceless jewel of God's holy character, that lies buried under all these mountains of detraction—(yea, **must**

be there, if analogies are anything worth)—excites in you no desire to extricate it: to establish its purity: test its worth; exhibit its value to others; and enrich yourself for time and eternity in so doing. I appeal to that desire of rectitude that underlies all else in you; to the commonest gratitude you owe to your Creator and Redeemer: and I call upon all that is true and right within you, to repudiate the heartless course, that, in this, you may have unwittingly, pursued; and henceforth taught in the school of love, let genius, ambition, industry, ingenuity and all else you may possess, run at last in a right channel. And never halt foot until you have taught the searcher after such corruptible things as silver and gold that there is a higher object of pursuit and a greater opulence of enduring riches, than can ever be dug out of earthly mines. When we read the Book, as if we were "searching for hidden treasures", there is no computing the riches we shall unearth. But there is no discounting the plain word of Scripture: They who "**seek shall find**": to them who "knock, it **shall be opened**". "Search the Scriptures", is no idle word. Satan has contrived, so cunningly, to obscure the word and work of the Lord: so adroitly has he substituted himself for God; that heedless readers will invariably be deceived, and even the careful and prayerful will be stumbled at times. Only we are sure that earnest, loving search will always find: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

"BERAYSHEETH", OR "IN THE BEGINNING".

INTRODUCTION.

"In the beginning" is the Hebrew title of the first book of Moses. "Genesis" is our Greek form of the same. The gospel according to St. John begins with the well-known formula. His is the gospel of Love par excellence, and it is a delightful thought that links the old and the new with the "Mercy" that is "from everlasting to everlasting"; the same yesterday, to-day and forever"; the "grace"—that form of the Divine Love, displayed to the helpless and the unworthy—that "never faileth", "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be".

"Begin at the beginning"—how wise is this counsel, though heeded by few. We plunge "in Medias res" with the audacity of ignorance, only to find out after long and bitter experience that we know much less than we thought we did; and begin "with shame to take the lowest place", when, by taking it voluntarily, we might long since have been promoted to the place we aspired to. How many a time I have wished that I had begun my ministry at "the beginning", and thus utilized the comparatively wasted years of brief earthly life, that give me pain to look back upon.

I wish to show in these pages how the Good Lord has been trying in His wondrous Book, to lead His creatures into the right way: teaching them on the lowest "form" of the school of grace those initial lessons, so essential to easy and rapid progress in "going on to know the Lord": but which, once neglected, or imperfectly acquired, will leave the hapless scholar a

blunderer to the end of the chapter. We cannot "grow in grace" to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ", till we are "rooted and grounded" in the "first principles" of His "doctrine". Then only can we "go on unto perfection"—or the practice of what we have learned. Till then we are "blown about by every wind of doctrine, and the cunning craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive". Most of the Lord's people are just in that condition. I remember, when, as a boy, I began Geometry that my teacher gave me for a first lesson a page of "Axioms", to be "learned by heart"—as committing to memory was called in my day—and I recall, to this day, how I recoiled from the task. But my master was inexorable, and I was not permitted to take a step until he was satisfied that I had mastered that first page of the science, thoroughly. I wish I had had an instructor in theology who, himself knowing their value, would have drilled me in the first few Chapters of "Beray-sheeth", till accurately acquainted with the "Axioms" of the Gospel, therein laid down. For that, first and foremost of all, is, I am persuaded, the design of their Divine Author—to teach His ignorant children the A, B, C of heavenly wisdom, in the beginning, so that their feet might not stumble on the dark mountains of error, that He knows, better than we, lie in our pathway to the Celestial City. O the whitened bones, that strew the highway; of those "fallen by the way"; who else had pressed on, "conquering and to conquer", had they but "begun at the beginning". Ask the men who have succeeded in amassing wealth; or reached the top in climbing the dizzy heights of earthly fame, if they did not start on the lowest rung of the ladder, and so, step by step, go up and up, and still higher,

till the highest point was reached. Ask the innumerable "failures" that crowd every department of endeavor, the "reason why"? The answer is given with dismal uniformity, "We started wrongly". Why should success in "heavenly things" not follow the same rule? It does. But one generation learns but little of those preceding. Nevertheless, some will learn—a small minority—a "little flock" that shall "inherit the Kingdom".

“BERAYSHEETH”, OR “IN THE BEGINNING”.

AXIOM 1.

God Creates: The Devil Mars: God Restores.

This is the sum and substance of Earth's History as we know it. All events fall under one of these heads, in records sacred or profane. I have just been reading Emerson's Essay on "History". He makes **man** the centre of it. There is a deeper, broader view than this, when God is seen to be centre. Man is a mere adjunct, however important. To know that into God's perfect creation of Heavens and Earth, an intruder has burst: that he has ravaged both with his unclean and hateful presence: that all heavenly resources of wisdom and power have been brought into play for his suppression, and that God will win the day in the long fight between right and wrong: this is history indeed. Dignity, infinite, envelopes and permeates it. Man could never lend such interest to it. God and His work alone can make the study of it worth our while. But, once the true centre is discovered, there can be nothing trivial or unimportant in all the marvelous variety of its endless detail. Let us therefore, "learn by heart" first of all this comprehensive, Axiomatic Summary of all doctrine—all practice. This "three-fold cord, not easily broken", that binds into a concrete whole the fragmentary and apparently discordant facts that go to make up all history. These three cover the whole ground. Taken together, they explain everything: solving mysteries as if by magic: leveling mountains of doubt and perplexity to very

molehills: and justifying wisdom in all her ways. Disconnected, confusion reigns and "chaos comes again". Human history sinks to meaningless platitudes or insoluble mysteries. This alone brings order out of confusion: **God Creates: The Devil Mars: God Restores.**

The Lord makes haste to tell us this. It is His first written lesson, because the one most needed. "Who did this?" is the first intelligent question we put, on the discovery of the facts as they lie about us. And God's answer is in the first two verses of the first chapter, of the first book in which He reveals Himself to us. The question is one coming from the depths of a startled soul, that first awakens to the knowledge of the strange jumble of facts that lie in a confused heap around it. The paralysis of sin—strangely blunting our perceptive faculties; an education of repression and suppression from childhood: and, above all, the blinding power of the "god of this world", may keep us from the astounding discovery that there is something terribly wrong in the tangle of facts about us: but sooner or later with a shock, never to be forgotten, comes the question, "like a bolt from the blue", Who did all this? Happy, that soul that has God's perfect answer, before the blundering solutions of the "blind leaders of the blind" can plunge the inquirer into abysses of "confusion worse confounded"; from which there seems to be no escape for an honest soul except in the inviting refuge of "Agnosticism", whose doors stand open, night and day, to welcome "weary souls by doubts oppressed".

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". Then—presto—"The earth was without form and void".

"As for God, His work is perfect". Are "emptiness

and confusion"—("Tohu va Bohu." Heb.) "perfect"? Surely not.

As for the Devil—his work is evil—only evil—and that continually. To him therefore must be ascribed the marring of God's perfect work. Satan cannot **create**. That is God's sole prerogative. But he can **mar**. And that is ever his prerogative. A good God and a bad Devil solve the mysteries of life about us. I need not deny **any facts**, with this solution at hand. It is not said, in terms, that the Devil wrought the ruin of the second verse: but one scripture throws light upon another, and this interdependence of the various parts in elucidating, each the meaning of the others, is one of the first lessons those learn who would "**search the scriptures**". "Comparing scripture with scripture" then, we do not go far afield to solve the mystery of verse 2. In the third chapter the personality of the Destroyer is fully revealed. There we have man, made perfect by God, marred and ruined by the Devil, as St. Paul, by the Holy Ghost, expounds it (2 Cor. 11:3). Thus we, not uncertainly, reason that the same dread being, who entered Eden and overthrew God's beautiful creation there, must be the same who overwhelmed in "tohu va bohu", the glorious heavens and earth created by the Good God "in the beginning". At any rate this is clear. The Blessed One repudiates, expressly, in Isaiah 45:18 the "tohu va bohu" of verse 2, when He says: "I created not the earth in vain"—"tohu" being the Hebrew word here translated "in vain", as Satan has arranged it, through the aid of our translators, to perplex unlearned readers. And this also is certain, that only this awful being—"that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan"—has power, according to scripture, to lay waste the

Empire of God, as he has done, and is doing, and will do, till "a stronger one than he" shall "take away the armor in which he trusted, and spoil his goods". Thus we follow no "blind trail" when we ascribe the "without form and void" of Genesis 1:2, to the Devil.

And what a ruin it was! Even diabolical malignity and power could not make it worse. Every form of life slain—dead and buried. Fish and fowl drowned in the depths of the salt and bitter waters: four-footed beasts and creeping things destroyed and hidden away in the depths of the earth: grass, herb and fruit tree not spared, but buried in rotting ruin in the same earth: that, itself, in turn, is submerged and "water-logged" in brine: and then, that wild waste of bitter, death-dealing waters, with all of helpless ruin covered by them, enveloped in a pall of impenetrable darkness, blotting out the light that once irradiated God's beautiful earth creation, and shrouding all in dismal gloom and horror of "blackness of darkness". This is Satan's worst, up to this point in history. There are deeper depths of infamy further on, but these do not yet appear.

Next our God appears upon the scene—not this time to do His own work, that costs no effort: takes no time: as "in the beginning" the Heavens and earth sprang into being under His creative thought and the touch of His "fingers" (Ps. 8:3) but now, to undertake what involves delay and weariness—even the "restitution" of what the Devil has wantonly destroyed. Slowly, painfully, wearily, the work is begun, continued and **finished**, till, at its close, we have the astounding spectacle of a **tired God**, needing **rest**, after exhausting labors that have sorely taxed the strength of even omnipotence. Stranger, more in-

credible, more astounding things than this lie further on, in the passing strange "History of Redemption". But this must give pause to the most thoughtless, if once we stop to contemplate the awful subject. Alas! this weariness of omnipotence, becomes a "thrice told tale" in the days to come, and "ye have wearied Me with your ways", bursts from the lips of God, once and again, as the difficulties in restoring **man** far overtop and outrun the restitution of Gen. 1; when only a sodden earth, and blotted light and drowned birds and fishes; and rotted vegetation; and dead and buried "four-footed beasts and creeping things", had to be raised again to life. That weariness was no weariness at all, by reason of the weariness that excels it.

But the grand and glorious lesson for us to learn through it all is this: that what our God sets His heart and hand to accomplish will surely be perfectly finished. He who "begins a good work", will never halt, whatever difficulties lie in the way, until He pronounces the satisfied sentence; "It is very good," and ceases to work, because there is no more to do. This is our inspiration, in all we undertake, in our feeble measure, that "**God worketh in us to will and to do**", and there ought to be no room for discouragement or despondency. Yes, God restores, and restores perfectly, until the restored ruin outshines in glory the thing that Satan's malice wrecked. For in just the proportion that the Devil **drags down**, God will **exalt**. It is a "rule that works both ways", as **it** ought. And we may be sure that God's "restitution" of a buried world and all things thereon and therein, presented a far more beautiful array than the same "**creation**" of God, upon which the Destroyer laid his baleful touch.

God's **Creation** cannot be more perfect than He made it. "As for God, His work is perfect", and **perfection** cannot be improved. But perfection **marred**, can be **restored** in more than pristine glory, by the **added** glory put upon it, that its destruction warranted. Some find difficulty in believing that in the "times of restitution", animals shall be "raised in glory". Such have not read Gen. 1 aright, nor given good heed to what St. Paul says in 1 Cor. 15 about the different flesh of men; of beasts; of fishes; of fowls; all differing in kind, but destined to resurrection, "after their kind"; as in Gen. 1, where only what we are pleased to term "the **lower** order of creation", are raised from death. We "sons of men", verily "take too much upon ourselves".

"BERAYSHEETH", OR "IN THE BEGINNING".

AXIOM 2.

Resurrection.

If destruction is the first taught lesson, after creation, then by a holy necessity of God's nature, resurrection or restitution must be the second. The Adversary must not be able to kill what God cannot bring to life again. However widespread and thorough the destruction, the skill and power of the life-giver and Restorer will meet it at every point. And however protracted the process of reconstruction may be: however hindered by causes over which the Good God **has no control**, His patient love will persevere in its work until the predestined end is accomplished. Nothing can ultimately baffle **predestinating** purpose. Else we could not believe in "God the Father **Almighty**", as the first clause in the Divine creed encourages us to do. I love to think that "He has predestined **all of us** unto the **adoption** of children by **Jesus Christ** unto Himself". That is a grander thing than the original **creation** of all of us. "Adoption" is the restoration of the **outcast**. It is taking us up "in our blood"; left in the open field to die; and saying to us, "Live". Its only warrant is **love** on one side, and guilt and helplessness on the other. Merit is as far out of the question in "adoption" as in "Creation". Much farther, indeed, for sin had not entered into the account when God "created the heavens and earth". It is important to see this; for Satan, just at this point, has obscured all investigation. If there is

one thing he is more anxious to keep us in ignorance of than another, it is the fact that our God is glorified in taking us up "just as we are", and without a thought of our unworthiness to hinder His purposes of grace, goes on, "from start to finish", for **His glory** and **our good**, to rectify every wrong committed by the Devil, whether upon sinless animals or sinful men: whether upon the **helpless** brute, or the **unworthy** creature, made in God's likeness and image but who, under the instigation of the Devil, has fallen out of everlasting right. Ever since Darwin in his fascinating books traced our ancestry through Anthro-poid Apes to an original "protoplasm", evolution has been a favorite theory of scientists and theologians, and the facts in the case are so incontrovertible that numbers have felt themselves driven into a theory of our origin as creatures of God, that would otherwise seem abhorrent to the best that is in us. Leaving out of consideration those who would rather be fathered by monkeys than to be "children of God"; and who must be left in their blindness and hardness of heart, to go their own way: there are honest but logical souls that cannot evade the conclusions that follow premises, that they have been taught to believe are true. The distress of such, in being forced to accept as honest reasoners, what their secret souls recoil from, is truly pathetic; and thousands of just such sorely bestead investigators are anxiously looking for a door of escape, however narrow, from "bonds and afflictions". How great the relief of such, if by breaking away from early teaching, with "eyes anointed", they could see the wide open door of exit from imprisonment, in the demonstrated fact that what they always believed to be "creation" in Gen., 1:3-25, is not Creation at all,

but a wholly different thing—"Resurrection". One can safely grant, that **that** begins with a "protoplasm" for it is quite in the Devil's line to "reduce" the life of God to its "lowest denomination"; while it is equally in God's way to begin, uncomplainingly, with the lowest form to which Satan has had a right to degrade the creature; and working up, through gradual advances, made in the face of mighty opposition by men and devils, to bring out a grander result than before the ruin set in. Do you not see, dear reader, that the Adversary has so "blinded the eyes of them that believe not", that they mistake God for the Devil; and, while ostensibly pitying the wretches who fall down before Moloch and Juggernaut, they are themselves worshipping a Devil for God and trying to justify their God by declaring that folly is wisdom; darkness is light: bitter is sweet and wrong right. One should think that the very extravagance of the wild theories of creation, where resurrection is not seen, would open blinded eyes. Alas! nothing but the Spirit of God can work that miracle. When I was a theological student in Princeton, the Chair of Astronomy at the College was filled by Prof. Stephen Alexander, who at the close of the senior course, delivered a famous lecture to his students, on the "Nebular Hypothesis" of La Place. We "theologues" were invited; and, encouraged by our Professors, attended, in force, to listen to the eloquent and pious lecturer. I remember in what glowing terms he expounded the theory of the brilliant Frenchman, which he firmly believed, and wanted us to accept as the most plausible explanation of how God did His work in creation. Briefly, it was this; God in His hands of power held an immeasurable mass of molten **something**, which He flung into

infinite space, giving it rotary motion as He hurled it from Him. This astounding mass of material, scattered, from its outer edge, as it swiftly revolved, huge worlds of molten stuff, that, rolling themselves up, in turn flung off from their outer surfaces other worlds. And so, in turn, each performing the original function of the central mass, until suns, planets, satellites, asteroids and meteors went whirling through space; collecting into vast systems by inexorable laws of attraction and repulsion, and taking their appointed places in a universe controlled by the Central Law-giver. And then the eloquent professor went on to show how all this was in conformity with Revelation. I well remember his vehement disclaimer, as he asked himself the question, he went on to answer; "Do you ask me, whether all this is not opposed to the Bible account of Creation? **NO!** A thousand times, No! young gentlemen!" And we were all impressed and some convinced.

Now I would have you notice how all this God-dishonoring extravagance would have been avoided, by sober Christians, at least, had men not accepted from false teaching that God began with "Chaos" in order to create; and that Chaos was an original **creation of His**, out of which He educes harmony and beauty. Again the Devil is put in the Creator's place. From such primary confusion as this anything may, properly, be brought forth. The wildest theory will never overleap its parent falsehood. The world is sown broadcast, with these dragon teeth of error. Some make the mistake, in their zeal for God, of denying the plain **facts** of Evolution. Surely "a remedy worse than the disease". Nothing is ever gained by disputing a **fact**. Nothing can justify it. Fair-minded men

are disgusted with such dishonest practice. The Lord be praised, **Truth** needs no such rotten bulwark of defence. She admits all facts, come from what quarter they may, and then explains them. But whether the explanation be at hand, or not, the **facts** are freely and fully admitted. Per Contra, she challenges mere **theory**, not founded upon bedrock "**facts**". In creation, she denies that God is the Author of an earth "without form and void". Then with the Authorship of "tohu va bohu", clearly established, all facts are welcome. No confusion can possibly arise. But with "**foundations**" removed, "what can" even "the righteous do"? They stand silent and abashed in the presence of the least skilled sceptic. Think, my reader, how the knowledge of "resurrection", as differentiated from "Creation", affects the whole controversy on "Evolution". All its well-known facts may be admitted, frankly, yet never a doubt or distress cross the path of diligent investigation. One can look open-eyed into the face of Col. Ingersoll: and "one can chase a thousand 'infidels;' and two put ten thousand to flight". It needs not to proclaim Darwin or Humboldt "Charlatans". You may take their hands as philosophers, or even kiss the hem of their garment, and thank them for their **facts**, while intelligently rejecting their theories.

The proof of "resurrection" versus "creation" lies scattered over the whole surface of Gen. 1:3-25. Strange, except on the theory of "blinded eyes", that the patent demonstration has escaped notice so long.

Take, first, the so-called "creation of light". The New Testament description is clearly "resurrection". It **was there**, when He spoke the word of power, "Let there be light!" "God who commanded the light to

shine out of darkness", as St. Paul asserts, and that is a type of a grander resurrection of a creature "dead in trespasses and sins". The **creature is there** to be rescued from its deadly environment, not "made out of nothing", as the cant of the school defines "creation". It was created in perfection, originally: then marred, destroyed, killed by Satan: then made alive by the God of resurrection. The **same creature**, in all its various phases, until placed by God, the Blessed Restorer, beyond the reach of further vicissitude. So light, blotted out by darkness; hidden, (though still resplendent) by a pall; impenetrable to sight, from without; covered by "a bushel", or obscured by "a bed-stead", as elsewhere in Scripture, mentioned analogically, is "commanded" to burst its encompassing cerements, and **shine** in its own unobscured glory; and even more gloriously, than before the darkness enwrapped it in gloom. What a flood of light burst on the "new creation" as upon the old. In that, the pure Spirit, the "image and likeness of God": part of God's very self, as light is part of Himself, is covered up "in trespasses and sins": never sharing in them, for a moment, but covered and overwhelmed by them: as pure as God Himself, from first to last, through all its deep oppressions and obscurations: a "spirit in prison" waiting for release: and at the "opening of the prison doors", bounding forth in all the gladness of a happy deliverance, when God says: "Let there be Life!" How this disposes of the hideous dogma of "Total Depravity" that has like a mill-stone, hung for ages upon the Church's neck; threatening to "drown her in the depths of the sea": and **would** have done so, long since, but for the imperishable truths, held in conjunction with it, that have upheld her, in spite of error. I

shudder when I think how in the iron grasp of this hoary slanderer of God and man, I struggled for so long, trying to believe that every act of unregenerate man, however fair to look upon, was only the outgoing of a sinful nature, and abhorrent to God. When I saw a "sinner" loving wife and child: opening his purse to the needy: sitting, the night long, by the sick bed of a friend: scrupulously paying debts: taking the lead in acts of advanced citizenship: and in many things putting to shame the works of "saints", I was ordered by my inexorable theology to ascribe it all to an unregenerate nature in which there was "no good thing". Is it wonderful, that when a suitable opportunity arrived, I made my escape from this and other dogmas, equally abhorrent, "like a bird out of the snare of the fowler"? And is it strange that, once delivered from the awful incubus of years, and seeing clearly, in Truth's effulgent light, the repulsive loathsomeness of the God-dishonoring error, I should everywhere declare its opposite, if peradventure, I may deliver other souls from this nightmare of the ages, and win them to the "acknowledgement of the truth, who have been led captive by the Devil at his will", through the power of early training, as I was? I have written elsewhere (Credo and Credulity) how all this demonstration of "Resurrection" is seen in seven acts of "Elohim": how, from verse 3-25 there is, absolutely, nothing else; and how, not till the creation of man in verse 26, is the magnificent work of verse 1 resumed: to be again interrupted, alas! by the fell Destroyer—this time destroying himself in the outcome of his o'er-vaulting ambition.

“BERAYSHEETH”, or “IN THE BEGINNING”.

AXIOM 3.

“The Precious and the Vile.”

Even a careless reader will be impressed with the assiduous jealousy exhibited by the Great Creator in His work of “restitution of all things”, in keeping separated the “things that differ”, lest harm should come from their commingling.

And this anxiety has been fully justified by what has followed in all ages; while the work of restoration goes slowly on. Indeed, we may truthfully aver that nothing has so retarded “the restitution of all things spoken by the Holy Prophets since the world began”, as the confounding of good and evil, brought about by the cunning of the great Adversary. The Lord’s proviso in sending Jeremiah out to do His work, is the **one** qualification He requires of His Ministers **now**. “If thou shalt take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth.” (Jer. 15:19.) And the inference plainly is, that in case His servants fail to do this, He discredits them as His ambassadors, whatever of human endorsement they may have. How this would thin the ranks of those who claim to speak in God’s name in this century, I need not stop to explain. But I wish to show that “Elohim” “in the beginning” laid down this discriminating axiom most carefully. And the reason is obvious. On no account will God allow Satan’s work to be mistaken for His own, if He can prevent it. His repeated and careful separations; His reiterated distinctions in nomencla-

ture; "His line upon line and precept upon precept", all show that He foresaw imminent dangers clustering around this point, and endeavors carefully to guard it in every possible way. And so it has turned out. The Devil has exhausted his subtlety and made his most pronounced assaults, just at this critical position. The "conflict of ages" rages here, and the defeats of the Lord's hosts far outnumber the victories, until, taught by "The Great Tribulation", "God's silly sheep", who will learn it no other way, are taught the wisdom that will insure a final and decisive victory in the long strife.

Notice how the Good God "divides the light from the darkness, and calls the light day and the darkness night". He will by no possibility, save wilful perversity, have the one mistaken for the other; and He denounces a "Woe" upon any of His prophets who call "darkness light, evil good and bitter sweet", henceforth (Isa. 5:20). Let us see how Satan has "set at naught" this warning of the Lord, and carried out his first plan of ruin in Eden, by so confounding "good and evil" in the fatal tree, that our Mother Eve thought that the fruit that has poisoned her race in all time was "good for food", and so "ate of it, and gave to her husband and he did eat". Take the ills of life—loss of dear ones, loss of property, loss of health, as illustrated in Job. We are there, all admitted "behind the scenes", and know beyond a peradventure who inflicted one and all of these calamities. We can see clearly the arch-fiend with infernal joy doing his deadly work. He had to go out of "the presence of the Lord" before he could do anything; for hate, not love, is in everything he does. Yet, we hear the honest, but misguided servant of the Lord, attributing all his dreadful

doings to God; and we, for whom the book of Job was written as a warning, copy Job's words of ignorance with approval and pass them on as current coin of the heavenly realm, instead of rejecting them with scorn as the Devil's counterfeit. Job was ignorant of the work of the Devil in his afflictions, and when he learned later on, who was the author of his misfortunes, "abhorred himself"; recanted his charges against God and "repented in dust and ashes". But, we, with a completed Bible in our hands, and a full knowledge of Satan's agency in the catastrophes of life, as summarized in the Book of Job, still ascribe all to God under the flimsy pretext—the "last ditch" of a false theology—that God "permitted" Satan to do it, and all this Devil's work was by full approval of God. For permission by no honest use of the word can mean anything else but approval. I can understand the Devil doing his accursed work, because the Lord, however desirous to rescue, could not help without violating Satan's acknowledged rights; as in Eden, He could not deliver our first parents save by a deliberate purchase, and Satan's voluntary abdication of his right of conquest. God is just, even to Satan, (His enemy and ours) and paid his claim against the race represented in Adam and Eve in Eden, that He might justify them which believe in Jesus. I can understand God's helplessness in virtue of man's free will. But a deliberate surrender by God, of His best man on earth, into the hands of His worst enemy, simply to try an experiment of torture, when He knew His beloved servant would fail; and this at the Devil's suggestion, I cannot understand, as possible on the part of my God. I will not make Him out worse than myself, and I know that I would rather die than yield

my beloved child into the hands of my worst enemy, if I had any power to prevent it. I will not believe that my God stands by and witnesses the sorrows of His creatures that He **could** prevent and yet does not. “I have not so learned Christ”, “Who is the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person”. He lived and walked on earth to **show** us the Father. He **always** did the Father’s will. Do we find him causing sickness and death, storm and disaster? He healed the sick, raised the dead, rebuked the wind and calmed the storm. Why? Because all was the work of the Devil.

Do you ask how I know that these are the works of the Devil? I answer, from God’s Word, and from the revelation He gives us of Himself in His Son, Jesus the Christ. As I read God’s Word, I find there are things existing now, which **shall not** be, when God’s dear will is done; when Jesus has put **all** things under His feet: and the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. “Nations shall make war **no** more; the destructions of the enemy all come to a perpetual end.” “The lion, the leopard and the asp lose their ferocity and venom; the desert loses its waste; the rose its thorn, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.” “The inhabitant shall **no** more say, I am sick; pain, sorrow, sighing flee, and God wipes away all tears.” The last enemy, death,—**shall be** destroyed, cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, where the beast and false prophet have been cast; and there, their works follow them. “They shall **no more** hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord.”

God’s work like His word cannot even be **shaken**, but abides forever. Therefore I at once, and gladly,

conclude that the things that hurt, that destroy, that pass away are **not** the works of God, but **are the works** of the great Adversary of God and man, the Devil.

Looking at Jesus, we see, He came to do the will of God. (Psa. 40:8.) He came to **save**, and to **destroy**—to **save** men's lives (Luke 9:56), and to **destroy** the Devil and **all** his works (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8). Think you Jesus would rebuke a storm if God raised it? heal the sick, if God made sick? Would Christ raise the dead if God took life? God says, "Thou shalt not kill." And God is subject to the law He made. But the Devil, God's enemy and man's, he it is, who has opened Pandora's box of the old mythology and scattered the thousand hideous torments, and woe and blight and death—throughout the world. "He goes about as a hungry lion seeking whom he may devour." Jesus always went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the **Devil**; not oppressed of God. Jesus says, "I and My Father are one", ("The works I do I do not of Myself, but the Father who sent Me, He doeth the works.") One in purpose, mind and work—and that work, is to rid God's universe of the Devil and **all** his works,—works that are being attributed to the Good God every day. How sad and shameful it is!

Look at this instance of it. A young telegraph operator at work in his office after dark. An unknown party shot through the window and murdered him. The committee on resolutions of respect, from the local lodge, wrote: "Whereas, it has pleased Almighty God in His divine wisdom to remove our brother," etc. Notice, God removed the brother. God pleased with atrocious murder. Men were grieved, shocked, a reward was offered for the arrest of the murderer,

who made home and wife desolate. But God was pleased—God who says, “Thou shalt not kill”—pleased to remove a brother thus. Can you not see, O reader, that an **enemy**, not our Father God, hath done this? The Devil—“a liar and a murderer”—instigated this foul murder, and so cunningly has he hid himself that men, good men at that, are deceived, and charge God with his dreadful and deadly doings.

I have written elsewhere of the coroner’s inquest held over the dead body of a soldier smitten by lightning, and the verdict was: “Died by a visitation of God.” The surgeon saved by artificial respiration six others struck by the same bolt, who otherwise would have “died by a visitation of God”. This soldier may have been a wicked man, and there may have been some connection between cause and effect in his case. But what of this from a newspaper? These are the headlines: “A cyclone’s terrible work at McCook, Nebraska. Church blown down on children and 50 injured. Pastor buried under the organ and badly crushed about the body.” “Visitation of God”, who permitted it in His wise but inscrutable Providence, the theologians will tell us. I thought “His Providential care over us” was a common definition of Providence. Here is another “visitation of our Father in Heaven”. It occurred in Mexico, Mo. “In the late disastrous tornado 12 persons were killed and an equal number wounded. Houses and barns were swept away bodily by the terrific force of the hurricane. A horse standing in the road was raised in the air, carried a considerable distance and dashed to the earth with such violence as to kill it on the spot. Trees were torn up by the roots, a number of cattle were killed by being thrown violently against walls and

down steep declivities. A baby which a man was holding in his arms, was torn away, carried about 100 yards, dashed against a tree and instantly killed." Think of those innocent and helpless creatures of God, visited by Him in this wise. Or think of Him "permitting" it for some inscrutable reason. Ponder over the revelation in Job, which tells so plainly who it is that does these things; remember that Satan is the "Prince of the power of the air". (Eph. 2:2.) He turns the blessing of God into an instrument of wreckage and death; given the power or right to do so by God's blood-bought people, whom he hath deceived into believing that God does it or "permits" it for some wise purpose. Jesus said: "A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit." Our fall in Gen. 3 begins with "charging God", putting the blame on Him, and it has set the keynote of life. This confounding of God's work with Satan's always brings confusion, of which God is not the author. Every one knows I could multiply these instances a thousand-fold and that these are mere "specimen" bricks of the house "built by God" for the exhibition of His glory, **according to theology**. I will adduce one more and quit the loathsome record to tell its own story of man's slander of the good God, and the horrible education we are giving our children, as our parents, before, taught us. "Fort Worth, Texas, March 18: The severe snow and wind storm which has raged during several days past over the Rocky Mountain country, from Wyoming to Central Texas, has been exceedingly severe upon live stock. It is estimated that 2,000 cattle have perished along the line of the Denver, Texas & Gulf Road between Trinidad, Col., and Fort Worth, Texas, during the past week, and as many more, North and East

of Trinidad. Fruit all killed, spring wheat just up and killed to the roots. Thousands of sheep in the midst of lambing, will die as the result of the blizzard now raging." Truly, if this be the "Providence" of God, Who saved Nineveh, because there were innocent children and "much cattle", who would have perished with the sinners of the city, then the God of the Old Testament is more merciful than the God of the New Testament. "The Lord our God is one God", and He is revealed in His son, Jesus the Christ, who always "went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the Devil". "I am Jehovah, I change not"; "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever." Can you believe, dear reader, that God ever did such things Himself; or "permitted" them to be done by others? If you do, then why do you weep and lament and condole and sympathize one with another over such happenings? If they come from the Heavenly Father's hand, should you not rejoice and give thanks that His will is being done? When sickness comes, a "visitation of God", why do you send for a doctor to relieve you of your Father's visit? Think on these things and learn, I beg you, to separate "the precious from the vile". Woe to them who "charge God foolishly". "Prepare to meet thy God", if such He be, who does such things. How thankful I am that I do not have to meet such a God. For you will find, O man, believing in the God described above, that you will meet the Devil, when you face your God. **We are all going on to meet exactly the God we believe in.**

And now I charge you, "Learn by heart this axiom", taught so plainly in Gen. 1, and that God makes the A B C of religion "pure and undefiled", and separate between, "the precious and the vile", as God divided

light and darkness; pure and bitter waters; land from sea; and day from night. The former things are God's; the latter the Devil's. Learn the lesson "all along the line", and teach it, assiduously, to others. So shalt thou be owned as the "mouth" of God, though thou speakest with "stammering lips"; and thou shalt "adorn the doctrine of Christ and walk worthy of the Father unto all pleasing", though perchance 'lightly esteemed' among men.

"BERAYSHEETH", or "IN THE BEGINNING".

AXIOM 4.

The Creation of Man.

The Lord does not tell us, and it is worse than useless to guess, through what instrumentality the first creation was ruined by Satan. Reasoning from analogy we can only infer that free will, turned in the wrong channel, wrought disaster: and, free will, slowly turned in the right direction by Divine patience and perseverance, made the restoration possible. But as the next stage brings to view our own ancestry, and our own fall out of everlasting right, many particulars are given that, perhaps, were needless, touching the former prehistoric events, for us to know. At any rate, we are ignorant of them, and so, must be content, however curiosity may have been aroused, to let them rest in shadow. And even touching our own immediate history, there are many gaps we might like to have filled by authoritative statement, that, now, cost us reverent study, and patient waiting on the Lord before the light breaks in, and "the shadows flee away". The narrative is, at best, disjointed: and we must "compare scripture with scripture" before a coherent account lies before us.

"And Elohim said, Let us make man (Adam) in **our image, after our likeness**". Here are two things, mentioned, corresponding to two other things, afterwards enumerated: viz., "male and female". Whether "image" and "male", and "likeness" and "female" express **correlation**, I can only tentatively affirm. I

believe but can't demonstrate it. In Gen. 1:27, Elohim created in His "image", in Gen. 5:1 He created in His "likeness." In 1:25 notice the seeming confusion of singular and plural, "Let us make **man** and let **them**". The same is noticeable in Gen. 5:2, "male and female created He **them**, and called **their** name Adam". This apparent incongruity is perfectly accurate, when, like the Trinity in Unity, God is spoken of as "El" (singular) and "Elohim" (plural), so man male and man female are duality in unity: as afterwards "Spirit, Soul and Body" in each man and woman constitute another Trinity in Unity. "Fearfully and wonderfully made" are we!

Let us carefully ponder this narrative fact in passing. Its significance will come to the surface later on.

A creature created in the "image and likeness of God", cannot be one formed of the dust of the earth. Cannot be a creature possessed of either soul or body and less of both combined. It is akin to blasphemy to assert this; though man, in all ages, instigated by the Devil, has introduced this confusion into his thoughts of God. Not in vain has Jehovah commanded, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or likeness of anything that is in heaven above; earth beneath; or waters under the earth". God has neither soul nor body. When for redemption purposes He entered Himself into our lowly condition, He took upon Him "a true body and a reasonable soul": but that was when He became like fallen man, for our sake. "God is Spirit". We must not make Scripture; and that is as far as Scripture goes. Therefore man, "male and female", (not man and woman, for as yet, "woman" was not) in the image and likeness of God, must needs be only spirit—male and female. "Spirit"

surely since **God is male and female, too**; as proven by scripture. And pure untarnished spirit too: because there is "no spot or wrinkle or any such thing", in God. "As for God, His work is perfect". And perfection cannot be perfected, in **itself**: however much in its **manifestation**, it may be. Thus then we have "in the beginning" a creature of dual nature and one personality—pure spirit, as **God is pure**. Here comes a gap in the sacred narrative, where Satan would fain puzzle us with vain imaginings. Let us not be "ignorant of his devices", but take the story as it is given, thankful that we have it, even in broken fragments. One thing, is, I think, abundantly clear. Between the creation in Gen. 1:25-28 and Gen. 2:3 there has been a **fall out of everlasting right**: for the second view we have of this imperial vicegerent of God; (set in unrestricted dominion over "the fowl of the air: the fish of the sea: and the beast of the field",) is a most humiliating one. This pure spirit is now "cribbed, cabined and confined" in a **body** made of "dust of the earth"; and has for its companion a **soul**; the first capable of disease and "corruptible": the second capable of sin, and consequent "mortality". And from that to the present, it has been a "spirit in prison": "groaning" in a "tabernacle", "of the earth earthy": itself pure, yet linked with impurity: itself deathless, yet chained to a "body of death", there to wear out the weary years, till the "time of restitution of all things", brings relief.

The complex creature—now Spirit, Soul and Body—is degraded. The reins of dominion have slipped from hands unworthy to hold them: the disgraced creature is in a circumscribed garden, which he is to dress and keep: which soon becomes a jail to him, in his loneliness—dissatisfied with simple companionship with

God. At this crisis, the Heavenly Father, pitying his forlorn loneliness, which He is unable through the creature's fall to remedy, brings a partner to share his life: and woman is "taken out of man": not from his muscular **arm**; nor thinking **brain**: but from the conceded place of love—over the throbbing **heart**. This lovely creature fills the aching void of his empty life, for a while, only, for the Devil is busy and relentless, and the crisis of their destiny comes on apace. You know the pitiful story; how the subtlest of the "beasts of the field", is debauched; and through this creature the woman, the "weaker vessel", is beguiled: and then the man, plunging open-eyed and undeceived into the vortex, caps the climax of Satan's triumph, and their own misery.

Ever since that fatal day, this once imperial creature, so fallen and degraded and wretched, has been truly conscious of his heavenly origin, and still stretches out groping hands in the darkness, "feeling after, if haply he may find" the fallen reins of Empire: and be a **ruler** once more. In the light of Divine History, I know nothing more pathetic than these wonders of science and art around us. The "powers of nature" as men misname them, one after another, are falling into line—discoveries of hitherto hidden forces are flashing into notice: and man, the wondrous creature, stands the center of all. Still degraded: still with lower affinities triumphant: still turning into gold and "bonds" and "stocks" the marvelous creation of his God-like genius; but, thank God, destined, one day, to have back his lost dominion: and as the "gift of grace", to hold rule that shall never be taken from him. Yes! "holy prophets since the world began"—antedating Paul, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or even Enoch—"seventh from

Adam"—have spoken of this sublime "restitution of all things". "The strong man armed", holds, for a while, "his palace" "and his goods in peace": but "a stronger than he" is coming to "spoil his goods" and "take away the armor in which he trusted"—even man's willing compliance with his tyranny. When that goes, all goes that hindered; and our Jesus with "a willing people," shall usher in "the day" of His "power". Let us hark back and pick up a few of the strands of this wondrous history, for its better understanding. I said above that "the spirit in man is pure as the God who gave it". It **cannot sin** "because born of God": and is "immortal" because "His (God's) seed remaineth in it". So a much used, and as often abused, verse of scripture declares. We may take, not at random but by careful selection, the worst man we can find; and this possession of a **sinless nature** in him, is just as demonstrable as in the best specimen of manhood we know. Put this "worst man" upon the witness stand, and ask him a few questions. 1st, "Have you something **within you**, bad as you are, that always reproves you when you do wrong?" He will answer unhesitatingly "Yes." 2nd, "Does that **something within you** always advise you to do right?" "Yes," he promptly responds. 3rd. "Can you bribe that **something within you** to approve you when you do wrong?" "Certainly not." 4th. "Can you **bully** that **unnamed something**, into approving wrong doing?" "No." 5th. "Does that wondrous monitor within always range itself on the side of **right**, however you **may** wish it to bolster you in the wrong?" "It does." 6th, "Is it a part of you—inseparable for a moment from your personality, however you may wish to be rid of it, because it goads you with reproach when you sin?"

"Certainly: why do you ask? Do you suppose I am without a conscience? unlike other men?" 7th. "You have named it; I did not; but you recognize that you have what men call a 'better nature', that always moves you to do the right thing, and never under any circumstances consents to wrong?" "I have, most certainly." "You may step down, my poor devil-oppressed friend; I knew it before, but your testimony may be valuable to convince others."

What we call "Conscience"—"our better nature"—our "real self" the Bible calls "Spirit". It is the "image and likeness of God", in every human being that differentiates him from the mere "animal". This is the inherently immortal part of his wondrous personality. Plato, 300 years before Christ, predicated immortality of the soul: because he knew nothing of the tripartite personality—or spirit, soul and body, in the one humanity. He reasoned from a duality of being. He recognized man's immortality, and "reasoned well" about it, but he supposed man to be only "body" and "soul". We know better. We know from scripture the soul to be "mortal" as the body is "corruptible"—both in Christ alone, to attain to a higher estate. "When this mortal (soul) shall have put on immortality; and this corruptible (body) shall have put on incorruption; **then** shall be brought to pass the saying, Death is swallowed up in victory." And not till then. An immortal soul is never mentioned in scripture, on the contrary, the exact opposite is asserted. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Clearly, what can die, is **not immortal**. But it shall attain to immortality, in Christ. The Spirit is immortal, whether **in** Christ or **out** of Christ. The man dead in trespasses and sins is as immortal **in his Spirit**, as the most devoted follower

of the Lord. **His Spirit can neither sin nor die.** So here we have in this wondrous creature man, a “**Spirit**”—pure as its God; sinless; immortal; a “**Soul**”, peccable and mortal: and a “**body**” corruptible and capable of suffering in every nerve and muscle and fibre. And these **three are one**, in such a sense that his Spirit is himself; his soul is himself; and his body is himself. A marvel and a mystery as is the three-one mystery of the Godhead. Beyond our comprehension, yet clearly revealed in scripture, and experience.

This Spirit is the only part of us that knows God. That which is Spirit can only be “spiritually discerned.” Like the one window of the ark, opening heavenward, this pure “spirit in man”, is the only thing in us that can receive the direct communications of the Spiritual World. “**His Spirit witnesseth with our Spirit**, that we are the children of God”. This clearly puts asunder the things that differ. It is not the “Spirit of God”, the “Holy Ghost” of Scripture, that is the sacred **something in** an unregenerate man. It is **his own** spirit; that, “after we have believed”, is “sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise”; who enters the **believer’s** body to make it a “temple of God”; and to communicate to “**our spirits**” the things “freely given to us by God”. Let us never confound the two. Scripture never does. And we may safely infer that only because there is first “a spirit in man”, that the Holy Spirit can enter that man and find a resting place, so that our bodies can become “temples of the Holy Ghost” forever. It is a cruel blasphemy that the Holy Spirit ever takes up His abode in “Total Depravity”. Gen. 8 might teach us differently. An unclean raven can find congenial rest on the floating carcasses of a drowned and rotting world, and return not

to the ark. But a clean dove finds "no rest for the sole of her foot", and with weary wing and panting breast comes back to escape impurity. This is the standing type of the Holy Spirit, and it teaches us that the Holy Ghost **must** have a spot in us where a clean foot may rest, and a clean wing may be folded to rest, before the celestial visitant can enter, to abide.

It is a blessed thought that all have this image and likeness of God as an inalienable birthright. It may be smothered in sin: hidden under loads of rubbish—but it is there. And we ought to **know** it, when we go forth "to seek and save **that** which is lost". "A little deeper, and you will find the Emperor, Doctor", said the French Grenadier of the "Old Guard", as the surgeon probed among his ribs for the fatal bullet, and with this word of loyal love upon his lips the brave soldier's Spirit took its flight. And we who aspire to be soul-savers should never give over in "seeking to save **that** which is lost". It is the **spirit** we are to seek. A "little deeper"—perhaps much deeper—and we will find the image of "the Emperor". It is **there**, and it is half the battle to **know** that it is there. With this assured knowledge that we are not chasing a shadow, but getting nearer every moment to what we are looking for, we are not like those who "beat the air". **Never give any one up**, who is on salvable ground. And the Lord only knows when the salvable ground ceases. I close this chapter with the recital of a little story that I read somewhere, I cannot tell you whether it really happened or not. But it covers this ground and I give it for what it is worth as an illustration. A hardened criminal chained in his death cell awaited his execution for an atrocious murder. It was the last homicide of a series, that in cold-blooded

ferocity had stamped the perpetrator as a criminal of the lowest character. Kind-hearted men and women, pitying his forlorn condition, had tried to do him good and prepare him for his approaching end. He brutally rejected their overtures one and all, and drove them away with curses, so full of blasphemous horror, and so laden with impurity, that men and women fled with their fingers in their ears. And thus the poor wretch was left to die. A little girl—a Scotch lassie—heard of this hardened malefactor, that he was a fellow-countryman, and with the well-known clannish affection of her race, resolved to visit him. The jailer denied her access to the cell, telling her that he would not allow her to be subjected to the prisoner's obscene insults. The utmost concession she could wring from him was permission to stand outside the cell, and sing a song. Stationing herself as near as she could get, she began in her childish treble, a Scotch lullaby, that all Scotchmen know who have known a mother. As the familiar air came to the prisoner's ear, he lifted his head and listened, as to a voice from another world. And now a strange thing occurred. The harsh lines on the crime-scarred face seemed to be blotted out, one by one; and as the child went on to sing, the tears welled up in those hot, dry sockets, and by-and-by overflowed and trickled down his cheeks. At last, he rested his head upon his manacled hands and wept and sobbed as if his heart would break. The child motioned the astounded jailer to open the prison door, and walking in, with the familiar language of her people she addressed this broken-down man and told him of Jesus. He was saved and died a penitent, happy believer. The child had gone a little deeper than the rest and "found the Emperor".

"BERAYSHEETH", or "IN THE BEGINNING".

AXIOM 5.

Woman. The Fall.

There has resulted the wildest confusion in interpreting Gen. 1 and 2 by confounding "female" with **woman**. More infidels of the "baser sort" have been made by this one blunder on the part of professed expounders of the Scripture, than by any other that I know. A "so-called" scientist will bring his "science" to bear, in propping him in unbelief of the account of "Creation", as conceded by "good men" to be that popularly taught; but even the unscientific reader of the commentaries on Gen. 1 and 2, does not require to be learned in the wisdom of "the schools", to detect the fatal discrepancy between the two chapters, confessed by interpreters of the Word to be two records of the same thing. The "female" of Gen. 1 is, according to these commentators, synonymous with the "woman" of Gen. 2. That ground once taken, it is easy to prove the whole narrative to be bristling with inconsistencies. An "angel of light" could not "reconcile" those two chapters, on the theory of the authorized interpreters, whom the church has blindly followed for the ages. Meanwhile the making of sceptics, willing and unwilling, goes on, and will continue till "the church" ceases to defend the indefensible.

There is no "woman" in Chapter 1, at all. She does not "materialize"—if we may use a much abused word without offence—until the close of the second chapter, and after the **Adam** "male and female" has become the

degraded "keeper" of a bounded "garden", instead of the imperial proprietor of a planet. Take the narrative as consecutive, and there is no simpler narrative in the Bible; save for certain omissions, that curiosity would fain fathom but cannot. Take it as **repetition**, and one flounders in a bog of contradictions. "Save me from my friends", might the grieved Spirit of Truth exclaim; as the false expositions of the Word are placed as weapons of attack in the hands of enemies. The pure spiritual creature of God; "male and female"—called "Adam" (**not** Adam and Eve) in the day of their creation, (Gen. 5:1, 2) and "set over the works of God's hands" (Ps. 8:5-8) in proud preeminence, needed no "helpmate" to assist him in bearing his loneliness. The command to be "fruitful and multiply and **replenish** the earth" would have been obeyed, had he held his grand position, in different fashion from the same multiplication of species that the earth now witnesses, in the shame and sorrow and pain of it. The plain language of Gen. 3:16 assures me of that; when one result of sin entering the world, and the most common one, is described by the "Lord-God", in specific terms. Had Adam, "male and female", only obeyed the command of the "Lord-God" to eat of the "tree of life" and live forever, all might have yet been well. But this open door of blessing was passed, and the story of destiny, now so common, was for the first time rehearsed. Not for what man **does** is he condemned; but for what he **leaves undone**, is he destroyed. "He that believeth not" (not he who sins in act) must "be damned". It has been **so** "from the beginning": is so, yet. Failure to eat of the tree of life" paves the way to eating the tree of death. "By **one** man (Adam, male and female, not two—

Adam and Eve) "sin entered into the world". After that, by the joint action of **two**—"death by sin" followed. Unbelief, is the parent of **sin in act**. Indeed there is no sin without it: and the condemnation for "deeds done in the body" is only because they are the **accurate measure of unbelief**.

Man in **loneliness**, with God waiting to make the creature happy in fellowship with Himself, is a common enough sight now: so common that we take little notice of it: but there was a pathetic **first time**, when wondering angels looked, in heaven's own amazement, at the strange sight: and without extravagance, we can imagine crystal drops of sorrow falling from eyes unused to weeping—forerunners of the Redeemer's tears that watered the highway, as "He drew near to Jerusalem, and wept over it".

But it has ever been the case; if we will not rise to the measure of God's grace, His love still comes to us **where we are**, and does what it can for us, in our self-appointed misery. "It is not good for man to be alone"—our pitying Lord-God says, when man had rejected His companionship. "I will make a helpmeet for him". Even in this strait the proud creature will make his own vain attempts to find a partner. He seeks one among the animal creation, but seeks in vain. Then, the Lord "is found of one who sought Him not", and He makes provision even when He has not been asked to furnish it. "A deep sleep" is the **condition**, a transformed rib the beautiful result: and lo the "female", "taken out of man", becomes the "woman" of this tragic history, through whom, a new-found **bliss** comes to the lonesome creature: and afterwards a **snare**: but from whom also, (such is the mystery of grace) is to come the World's Redeemer.

"Sin abounding: grace much more abounding". Satan tempting and destroying: God restoring in a glory far greater than before sin entered.

After the tree of death is eaten, the option of partaking of the "tree of life", in Eden, is denied the guilty pair. They may eat of it in the "Paradise of God", but not in order to gain eternal life. That, henceforth, is only the "gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord". As saved by grace, nothing is denied them; but only as immortal and saved—Spirit, Soul and Body—can they taste the fruit of that wondrous tree "that bears twelve manner of fruit: and yields its fruit every month". So they go forth, hand in hand, with a better blessing, though they know it not, than the privilege of eating of the tree of life, when it could only perpetuate sin and misery. They are "driven forth", in haste, lest they should eat to their own undoing, for the Lord is ever better to us, than we to ourselves, and He will not allow us ignorantly to ruin ourselves, if He can prevent it. Thus, Adam and Eve go forth to take their places as the combined head of the race of which we are part: and begin the sorrowful, yet joyous, history, whose end is "Paradise regained" by the "Blood of the Lamb".

"BERAYSHEETH", or "IN THE BEGINNING".

AXIOM 6.

God's Unchanging Attitude to Sinners.

Again, the dear Lord makes haste to teach us, clearly, what He well knows Satan will do his worst to obscure. Second only to the knowledge of what He is, **in Himself**, is the knowledge of what **He is to us, under all circumstances**. Doubt or uncertainty on that point means misery and fear after we become sinners. Therefore the unspeakable value of the lesson that is taught in His interview with the first pair of human sinners. Other sinners compared with them are hardly sinners at all, "by reason of the sin in them that excelleth". "Inexcusable", "aggravated", "of deepest dye", are terms that feebly express the guilt of the first sinners. The argument is "*a fortiori*", for our comfort. If then the "Lord-God" in dealing with Adam and Eve exhibits amiable forbearance and tenderness, "much more" will He show the same in dealing with us, who have sinned so much less. For, not to lessen in the least, the odious character of sin, in itself, but only speaking comparatively, we have much excuse for being sinners: and the wonder of wonders is that we do not sin more. Therefore, the ineffective appeal of the pulpit, when it attempts to get the conscience aroused; and hence our own failures that all have felt, who have attempted to prove a heinous case against ourselves: and reproach ourselves as "hearts of flint" because we do not **feel** more deeply our own innate sinfulness. Spite of a

thousand exhortations for "sorrow for sin", we find ourselves making more or less plausible excuses for being what we are. And then we think this a device of the Devil, and beat our breasts, and howl "mea culpas" till the welkin rings. And all in vain, for we only feel, after all, that it is only wonderful we are not greater sinners than we are. "My Lords," said Clive, when charged with speculation during his Indian career, "when I consider how many opportunities I had for amassing immense riches, I am amazed beyond measure at my **moderation.**" Thus with all of us when we get to dealing with ourselves on the sin question. We are cast upon earthly life without our own consent. We find ourselves in a world where there are ten inducements to do wrong, where there is one to do right, and we have a personality within us with a trend ever downward and sinward: so that to do the wrong is but to float with the stream; while to do right means to take the "laboring oars", with both hands, and pull up stream for dear life. The rewards for wrong-doing held out by the "god of this world" are immediate, delicious and intoxicating. The deadly consequences are as artfully hidden from view as, of old, when all that was attractive in the "tree of death" "in the midst of the garden" was obvious, and the fatal poison was out of sight. On the other hand the rewards of righteousness are only present to faith, and in the future, largely: at best, seemingly far off, and seen through a haze of sense. For faith is an **exotic**, and only cultivable with the **utmost** care, while the wild weeds of unfaith grow rampant in the garden of our hearts. Do, say, think what we will, such thoughts will come as arguments, not simply plausible or sophistical, but with a solid ground-work

of truth, that goes far to nullify the really wholesome reason for our keenest remorse, when sin confronts us, to be settled with. But Adam and Eve had no such excuses to plead: and no such sin, in vileness and lack of motive, has ever been committed since. As one of our poets has said of another thing, "It stands alone, like Adam's recollection of his fall". In its unique guilt, the sin of our first parents, as dealt with by the Lord-God, covers **all** the broad ground, of **all** the numberless sins, of varying moral turpitude, that have been committed in **all** ages, since. It is well to see this, very clearly, if we would have, what Scripture describes as "**strong consolation**; who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the gospel." And we need not fear the effect of this comparative view of our own sin, since the Lord Himself makes all allowance for it. We need not fear that repentance will be less genuine because we begin by acknowledging facts. No genuine change was ever effected on a basis of falsehood, and an exaggeration of our sinfulness, not only **possible**, but extremely **common**, in dealing with ourselves, is sure to have reaction in **pity** for our maligned selves, which, just so far, nullifies genuine sorrow for sin. On the contrary, no remorse is so genuine as that which looks open-eyed upon **facts**, as they are. And sin never looks so "exceeding sinful" as viewed in the light of the love that has pardoned it, and looked upon it in all its true **extenuations**. Which may seem to the careless thinker a paradox; but it is **not**. The ease with which the average confessor of it, in odious and exaggerated terms; goes back to sin again; again to be confessed with redundancy of shameful utterance; and then again committed—tell out the story of something wrong, fundament-

ally, in the original experience. "The tree is known by its fruits". I appeal to the common experience of God's children. We may then, legitimately, take the full comfort of the fact that our Lord-God in dealing with the guilty pair in Eden dealt with **pre-eminent** sinners, whose sin, (do we never so badly) we can never approach the guilt of; so that if the dear Lord could forgive them, and with apparent ease, much more easily He can forgive us. I speak, entirely, of His attitude towards sinners; His forgiving love; His favorable regard for the "chief of sinners". (Here—par parenthesis—let me bring to notice, that Paul's argument in I. Tim. 1:15, 16, is an exact confirmation of the remarks above made.) We will see, in another place, how difficult was the deliverance from Satan's power, just because the Devil is malignant. But as for God, "**He** is good. His mercy endureth forever". Here then we have, in Gen. 3, the key-note of all God's after dealing with sinners, and we find this axiomatic lesson taught that He **always forgives, unconditionally, all sin and sins, in all sinners, from the beginning to the end of time.** That this forgiveness is spontaneous, and all-embracing; not waiting on confession: or petition; or sorrow; or promise of amendment; or any other condition conjured up by the malice of Satan, or the folly of man to weaken the **grace** of it, or nullify the fulness of it. And this is a wondrous thing for sinners to know; that "where sin abounds, grace much more abounds"; that sin cannot over-top the love that pardons it: that God is glorified in "**freely** forgiving" when we have "nothing to pay"; that under no circumstances will he have anything against us: and that He loves and forgives in Heaven, Earth and Hell, just the same. It is such an unspeakable comfort to know

that God's love is not dependent on any goodness in us: and that "forgiveness is **with Him**"—ever, and always **for us**, be we never so unworthy. He never ceases to look at **His own** "likeness and image" in us, and always has respect for **that**. It hides **all** our shortcomings, in **His** eyes. And His love is the love He bears to **that**. Even as He looks upon the face of "His anointed", behind whose perfect righteousness we stand, as our "shield" **against Satan**, and "forgets" all else. This familiar way of love we know in ourselves and have seen it, feebly set forth, in others, how love can blind us to faults; and overlook a thousand shortcomings, in the object of it. It is one of its sweetest manifestations; and it is but a weak scintillation from the central source of light and love—our God, who is "love and nothing else". This is the lesson taught in Eden where the Lord-God first taught it to the real "chief of sinners". Notice, carefully, how the Lord refrains from **rebuke** to the guilty pair: and how He turns upon Satan, the "Old Serpent", and curses **him** as the cause of all. "Because **thou hast done this**, cursed art **thou**". He is the **only one** cursed in the third of Genesis. The after announcements, of exhausting toil in labor; the pains of childbirth; the return to dust; are **not curses from God**, but the telling out of certain consequences of that day's tragic history, that would have to go on for ages, before the loving purpose of God in their obliteration could be carried out. The Lord-God stands **between** Satan and his victims—notice well the position, and Love's unchanging attitude ever since—and in every word and gesture shows Himself the "Friend of sinners", and the enemy of their enemy. No action could more completely identify Him with us. And that attitude has

never been changed. What a glorious "Beraysheeth" Axiom it is! What a "**Comforter**" has our God "been from the beginning"! And how has Satan cunningly transformed the Good God into a tormentor, through man's ignorance of this **initial letter** of the fall. Therefore, on the cross of Christ, this lesson is taught anew, and most impressively, in those memorable words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." One would think the meaning of such words could not be misunderstood; but the training of ages, in the belief of a **lie**, is not to be obliterated in a moment, even though the Son of God, Himself, nails the falsehood to His cross. Even then,—O, pitiful to relate!—His followers go on to believe and teach the very error His dying lips denounced; as if the Master had never spoken. Who of all His professed followers believe to-day that **God forgives everybody alike**; and that His standing attitude toward **all sinners** is **indiscriminating forgiveness**; just because it is **in Him**, and must need go out of Him, toward all, alike; like the impartial light of His sun that shines on good and bad, the same; or the gentle showers, that fall on "the just and the unjust" without distinction? Yet that is the lesson of Eden, "in the beginning", and that is the lesson of Calvary when the "fulness of times" has come. Can you make anything else out of "**Father, forgive them**"? Analyze the sentence; take in the environments; sift the possible meanings till only the true one remains, and you will find that God is the **all-Fatherly forgiver of all His guilty creatures**. Analyze the sentence. Can you doubt that Jesus forgave His murderers? Or can you hesitate to own that He spoke that sentence as the mouth-piece of the Father? "The words I speak, are not Mine, but the words of Him

who sent Me". He was God's representative "all along the line" of His earthly life. His "works" as well as "words" were not His but the Father's. He was the "brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person". Not **some** like Him, or a **great deal** like Him, but His very "image". "God manifest in flesh" is His scriptural definition. The petitionary form of the words do not detract from the complete unity of purpose and feeling between Father and Son. Whatever the reason for the particular form in which forgiveness comes, it is not possible that Father and Son were at cross-purpose; and that the Son was seeking for sinners a blessing to be wrung by prayer from the reluctant heart of His Father. A thousand times, No! "Hear, O Israel! the Lord your God is one God". Not a shadow of a shade's difference can there be between the persons of the "adorable Trinity". One, ever, in thought, feeling, affinity, purpose. Always **one**.

What then is the ground over which this "greater absolution" stretches? Take in the scene, as best you can, dear reader. Around the cross of the World's Redeemer, are gathered "all sorts and conditions" of men. Surging, in a mad mob, around the sufferer, we see specimens of every class of earth's sinners, for every one of whom He came to die, and even then had begun to "taste death" with all that that fearful word implies. There were Chief Priest, Elders, Scribes, Pharisees; Sadducees, Rulers; "riffraff": grave senators; harlots; rich; poor; respectables; criminals; thieves; murderers and reputable citizens; all huddled together; forgetting, in their common hatred of that poor victim on the cross, the social distinctions that elsewhere would keep them far apart. The "broad

phylactery", touched the crimson garment of the polluted prostitute; the lowest肘bowed the highest, unrebuked. The crowd, so varied, for one brief occasion is perfectly homogeneous. And in all the annals of crime, I know nothing more unreasoningly ferocious, more devilishly unjust, than the action of that "Golgotha" mob. I can understand the ungovernable fury of a crowd of maddened men, with some red-handed criminal in their clutches. Some wretch, fresh taken in an act of brutal lust, or atrocious murder. I can make some allowance for outraged human nature, so beside itself as to hang, in hot haste; riddle with bullets; even burn alive; the helpless object of their wrath; but this cruelty is no cruelty at all, beside the cold-blooded ferocity that denied our loving Savior the poor solace of a quiet death. When I hear men, scholarly, well-bred men mocking one poor, helpless sufferer in the hour of His extreme agony; "wagging their heads"; saying, "Thou that destroyest the temple in three days—save thy self." "He trusted in God; let Him have Him if He wants Him, for He said, I am the Son of God." "Come down from the cross now, and we will believe on you." "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." O, what a scene of horror! What malignant cruelty! Yes, it **was** "Satan's hour and the power of darkness." And the answer to it all was only this: "Father, forgive! They know not what they do." There never has been such another scene enacted on earth. Now compare this forgiveness, with man's poor shallow thought of God's forgiveness. Did these sinners **ask** for pardon? Did they **want** it? Did they **feel sorry for their sins**? Did they promise **amendment of life**? These are some of the "sine qua non" requirements of man's invention, before the God

of **their** theology will condescend to look upon His lost creatures with **forgiving** love, however He may pity them in the abstract. His pardon lies behind a host of hurdles, the poor sinner is commanded to vault, before he can come to God, at all. Now look at the **reality**, upon the cross; "writ large" in crimson lines. There is **Divine** forgiveness bestowed without a promise or condition, upon an indiscriminate mob of God-haters, God-revilers; neither asking nor wishing pardon, and flinging it, when offered, back into the face of the forgiving one, with every epithet of scorn that wicked hearts could suggest. And yet the forgiveness is accorded—**just the same**. For, "know, O man, whomsoever thou art", that God's love and God's forgiving grace come not in answer to merit, on the guilty creature's part. They are lavished on **demerit**. They flow forth from His heart because there, and need no other inducement to their generous exercise. The Devil would have us believe otherwise, and has enlisted good men, in every age, to deny it, but that is **grace**—"Love displayed to the **helpless** and **unworthy**" (Dr. Hodge)—irrespective of merit or emotion on our part: given, impartially, to all alike. Its bestowment has its springs of being in God alone. Our **goodness** will not hasten its coming, one moment: our **badness** will not delay its arrival, in the least. "This is compassion like a God". Worthy of His greatness: worthy of His goodness. Less than this would never fix our wavering love. Only this can conquer the revolt of His rebel creatures and make them forever loyal. This free forgiveness to all alike does not in the least conflict with the solemn sentence: "He that believeth not shall be damned", for the simple reason that **damnation** is from **Satan**, as **salvation** is from **God**; and how-

ever forgiveness may be linked with ultimate salvation, it certainly does not save, **by itself**. Love cannot prevent a free willed creature from ruining itself. Nor can forgiveness settle a debt contracted with the Devil. Else would the cross never have been set up to pay that awful debt. We must never forget that there is a God of love to settle accounts with: and a Devil of hate, whose claims must be equitably adjusted. If only we had one God to give account to, every claim would be expunged by divine forgiveness and forgetfulness. The whole story is written in a sentence: "And when they had nothing to pay He frankly forgave them both." But the Devil knows nothing of forgiveness. He is inexorable in demanding payment. His "pound of flesh" must be yielded. And if he can persuade God's silly creatures to fall into **unbelief**, he damns them—or tortures them in his prison house—till full expiation is rendered and the "uttermost farthing" his hatred can exact, is paid. Thenceforth, of course, he has no further claims, and the poor sufferer "falls in the hands of God", whose love will heal every hurt, and whose sweet grace will give an abundant compensation for every agony endured. Keep clearly in mind "a good God and a bad Devil", and all is clear in the outcoming phenomena of life, in Earth, Hell and Heaven. The philosophy of damnation is an open book.

But there is another class of Scripture, dealing with the saved ones, who do not pass through Hell, enroute to heaven, but who learn a sad lesson on Earth. All, conversant with Scripture, have noticed how God's forgiveness, in certain cases, is limited by Confession, Reformation, Prayer, Forgiveness of others, etc. At first sight these Scriptures seem to deal a

death-blow to the forgiveness spoken of above—that comes to all without the slightest limitation or good deserving. The mystery is cleared up by discerning the difference between the Lord's dealing with the members of His household, who are “children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ”; and the outside “aliens and strangers” from the “covenants of promise” by their unbelief. The distinction is as wide as that observed by any one who has a household of his own, where one regime obtains, and another, in dealing with the “general public”, outside his family. I have to **train** my **children**, in the way I would have them go. Those beyond the family circle, I cannot make the same rules for. If I see a little shivering beggar, crying bitterly, with bare feet and scant clothing, as I am seated beside a comfortable fire, with my little son conning his lessons, as he waits for breakfast; my heart is touched with pity for the poor weeping waif, about my boy's age and size and yet so forlornly different. I rise in haste from my easy chair, run to the front door, call the child in, off the street, and ask in sympathetic tones: “What ails you, my lad?” “My father is sick, sir, and mother was taken down this morning; and we have nothing in the house to eat; and there are two little ones, younger than me, at home, crying with hunger. Mother told me to go out and see if any one would help us.” My charitable heart is touched by the boy's appeal, and all my comfortable environments plead for him; and especially as I think of the possibility of my own little Charley ever coming to want in a cold world. So I have him in by the warm fire; learn the address of his poor home; dispatch a servant with coal and food for immediate use for the children and invalids; give the child a good break-

fast; rig him out in a comfortable suit of Charley's; put stockings and shoes on his rough, red, naked feet, and send him home, happy, smiling and grateful to tell his parents that their wants shall all be attended to till they get well and can do something for themselves.

And in all this generous action, I do not once notice or upbraid my little guest, for his unwashed face, and uncombed hair. It would brush all the bloom from the gracious favor to mar it by any thing that would make the little fellow anything but supremely happy. A homily on cleanliness, or a mention of comb and brush, would be cruelly out of place; would it not? And yet when, the next day, Charley comes down later than usual for his breakfast, and I see at a glance that he has not washed his face, nor combed his hair, I at once reprove him, and send him back to his room. When he reappears, he is all right. He knew well the rule of the house, and what is due to "table manners", in his father's house. He knows that soiled garments and disorderly manners of any sort cannot be overlooked; and he knows well, that these salutary regulations are for his own good. Therefore there is no impeachment of my love, as he obeys the—it may be—trying rule. Thus is it also, in our Heavenly Father's family. The forgiveness which He extends to all, unasked, and undeserved, is limited and trenched with rules and regulations for His beloved children. They must confess, reform, forgive others, and the like, before knowing it. Here a careful explanation and analysis of what the Scriptures mean by "forgiveness" is needful, lest we do dishonor to the Lord by confounding the things that differ. When God forgives either saint or sinner, we must carefully distinguish between His attitude that never changes and

our apprehension of that attitude, which is ever shifting with surrounding circumstances.

Let me illustrate. Here is an "awakened sinner"—as the cant phrase goes—in a "protracted meeting", who has been aroused to see his danger by a stirring sermon. He is in an agony of terror and remorse, longer or shorter, as preachers vary. Suddenly his fears vanish, and his mourning is turned into joy. We have all witnessed the sight. Ask him what makes the change in his feelings and he will likely reply, "God has forgiven my sins." "When?" "O, a little while ago. I was very miserable and now I am so happy." Now what has really happened? The penitent thought God had not forgiven him, and he thought unforgiven sin would damn him. Naturally, he felt miserable. Then he thought God **had** forgiven, and he was correspondingly joyous. But was this change in **God**, at all? Certainly not. God had **always** forgiven. What then? Why, this: **the poor soul for the first time apprehended and believed that forgiveness.** The change was **wholly**, in the "poor sinner". The difference was that between unbelief and faith. And here is where Satan works his mischief. He teaches us that the change in ourselves, is the result of a corresponding **change in God.** And so, we get to believe that God is moved to pardon, by our tears, our confessions, our agonies of "conviction", and what not; than which nothing can be more false and God-dishonoring. This robs God of His chiefest attribute, Grace—or "love displayed to the helpless and unworthy" (Hodge). So all along the line, when a saint, after wandering, comes out of misery into happiness, there has been no **change in God.** He is unalterably and always **forgiving.** But our apprehension of His forgiveness, waits upon con-

fession, return, etc.; as the "sinner's" apprehension and joy waited on his **acceptance of Christ**,—the only appointed test between condemnation and salvation. And as in the "sinner's" case, anything but a simple "coming to Christ" "just as he is, without one plea", would mar grace, and vitiate salvation in its freeness and fulness; so in the "saint's" case, discipline would be weakened and household order destroyed if happiness could come to the wandering child without salutary confession; promise of amendment; and sorrow for the guilt of straying from the fold. Read Ps. 32 and understand this whole contention. David was unutterably miserable in **sin**. That is a saint's "earmark". He cannot "roll sin as a sweet morsel under his tongue". He may continue in it; may be too weak to break away from it; but he can't be **happy** in it. And he will be miserable just so long as he does not confess it and put it away. "While I kept silence," etc. "I said, I will confess," etc. These two sentences tell the whole story. So, if we "forgive not men their trespasses, our Father in Heaven will not forgive us", must not be understood as any change in **God**, but in **ourselves**. "If I bring my gift to the altar, and there remember that my brother has aught against me", I can't go on as a **happy worshipper**, till I make it right with my brother. When I do, I can come and "offer my gift" in joy and with a **sense of acceptance**. This, too, is a familiar experience, known by all true worshippers.

How have needless burdens been borne by earnest souls, groping after light and comfort, by the failure to see that what the Lord demands as right from a "saint" would be an intolerable wrong if made a test of acceptance of the "sinner". Take the fifty-fifth

chapter of Isaiah and apply it to an "awakened sinner" "anxiously inquiring": "What must I do to be saved?" Do? Why, "let the sinner **forsake his way**; the unrighteous man **his thoughts**, and then let him return unto the Lord, who will have mercy on him; and to our God, who will abundantly pardon him". Clearly, the inference is, that God's mercy and pardon are **conditioned** upon the poor creature doing what is **simply impossible**. When you come to analyze the proviso, no "sinner" on earth can do either of these things. Thousands have attempted it and failed. And yet it is what a "saint" can easily do, because the indwelling power of the Holy Ghost is present, enabling the **willing** child to do "all things through Christ Jesus strengthening" him. Yet how often we have heard the changes rung on these words from the pulpit, essaying to guide the wanderer into the way of peace. I am bold to say that no poor sinner ever truly came to Christ on that line; and that peace is unattainable in that way, simply because the soul's gaze is turned in upon itself; ever raising and never settling, the important question; "Have I fully complied with these terms of pardon?" "What lack I yet?" Whereas such an inquiry shows that the poor bewildered one is wholly off the track; since true peace can **only** come from knowing what another **has done for us**, and not in any knowledge of ourselves "good, bad or indifferent". No words can exaggerate the disaster that has been wrought, by the misapplication of this and kindred scriptures, laying burdens that neither "ourselves or fathers were able to bear", and bringing in a heathenish system of self-saviorism, instead of the blessed "gospel of the grace of God".

How many have been tortured, on dying beds, by the thought that their salvation was dependent on a hearty forgiveness of all their enemies, and how many have cowered before that scripture, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you", and have sought a false resting-place in trying to forgive all who had offended them. Nothing can be clearer than that both Isaiah 55 and the text just quoted can only be spoken to the **Lord's Children**. To them, both scriptures are most appropriate. Addressed to a sinner, it is a trump of doom. Compare the expressions, "in a time when thou mayest be found", Ps. 32:6, with the same word in Isaiah 55:6 and learn that both are addressed to the "Godly" who have strayed temporarily from the narrow way.

So deeply rooted is the impression, made by centuries of Satanic teaching, that God's forgiveness is ever dependent on some change in man, that the presentation of God in the most amiable attitude of always forgiving irrespective of any possible action on our part, is considered most "dangerous teaching". Thus every successive advance in grace has been met with a hurricane of howls, of the same sort. Luther's "justification by faith" encountered just this storm of opposition as a "dangerous doctrine". Wesley's spiritual religion had to confront an immense majority of formalists, all descanting on the **danger** to stable and orthodox faith, his reformation entailed. Not to mention how men of old, in their zeal for established formulas of doctrine, said of Paul that his gospel taught the **dangerous** doctrine of "going on to sin that grace might abound". And yet, now, the very "theologians" who deny that God **forgives** all alike, even the vilest,

will admit that God loves all men, even the most wicked of earth. This is **making a part greater than the whole**. For all must own that **forgiveness** is but a **segment of the circumference of love**. And if the whole contains all its parts, it certainly cannot be predicated of God's love that it is all embracing, while a part of it is limited. God's love is **unconditional**. "God is Love." It is not dependent on worthiness in its object, any more than that the raindrops, or the sunlight, discriminate upon whom they fall. And so with forgiveness. "It is with Him" "that He may be feared"—not in the degrading sense of "fear" of **punishment** but the holy childlike "fear" of grieving the heart that loves so freely and fully. There is no covert threat of withholding forgiveness unless terms are met, in those words of scripture. That would rob them of all their value, and make us a perpetual prey to the "Spirit of bondage, again, and again, to fear". But "forgiveness is **with Him**", and **always at our disposal, without money or price**; without distinction or predisposing merit: coming forth to bless all, as the sun shines, and the rain falls, in unconditional benediction upon all alike. And if the sinner is full of the "fear that has torment", it is only because he does not cast himself on the love that "**casteth out fear**". And if the saint is miserable, it is only because he remains on the Devil's territory, where he can expect nothing else but unhappiness, and does not step "over the line" into God's domain, where there are no clouds, and where a loving God stands ever with outstretched, empty arms, that welcome the backsliding child, by day and night; and where "the husks the swine do eat" give place to the "fatted calf" in the "Father's house".

"BERAYSHEETH," or "IN THE BEGINNING".

AXIOM 7.

Cain and Abel Religions.

The great thing is never to be ashamed of God or our Bibles. If we begin with apologizing, we are fore-doomed to defeat and disaster. It is a significant fact that defenses of Christianity are termed **apologios**. It has stereotyped a word in the language. Neither God nor the Bible needs an apology. Yet so-called scientists, with their loud pretensions, have put saints into an apologetic attitude; and many are actually ashamed of parts of their Bible. All is lost when this is the case. One way to foil adversaries, is, never to **admit** premises that put one in an inevitable corner. Boldly denied, on general principles, the Lord will soon find a solution. For example: if you allow a false premise as to the first of Genesis being an original creation—contradictions are inevitable. Difficulties are insuperable. As a resurrection of a ruined creation—how plain! So with the base charge that Moses compiled old documents full of scientific inaccuracies. Deny it on general principles. Then you will soon find a reason for changes in name from Elohim to Jehovah-Elohim and again in the fourth chapter to Jehovah alone. Deny identity of creations in chapters 1 and 2 if you see hopeless discrepancies. The Lord will soon show you two creations of man that clears all up. Cain and Abel are specially valuable because the history of God's dealings with the first pair of sinners born in the same condition in which we find ourselves

--"Conceived in sin". Adam and Eve were not that. They were pre-eminent sinners.

Thus far our axiomatic lessons have touched upon the state of innocence **before** the garden; or the transitional experience **within** the garden. Now we have a lesson taught **outside** of Eden, before the human race is launched upon the tide of its sadly eventful history—stretching down to the present and through the "æres of ages".

The point to be carefully "learned by heart", is the radical difference between **two religions**, that began in the lives of Cain and Abel—the **twin** brethren whose destinies were so widely different, though so closely associated at the start. A fitting analogy to these sundered lives is found in the two raindrops from the same cloud, falling on Eastern and Western slopes of the mighty water shed of the Rocky Mountains, where one wends its way to the Pacific Ocean and the other to the Atlantic, **severed by a breath of air at the starting point**, but destined never to meet again till the divided waters of East and West flow together in the great beyond.

The difference between Cain and Abel was not in their **conditions**. Born of the same **mother**; a few moments apart; both born **outside Eden**; with opportunities of blessing and cursing alike, we must search for the meaning of the after lives in the personalities themselves. And here we find the solution of the mystery, as ever, elsewhere, in **individual choice**, that differentiates the destinies of every individual unit of the human race, since the time they had the option of evil and good set before them, and the power of choice vested, inalienably, in each one. Cain **chose** one way of worshipping God; Abel another. Of course the

choice implies opportunity of selection; which, again, involves an express commandment of the Creator. As in Eden, "The Lord God **commanded** the man", verses 16 and 17—chapter 2; and now "God **commandeth** men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Cain then chose to **disobey**: Abel to **obey**. The New Testament account of the fourth of Genesis (in Heb. 11:4) while emphasizing the acceptance of Abel's offering; by the use of "more acceptable", intimates that Cain's was less acceptable, and not entirely **rejected**. And this is comforting. No honest attempt to please God, however misguided, is entirely **lost**. Jesus did not repudiate the **whole** of Phariseism; but cheerfully recognized **good** as **good**, wherever and whenever He found it. "These things ought ye to have **done**, but not to have left the other undone"—gives credit to good work, **as far as it went**. This clearly understood, we are not to underrate the fatal character of the omission that far overbalances the merit of the works of commission, even of "bestowing all the goods to feed the poor; or giving the body to be burned". The sentence of the last "Court of Appeals", declares these **unprofitable** (1 Cor. 13:3) though the paeans of praise may come from our fellowmen, because of these attractive virtues. The fourth of Genesis is peculiarly **ours**, for it tells of God's dealings with sinners—born outside Eden. The pair of **innocents** turned **guilty** can never be a perfect parallel with our case; for we can never fall out of perfect innocence, as they did. But Cain and Abel **are** parallels. There were two "offerings" under the law, corresponding to its grand divisions, as laid down by the Master. First, The Burnt Offering—or "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart"; and second, the "Meat Offering"—or

"Love thy neighbor as thyself". The first—Abel's. The second—Cain's. These two grand divisions are no less the same in the Gospel. The order is everlasting and inviolate. God **must** be **first**. All others **second**. Satan perverts this sacred **order**, as he cannot blot the duties from the creature's conscience. So he invented Cain's religion as opposed to Abel's—or God's. This Cain religion was perpetuated by the Pharisees; and is substantially, the main feature of the false doctrine now foisted on the Church of Scotland by Dod; Bruce; Drummond; and the younger clergy. It was the error of Horace Bushnell, in our own country, whereby he nullified the glory of an otherwise brilliant ministry.

The "Burnt offering" gave God, His **own**. The "first-born" lamb was **God's**. Abel therefore gave **nothing** of his. In this salvation God **alone** appears. The "meat offering"—represented man's work—the sweat of his brow—the labor of his hands—therefore, appropriately—his duty to his "neighbor". Here, then, is the wrong of Cain's religion. It substitutes **duty to neighbor for duty to God**; or at best makes the less to **precede** the **greater**. That was the Pharisee's **doing**—leaving the greater as **undone**. It led to the murder of Cain's brother. It led to the murder of God's Son. In modern parlance "**following** Christ" is put for "**believing on** Christ". The dying for our sins, "according to the Scriptures", has been supplanted by "dying to set us an example of self-sacrifice". It is all one melancholy "Cain religion". The mark on Cain was a **love** mark, intended to save. How different from the "brand of Cain" as popularly spoken of. And note well, that as all this catastrophe began in a matter of **worship**, which distinctly implies a de-

sire and effort to **please God**: so the disobedience was only in part, and with much to extenuate it: only a "rift in the lute", but enough to change harmony into discord.

If we "walk by sight", Cain's offering is not only the more pleasing to sense, but has the warrant of a **distinct command of God** to justify its bringing. It belonged to the class of sacrifice denominated the "Meat Offering", which, **in its place**, was only second in importance to the "Burnt Offering". Ah! "**in its place**" is the pregnant sentence. This is the "Axiom" of Genesis 4. **Dislocation** is fatal—"all along the line." And we have only to study the history of the church in all ages to learn how Satan has taken advantage of ignorance of this "law of the spirit of life", to transform it into a "law of sin and death". This is the lesson we are seated to learn "**in the beginning**". There is no after progress without it, and O, as we trace the disastrous consequences of neglect to acquire it, **at the start**, may we learn it now; though like the pathetic spectacle of an adult school where the aged pupils are slowly and painfully taking in the lessons appropriate to little childhood—the lesson may be a difficult one to learn, and our hardened habits of thought rebel at every step; still "better late than never", is a good word, and the discipline of seating ourselves on "**the lowest form in the school of grace**", will be salutary however painful.

Returning then to our story of the two **worshippers of God**. Both were devout worshippers. We may not rob Cain of this poor solace. The Lord gives him this credit in Heb. 11:4, in comparing the two offerings. In characterizing Abel's service as "more acceptable", He distinctly awards a **degree** of merit to

Cain's. He may not have had "respect" to it, as to **Abel's**, but He can never deny or ignore **His own**, however mistakenly presented. I am sure we are too hard upon "Pharisees" as though they exemplified the doctrine of "total depravity". So did **not** Jesus regard them, though sharply rebuking them "all along the line". "These things **ought ye to have done**"—ascribes decided merit of a certain sort, to them, as doers of things, in themselves, meritorious. "This man went down to his house justified **rather than** the other", does not cut off the Pharisee, as we do, from all that is **good**, in his temple worship. You see, clearly, dear reader, that the different cases are beyond question, only comparative—not absolute. It is well to "give honor to whom honor is due" as we go along. We are all **born extremists**, seeing **nothing** good in the objects of our dislikes; as we are blind, in love, to the objects of our affection. The "middle way" is the better one.

Taking Cain then to be an honest worshipper of God, as he undoubtedly was, let us carefully consider, where he fell short; and the Pharisees, of every name, his lineal and legitimate successors, fell, and do now, fall short. Our God is the object of our worship; and **He**, as it is His perfect right, has prescribed the processes of that worship. There can be no trifling with the **order** that **He** has established, and without obedience to that order, no worship can be thoroughly acceptable. Therefore we see, in that full directory for Tabernacle and Temple worship, there was a certain **invariable order** of approach to God, observed. There were various offerings, but one was ever pre-eminent—the only one of universal necessity. The "Trespass offering" was based upon Trespass com-

mitted; the "Sin offering" upon Sin general and Sin in particular; the "Peace offering" had its specific place; and the "Meat offering" taught its own particular lesson. But towering over them all, the "Burnt offering" asserted its pre-eminence, and taught its "lesson of lessons", that none of the others could vie with. The efficacy of all the rest **depended wholly** upon the "Burnt Offering"; while it, in turn, depended upon none of the rest. The others, however important **in their place**, had no such place as this. Even a cursory study of the "Law of the Offerings" will convince us of this. What then did this pre-eminence teach us? Exactly what the Lord Jesus taught, when in answer to one who asked Him what was "the greatest of all the commandments"? He said:: "This; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength. This is the **first and greatest**, and the **second is like unto it**; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these hang both Law and Prophets." That is to say, our **God has the first claim upon us**. Nothing can, by any possibility, weaken that claim or displace it. Nothing may be counted as a substitute for it. No virtue, however amiable or lovely, can fill its place. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not **love**, it is nothing." The "Love of God" "shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost". It is like sending costly missions to Africa and Asia, and neglecting the heathen at our doors; it is like a man being "an angel abroad and a devil at home"; good to other wives and maltreating his own, who has the first claim upon him; sweet-tempered to other children and cruelly tyranical to his own flesh and blood. We call such men, rightly, "hypocrites". As Jesus said,

"Scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites**"; because they were punctilious in their duties and charities to their neighbors, and turned their backs upon God's Son, who had a first claim to their attentions. He never denied the virtue of what they did. On the contrary, He approved it. But it was what they left "**undone**" that ruined them. "These things ought ye to have done; and not have **left the others undone**". Sins of omission destroy more than commission; though it is not generally known. The "Burnt offering" typified our duty to **God**. The "Meat offering" our duty to **man**. The Lamb of **God**, was the centre of the Burnt offering. **It did not belong to the offerer**. It was **God's by right, not gift**. It was to be taught evermore that **God gave** His Son to be a Savior and Sacrifice. All the part man had in that gift was to **slay** it. And this gift of God, was to be the centre of acceptable approach in worship, first and last. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." And the song of Zion says:

"My **faith** would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine
While like a penitent I stand
And there confess my sin."

After this attitude in worship, I may do all that I like to my neighbor, in earnest service; and **all** will be acceptable, because an outcome of a heart "right with **God**". "Even a cup of cold water" thus given will not go unrewarded. But failing this attitude; "though I bestow all" I have: or "give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul", it is of no avail. Therefore let us not marvel that "God had not respect" unto Cain, or his offering—beautiful as it was. Let us not won-

der that He turned away from the luscious fruit and fragrant flowers, to bestow His blessing upon the repulsive altar of Abel; where the shining knife had been plunged into the heart of the innocent Lamb, and the red blood was dyeing the snowy fleece of the helpless victim. Repulsive as the sight may be, it tells out our only way of escape from Satan's dark kingdom. The payment of the debt we owed, in the agony and blood of a spotless Savior, slain for us, and dying that He might give us life, by the yielding up of His own to the "murderer from the beginning". This is the central lesson of the universe, after all, and God will not let it be forgotten. It must be rehearsed at the beginning of everything: it must take its place of pre-eminence, before all duties great and small; it must be the genesis of every act of love displayed to my neighbor.

Cain's offering was as much a commanded offering as Abel's, but it was an offering **out of place**. That made all the difference. We can see Satan's guile in inducing the poor creature to violate **God's order**. It was the old story of Eden over again. "You see this tree, how fair its fruit to look upon; how good for food; how desirable to make one wise. Why not eat it?" **And she ate**. He said to Cain; "This luscious fruit, these fragrant flowers, how acceptable to God, who painted the flowers, and distilled the tasteful juices; and made all to be so desirable and beautiful. And all the work of your strong hands; and offered, in good faith, as the **best you have!** Surely God will accept His own." **"And Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord."** You know the sequel; rejection; anger; murder. Angry with God because He did not countenance disobedience.

Angry with his brother, because that brother's "works were righteous and his own were evil." Raging thus, with a bad conscience; yet determined to "**justify himself, rather than God**"; in an evil hour he "**talked with Abel his brother**". O, if men would only hold their tongues, in wrong! Religious controversy leads to bloodshed, ever. The Pharisees **talked** with Jesus, till in their ungovernable rage they slew Him. And Cain, **the first Pharisee**, slew the type of Jesus, in the person of his innocent twin brother. It is a pitiful story first and last, but "history can only repeat itself", as many have seen.

Since then, Satan has ever foisted this dogma of **salvation by man's works**, in the place of **salvation by the blood of a slain Lamb**, upon the Church of God. And even those who come at last to see that there is "no salvation in any other", he tempts to try under varied disguises the old Cain religion of "**works**" instead of "**faith**". I suppose there is not a saved one whose eyes peruse this page, but has traveled over these beaten pathways of abortive attempts to be saved; and worn out the weary months and even years, in vain attempts to be "justified by the works of the law", before resting in the "righteousness by faith", in a Christ who has so completely done it **all**, as to leave us nothing to do, but **come to Him**.

"Weary, working, plodding one; wherefore toil you so?
Everything was fully done ages long ago;
Cast your deadly doing down; down all at Jesus' feet;
Stand in Him, in Him alone—all gloriously complete."

Let us pass from this subject of the two religions at war in the world, even now,—with a word of warning. There are two extremes, sadly common, both

circling round the sophism, "**Nothing else is needed.**" On the one hand, the self-righteous "**Pharisee**" thinks, with the poet; "He can't be wrong whose life is in the right"; and ventures all, for time and eternity, upon "doing his duty", as he sees it, utterly disconnected from the thought of the necessity of an **atonement**, or a **righteousness without merit**, on the part of the recipient.

On the other hand, the one who accepts the death of Christ, as his title to salvation, thinks that "nothing else is needed", and banks upon "justification by faith alone", till the importance of continuing in "good works" becomes an infinitesimal item in his "Solifidian" existence. This **may be** the loose-lived "**Sad-ducee**" of Scripture. If not, the character is a common one in real life. Both extremists are "hypocrites". The one rejects "Christ" who "died for our sins, according to the scriptures". The other deserts "Jesus" who "always **went about doing good**". In another booklet, I have tried to set forth the importance of seeing that there are "Two Salvations", which is the key to the "more excellent way", in which neither of these extremists walk. But all I wish to insist upon here is, that he who truly believes in **Christ**, will be most "careful to maintain good works". And he who "works the work of God" will most earnestly "believe in Him whom He hath sent".

Meanwhile let us turn to another topic of supreme importance, next to **Faith** and following **Good Works**. It is found in the **mark** that God put upon Cain, when the poor impenitent one "went out from the presence" of his God, to pursue his own evil course, as he "pitched his tent in the land of **Nod** to the East of Eden".

"BERAYSHEETH", or "IN THE BEGINNING".

AXIOM VIII.

Cain's "Mark." Salvation for All.

If there is one thing more than another in God's redemption, that is **uplifting** to the poor down-trodden, Devil-oppressed, sin-ridden children of men, it is the assurance that **God wins the final victory**, in the struggle going on between right and wrong; happiness and misery; holiness and sin; or to put it in one sentence, —between God and the Devil. For, really, it all comes to that, when we get out of abstractions into the range of concrete contending personalities. It is so cheering to know that there is nothing like **hopelessness** in the outcome of this terrific conflict, but that right is **might**, however discouraging the present outlook may be. And we might fairly look for this assurance among the "**axioms**" of Divine Science.

We find it accordingly, as a "star of the first magnitude" on the brow of sin's night, and "Beraysheeth" has no more comforting word in all its utterances than this, and "they who seek shall find" it revealed, most clearly.

Of course there are **heaps** of rubbish to be cleared away, which Satan has assiduously piled up, in the ages, to **hide** the truth so **dear to God**. Among the rest, the popular impression, taught to all, from childhood, that the "mark of Cain" was a **brand of disgrace**. And so deeply ingrained is this teaching, that it comes upon any of us, in the nature of a shock, to have it hinted otherwise. We feel as if our founda-

tions were shifting, if this theory is to be disturbed: or that we are drifting on a sea of error, "without compass and chart", if we may not believe that God stamped Cain as a reprobate by the distinctive mark put upon him.

Such a notion, so widely variant from the Divine record, could never have found a foothold, except as part of a preconceived system, that required such a "wresting" of the plain words of Scripture to support it. We all know, if we reflect a moment on the admitted error of others, how one is blinded to the plainest statements that seem to come in conflict with one's predilections. This is the favorite method by which the "god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not". To such, there is, absolutely, no power whatever in the simplest statements that cross their line of vision, any more than there is power in the rays of the midday sun, that flashes its brilliancy upon sightless orbs.

Now hear what the "Spirit speaketh expressly" in the case of Cain. Perhaps we may hear His voice more patiently, since seeing that Abel's offering was "more excellent" than Cain's; leaving the latter still excellent, in itself, though God could not have "respect unto" it, because out of place. And we may further, be impressed with the patient way in which the Lord argues with him when He saw how deeply Cain was moved by the rejection of his splendid offering. How He seems to make all allowances for him, and attempts in the gentlest way to bring him back to the right way. How different from our ways of dealing with offenders, this is, the heart well knows. Let us learn this lesson as we go on.

Notice, too, for a clearer understanding of what fol-

lows, that here, as in the third of Genesis, God does not curse **any one but Satan**. As with the first pair of sinners it is the **ground** that refuses its increase without exhausting toil: so in the case of Cain it is the "**ground**"—soaked with a brother's blood—that curses the murderer. In Gen. 3 the innocent ground is cursed, by Satan, for man's "sake". In Gen. 4 Satan, the "murderer from the beginning", is cursed back by the ground, in the person of his victim. In the murder of his brother, Cain is distinctly set forth in Scripture as the wretched and guilty agent of the Devil. "Who was of **that wicked one** and slew his brother" (1 Jno. 3:12) gives us a view of the **principal** in that dread transaction: as, afterwards, the "Jews, Gentiles and Pontius Pilate" were only the miserable tools of a malignant ruler of the "power of darkness". "And Cain said, My punishment is greater than I can bear", or, as the margin more appropriately renders it: "Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven." This is Satan's way in dealing with sinners. First it is the hiss of the serpent, **making light of sin**, and tolling the sinner with honied phrases to its commission. Then when the deed is done beyond recall, he **roars like a lion**, and **drives to despair**. As in Eden, so outside. He tempted Adam and Eve to sin; and then urged them to flee from "the voice of the Lord God", though it was the voice of gentlest mercy and not of wrath. So with Cain. Disobedience was lightly entered upon. Sin, culminating in murder, brought despair, under the leading of the Devil. Yes! he is a **liar**, from the beginning, as well as a murderer. He lies in making light of sin. He **doubly** lies, in treating it as **beyond pardon**.

"Behold Thou hast driven me out (how like Adam;

"the woman Thou gavest") this day from the face of the earth; and from **Thy face** I shall be hid: (how like again) and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me." Notice the mingled **despair** and **self-pity** in this speech of Cain, and doubt that there is a Devil behind it. "I am hardly treated" is the upshot of it, and "**God does it**" is the implication. Thus do sinners, to this day, repeat the false charge against God—"instigated thereunto by the Devil". To this despair, so needless; this self-pity, so unlovely; this false charging of God, so cruelly wicked, the Lord responds, in an action, replete with tenderest pity and love. You have, perhaps, noticed how **names** change in these chapters; and how "God" of Chapter 1; gives place to "LORD GOD" of Chapter 2 and 3; and how, in turn, that gives way to "LORD" alone in Chapter 4. All of which is most deeply significant if we only understood the **gracious meaning** of the changes. "THE LORD" is the name **sinners** love to call Him by, and the perhaps unconscious instinct is the true one. **Unmixed grace** is what we want, and "LORD" is just that **covenant title** that expresses it.

"And the LORD said unto him," "therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold". Here is the shelter of almighty love thrown round this sinner's despair.

"And the LORD set a mark upon Cain (note the reason) lest any finding him should kill him". Here is the **safe-guarding "mark"**, so plain that he who ran could read it. I love to think it was a **red cross**, set upon his white forehead, the symbol of **omnipotent** protection of a sinner, to the latest generation of them all.

So far as **ultimate security** went, it mattered not that an unappreciative "Cain went forth from the presence of the Lord". The mark was a **grace mark**, not dependent on Cain's goodness but his **badness**, and the dear "LORD'S" "**loving kindness and tender mercy**". Find me a conjunction of terms more sweetly blessed than these. It is **God's Salvation** we are dealing with here; **that is to all alike**. And the good LORD chooses from among the children of men the **worst**, since Adam and Eve, to serve as an eternal "object lesson" of His love.

Cain was no **common sinner**. He was not the **pre-eminent** one that his father was; for there must needs be a difference between **inside** the garden, and **out** of it. Eden differentiates Adam and Cain. But the eldest born of sinful parents, in the long line of sinning progenitors, stood head and shoulders above the evil doers of his kind. When Adam "begat a son **in his likeness**," he begat a sinner, poisoned at the fountain head. Cain was not responsible for **that**. It was his misfortune, not his fault. In so far as the inherited tendency to **sin** went, he had an excuse for sinning that his unhappy parents had **not**. I doubt not the good Lord in His wish to extenuate the faults of us all, takes full account of this, in which we are all **personally** guiltless, but **federally** entangled, to our undoing. Now let us ponder, for a moment, the heinous nature of Cain's transgression; remembering that he is an **object lesson**, chosen as Saul of Tarsus—"chief of sinners"—declared **he** was; not because the Lord was pleased to degrade him to all generations, by exposing him to universal gaze, as the worst of his kind; but simply "for a **pattern** to them which should hereafter believe". So Cain is a "pattern" sinner "saved by

grace", and marked for salvation, like the 144,000 of Rev. 14:1, who with the name of God the Father "in their foreheads" were sheltered in perfect safety when the storm of wrath swept "earth and sea" in the Apocalyptic vision (7:2, 3). Satan and his angels in their wildest rage will have to respect that "mark", which is the "seal" of God's mercy upon all His creatures, "for whom Christ died". It is the **Blood mark** of Calvary's Cross which outlasts the wrath of Devil, and men like devils. (Not the "scarlet letter" of the orthodox Puritan.)

Think then, dear reader, of Cain's sin, and take the comfort of it, while shuddering at its enormity. "Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's were righteous." That is the way the Holy Spirit puts it. He was a **murderer**. That is bad enough. He was a **fratricide**. That was worse. He killed his twin brother. The instinct of humanity puts a peculiar stamp of enormity on that particular feature of fratricidal crime. And worst of all, he killed Abel, for the dreadful reason given in Scripture. Men have been killed in all ages for money, for revenge, for endless varieties of reasons. But this reason "exceeds". It stamps the crime as pre-eminently **diabolical**. All murder springs from its fountain-head—Satan—"murderer from the beginning"; but this murder is more like its "father the Devil", than others. It is the "express image" of its progenitor; who **hates goodness for goodness' sake**, as he hates God the fountain of all goodness. From Cain's standpoint, then it was no unnatural thing for him to say: "My iniquity is too great that it may be forgiven"; as the truer marginal rendering gives his

words of remorse and despair. But, thank God, sin is **not** greater than God. "What is **impossible** with man, is possible with Him". And while suffering unspeakable may still follow unbelief and sin, here and hereafter, the sufferer ever bears **his Father's** mark "in his forehead", and all the devils in hell know that there is a limit to such an one's torture; and that LOVE DIVINE will claim the most miserable victim of Satan's hate, when "the uttermost farthing" of retribution is paid; and LOVE DIVINE has its infinite compensations in the "sweet by and by", to make past suffering only an enhancement of present bliss.

This is the lesson I love to read in Genesis 4:15.

"BERAYSHEETH", or "IN THE BEGINNING".

AXIOM IX.

Immortality.

As all know, who read their Bibles, two men went to Heaven without dying—Enoch and Elijah.

The only given reason for Enoch's escape from death is this: He "walked with God and obtained this testimony, before his translation, that he pleased God." And concerning Elijah, who, likewise did not "taste death", the record is even more encouraging for us: he "was a man subject to like passions with ourselves". And Enoch was no holy anchorite, detached, hermit-like, from his kind; for he was married, and "begat sons and daughters", like ordinary men. This, too, is distinctly encouraging for us, who may aspire to end earthly life as he did.

Now, I wish to ask this simple question. If Enoch "walked with God", and "pleased God", and thus escaped death; isn't it reasonable to suppose, since God is "no respecter of persons", that all who "walk with God", and "please God", will be taken in the same way? If not, why not? I think this question cannot be honestly answered in the negative, unless we raise difficulties not found in Scripture. This we have no right to do, and, one should think, we ought to have no wish to do, and thus "sin against our own souls". And yet, so cunningly has Satan robbed us of our birth-right, that one generation after another goes on, charging God with partiality to Enoch and Elijah, and never dreaming that their stories are "written for our sakes";

that we through the comfort of the Scriptures might have **hope**, and not lie down to die, as brutes die, when the "end of earth" shall come.

The highest destiny taught by "the church" is this: "The **souls of believers**, at **death**, are made perfect in glory; while their **bodies**, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the **resurrection**." Not a hint of **escape** from **death**; not a scintilla of **hope**, that "he that **liveth and believeth** shall never die", as Jesus plainly promises in John 11:26. This is very, very sad to write, but it is true.

Some—"a little flock" only of **them**—believe that when Jesus comes, in "parousia", a whole generation of those, who are waiting and watching for Him, shall be "caught up in the clouds, to meet Him in the air", without dying. And this they call "that Blessed Hope". And it is a "blessed hope". But what if the years pass by, as they have for more than 1,900 of them, and still the Lord tarries? Are those, who in the midnight darkness have gone forth to meet Him, to lie down in death, and wait for a future resurrection, to rouse them from the grave's slumbers? Have Paul, and John, and Peter, and James, who shed their blood for Him, to lie in the grave, waiting for a "parousia" that has lingered, for them, for over 1,900 years? To ask the question with an open Bible before us, ought to be the answer. A thousand times "No! No!! No!!!" "Shall not the Judge of all earth do right?" And I am bold to say for our God, as against the hoary error of the ages, that if Enoch escaped death by "walking with God", so did Paul; and so may **we**—every one who "pleases God". To "walk worthy of the Father unto all pleasing", is the child's sweet prerogative, and although few of His children

do this, it is **their** fault, **not** His. Nor is He a partial Father, to act differently towards His deserving children. And just as "in the regeneration", some will be "counted **worthy** to escape the things coming to pass on the earth and to stand before the Son of Man"; just as those who are worthy will be "**taken**", and the unworthy will be "**left**"; so, if we believe Jesus' word, so plainly spoken, we shall "**never die**". If Paul is **dead**—who wrote 2 Cor. 5:1-8—then we have **no Bible worth believing**. The chain is no stronger than its weakest link; and the Bible is no truer than its smallest verse. I say it reverently, but plainly, if Paul **died, he lied**. But **he neither died nor lied**, "Praise the Lord".

"It is appointed unto men **once to die** (Satan's appointment) and after that the judgment." Not "all men", as it is almost universally misquoted. But, by grace, those who believe have escaped the "judgment". As it is written: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and shall **not come into the judgment**." Isn't it strange that a promise to **belief** can not give us exemption from **death**, as well? Nothing can be plainer than Jesus' word: "He that believeth shall **never die**." Why not believe and receive? Yet men of faith, in lesser things, have passed by this open door of hope, for ages, without entering. The reason is obvious. "He that hath the **power of death** is the Devil." He is a "**murderer from the beginning**" of his hateful existence. **He wants us all to die**. Submission to his murderous purposes, is an express triumph over the Lord of Life. Therefore "he hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the knowledge" of Jesus' power to deliver us from death, "should shine

unto them." What a malignant Devil he is! Dear reader, be not "ignorant of his devices".

Paul and the early Christians awaited "departure"; "dissolution"; "putting off the earthly tabernacle"; but **never death**. They always spoke of the change that was to pass upon them, as something near at hand. No one can read the Scriptures, bearing upon this point, without seeing this imminence of expectation surging to the front. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "Be patient unto the coming of the Lord." "Yet a little while and ye shall see Me" was a *bona fide* promise to these waiting saints. They never dreamed of 1,900 years intervening between promise and fulfillment, as some would have us believe. They "looked for the Lord from Heaven" to take them up to the "place" He had "prepared" for them. And Paul in 2 Cor. 5:1-8, tells us that he expected to be taken in his glorified body, if language has any meaning.

The "millennarians", of whom I am glad to be one, "have rung changes" on the absurdity of Jesus "coming" to any one in **death**. It is a horrible prostitution of thought and language. And they triumphantly demonstrate from Scripture, that His "coming" can only be to bear them up, triumphantly, in glorified bodies; those who are "alive and remain until His coming", without dying; and those who "slept", snatched from the power of death and the grave, and "fashioned like unto His glorious body"—both quick and dead—thus to be "ever with the Lord". I am afraid these good people have overlooked, in their zeal for the establishment of this truth of Jesus coming in "parousia" for His saints—when a whole generation will escape death, by translation—that nearer coming

for them, which is bound to be within the limit of each individual life, and is a much more practical truth, when laid to heart. Dispensational doctrine, valuable as it is, has not that lovely personal touch, that the Savior's individual dealings with us will always possess. There is a wide difference between "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life"; and that warmer individual Scripture; "who loved **me**, and gave himself for **me**." Thus with these second "comings"—both true, but how different!

There is not a shred of Scripture—however men may guess—to prove that any one is "with the Lord", except as glorified, and in **glorified bodies**. Enoch and Elijah must thus be "changed" before fitted to be "with Him, where He is".

How tenderly He can care for His **dead** saints, in their rent and dismembered condition—Spirit, Soul and Body separated and dishonored by him who "has the power of death"—I need not stop to prove. It "goes without saying" that "He will never leave nor forsake us", in our sin down here, nor in our dishonor over there. But Scripture never says that dead ones are "with Him, where He is". He comes to us **where we are**—here or there—how lovingly none can tell—but it will be with the tender grief of one whose word of promise has been "lightly esteemed"; and a tear of sorrow, akin to the crystal drops that fell upon the highway, as "He drew near to the City and wept over it" saying, again, with what tender pathos: "If thou hadst but known in the day of thy visitation; but now"—

But the saints who believed the word of the Lord

were not mocked by the cruel delay of centuries. Paul was "translated" as truly when "dissolution" came, as was Enoch; and Elijah had no more certain transfer to glory in a chariot of fire, with horses of fire", than did the "beloved disciple", when he "departed to be with Christ". Nor can Paul's "far better" (Phil. 1:23) be linked with the **grave**, in which there is "no work nor device", when one understands his fiery zeal to be employed in active service for the Master. No thought more horrible, to such an one, than the useless inaction of death, and a dreary waiting for the "resurrection of the last day", before resuming his heavenly activities.

There is a difference between Scriptural "death" and "dissolution" as wide as the interval between earth and heaven. Death is the severance of "Spirit, Soul and Body"—each going to its own place". We have this destiny clearly marked out in the case of lost unbelievers, by studying the Scriptures which tell where each component part of the Savior's personality went, after death. That He died, none can deny who believe the Bible. "He tasted death for every one." That He died for unbelieving sinners (1 Cor. 15:3) is also a fundamental belief of Christendom, whether committed to a "limited" or "universal" atonement; and as complete "substitution" for sinners, lies at the foundation of all genuine Christian faith, it becomes of prime importance in seeking to find where unbelieving sinners go, after death, to find where Christ, the Savior, went, when He died. We are not left to profitless speculation on this point. The Scripture narrative is explicit and precise. His Body, slain, went to Joseph's new tomb; whence, rejoined by Spirit and Soul it arose to life after three days. His Soul went to hell—the place

of torment. This is also clearly taught. Peter, on the day of Pentecost—filled with the Holy Ghost and infallible—quoted the 16th Psalm and expounds its meaning, as applicable to Christ. "His soul was not left in hell". Clearly, it could not be said to be "**not left**" there, if it had not **gone** there. The Apostles Creed rehearses this in the clause: "He descended into hell." Manifestly, "Hades", in this connection, cannot refer to the body's deposit in the **grave**. That died and was buried in Joseph's tomb. But the suffering Soul "descended into hell"; there to be tortured by a malignant Devil, as he has a right to torture unbelievers, who fall into his hands; and as he had a right to torture **their substitute**, who, voluntarily placed Himself at that fiend's disposal. The silence, in Scripture, concerning that awful three days and nights ordeal, is the most graphic tribute to its horrors—indescribable by words—even the words of an inspiring Spirit. A faint idea of it can be found in Luke 16, where the rich man cries out, in vain, for a few drops of water to assuage the agony of the tormenting flames.

His Spirit—after escorting the saved thief to "Paradise", went off to the place of **lost spirits**. "It behooved Him, in all things, to be made like unto His brethren", whose hapless destiny He lovingly assumed. But there, while sharing their doleful lot, He preached "glad tidings" to those who for 2,500 years had been shut up—"prisoners of hope"—while yet "Spirits in prison"; doubtless announcing that their release was near, and only waited on His own. This, though not specifically asserted or denied in Scripture, is a reasonable exposition of the verse (Eph. 4:8) "He ascended on high, leading captivity captive". It is a

relief, in presence of the ferocious theologies of never-ending torment, to know that 2,500 years is the Scripture **ultimatum** of suffering; as 120 years of "disobedience" (1 Peter 3:20) to the "heavenly calling", is the longest known period of resistance to the Holy Ghost. Who, but a spiritual hyena could demand a longer term, under Satan's torturing hand?

Death, then, is violent disruption of "Spirit, Soul and Body"—and each "to its own place". It is very significant, that Scripture is silent as to where these component parts of an **"unbelieving believer"** go. While there is a clear revelation of the destination of those who believe and escape death; and a terrible description of the fate of the lost dead; there is absolutely nothing to inform us as to where a saint goes, **when he dies**. The "catechism" informs us that "the souls of believers, at death, are made perfect in glory", and quietly quotes what Scripture says of those who **do not die**, in proof. But the Bible maintains an ominous silence.

"Dissolution" is a wholly different thing from death. There is no disruption of "Spirit, Soul and Body". They remain forever together. But all the fungus growth of sin and Satan is taken away. The hateful and unnatural union is "dissolved". The "precious" is, forever, "separated from the vile". There is an eternal "dissolution" of a partnership that ought never to have been formed. The "corruptible" is removed; the "incorruptible" remains. The "mortal" disappears; the "immortal" alone is seen. That which is "shakable" is taken away; that which is unshakable abides, (Heb. 12:27).

In every human personality there is that which is

of God; and that which is of the Devil.* This union of the celestial and diabolical is that which is, forever, done away in "dissolution". This is why Paul said: "To **depart** is far better." "We who are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." Blessed dissolution.

Do you think that fever, or smallpox, or cholera could find lodgment in the body God gave us? Do you think sin could flourish in a soul inbreathed by God? A thousand times, No! But in that fungus growth that Satan lodged and propagated, on both, these fatal germs find suitable soil, and grow with frightful rapidity and reproductive energy. While earth lasts, this fearful connection goes on. But when Satan has done his worst with the **believer**, the time of "dissolution" appointed by God, and ratified by faith, comes, in its turn; and this mortal puts on immortality; and this corruptible incorruptibility; and that triumphant stage arrives where "death is swallowed up in victory": and the happy spirit, in man, now mated with its congenial soul and body, cries out exultingly: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

No one has a Scriptural right to utter these words who **dies**. Death is the infliction of the "sting". The grave that claims its prey, **is not** conquered. Whatever comforts the Lord may cause to cluster around a "**dying pillow**", this is not one of them. I know that

"Jesus can make a dying bed,

Feel soft as downy pillows are,

While on His breast we lean our head

And breathe our life out sweetly there."

* See my book "Alta Ego", for sale by Mrs. Mary B. Craig, Stanford, Ky.

He will not **leave** us. **Our** unbelief shall not "make the promise of God of none effect." But we must not go beyond Scripture. That, makes the above exultant shout the sole prerogative of those who shall not "taste death".

I do not build upon science. Only upon the Word of God. But science corroborates what Scripture teaches. Those who make the human body a study, declare that every seven years it changes so completely that the body I have today is not the same that clothed my Spirit and Soul seven years ago. This may be true or not, speaking broadly. In part, I know it to be so. But accepting it, as it stands, as a scientific fact, let us analyze it. What is thrown off in this seven years? Say that my weight is 150 pounds. Seven years ago I weighed the same. If 150 pounds are gone, that amount of new matter has come to replace the lost quantity. I am the same and yet not the same. My individuality, recognizable by those who knew me, remains, though all that they knew seven years ago has vanished from the scene.

Here is a wondrous thing that baffles inquiry till we find the key. It is furnished in this fact, that all that has disappeared from my **bodily** personality is that part of me which is hurtful. The excreta from liver, lungs, kidneys and bowels, that must be thrown off or I die, constitute the missing 150 pounds. And that which replaces the ejected and hurtful elements, and keeps up my standard weight, is still the fatal increment, that, in turn, must be cast out, or it kills me. I wipe my brow with a handkerchief, and it is moistened with "perspiration". That sounds innocent enough; but give it a name that tells its function in the bodily economy. I will translate it into plain

English. It is **death** I am wiping from my moistened face. God, in mercy, has provided many thousands of diminutive ducts to carry off this deadly drainage of all our systems; that oozes from the peach-blow cheek of beauty, as well as from the leathery hide of labor. We would all soon perish with this noxious and poisonous secretion abiding in our bodies. I have read that a beautiful boy was selected to grace one of the pageants of the Pope of Rome. He personated a cherub, and was covered from head to foot, in silver foil—checking all healthful perspiration. The child died, in convulsions, in 48 hours.

Matt. 15:10-20 lets us into this mystery of life and death, if we will but ponder its unsavory teaching, however humiliating to our pride; and not close our eyes to patent facts. But the truth is, we are all persistently shutting our eyes. We array our poor bodies in garments, spotless from the laundry, and conveniently forget the sad lesson of the wash-tub, and its covered up secrets. We masquerade before high heaven, and pretend to know nothing of these pitiful facts of every day life, and that all the resources of science are exhausted to keep us from perishing in our own filth; and affect ignorance of the origin of "sewer gas"; and seem to know nothing of whence come the seed beds of the horrible microbes that infest our filthy earth, and frighten us, in the unprouncable terms with which science describes them.

All this is loathsome and disgusting, but the truth ought to be known and told, if not at all times, surely, sometimes. I am attempting to account for this 150 pounds of waste matter that comes and goes. Of course it is, originally, from its "Father, the Devil". He is the proprietor of all the filth that has come into

this world of God. His title of "Beelze-bub" means "god of dirt" or "filth-god"; and he is the "author and finisher" of all pollution. And he it is who has fastened upon the perfect body, and perfect soul, with which God originally endowed us, the fungus growth, where the seeds of death run riot in rapid propagation. "The law of the Spirit of Life", within me, wages ceaseless warfare with this "law of the Spirit of death"; and that explains the phenomena of facts that all are acquainted with. We cover up this struggle for life in every way possible. We spread costly viands on exquisite tables and make our gathering there a festivity. Stripped and bare, it is the old **fight for life**, as coarse and common as the gnawing of a crust, to keep poverty's soul and body together. We must eat or die—that is the plain English of it.

And so we go on. Even as "gay apparel" is made the occasion of pride and ostentation; not remembering that when the bed-rock fact comes to light, **clothing** is a badge of our original sin and disgrace, whether a fig leaf or a product of some costly loom. We make our shame our glory. "Pity 'tis 'tis true".

But this 150 pounds that constitute the "earthly house of our tabernacle"; that must be "put off"; that fills a coffin; that makes a burial; that is eaten of worms; that must be "buried out of our sight"—so loathsome is the spectacle of its corruptibility—is that **all** of our bodies? No; thank God; there remains His body, perfectly distinct from "this vile body"; and "dissolution" only sets us free from that **in** us, and **on** us, that Satan has fastened upon what God made perfect. The Devil's portion goes to him. God's portion goes to Him. The separation is final and complete. We "**put on**" a glorified body—are "clothed upon"

by Jesus' own hand. We "put off" Satan's hideous excrescence, no more to know it; or be disfigured; or tormented; or disgusted; or disgraced by it, forever. How strange that any should not choose this "better portion". Still the wailing question comes from the grieved heart of our Savior-God; "Why will ye die?" and still the loving exhortation is echoed with unwearied persistence; "choose life that ye may live".

With the above facts before us, it need not stumble any, that saint and sinner **seem** to die alike and be buried alike. "We walk by faith and not by sight", and if we can believe in the widely sundered destinies of the **souls** of unbelievers and believers—so alike in death—why do we deny the same difference of destinies between **bodies**? Let us never forget that there is enough of the Devil, in and on any of us, to fill a coffin, and furnish a "funeral". The great question is: "What saith the Scripture?"—not what our senses take cognizance of. We are to believe what God says—not what our eyes tell us.

There is a still more serious aspect of this subject than the personal loss each one sustains who succumbs to the "last enemy"—death. Of course, we more readily dwell upon what affects **us**. But what of the deep dishonor we put upon our God, by consenting to die? Think of the costly provision He has made for the complete deliverance of "Spirit, Soul and Body" from their present thralldom. Christ the Lord went "in spirit" to the place of lost spirits, for us—that our spirits might never go there. His soul "descended into hell" that our souls might never sink into its awful depths. His body lay in the grave that our bodies might not lie there. Surely, the analogy of faith, and

"Christ for us" teaches us this as the A. B. C. of true Christianity. No better answer can be given to the question: "Why are we not damned?" than this: "Christ was damned for us." And His damnation covered "Spirit, Soul and Body" that my spirit, soul and body" might not perish, but have everlasting life." The logic of faith is inexorable; "that we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the gospel."

Now think, dear reader, what will happen if you disappoint God's wish for you. You grieve your Father's heart. You compel the loving Savior to care for your scattered spirit, soul and body; as if He had not had trouble enough, caring for them while united, on earth. You drag the Holy Ghost, who has made your body His "temple", down to the dark and noisome grave, to keep watch and ward over you, till "the resurrection of the last day". Never fear that He will fail. He abides in that body of yours, not as a transient guest, but "forever". Never fear that Jesus will "leave or forsake" you. But the question is: **"How can you do this mighty wrong to the Blessed God-head?"**

I do not, for a moment, suppose that the mere technical belief in the doctrine of an escape from death, will secure exemption from that dread close of earthly existence. And I do rejoice to believe that many who were not aware, through false teaching, of the blessed privilege belonging to them, secured it by a "walk with God". But that does not militate against the importance of an intelligent and definite belief in our Savior's word: "He that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." There will be an immense difference, when we meet Him, between the surprise of rapture, showing that we were not expecting it; and the joyous

expectancy of it—showing that we believed the dear Lord's word, and were looking for its fulfillment. The former condition will have, at least, a **tinge** of "Ashamed before Him at His coming"; while the latter will refresh His heart of love, as faith ever does. For "without faith it is impossible to please God." It **honors** Him more, even, than love; though in the catalogue of graces that be esteemed the "greatest". Think well, dear reader, whether you will choose to say, when you meet the Lord: "Dear Master, I was not expecting **this**; though now that you are here, I am glad to see you;" or, "Lord, I looked for you; I knew you would come for me; and I am so happy to see you, and be with you."

I had a dear friend and brother, who lately "departed to be with Christ". Just before he breathed his last, he called his wife to his bedside and said: "Wife! don't think my mind is wandering. It never was clearer than at this moment; I saw the Lord Jesus, Himself, standing in that doorway a moment ago." And then he passed "within the veil". His wife—a godly, truthful woman—told me this. Do I believe he **saw** his Savior? Certainly, I do. Do I believe that Savior's word, "I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, ye may be also"? Assuredly, I do. He will not dispatch an angelic cohort to convey us to His presence. He will come, Himself, for us.

You have, perhaps, often heard of "happy death beds". It is a misnomer, but the **experience** is a genuine one, in full accord with the one ~~described~~ above. Time and again it has been testified that the departing saint seemed to see something or some one; and the "fashion of the countenance" would be changed instantaneously, and irradiated with joy unutterable. The eye

saw, plainly, what the lips had no power to speak; and gazing thus, in rapt ecstasy, the "happy spirit took its flight from its clay tenement" to "fairer worlds on high". I do not doubt exhibitions of ecstatic visions, for a moment. They agree with Scripture and are in harmony with the blissful facts that accompany "dissolution". But I am a confirmed sceptic as to "happy death beds"; while I am a firm believer in happy "dissolutions".

In conclusion let me give a practical direction as to the attainment of this great blessing. We must ever bear in mind the fundamental facts of our present existence. First, God made man **perfect**: He could do no otherwise. Second, then a malignant enemy gained man's consent to depart from God. He robbed the Creator of His perfect creature in order to destroy him. Third, God at infinite sacrifice—His own life—rescues His guilty and helpless creature: secures thus a right to save the creature when its **free will** consents to be saved; and then undertakes **reparation**—to repair the ruin, sin and Satan have made. Fourth, at each stage of this restitution and renewal, the good Lord seeks the **free will** co-operation of His Devil-oppressed creature and calls upon the creature, by that act of **constant exercise** of free will, to "Come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty". This will secure **personal blessing**; while the creature is also allowed to secure blessings for others, in fellow service with the Lord, by the "One talent" prayer of faith, which if "fervent and effectual availeth much", in the general scheme of altruistic blessing. Fifth, the victory in the deadly struggle between God and the Devil is **bound** to be not only decisive; but absolutely complete: the creature, with **all** its belongings being **restored**; and not

only restored, but **exalted** to as much higher place above the point it fell from, as it has been dragged down by the enemy; who will thus, before his utter annihilation, not only know himself vanquished; but will see that his aborted malice has unspeakably advanced God's glory, in the exhibition of **grace** before unknown—"the outburst of a fountain sealed, a spring shut up", till the baffled malice of the Devil opened it. And he shall also see that he has unwittingly brought about an advance in the creature's happiness, and dignity, by the very means his malice undertook to degrade it, and render it miserable. Yes, the **victory is complete**. But this ultimate triumph that the faithful "hope for", is in fearful contrast with the things **seen**. We, not only, as Scripture affirms, "see not yet all things put under Him"—Jesus—but we see **wrong**, everywhere, trampling **right** in the dust, and only a "little flock", accepting **eternal life**—the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Is there anyone so insane as to forfeit such a boon, or reject so great a gift? Alas! how few of all the millions of earth to whom the option of salvation is brought, accept it, and choose the better portion, though the alternative is a yawning hell that Satan thrusts the rejector into? There is no solution but the Scripture one of such unspeakable folly: "Madness is in their heart, and after that they go down to death." And again, "The god of this world hath **blinded** the eyes of them that believe not." If there are so few that choose to escape **hell**, is it marvellous that **so few escape death**? There are no plainer scriptures for sinner and saint than for the former: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life, and shall not come into the Judgment"; and for the latter, "He that liveth and believeth on me,

shall **never die.**" John 11:26. Yet both are daily, hourly trampled under foot. **It is awful!** "Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him." That walk with God has been made so unattainable by the Devil's interpretation of it, that few are willing to attempt to scale the unsurmountable mountain of difficulty. If, as the Devil wishes, we begin to define it as a series of holy self-denying acts, **without a break**, the boldest are discouraged at the start, and are deterred from trying an impossible task. Enoch's short biography, and Elijah's character sketch in James as "a man of like passions with ourselves" might have opened our eyes to this diabolical snare. Think a moment, what a "walk with God" is. Is it not, to "walk **worthy** of the **Father**, unto all pleasing"? Now what "pleases" God, pray? Let Scripture answer. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." And what is "**Faith**"? Let scripture answer. "We must believe that He is (that is the first "sine qua non") and (second,) that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Is this not the **perpetual belief that He is good**, that delights Him, unspeakably? And the perpetual acceptance of good gifts from His generous hand, that gives joy unutterable to Him? Where is the hardship of **that** "walk with God"? From this all holy actions proceed with as little effort as breathing. O Brother, the Devil has heaped up **effects** mountain high, and bidden you commence with them, instead of looking at the cause that he cunningly conceals.

It is a vague exhortation to say "only believe". In our weakness, perhaps, we ask for something more definite and tangible. I will give it, from Scripture. Notice, that Jesus in John 11, asks of Martha, touch-

ing this very point: "Believest thou this?" He will ask it of you, every time you think of the subject. See that you answer "Yes". At first, it may be a hesitant and feeble response. But this "mustard seed" of faith, once planted, will grow. If He asks you a thousand times this question, then, a thousand times make answer, "Yes, Lord!" And you will find that the faith that seemed at first "the smallest" of all your virtues will grow apace, till it overshadows all else in the garden of your heart; and others, who were once unbelievers; like "the birds of the air that sought lodgment in the branches" of the great mustard tree, will come to you for guidance and help in also gaining what you have: and, perhaps, in time, you will even say, with holy Paul, in 2 Cor. 5:1, "I know, that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God," which, unlike this transitory wayside inn, is "eternal in the heavens".

"BERAYSHEETH", or "IN THE BEGINNING".

AXIOM X.

A Scriptural Hell.

Luke 16 is the only scripture, so far as I am aware, that uncaps "Hades", as a place of punishment, after death, and gives us an insight of that doleful underworld. On such a subject we are absolutely shut up to what the Lord reveals; and guessing and speculation are nowhere more completely out of place. Dante and Milton have made poetic hells, lurid enough, and with more or less of scripture verisimilitude, and more or less undoubted error. Theologians have depicted the world of woe in strict accordance with their favorite doctrinal dogmas; and there are as many theories of hell as phases of religious teaching. The more need, then, to accept nothing but the statements of Scripture. I propose, in this chapter, to adhere closely to the divine Word, shaking loose, as far as I can, from all preconceived notions.

Hell, as conceived by the overwhelming majority of religionists, is a place of **punishment**, inflicted by God, in "righteous judgment", on the disobedient and unbelieving children of men, and carries with it the idea of total reprobacy on the part of the wretched victim of God's wrath. It is, emphatically, a "dernier resort", following unsuccessful efforts to save. The sinner **will not be saved**; therefore he must be destroyed.

There may be varying views of destruction. Some prefer annihilation to torment unending. Some prefer figurative "fire and brimstone" to literal. But all

agree that the miserable subject of punishment is hopelessly hardened; wholly bad; and nothing is left but to destroy him, with all that the word destruction implies.

Not a few, on the contrary, believe that after a period of punishment that was intended to be of a reformatory character, God will restore the subjects of His "Fatherly Chastisement", and bring them back to the family circle. But, even these believe that God, in "righteous wrath", inflicts the "stripes", whether "few" or "many". But these are numerically the few. The many, who believe in hell as taught in orthodox bodies, regard it as the endless abode of the unreconciled and irreconcilable enemies of God, who by endless sin confirm and make necessary endless punishment.

The doctrine of my childhood that hell was eternal punishment, because of the infinite dignity of the character of God, who had been sinned against, has now passed away, and given place to the scheme of endless progression in sin, demanding infinite progression in its penal consequences. In either case, the wretch, enduring unspeakable and unmitigated torment, was always a fiend, and unimprovably so.

Let us test this by the only Scripture we have to prove its validity, or incorrectness. It is a pivotal assumption and much depends on its truth or error.

The "certain rich man" of Luke 16, is a type of a class, as all can see. It requires but a glance at the narrative to tell the form of his unbelief that landed him in hell. Pride and selfishness are "writ large" on his fated biography. Unbelief may go in rags, as in "purple and fine linen", but it is a different phase of unbelief, with different developments. The twin devils

that nestled in the unbelieving heart of the "rich man" were pride and selfishness.

And they accompanied him to the brazen gates of death and hell, that clanged behind him as he passed through, and denied him egress.

But somehow or other they did not accompany him into hell. I miss them as soon as he "lifts up his eyes, being in torment, and sees Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom." He seems to have dropped them when he left the earth. The relentless gates that barred him in barred them out. One will be surprised who expects to find the wickedness of earth intensified and emphasized in hell to discover that it seems to have vanished like magic, leaving no trace behind.

And other environments are not what one bred in orthodoxy anticipated in hell. A God frowning in extinguishable anger is nowhere to be found. On the contrary, Abraham, who surely speaks the mind of God, addresses the poor sufferer in the most amiable manner and calls him affectionately "son", as before the agonized "rich man"—now, alas! so poor—had called the glorified patriarch "father". These are not the terms an angry God or a remorseless fiend would use in addressing each other.

It is a revelation, this heaven so full of pity and this hell so full of humility. It annihilates at a single stroke more than half my preconceived views.

But let us follow reverently the guiding Scripture. The poor-rich man begs his "Father Abraham" to "send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue, tormented in flame." Every word in this is an additional revelation. I could only despise this man while on earth, who, in his pride, disdained a glance of pity on the beggar,

laid at his gate, full of sores. He could not remove him, for the open street is the poor man's domain, equally with the rich. But he had no pity for the wretched sufferer. "The dogs"—unclean and outcast animals in the Orient—had more pity than he who was created in "the image and likeness of God". The "crumbs", that were swept up after "falling" from the dainty "table" of the man who "fared sumptuously every day" were cast out to Lazarus. He shared them with the hungry dogs, and they, in turn, did what they could for him—they "licked his sores".

The more I dwell in thought on this picture of desolate want on one hand and hateful human selfishness on the other the more my heart rises in repugnance to this abominable creature, "clothed in purple and fine linen". But in hell I begin to like this man, so hateful on earth. And as I hear the words that tell me his **pride** is gone—that pride that made him hateful—I can not but be tenderly drawn toward him in pitiful sympathy.

With the light I now have upon this revolution in this human life, and knowing, as I do, the genuineness of his conversion to God, I have no words to fitly characterize the heartless comments of expositors—one and all—who with the theory that this sufferer in hell is a fiend, abhorrent to heaven, and hopelessly abandoned to his fate, must needs ascribe a selfish motive to this cry for "a drop of water" to cool his parched tongue. A wrong dogma, obstinately held from childhood, is as icily cruel as the heart of the Grand Inquisition, gloating over the racked body of a heretic. These expounders of Scripture seem never to dream that the **pride** of earth is gone, and in its stead the meek humil-

ity that would accept the smallest favor from the hand of the once despised beggar, now reigns supreme.

Further on, we shall see clearly, that it is a genuine change, and one not produced by the torment of fire, that never, under any circumstances, can burn up the pride, that comes from the Devil. That is "fire-proof". Meanwhile, for some reason, it is gone: and my heart warms to the poor sufferer, because my "better nature" is "made in the likeness and image of God", who **always** sympathizes with His suffering creatures. But, not alone his **pride** is gone. His **selfishness**—pride's twin devil—disappears. Not stopping to dwell upon the instructive retributive analogy between a "crumb" of bread, on earth, and a "drop of water" in hell, we will keep pace with the thrilling narrative.

Abraham, in kindest terms, but clearest logic, shows the rich-poor man how there is a "needs be" in what has happened. Not a necessity on the God-side, for his joy is to "forgive iniquity, transgression and sin", and release His poor, deluded creatures from the penal consequences of wrong-doing. This is His constant effort "all along the line". But on the devil-side, it is different. He is the inexorable creditor, who has no mercy, and never relaxes a claim that he obtains a right to press. There is a current proverb that means more than we think: "Needs must, when the devil drives." The wretched man accepts this as inevitable. His eyes are opened, now. He is learning over a rough road what he would not learn, "dressed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day." He knows, now, who has brought him to this "pit of woe"; and who the unfailing friend was, who tried, in vain, to rescue him from it. And as he knows the love that "never faileth", even though he has "made his bed in

hell", he turns gratefully towards it, and repudiating the tempter, with loathing, chooses the God of Love as his everlasting portion. "And this is life eternal, to **know** the only true God", whether the knowledge comes on earth or in hell. So, I have a right to interpret this wonderful Scripture, and I say, confidently, it is the only exposition that is consistent and tenable, with the facts before us, as given by the Holy Ghost.

And now, abandoning a petition that he feels must be unavailing, because Satan has fixed a "great gulf" between the happy, sympathetic inhabitants of heaven and the doleful inmates of hell, preventing access from either side to the other, however much desired by both, he turns his plea earthward, and, forgetting for a time his own misery, pleads in **unselfish love** for those he left behind. Again he begs that Lazarus may be sent on a mission of mercy to earth, if he may not come to hell. "I have five brethren." How his heart yearns over them, to save them! His **selfishness is gone with his pride**. My heart draws nearer and nearer to this poor man, whom the devil has "cast body and soul into hell". I love him with the same brotherly feeling I have for a repenting sinner on earth. And I am sure that in feeling thus, I am in closer touch than ever with the "joy in heaven" that goes out for "one sinner that repenteth, more than ninety and nine" of the un-fallen creatures of God who need no repentance, because they have never wandered from Him. Again, I cannot trust myself to characterize the heartless comments of theologians on this most touching scene. To read them, in love's light, is to loathe them.

And now tell me, dear reader, where is the fiend in hell that men speak so glibly about? I find an humble believer there, judged by every scriptural standard of

what constitutes "true belief and true repentance—every grace that brings us nigh". And this poor, rich man is a **representative character**. All admit this. We have every reason to believe that as he was, so **all his fellow-sufferers were**. It may startle, but it is true. **Hell is filled with believing lovers of God**. And heaven is filled with those who love their unfortunate brethren and sisters in hell, and who do all that they can to mitigate the horrors of their dreadful situation. They may not cross the "great gulf fixed" by a malignant devil. They can not cancel the "uttermost farthing" of that devil's claim. But love has wings, and sympathy can cross the yawning chasm that divides true hearts, and God and His saints find many a sweet compensation for the "prisoners of hope". They must serve their terms, long or short, they must bear the "stripes", "few" or "many". But they can also count the days that lie between their most doleful lot and the blissful period when the Saviour will come to "open the prison doors"; claim as His own the convicts of Satan, and bear them up to the "places prepared for them", by predestinating love, "before the world was", and the dreary history of sin had begun. In the joy of the "Father's House", these tired souls shall forget their past sufferings, and their heavenly bliss be enhanced a thousandfold because of the things suffered. Thus again, "out of the eater meat shall come", and "sweetness" from "the strong"; and the Lord of glory shall "see of the travail of His soul and be fully satisfied."

When I think of this programme of blessedness, and then of what the devil has taught men—good men—to believe, I stand aghast at the malignant cunning of the great adversary, the credulity of men and the

awful power of early training to beguile mind and heart.

And when I think that souls in hell are **ever yearning over those on earth**, as this wondrous narrative compels me to believe; while those on earth have no pity for the lost; never pray for them; think it treason against God to sympathize with their agonies; and count it impious superstition to hope for their release; what can one do but fall down before the throne of heavenly grace in shame and confusion and groan out the prayer: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"?

For myself I can only bear witness, as "that disciple who testifieth", that since the light broke in upon my poor eyes once "blinded by the god of this age", I never draw nearer to God in prayer than when I am pleading for my lost brethren and sisters in hell. Some of them I know, but whether known or unknown, I count it my highest joy to enter myself into their sorrows and do what I can, by intercessory prayer, to lighten their burdens and perhaps abridge their sentences of imprisonment. I don't know **how** I can help them. But I believe in prayer, and that "in ways beyond our ken", God hears and answers, **here** and **there**. Time, space, place are nothing to Him. If I can pray for the heathen across the ocean waters, why not for souls in a worse plight the other side of the great gulf, who need my prayers still more? Nothing shall prevent me now that I see that God does not send people to hell, and that He loves and pities them after Satan has dragged them thither. And knowing as I do from Scripture that God has appointed believing prayer as a means through which He can convey blessing, even to the worst and lowest, why should I fling away the heavenly weapon of attack against His enemy and mine

that He puts in my hand. So when I retire to rest at night and lie down upon my couch, thanking the Lord that it is not a "bed in hell", I pray for those who are "walking through (thank God for "through") the valley of the shadow of death", and whom my Heavenly Shepherd may comfort with rod and staff through my poor prayers—even mine.

There is one Scripture that, in the letter, seems to doom the inmates of Hell to a never-ending residence there. Most accept the doctrine of eternal torment, under the baneful power of early teaching, with a lightness of spirit that is appalling to a thoughtful mind. This flippancy of belief is a fitting corollary to the hideous proposition that God has prepared the "lake of fire and brimstone"; "The worm that never dieth"; "The fire that is not quenched"; and "The smoke of torment" ever ascending. There He thrusts the creatures whom His hand has formed: who had no option in their own creation: who have been projected, without their own consent, into existence, in a world where the unhappy creature's environments are demoralizing in the last degree: where there are 100 inducements to do wrong for one to pursue the right; and when added to all these discouragements, the crowning one is found in one's own nature, with its downward trend, "prone to evil as the spark to ascend or the stream to run down". Then, for the wrongdoing and unbelief of three score years and ten, or four score at farthest, a just God dooms the ruined wretch to a hopeless hell of misery, where the storm of just wrath from an angry Maker beats ceaselessly upon the head of His helpless creature, while saints in glory, and "Spirits of the just made perfect", applaud the righteousness of the retribution that has overtaken

the sinner, and rejoice with unceasing and increasing joy, as the ages of eternity roll by, in the agonies of the lost, and their unending duration. I have not "extenuated aught" in this, but I have set down naught in malice, and I want you to think, dear reader, if ever so briefly, over what your teachers have taught and committed to you to teach. I know no more striking an illustration of the power of early training, than the awful fact, that men and women with hearts of tenderest love in other things, can, in cold blood accept and teach such a horrible doctrine as that imperfectly set forth above, and can bear even to hear their offspring prattle it, in ignorant and innocent childhood.

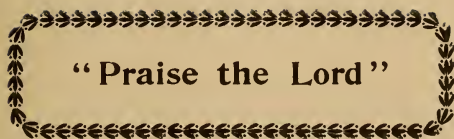
But of course mere sentiment is not to settle this weighty matter. "What saith the Scripture?" is the court of last appeal. And here is where wonder grows; that where the "letter" of Scripture seems to shut one up to a belief in the horrors; but where every fibre of "our better nature" is in recoil at every mention of the blood-curdling doctrine of everlasting punishment; the way of escape from it, lying just beneath the surface, is not eagerly sought and gladly availed of. The marvel of marvels is, that those who love God, can bear, for a moment, to think of Him in the lurid glare of a hell of **His** creation, when they do **not have to**. Again and again that Scripture comes to mind that, alone, solves the mystery: "The god of this world hath blinded their eyes." As scholars, these men know that aion is an indefinite period of **time**, past, present or future. They know, as scholars, that aionios, translated "everlasting" cannot properly go beyond the meaning of the noun from which it is derived. It is an "age lasting punishment", not an **ever** lasting pun-

ishment. And the age is to be decided in its duration by the context and by other Scriptures. In Eph. 3:21 the paraphrase, "World without end", confesses that the word "age" (there rendered world) is not an unlimited expression, taken alone. The "age" of punishment corresponds exactly to the "few stripes" and "many stripes" of Scripture, both **limited**, however, in the very nature of the case, and by the word used to measure the acts of disobedience. The mystery is cleared up when we know from other Scriptures that **all** punishment is inflicted by the **Devil**, and that we must have an eternal Devil to make eternal punishment. If the Devil is destroyed, punishment ceases, ipso facto. And that he is destroyed Scripture clearly affirms. In fact, he can only hold his unhappy victims till the "uttermost farthing is paid", Matt. 5:26, not a moment longer. When the prisoner has "**served**" his **time**, the prison doors fly open of themselves. Praise the Lord! But we have not yet grappled with the textual difficulty in Matt. 25. "These shall go away into **agelasting** punishment; but the righteous into **agelasting** life." I give the literal translation that none can challenge. The difficulty, as has been often seen, is this. If the punishment is limited, is not the "life" also? If hell's misery comes to an end, will not heaven's happiness cease? Do we not prove more than we wish by our use of the word "age"? I am glad to be able to meet this, in a way that will not shock the most timid trust in everlasting happiness. We have seen that **agelasting punishment**, has an end, in virtue of the destruction of the Devil, the cessation of sin and death: not to speak of the innumerable moral arguments, springing from God's nature in its everlasting rectitude; and the circumstances of human existence.

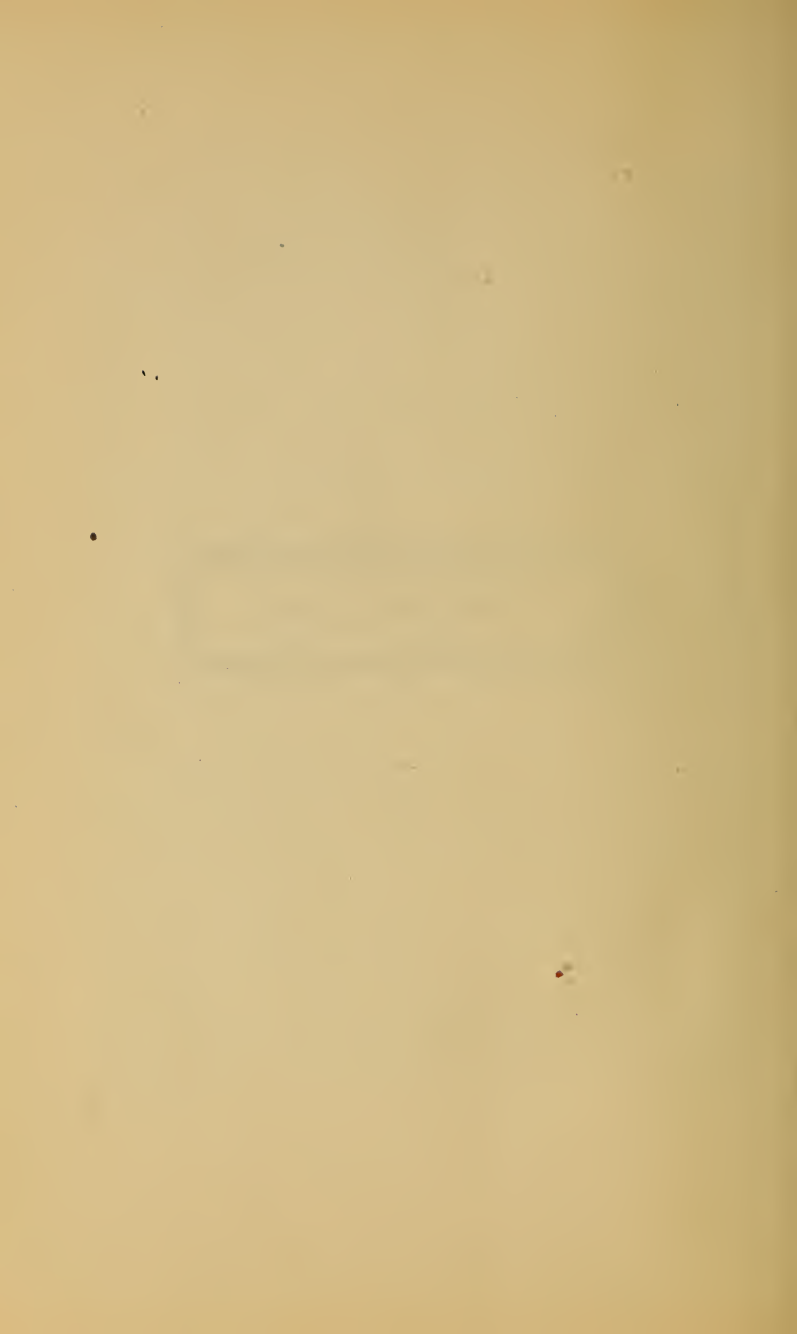
All these limit the age of punishment. Why then does the same word used in connection with happiness, mean an age "**without end**" as Eph. 3:21 has it? Simply because the "life" we have is the life of **Christ**. "Because I live ye shall live also", is a bond that hell nor earth can sever. God has "joined" what none may "put asunder". My life, then, is measured by His: and that never ends. "He alone hath immortality in Himself." That "immortality" He gives to me, once "mortal". It can never be taken away. When Christ dies I shall die. But having once died, He "dieth no more". And that death of His gives Him the right to impart His life to those "dead in trespasses and sins". I need not trouble then for fear of loss, though the word used, like all human words, must be a limited one, taken alone. Indeed, I am not aware that the Bible ever uses a word that is in itself unlimited, even to make known to us our God and His ways. For how can a finite man comprehend the infinite? So the Spirit speaks to us in comprehensible terms.

Of course, objections will be raised by the score. Some from the bias of early training; some from the letter of the Scripture; others from this source or that.

I think I can answer them all fairly, but time and space fail here and now. But whether answered to the satisfaction of all, as to my own, Luke 16 stands apart from all objection, fixing certain great principles that must be reckoned with in the proper solution of acknowledged difficulties. I commend this exposition to the prayerful consideration of thoughtful and candid men. It opens up such a vista of hope and usefulness, that no words can express it. And this is the **Hell of Scripture**.



“Praise the Lord”



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