

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

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**Divine Life**  
**and**  
**International Expositor**  
**of**  
**Scriptural Holiness**

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*To me to live is Christ.-Phil. I. 21.*

# Divine Life

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## Chapter 1

### THE LEGACY OF JESUS.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you."-  
John xiv. 27.

INEFFABLY sweet are these words of our Lord. They are His farewell benediction. What is the significance of these utterances? First, What is peace? It is not primarily the absence of outward hostility, or a state of social friendship. Nor is it a mere exemption from internal conflict and commotion.

It is spiritual and Divine repose resulting from the presence of the Holy Ghost. This appears from the preceding verse. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all, things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Peace here is only another name for the comfort of the Holy Ghost and the refreshing remembrance of Jesus and His words which He will revive and expound. It is not temporary. It is left with us. It is not bought, but given. It is not given after the fashion of worldly bestowments. The world gives reluctantly-Christ freely. "Freely ye have received, freely give." "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." The world gives sparingly, and often with parsimony -Christ bountifully, and with overflowing abundance, "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over."

The world gives from interested and mercenary motives, expecting an equivalent-Christ from pure, disinterested love, expecting no compensative reward, and asking nothing in return but love and trust. Hence it is written, " For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9).

This peace, which is the munificent legacy of Christ, and the permanent heritage of His disciples, is peculiar in two respects.

First. It is incomprehensible. It is so deep and Divine that Paul says, "It passeth all understanding."

Second. It possesses a keeping power. Accordingly, in the same connection, it is said, "The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This peace is a safe full of gold, and burglar-proof.

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## Chapter 2

**"YOUR SORROW SHALL BE TURNED INTO JOY."**

(John xvi. 20.)

I'VE found a joy in sorrow,

A secret balm for pain,

A beautiful to-morrow,

Of sunshine after rain;

I've found a branch of healing

Near every bitter spring,

A whispered promise stealing

O'er every broken string.

I've found a glad hosanna

For every woe and wail,

A handful of sweet manna

When grapes of Eshcol fail;

I've found a Rock of Ages

When desert wells are dry,

And after weary stages

I've found an Elim nigh,-

An Elim with its coolness,

Its fountains and its shades;

A blessing in its fulness,

When buds of promise fade.

O'er tears of soft contrition

I've seen a rainbow light,

A glory and fruition,

So near, yet out of sight.

My Saviour, Thee possessing,

I have the joy, the balm,

The healing and the blessing,

The sunshine and the psalm;

The promise for the fearful,

The Elim for the faint,

The rainbow for the tearful,

The glory for the saint.

"Life in love is the noblest life: let that be our conviction; we will abide in this love: let that be our resolve; then God will abide with us: that will be our blessing." -Ranke.

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest; until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." ISIAH xlii. I.

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## Chapter 3

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST AS SET FORTH IN THE SCRIPTURES.

BY REV. ASA MAHAN D.D. LL.D.

A SHORT time previous to the Conference at Brighton, the great theologian in Berlin-the individual who is, in reality, Primate of the Lutheran Church in Germany-made a statement to this effect "For centuries past the thought of the Church has been mainly occupied with the mission of the Father and Son. Hereafter religious thought will, in a special sense, be occupied with the mission of the Holy Spirit." Prominent facts in all parts of Christendom clearly indicate the truth of the above statement.

#### THE THREE DISTINCT AND OPPOSITE THEORIES UPON THE SUBJECT.

Since the subject has been brought prominently before the public mind, three distinct and opposite theories pertaining to "the Promise of the Spirit" have been set forth, and each now has its zealous advocates in the Church. The time has arrived, we believe, when the True Doctrine of the Spirit may be set forth with such distinctness that it will be received by all true believers who shall understand it. The three theories under consideration are the following:-

1. The Promise of the Spirit became, at the Pentecost, for the whole Church in all future time, an accomplished fact, just as the work of atonement was "finished" when Christ gave up the ghost upon the cross, that the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost is always given in Regeneration; that "all believers in common now have the whole Holy Ghost," that it is no more proper for them to pray for the Spirit than it is to pray that Christ may atone for our sins; and that when we believe that the Spirit is in us, His influence becomes effective for our illumination and sanctification, just as when we believe in Christ, His atonement becomes effective for the pardon of our sins.
2. The second theory is this: All believers do, in fact, at Regeneration, receive the promised "Baptism of the Holy Ghost," and all are under the power of this Baptism. All are not, however, at that, time, nor are all now, "filled with the Spirit;" and this filling-up, by an increase of what all have in a measure, is what we are required to seek. According to this theory, the "Promise of the Spirit," or "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost," is not, with any believer, an object of faith or prayer. The filling to fulness of what is already in us is all that is to be now sought or expected.
3. According to the third theory, the true doctrine, as we fully believe, the promised Baptism of the Holy Ghost, is seldom or never given at the moment of Regeneration, but is a special endowment of power to be sought and received by faith, "AFTER we have believed." The experience of all who receive this Baptism, is, we believe, thus written out by the pen of Inspiration: "In Whom (Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom, also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise." To all believers who have not yet received this Baptism, the Words of Christ are just as applicable as they were to the disciples then: "If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father for you, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." The revealed order of Divine procedure is this: Regeneration; then obedience; and, lastly, "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit" received by faith. God gives the Spirit, we read (Acts i. 32), "to those who obey Him," and those who obey (Gal. iii. 14) "receive the promise of the Spirit by faith."

## EVIDENCE BY WHICH THE FIRST TWO THEORIES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE VERIFIED.

The arguments by which the first two of the above theories are professedly proven are the same in fact and form. We read, it is said with truth, that all believers have the Spirit,—"that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"—that "their bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost which is in them"—that "by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body"—and "have been all made to drink into one Spirit," &c. This, it is affirmed, could not be true, if all believers in common do not, at conversion, receive the promised Baptism of the Holy Ghost." The evidence against such a conclusion based upon the revealed fact, that none of the converts in Samaria, nor in the house of Cornelius, did "receive the Promise of the Spirit" at the time of their conversion, but subsequent to that event, is thus disposed of. It was necessary that the first converts in Samaria, and among the Gentiles, should receive the Spirit as the disciples did at the Pentecost, in order to evince the fact that the gift of the Spirit is the common inheritance of all believers of all nations and in all time. That truth being thus evinced, no special Baptism of the Holy Ghost, except in conversion, has since been given, or is to be expected. Those who employ such an argument forget that quite twenty years subsequent to these events, Paul found certain disciples at Ephesus who had not then "received the Holy Ghost," and that the question which he put to those disciples, absolutely implies that, in his inspired judgment, the fact of Regeneration does not imply that the subject has yet received "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost." If he had held and taught, that all believers, in common, do at Regeneration receive this Baptism, would he have put the question to acknowledged converts, believers in Jesus: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye believed?" The same question, together with the facts recorded (Acts xix. 1-7), absolutely implies that when Paul, as in the passages above cited, spoke of all believers as having the Spirit, and of their bodies as "temples of the Holy Ghost," he did not, by any means, intend to be understood as teaching, that all in common have received "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost." We affirm, all the passages under considera- tion implying it, that while the Spirit is in all believers, and their bodies are His temples, very few of them may yet have received the Pentecostal "Baptism of the Holy Ghost." These statements we will now proceed to verify and elucidate.

## TRUE DOCTRINE VERIFIED AND ELUCIDATED.

We adduce as the basis of our verification and elucidation of the True Doctrine of "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost," the following passage of Scripture (Eph. ii. 22): "In whom (Christ) ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Reference in this, and the verses preceding, is had to the building of the ancient Temple and Tabernacle. To these we must recur, in order to understand the bearing of what is here revealed upon our subject. The owner of a house, while it is as much his at one time as another, sustains, we should bear in mind, quite different relations to it before and after he takes up his abode in it. All that is previously done is preparatory to this final occupancy.

## THE BUILDING OF THE ANCIENT TABERNACLE.

Let us now turn our thoughts to the Tabernacle built by Moses. This entire structure, we must bear in mind, was constituted of dedicated materials, materials, first Divinely designated, and then dedicated for a specific purpose, the rearing-up of a building which was to become "a habitation of God through the Spirit," a place, as heaven is, of His special abode. Not only so, but the entire building was reared up under direct and specific Divine dictation and superintendence, the entire pattern of it being, first of all, distinctly "shown in the Mount," and all the leading workmen being first designated by name, and then acting, in all they did, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. God, in the highest sense, was the builder as well as the proprietor of that structure. It was God's Tabernacle, reared up, we repeat, "for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Let us now recur to the scene recorded (Ex. xl.). Under special and specific Divine direction the structure was set up, and all its furnishment put in perfect order, and all the prescribed offerings were made. When the Tabernacle was thus dedicated, and set apart for God, Moses and Aaron, and all the priests, retired, and stood without, leaving the divinely erected and dedicated structure in the hands of God, and alone with Him. "Then," we read, "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." We must bear in mind

here that this tent was as really and truly God's tabernacle, that it was as sacred in His sight, that it would have been as criminal to desecrate it, and that God was as really in it, and in it in a peculiar sense, before as after He took special and visible possession of it, by filling it with His glory. Before this event, He was present in the Tabernacle as giving inspired directions in regard to its structure and arrangements, and accepting the act of its dedication to Him. After that event He was in that tabernacle as a glory manifested personal presence, to hear the prayers, and accept the offerings of His people, and to reveal to them His will and His truth. The two relations of God to His Tabernacle differed, not only in degree, but in kind, and it was God's dwelling-place in a new and different sense after from what it was before, that event.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS APPLIED.

Let us now, in the light of these illustrative facts, turn our thoughts to the believer in Jesus. The words, "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building," apply directly to every true saint of God. As the entire Tabernacle, of which we have been speaking, was constituted of dedicated materials, as all was wrought, and constructed under direct Divine superintendence, and as all was done as a means to one exclusive purpose, the rearing up "a habitation of God, through the Spirit," so with the work of God, in and upon every believer. First of all, "by the precious blood of Christ," he is "bought with a price" to become "a habitation of God through the Spirit." Their, in the work of Regeneration, conviction of sin, and "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," are all the direct and immediate result of the agency of the Spirit. From this moment, the Spirit is never absent from the heart of the believer, but is always "working within him to will and to do," carrying forward the process of sanctification, perfecting his obedience and love, and "building him up in the most holy faith." For what purpose is he thus builded? For the same purpose, we answer, for which the ancient Tabernacle was reared up-"for an habitation of God through the Spirit." As the fact that a house is builded to be the home-residence of its proprietor, and that it is his house, and that he is in it preparing it for the purpose designated, does not imply that he has yet entered it for home-occupancy, so the fact that "in Christ the believer is builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit," does not imply that God, as a glory-manifested personal presence, has entered His habitation, and "made his abode in it." Now, what the entrance of the cloud into the ancient Tabernacle, and filling it with the Divine glory, after it was reared up, purified and dedicated as the habitation of God, was to that Tabernacle, such is "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost" to the believer, after, as "God's husbandry and God's building," he has been "builded in Christ, for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

#### THE PENTECOST.

As a further illustration of this great theme, let us now recur to the scene of the Pentecost (Acts ii. 1-4): "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Here we have the Tabernacle set up, put in order, and dedicated, as "the habitation of God through the Spirit." The body of each individual was here consecrated as a "temple of the Holy Ghost," and all their members and all their faculties were set apart "as instruments of righteousness unto God." What then followed? As in the symbolical Tabernacle when it was set up and dedicated, "the cloud covered the tent, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle," so, in this case, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." All their prior experiences had been under the direct agency and control of the Spirit, but had been preparatory to this great consummation. As "God's husbandry and God's building," they had "been in Christ builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit," and now, as a personally manifested presence, God entered all these divinely built and consecrated Temples, filled them with His glory, and made His abode in them. We must bear in mind that the visible signs which in three recorded cases, and in these only, attended the Baptism of the Spirit, were no part of the Baptism itself. When "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," then, and not till then, did they receive "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost." This Baptism is "the Promise" which all believers are required to "receive by faith." The subject will be further elucidated on a future occasion.

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Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 4

### THE BELIEVER'S POSITION.

BY THE REV. JAMES FLEMING, D.D.

THE words which St. Paul employs to describe the position are-"in Christ." They are words, as every reader of DIVINE LIFE knows, which frequently occur in his epistles. He employs them when speaking of the life, and walk, and heritage of believers:-"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" "thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ"-"whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" -"blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

The words must have had a Wonderful richness of meaning, and even fascination to the Apostle, to be repeated by him with such frequency and variety of application. He interweaves them with all his instructions, as if they were the very life and soul of the truths he expounds, and the duties he enforces.

How far the meaning he put upon them exhausted their significance, it is not possible to say; but so far as ordinary readers of Scripture are concerned, they imply what will never be comprehended, and cover depths which will for ever remain unexplored.

The meaning they obviously bear, and with which religious teachers, are, as a rule, contented is, union with Christ. As thus understood, they express a subject to which the writers of the New Testament attach the highest importance, and on which consequently they frequently dwell. Nor, is this to be wondered at, as it covers the whole ground of salvation and Christian experience. Yes, only as you are one with Christ, are you His. The degree of your identification with Him is the measure of the grace you possess, and the security you enjoy.

To be in Christ, then, is to be one with Him, as the member is with the body, and the branch with the vine. It is, in other words, to be in Him as the sphere of your life, and the element of your being.

The converse of the truth is, that Christ is in us. The one is synonymous with the other. To be in Christ is the same as having Christ in us. Nor must the two ever be separated, as on their co-existence and mutual action depend advancement in holiness, and the possession of power for service.

Then think with whom this union associates you; it is with Him who is "fairer than all the sons of men;" who is "the Brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person;" "in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" with whom are all the resources of grace, and by whom "all power is wielded both in heaven and in earth."

But what a position is this for man to fill! How exalted the standing! How Divine the relation!

Israel's place of old was on the breast and shoulders of Aaron; yours, beloved, is in the heart and strength of the Son of God. But you have not only His love and power, you have Himself, in undivided personality and ever-available sufficiency.

To be in Christ is to have His acceptance. Guilt no more attaches to you there than it does to Him. Possessed of His "righteousness," you receive the very acceptance which is accorded to Him. And must not it be so? There is not one kind of acceptance for the Head and another for the Members. You are not only "accepted in the Beloved," but as the Beloved. "As He is before God," so are we in this world. There is therefore no condemnation for us. Our past may be clouded, but our future is light in the Lord.

But we have in Christ also the "Eternal Life," which is the outflow and gift of the Life-giving Spirit. No, you cannot be in Christ without partaking of His life. The branch receives of the life of the tree, and the member of that of the body, and all who are joined to the Lord are one spirit with Him. And then the life you have from Him is resurrection-life—a life over which death has no power, and on which no spot of defilement is seen. Yes, this, child of God, is your life in Christ, not your own made better, but Christ's infused into you. May Christ Himself be enthroned within you, as the Master of your being, and the Hope of Glory.

When you came forth from the grave in which you had been buried with Him, you did so as a new creation. But do you believe this? Then do not be ever trying, as is the case with only too many, to improve what you possess. You cannot add to what is Divine. You may mend and patch up the old, but the new needs no improving. Then is there nothing which it behoves you to do? Are you to remain where you are, and be satisfied with what you have attained? You are not yet all you are capable of and intended to be. You are in Christ to grow, to go from strength to strength, to rise up to the stature of Christian perfection, and glorify God by much fruit-bearing.

And for this—for walking before the Lord unto all-pleasing and fulfilling the purposes of life, you have in Christ the power that you need. He perfects His strength in the weakness of all who are one with Him. They are henceforth equipped for every service, and possessed of resources adequate to all emergencies.

"Electricians tell us," to quote from Mr. Aitken, "that our nervous system is so constituted that under the force of electricity we can perform prodigies of strength and endurance, which would be impossible under ordinary circumstances. We will suppose a book to weigh several pounds. I hold it out at arm's length, my arm being in a horizontal position. Ere many minutes have passed, the sense of fatigue becomes insupportable, and my arm must fall to my side. But turn on a current of electricity to the outstretched arm, and I am able to, sustain the weight indefinitely, without any such sense of fatigue. Where does my part in the matter lie? Not in struggling to force my arm to do what it is too weak to do, but in yielding my member to the power which can enable it to accomplish what is otherwise impossible. I have to see to it that no non-conductor shuts me off from the generating mechanism, and breaks the invisible stream of power; and that is just what I have to see to, above everything else, in my spiritual experience. Am I in full connexion with Omnipotence? Listen to the language of St. Paul: 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.' How did Christ strengthen him? By endowing his nature with a new and adequate power; 'I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' "

Then we have here the secret and growth of holiness. Only in union with Christ can you become like Him. It is association that produces resemblance. As then you abide in Christ and walk with Him, you assume His image, become His representative, and dying to sin, live unto righteousness. Nor are these ends to be reached by any other way. Christ is our sanctification. Salvation is from beginning to end His work. He prepares for heaven as well as preserves from perdition. He is the supply for our every need, whilst in Him we occupy His standing, become the subjects of a Divine nature, and are, holy as God is holy. "All things are yours in Christ: for as many as receive Him, to them gives He power to become the Sons of God; even to them that believe on His name;" that "ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work."

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## Chapter 5

### HOW TO GROW FROM FAITH TO FAITH, AND FROM GLORY TO GLORY.

BY REV. W. E. BOARDMAN.

"AS ye have received Christ Jesus our Lord, so walk ye in Him." The way to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is to go on as we began. There is no stepping onward in any other way.

How did we receive our Lord Jesus Christ? We ventured on Him to save us, and gave up all thought of salvation in any other way.

How are we to make progress from faith to faith, and from glory to glory? By venturing on Christ for it, as we ventured on Him at first for salvation.

What followed the venture upon Christ for salvation? The revelation of Him by the Spirit to us, in the wonders of His self-sacrificing love for us in giving Himself to die that we might live. And with this knowledge of Christ came also such an in-letting into the grace of God our Heavenly Father as filled us with adoring wonder. More of the grace of God and of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ came to us in a day-aye, in an hour-than could be gained by a whole eternity of self-effort in any, or all ways, conceivable to us. It was a grand first revelation to us of the True God and of His Son Jesus Christ, the first in-breathing of eternal life.

Are our souls longing for more? Are we conscious of the need of a deeper in-letting into the grace of God and of fuller knowledge of Christ? How is it to be received?

How but by venturing on Christ for all the fulness of God in our souls as we did in the first place for salvation?

What follows when this is done?

The revelation of Christ to our souls as the Risen Saviour, in His Living Presence and Power with us now-in the beauties of holiness, to save us from sin, fill us with the Holy Spirit, and keep us in perfect peace, and multiply grace and peace unto us, according to the riches of God's glory.

Those who have found themselves at a standstill after receiving Christ for salvation from death and hell, and have made little or no progress in the mastery of besetting sins and in the grace of God, by the most strenuous effort and vigilant watchfulness, have, by giving up all hope of progress in this way, and venturing upon Christ for salvation from sin, and for the fulness of the Spirit, come, in an hour; into such fulness of grace and knowledge of Jesus, that their amazement has been even greater than in that first hour of the revelation of Christ in His dying love to their souls. In a moment they have been shown their own mistake in the past about the way to grow in grace, in contrast with the true way, which is God's way for us. And in that same moment there has burst upon them, or dawned upon them more gradually, the grace of God in its fulness, and the knowledge of Jesus in another, and to them new relation, which has made Him doubly precious to them, and brought their thoughts and affections, and will, into such sweet abiding captivity to Him as they had

not before thought possible this side of heaven.

One day there came into a little circle of earnest Christians who were gathered to wait together on the Lord in prayer and conversation, that they might renew their strength, or exchange it for the Lord's strength, a veteran Christian man who had grown grey and risen high in his country's service. The fact came out afterwards that he had been wonderfully taught of the Lord, apart from all distinctive human teaching or testimony on this subject. As one and another spoke of the new step of faith which the Lord had led them to take, and of the wonders of His grace and truth open to them, the fire burned in the heart of this good man, and as face to face in water, so his heart answered to theirs in experience, until at last, though a stranger to all in the circle, known by name to only one or two, he could not but speak. He asked a very simple question, "Is not this the way to grow in grace? "

The new voice and the question arrested all. Some were a little startled. They would have been less startled, though much pained, if the question had been, "Is not this incompatible with growth in grace? "So often is it that this misconception of it is thrust by the enemy of all truth into the minds of those who hear about it. Yet in a moment one answered emphatically, "Yes, indeed, this is the way to grow in grace, the only true way." To this answer the whole circle gave spontaneously the most hearty assent.

Yes, the Apostle has put the way of Christian progress truly in two of his most remarkable sayings, "from faith to faith" and "from glory to glory."

There is a faith that ventures upon Christ, and really receives Him as a Saviour from eternal death. And there is a transfiguring power in the Gospel when it presents the Saviour in the glory of His dying love for the sinner, which changes, the believing sinner himself into the same image. And there is a deeper, fuller faith which ventures upon the same glorious Saviour for salvation from sin and for the fulness of the Spirit, and receives all it ventures for in Christ. And in Christ, as presented in the gospel as in a mirror in the glory of His presence and power, there is a transfiguring efficacy that changes the believer into the same glory of the resurrection-life, and fits him to live with Christ in all the walk, work, worship, and warfare of daily life, holy, harmless, and undefiled, amidst a crooked and perverse generation.

The glory into which we are brought, and by which we are transfigured, is in Christ, not in us, and is ours in Him by having Him revealed in us. The process set forth by the Apostle is that of progress from faith to faith in Christ, not in ourselves; and so from one glory in Christ to another. It is not that of bringing us step by step onward by self-effort into a perfected self, but in a perfect self-renunciation and in the reception of a perfect Saviour.

Satan would eagerly catch us up in our escape from his dominion, and entangle us in the meshes of a good self or a perfect self, if he could, and make us think of the glory of a perfected self, instead of the glory of a perfect Saviour; and so divert our testimony for Christ and His glories from Him, and turn it to egotistic boasting of our own glories. Our glory is not our own, but Christ's, and our glorying must all be, not in ourselves, but in Him. He is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption," by being revealed in us from faith to faith, in His glories from glory to glory. He is all our glory; we have none of our own.

(To be concluded in our next.)

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## Chapter 6

### THE DISPENSATIONS.

BY REV. A. LOWREY, D.D.

"Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea vi. 3

THE gracious dispensations of God to men, like the antecedent plan of redemption, are progressive and ever brightening. Beginning with the twilight of vague, obscure revelation, it steadily advances like the morning light until it broadens into the splendours and perfections of Gospel day. Each successive revelation grows less typical and more didactic and intellectual-less national, and more personal-less ceremonial and outward, and more interior and directly, saving-less prophetic and remote, and more promissory and immediate-less earthly, material and sensuous, and more Divine, spiritual and life-giving.

This gradual development of the Divine preparations, looking directly to the simplicities of the Gospel, and the holiness which it provides for and requires, finds its correspondences in nature everywhere. It is like the dawn of day coming out of the womb of midnight, and proceeding to a high noon. It is like the germ in seeds that begins to swell, and then send forth plants and trees that cover the earth with verdure and beauty. It is like the recondite process of human existences which begin with the mysterious quickening of the embryonic germ, and then developes into the conscious state, then into manhood and maturity, stopping not until it dominates the world and fills the earth with the brilliancy of its genius. So with the dispensations. They begin with the bud of incipient preparations founded upon the prior plans and purposes of mercy and grace in the Eternal Mind, but go on unfolding leaf and flower until the earth is made gay with the blush of their full bloom, and rich and sweet with the redolence of their inexhaustible fragrance. Generically considered, there are but two dispensations—a dispensation of law, and a dispensation of grace. But under these general heads there are several subdivisions called covenants, promises, revelations, visions and prophecies. These have been periodically bestowed to amplify and spiritualise religion.

The beginning of legal dispensation was the requirement delivered to our first parents that they should not "eat" of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Gen. ii, 17. This was adapted to responsible beings in a state of rectitude. In that case nothing but obedience was necessary to secure the continuance of the Divine favour, and obedience then came easily within the possibilities of natural ability. It therefore involved no promise of grace. The next and most prominent dispensation of law was the Ten Commandments, or Decalogue. This was given after the disability of the fall had smitten the race, but in itself contained no provision for, or proffer of help. And yet compliance must have necessitated a certain pre-appropriation of the merits of the promised Saviour. In this way the law began early to be a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, in whom help and healing would be abundant. The spirit and principles of the decalogue were afterwards expanded into the Levitical code and diffused through the preceptive parts of the prophecies, and finally transferred with increasing stringency and exactitude to the Gospel. The Gospel, therefore, is no less a code of laws than a covenant of mercy. It no less provides for high morality and perfect holiness, than it requires such excellence. That teaching is most faulty which represents the attainment of holiness as optional, or as a state simply to be aimed at—a mere privilege which it is well to embrace. It is more. It is a duty, it is heaven's all-comprising requirement. It has all the binding force and penal sanction of law. "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xii., 14. And this legal aspect of the Divine dispensation has steadily pointed, like the needle to the pole, to personal purity. Down

through the ages the exactions have multiplied and become more explicit, rigorous and comprehensive. It is now the indispensable condition of full acceptance, the necessary endowment to give to service the highest efficiency, and the quality and image without which no man can ever enjoy the beatific vision of God. All who enter heaven must first "wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. vii. 14. This gracious dispensation of God received its first enunciation in the obscure promise, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. iii. 15. Here the conflict between holiness and sin was first waged. It was a declaration of war on the part of God and in the name of Jesus. It was also a prediction and assurance that the seed of the woman should triumph. Thus six thousand years ago the antagonism of sin and holiness was established. From that day to this the artillery of truth and righteousness has gleamed and pealed along the whole line of the ages against sin. Nor is this a war of mere subjugation-it is a war of extermination. Nor can there be any perfect peace until this enemy is swept from the soul by the Divine bosom of destruction. As the Lord commanded the barbarous tribes of Canaan to be entirely destroyed that there might be peace and uncorrupted worship in the land among His chosen people, so God originally decreed, not the abatement, but the destruction of the works of Satan. This purpose he indicated by aiming the blow at the serpent's head, or the seat of sinful life.

Again, the dispensation of grace was announced more distinctly and full to Abraham: "And in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 18. This covenant of mercy was enlarged, defined, and diversified in the repeated promises of a Saviour in the Jewish ceremonial, and in the more spiritual definite promises of the prophets.

Finally, it opened up like a rose bursting into full bloom in the glory of the Gospel dispensation. And as the successive instalments of truth were made known, the spiritual element became more and more prominent and pervasive, and the design of focalizing all the fires and forces of religion on the heart, and making it the chief object of purification and culture, became manifest. But when the great orb of Christianity rose, a conversion took place, which caused nearly all the material and outward in worship to slough off. Types and symbols, ceremonials and circumcision, animal sacrifices and bloody baptisms, feasts and offerings, priests and prophets, tinsel and show, all disappear. It is a sublimation that excludes all the grossness and crudity of former dispensations. The whole of religion was resolved into pure truth, simple faith, perfect love, and spiritual worship.

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 7

### THE GLORIOUS PERSON OF OUR LORD, AND THE DOCTRINES WHICH GATHER ROUND HIM.

BY REV. CLEMENT CLEMANCE, B.A., D.D.

WE have selected this subject for a series of papers because, while to us and our readers it presents, "without controversy," the great mystery of godliness, it is precisely that around which the controversies of the day are thickly gathering. We venture to offer, for the earnest consideration of our readers, that which we verily believe to be the teaching of The Book concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom and by whom alone the "Divine Life" has become possible for man. We wish, moreover, to say that, while we are satisfied that our views of the glory of Christ coincide with the unchanged faith of the Church through all the Christian ages, yet, for forms of expression and for the entire setting of the theme, the writer alone is responsible.

Archbishop Whately somewhere makes the remark, that if any one has a clear conception of the Person of Christ, that conception is an erroneous one; by which, we suppose, he meant, that whoever held fast to the Bible-teaching concerning the deity of Christ, and who also believed in His humanity, would, if pressed to explain the mode of the union of the two natures in one person, be utterly unable to give a reply. This seems just about the actual fact. The two sides of Christ's person are, if each be taken by itself, perfectly apprehensible, if not comprehensible; but the junction of the two is beyond our power to explain. At the same time it does not by any means follow that it is unimportant whether our thoughts of Christ are Scriptural or no. Good John Owen laments "Of all the evils which I have seen in the days of my pilgrimage, there is none so grievous as the public contempt of the principal mysteries of the Gospel amongst them that are called Christians." This would indeed be matter for lamentation; but perhaps the danger of our day lies not so much in the direction of open contempt as of secret indifference. Judging from the tenor of much of our literature, doctrine is of little moment provided we aim at "universal benevolence." As if, provided we dealt our gifts to man with a liberal hand, it should concern us little whether we fulfilled the right worship towards the Father and the Son—thus making benevolence to the creature of more moment than right reverence to God! But it should be remembered, that indifference in forming a right conception of what Christ is, is unrighteousness towards God. To worship Christ if he be not God, is superstition. To refuse him worship if he be God, is dishonour to One who is deserving of all honour. To pay the Supreme One subordinate honour, is to be guilty of mockery; to pay a subordinate one supreme honour, is to be an idolater. We cannot afford to be indifferent on such a matter as the person of Christ, nor may we be nebulous or misty as to what on this topic the Lord hath spoken. Wherever there is proper reverence for God and for His word, there will be intense desire to have right views of Jesus. That devoted man, Harrington Evans, was, at one period of his life, in deep anxiety lest he should be doing Christ a wrong by supposing Him to be God merely through the in-dwelling of the Father. Reverent and devout as he was, it is not to be wondered at that he came in time to a clearer and fuller light. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," and ever will be.

The materials from which we may draw our conclusions as to what Christ is, are found mainly in the words of Christ and His apostles; the Old Testament, however, giving to these conclusions no small amount of confirmation and strength. It needs but a very cursory glance at the four gospels, in order to perceive that Jesus Christ said many things which compelled the suspicion that He who could say such things was no common man. As to God—He says He "came from Him." He speaks of the "glory which He had with Him before the world was." He speaks of Himself as "the Son of Man who is in Heaven," as "in God," as knowing God," as "the way to God." He says, "he that hath seen me hath seen the

Father;" "my Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" "I and my Father are one;" "my Father is greater than I." And when Peter confessed "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God," Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven." Christ must be something more than man, if it needed a special Divine revelation to teach man what He was. As to man-Christ speaks of Himself as man's life, light, food, healing, and rest. As to the honour He claimed, He says that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." And as to His personal presence, He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!"

Still, however great the amazement such passages cause us as we place ourselves in view of Christ's humanity, and however strongly they impel us to say, "He must have been more than man," yea, however clearly and directly they point us to His divinity, yet, so far as Christ's words go, it is for the most part by necessary inference rather than from direct statement that we reach the conclusion that He was God. On the whole, there was a certain reserve as to what He was-enough revealed to lead some to say, "We beheld His glory," and enough concealed to leave many in doubt as to "what manner of man" He was. Before we have finished our theme, we shall show how this may be accounted for; meanwhile, let us observe that there was one principle on which Christ taught, which points out, at least, the direction in which the reason of this concealment may be found. This is indicated in the words, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth." Here, then, we have the express declaration first, that there were many things which Christ could not then teach, or of which He could give only the germs; secondly, that the Holy Spirit would teach these things when He was gone; thirdly, that the Holy Spirit would teach these things to the apostles, that they might be teachers of Christ, having had the double advantage of being with Christ from the beginning and of receiving the teaching of the Holy Ghost, who should testify of Christ, and in testifying of Him should glorify Him.

It will be in perfect consistency with all this should we find-First, that the revelations of the Holy Ghost supplemented the teaching of the Lord Jesus, and threw new light on what He was and did. Secondly, that the apostles were the organs of the Holy Ghost in their expositions of Christ's person and work. Thirdly, that the teachings of the apostles respecting Christ were in advance of anything which Christ said about Himself during His lifetime, because at that time the apostles could not bear this fuller development of truth; nor could it be unfolded till the facts on which it rested were accomplished.

Now, if we turn for a moment to the writings of the apostles, especially to the Epistles of Paul and John, we find-First, that the apostles shared this revelation (1 Cor. ii. 1; Gal. i. 15,16). Second, that they expounded this revelation (1 Cor. ii. 15, 16; 1 Cor. xv. 1-4; Ephes. i. 8). Third, that they saw the results of their teaching, since it became a practical power in believers (2 Cor. iii. 2, 3). Nor was the teaching of the apostle John less clear than that of St. Paul. We may find it convenient to illustrate and confirm the teachings of one apostle by those of the other. There is one passage in the introduction to the Gospel of St. John; there are also several passages in the Epistles which set forth the dignity and glory of Christ more fully than any words in the way of direct statement which are recorded as coming from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself. These passages are-John i. 1-14; there is another in Phil. ii. 6-8. We propose to make this last-named passage the basis on which we set forth the glory of our Lord.

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 8

### THE RECKONING OF FAITH.

BY THE REV. THORNLEY SMITH.

IN that remarkable chapter, the sixth of Romans, St. Paul speaks of the death and resurrection of our Lord as symbolical of the believer's death unto sin, and of his rising again into newness of life. He is baptised into Christ's death, he is raised into living fellowship with God. Turn to the passage and read verses 1-10, and you will see how decidedly opposed the Apostle is to the notion that the Christian may live in sin, and how inconsistent he deems it with the profession of Christianity. "Christ died," he says, "unto sin once," and, therefore, must the believers die to it once for all. Christ "liveth unto God," and, therefore, must the believer live a life in God, for God, and to God, day by day.

For what follows? "Likewise," or in like manner, "reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (verse 11).

What is this reckoning? It is not the reckoning of the arithmetician. There are men who demand demonstrative proof of the truth of Christianity, and refuse to believe in it unless it can be made as clear to them as that two and two make four. The demand is simply absurd, as every unprejudiced and thoughtful mind must see. It is a perilous thing to reject Divine revelation on any such grounds, for it may render the mind incapable of believing, and is indicative of a want of true sincerity. Mathematical evidence of moral truth and of Christian experience is impossible, and those who are resolved to wait for it will have to wait, until, perhaps, they are shut up in judicial unbelief.

It is not the reckoning of the logician. The logician adopts a process of reasoning on many subjects which he thinks will bring him to right conclusions, as possibly it may. But the reckoning of St. Paul moves in a higher sphere. No one can ever reason himself out of sin into holiness. He may set the evil of sin before him on the one hand, and the beauty of holiness before him on the other; and he may try to compel himself to shun the one and to aspire after the other, but he will fail, and fail signally, however correct his reasoning may be. Examining the evidences of Christianity, weighing carefully the facts of its history, and candidly considering the objections brought against it, will, no doubt, lead us into an intellectual assent to its Divine origin, but we may reason on the mysteries it unfolds till doomsday ere we become experimentally acquainted with its saving truths.

There is a higher and a better reckoning than this, even the reckoning of faith, and it is of that St. Paul here speaks. Do you ask how does faith reckon? or with what? The answer is, it takes the promises of God, and says these promises are true, and I will act upon them; and, however rich, and full, and wondrous they are, it staggers not at the grand conclusions they involve. It looks first at the requirements of the Gospel, and it finds that they amount to nothing less than the full surrender of the life to Christ. It looks next at the promises of the Gospel, and finds that they amount to nothing less than a complete deliverance from the guilt, the power, and the pollution of sin. And there it rests. It realises, practically, the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and it sees in them provision made for the entire conquest of the Christian over his depraved and sinful nature. Nor need the process be a long and tedious one. It may be entered upon at once, and completed now. Some there are who go on reckoning, but never come to an end of their reckoning. They read the passage before us, "reckon that you will die to sin and live unto God some day or other before the death of the body," but they think, perhaps, that it would be presumption to reckon upon it now. Yet St. Paul says, reckon now, reckon at once, -reckon without delay, and he implies that the moment we so reckon the work is done.

But what are we to reckon? On two things-that we are dead indeed unto sin,-that we are alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ. There were, it would seem, Christian professors in Rome who reckoned otherwise; and said, if we continue in sin, grace will the more abound. But what says the Apostle? Does he give countenance to such a thought? By no means. It would, he says, be a contradiction of our profession, for "how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" No longer, therefore, must it reign in your mortal bodies, no longer must it have dominion over you, no longer must your members be its servants and slaves. Reckon yourselves, by faith, dead unto sin,-not dying merely, but dead, for, though the Apostle says elsewhere that they who are Christ's "have crucified the affections and lusts," and though crucifixion was often a lingering death, yet it was death in the end, and the sooner death took place the less were the suffering and the pain. But how can I reckon myself dead unto sin when I do not feel that I am? Ah! it is just here, beloved reader, that you must venture by faith. Only believe, and you shall know. But believe what? Something to be true which is not true? No; but that Christ died to put away sin, and to gain, for you, the conquest over it; died, that you might die with Him and have your sins buried in His grave. This you are to believe, and in this you are to trust. And can you hesitate? Is He not able to do for you, and to accomplish in you, all that He has promised?

But the reckoning goes further. We are not to die only, but to live. The resurrection-life of Christ is to be realized in us, and henceforth we are to live indeed-to live unto God, and thus to answer life's great end. Were we to die only, our salvation would be but in part completed.

And He is the element in which it lives. The words are literally, not "through," but "in our Lord Jesus Christ," implying that He becomes the life of our life, and that we live this resurrection-life in Him just as we live our natural life in the balmy air of heaven. "There is," said Dr. Tholuck, "a whole system of divinity in that little word in Christ," and there is, we may add, a whole system in it of experimental and practical religion. The resurrection-life is not something realized once for all, then to become an independent life; but it is a life of which Christ is the centre and the source today, tomorrow, and for evermore. Is it asked how can such a life be lived? We have nothing, Christian reader, to do with the how, and the sooner we give up trying to solve that question, and to leave it to the Holy Spirit, the sooner shall we find that, as in our conversion, so in our sanctification, He will accomplish His own work, and will seal upon us this grace also. A life of unwavering trust in Christ for purity and holiness will be a pure and holy life; and that life will expand yet more and more, until, when the moment of dissolution comes, it rises into the life of eternal blessedness.

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 9

### BABY CHRISTIANS.

BY H. E. FRAURE, D.D.

WILL you come and see our little one?" Thus accosted, yesterday, I was brought by a sorrowing father to a cradle where his youngest daughter was laid. That daughter had reached the age of 25 years, the younger of twin sisters, the elder of whom was a strong and healthy maid in the full bloom of womanhood. The younger, who laid dead before me, of stunted growth, had passed her quarter-of-a-century on her mother's lap, in the cradle, perambulator, or babychair. A poor, helpless little thing, she could neither walk, nor talk to any about her. Yet, though the parents are not in affluent circumstances, never had a child been more fondly tended. Never had a complaint escaped the mother's lips, on account of all her trouble and anxious care of her helpless offspring.

How many a time, in visiting or passing that home, had I thought of the striking likeness of so many Christians, in their stunted growth, to that poor weakling. More than a quarter-of-a-century has passed in the lives of many since they experienced the new birth. Yet, the era of babyhood remains. Paul (Heb. v. 12, 13) thus speaks of certain believers in his day: "When for the time (which has transpired since your conversion) ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." In the church in Corinth also, while he found some who were "spiritual" and "came behind in no gifts," "faithful men, who were able to teach others also;" he "found not a few" "who were yet carnal," mere "babes in Christ." Continuance in this state, he represents (Heb. vi. 1-8), not only as criminal, but as infinitely perilous to the soul's immortal interests.

This poor toll-keeper's daughter was in no respect responsible for her backwardness; but can any Christian, who still finds his daily experience depicted in the seventh of Romans, honestly say before, God that it is not his own fault that he has not got beyond this stunted babyhood? Every page in the blessed Word of God tells us that God has placed at our disposal every needful grace whereby we may "grow up to the perfect man," "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," that "we be no more children." Paul certainly charged it to the account of the Corinthian believers, that he could only "feed them with milk and not with meat," that they were carnal (under the power of the flesh), that among them were envying, and strife, and factions, and calling themselves after Christ's servants, instead of acknowledging Him only as Lord and Master. Hence it was distinctly their own fault that they were not full grown, but mere "babes in Christ." The Spirit of God was at their disposal, but by their carnality they were grieving Him all the time; had they made the same use of the Spirit as our Blessed Lord, they also, as He did, would have "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

How aptly, on the other hand, does that elder sister, blooming in health and full-developed womanhood, strong to do, to endure, and to receive and digest "the strong meat of the word," represent that other class of believers, who, when "babes in Christ" "desired the sincere milk of the word," and did "grow thereby," and thus "out of weakness were made strong," and are now "able to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ." It is an infinite shame that in the presence of the super-abounding provisions of grace there should be in any of our churches any stunted believer, "any sickly and feeble ones," that "he that is feeble among us is not as David," an all-conquering prince of God, while "the house of David," the leaders of the Sacramental Host, are not "as God, as the Angel of the Lord before Him."

How aptly, I remark, finally, do the patience and enduring love of those parents towards that sickly, and ever feeble child represent the eternally enduring patience and exhaustless love of Christ towards those multitudinous stunted believers who abound in our churches, believers who never grow, and who for so many long years remain unspiritual, carnal, "babes in Christ." Why does He not come upon them in their carnality, worldliness, and sin, and cast them out of His Church as He cast out "those who bought and sold" in "His Father's House?" Because "His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts." If you, reader, are among the number who have long thus "grieved " your Saviour and God, permit me to admonish you, that "it is now high time to awake out of sleep." "Reprobate silver men MAY call you, because the Lord hath forsaken you."

Doesburgh, Netherlands,

16th April, 1878.

# Divine Life

**Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.**

## **Chapter 10**

### **TESTIMONY.**

DURING the progress of a very blessed meeting held by Dr. Lowrey in one of the Wesleyan Churches in Bradford; one of the ministers sweetly entered into the joy of full salvation. He embodied his experience in verse, and handed the lines to Mrs. Lowrey the next morning. They so beautifully express the author's feelings, and are so indicative of what others feel, that we do not hesitate to publish them, under the conviction that they will speak to the hearts of many:

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 11

### THEN AND NOW.

BY THE REV. HENRY BURTON, B.A.

I followed Christ, but with divided heart,  
With one hand only did I grasp the Cross;  
I served Him not with all my powers, but part,  
And knew not that my gain was all a loss.  
I toiled among the furrows of the field,  
I cast the seed with ever-patient care;  
But when the harvest gave a scanty yield,  
I found, too late, that I had lacked in prayer.  
I stood beside the altar day by day,  
And offered, as I thought, the sacrifice.  
The whole, the perfect offering was it? Nay,  
It was a blemished gift, "part of the price."  
Self was in all my plans, in all my deeds,  
And through my life the "I" was written bold;  
'Twas not in Christ I trusted, but in creeds;  
I grasped the dross and flung away the gold.  
Duty was only duty, harsh and stern,  
(Though love can bend a cross into a crown,)

But ah! love's fires had scarce begun to burn,  
My strength soon wasted and my hands hung down.  
And thus I lived, a joyless, shadowed life,  
Because I turned from Him, my only Light;  
Instead of trophies won I had the strife,  
Life was a dimness, neither day nor night.  
But when I turned and gave up all to Him,  
My powers, my talents, and my stubborn will,  
There broke upon my soul an angel's hymn,  
As the sun rose beyond Penuel's hill.  
The sky was steeped in heaven's eternal dawn,  
And in its light the very clouds were gold;  
The shadows melted in the rising morn,  
Disclosing joys and blessings manifold.  
The cross, from which my weakness shrank before,  
Now seemed transformed into a waving palm;  
The rod, that made me smart in days of yore,  
Now blossomed into fragrance and to balm!  
No longer was it self, the "I," that wrought  
The proud weak self was crucified and slain;  
Jesus was all in all, and I was nought,  
But losing self, I found eternal gain.  
It was no longer duty bade me go  
Or here, or there, to do my Lord's behest;

The fires of love burned with so warm a glow,

I found in suffering joy; in service rest.

Now all is peace; for when the tempter tries

To fill my soul with sad, unquiet fears,

My faith looks upward to the watching skies;

The tempter vanishes; for Jesus hears!

Heaven touches earth as onwards now I go,

Hasting to reach the city of the blest;

What waits me over there I do not know;

But here, with Jesus, it is joy and rest!

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 12

### THE SOWERS.

"All seed is in the sower's hands."-Rossetti.

Ten thousand sowers through the land

Passed heedless on their way;

Ten thousand seeds in either hand.

Of every sort had they.

They cast seed here, they cast seed there,

They cast seed everywhere.

The land a forest straightway grew,

With plants of every kind;

And kindly fruits and poisonous too,

In that wood could you find:

And trees grew here, and trees there,

And trees grew everywhere.

Anon, as many a year went by,

Those sowers came once more,

And wandered 'neath the leaf-hid sky,

And wondered at the store;

For fruit hung here, and fruit hung there,

And fruit hung everywhere.

Then plucked they many a berry bright,

None could their right deny;

And some ate to their lifelong delight,

And some ate but to die;

While some plucked here, and some plucked there,

And some plucked everywhere.

Nor knew they in that tangled wood

The trees that were their own;

Yet as they plucked as each one should,

Each plucked what he had sown.

So do men here, so do men there,

So do men everywhere. Selected

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 13

### QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

BY DR. LOWREY.

THE following questions, published in the "King's Highway," have been sent to me with a kind request that I should respond to them. As the interrogations are put forth in no captious spirit, but evidently with a view to solicit a solution of some difficulties, I cheerfully, and in the same spirit, append a brief answer to the first question.

Question 1.-"What is the truth as to the advancement of the soul in holiness from the point of regeneration (John iii. 3-8; Rom. viii. 5-9; 2 Cor. v. 17), to the time when by faith it enters upon the realization of full redemption? And in what respect does this growth continue after perfect holiness is obtained?"

Answer.-The serious "truth" in many cases, if not in most, is that there is no advancement at all. Nor is this the worst aspect of their condition. They recede and decline. Instead of growth, we find decay. The Church to-day is filled to suffocation with stunted believers. Twenty years after their conversion, it may be fifty, they are found with a sort of fossilized Christian habit and perfunctory worship; with no clear evidence of acceptance with God, no unction from the Holy One, no glowing love or sweet emotions in the heart, and no spiritual fruitfulness in the life. If, it may be said, they have religion, and it would be uncharitable to deny it, yet is their religion like the candied honey, that has lost all its limpid life, and honeycomb sweetness. We admit that a regenerate man may advance in religious knowledge, spiritual enlightenment, confirmation of correct habits, deeper convictions of truth and right, higher conceptions of Christian privilege and obligation. And so may the unregenerate man. And as light, correct habits, and external conformity to God's law, and forms of Divine worship, are no inseparable part of the new birth, so the advancement in the regenerate, which we here admit takes place, is no progress; necessarily, in actual subjective sanctification. If it were so, that would be a progress by works, which even a sinner might make.

It is well known, and universally conceded, that a sinner remains a sinner, though steeped in scriptural light, and baptised with the dew of general gospel grace, until he believes for conversion. It is equally true that a regenerate man, whatever be his enlargement of view, or progress in culture and education, or delight in frequent blessing, or victory over sin by way of restraint and repression, does not advance one hair's breadth in essential subjective sanctification, only as he definitely believes for it. Salvation in all its stages is by faith and by faith alone. And this makes sanctification not only instantaneous, but creates a necessity that we should receive it as a gracious gift, bestowed in opposition to a product worked out, or resulting from development and growth. It must be recollected that sanctification, in the sense of heart purity, is the eradication of moral evil from the elements and attributes of the soul itself. It is not a substitutional holiness, like that of a pure man, representing a foul and degraded constituency, but a personal and inwrought purification, effected by the Holy Ghost, through the truth, and by faith, in the merits and promises of Christ. It is not Christ's holiness imputed to us, and covering us, while all or a part of our depravity remains within, necessarily untouched. Nor is it Christ's sanctity put within our minds, in the sense that precious goods are deposited in a commission house, which simply holds the goods, but is not cleansed or changed by them. But it is such a renovation and cleansing of our moral being as gives to it a purity corresponding with the purity of God. Such excellence Divine power alone can produce. We can no more evolve it by discipline and culture and good works, than the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots. We might as well undertake to grow briars and thorns and Canada thistles out of our fields, by sowing wheat among them, as to attempt to grow sinful appetites, and lusts, and tastes and tendencies out of the soul, by cultivating counter graces. But

while it is true that sanctification proper is obtained by faith alone, and is therefore instantaneous, and not gradual, yet it must be remembered that there are preliminary steps which contribute to its attainment, by way of preparing us to exercise the kind and measure of faith necessary to its realization. These preliminaries are instruction, prayer, and the study of the subject. No man can exercise faith for a blessing which has never occupied his thoughts, and for which he has no aspiration.

Hence the duties and services which are indispensable to the preservation of a clear and rich regeneration, are at the same time conducive to entire sanctification. They bring us to the point where we see the privilege and feel the need of full redemption. This preliminary work may require time and be attended with degrees of progress. In this sense the experience may be said to be gradual. This, however, is not gradual sanctification but gradual preparation.

I have now given a sufficient, and, I trust, satisfactory answer to the first part of the first question-to wit, "What is the truth as to the advancement of the soul in holiness from the point of regeneration?"

Our answer may be re-stated in these two propositions:-

1st. There is no advancement in holiness after regeneration in the sense of being saved from the remains of inbred sin, except by faith, and faith excited by the Holy Spirit, and brought into use through craving hunger for righteousness and a recognised obligation to be holy.

2nd. All the faith and duties necessary to maintain and cultivate an undimmed state of regeneration are subsidiary and conducive to a condition of entire sanctification.

The second part of the question which I have undertaken to answer reads as follows: "In what respects does this growth continue after perfect holiness is obtained? "This query must be disposed of in a few words for want of space.

Answer.-Holiness does not put a finality to anything within us, except to the existence and practice of sin. Sin has stunted our being and thwarted our development. Healthy growth, therefore, requires its destruction. It is the office of holiness to counteract this morbid and rickety state of things by effecting the extirpation of moral evil. It puts health and thrift into us, and therefore is the beginning and not the end or enemy of growth. The wheat grows best when the tares are plucked up. Starting with gospel holiness the soul will approximate the absolute and infinite holiness of God for ever. There is no limit to the improvability of our nature and the expansion of our capacities to know and enjoy God. We must therefore rise, thrive, unfold, and increase with the increase of God throughout the ages. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," see Him on and on for ever, and seeing Him, and beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. United to Christ now we have everlasting life, and under the eternal transfiguring ministry of the Holy Ghost, we have set before us endless gradations of glory and holy culture. As the ages roll on, we shall be dropping the less perfect and putting on the new and more exact and more beautiful similitudes of the Divine image. Reader, let me engage you to begin now "to put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man, which after God is renewed in righteousness and true holiness."

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 14

### ERROR CORRECTED.

A FRIEND, in whose judgment we have much confidence, suggested to us the expediency of having in our columns a series of articles under the above general title, or articles intended to correct certain errors which may impede or hinder believers in their Christian progress. In accordance with that suggestion, we introduce the following as the first of such series:

#### FAITH AND ITS EFFECTS.

"Thou," we read, "wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." Two objects of thought here present themselves to our special consideration, namely, Faith on the one hand, and a Peace-keeping Power on the other. This Power does not reside in our faith, but in God. In faith resides the element of trust; in God, and in Him exclusively resides the Keeping Power. The peace which we receive when we trust, does not issue from our faith, but wholly from God. We trust God to keep us, and he does keep us in accordance with our faith. But for Divine keeping, little or no peace would come to us through our faith.

In the Scriptures we are told that "the just live by faith," that we are "justified by faith," that we are "sanctified by faith," and that "the prayer of faith saves the sick," and that "all things are possible to him that believeth." In view of such representations, many individuals seem to regard and speak of faith as if in it resides the power to accomplish all these results. Here is a great error. If faith is the source and cause of our joy, spiritual health, and growth in the Christian life, that, source and cause would be in us, and not in Christ. By faith, we simply open our hearts, and present ourselves as empty vessels for Him to fill. As we trust, "inquire of Him to do these things for us," living waters flow out, not from our faith, but from Him, and fill those vessels.

"In my early experience," said a minister to us recently, "I thought much of what the Scriptures reveal of the power of faith, until it seemed to me, that there was a kind of omnipotence in faith itself. At length his question came with great force to my mind: 'Suppose that Christ did not exist at all, and yet I have the same apprehensions of Him, and the same faith in Him, that I now have. In that case, would my experience be what it is?' This thought opened my eyes to the great error into which I had fallen." Bear this in mind, reader, that it is not faith, but "Christ, who is our life," and that He gives life, when, and only when we "receive Him;" believe in Him, and trust in Him. If Christ were not trustworthy, little of life or joy would come to us through our faith. Yet, and because He is trustworthy, our peace, and joy, and spiritual health, and life, will be according to our faith. Moses believed in the glory of God, and knew it to be real. He could know what that glory really is, and it could become real to his apprehension, but upon one condition-an answer to the prayer: "I beseech Thee, SHOW me Thy glory," and a fulfilment of the promise, "I will cause all my goodness to pass before Thee." Our believing, on the testimony of God's word, that God is in us, does not and cannot make His presence real to our minds. When, on the other hand, the Spirit in response to our faith, "takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us," and Christ through the Spirit, "manifests Himself unto us," then, and only then, is Christ, as a personal presence, real to our minds and hearts. Let us never put our faith in the place of the Spirit.

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 15

### Humility.

"Humility is so frail, so delicate a thing, it is gone if it but looks upon itself; and she who ventures to esteem it here proves by that single thought she has it not." So said Mrs. Fry many years since, and we find the same cited among choice utterances in a paper of high standing in the United States. Such, too, is a very, common sentiment, not only in regard to this but all other forms of genuine Christian virtue. Such virtue, it is thought, exists for all eyes but the possessor, and is of such "a delicate thing" that he cannot look upon it without losing it. We regret to differ totally from such high authorities on so vital a subject. But how, we ask, if this is the true view, must we regard the following inspired utterance of the Psalmist: "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." "Our rejoicing," says Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, "is this: testimony of our conscience (consciousness) that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." We are not only required in the Scriptures to possess Christian virtue in its genuineness, but to know that we possess it. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." Bear this in mind, reader, that if your supposed Christian virtue is of such a character that you cannot look at it without losing it, or being puffed up with pride, the fact is thereby evinced that such virtue is a counterfeit, and not a genuine coin of heaven. Genuine Christian virtue is so consciously the gift of God that, in its conscious possession, the subject never glorifies himself, but "magnifies the grace of God in himself."

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 16

### Inetelligence.

The Proposed Camp Meeting at Lanowlee, India.

For some years past not a few earnest believers in India have been impressed with the conviction that the most pressing need of Christianity in this land is a full realization of the New Testament measure of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. While there is a general doctrinal agreement in reference to the Holy Spirit, while all admit that His aid is absolutely necessary in all efforts to bring sinners to Christ, and that His aid is assured to us up to the fullest measure required in each case, it is a mournful fact that comparatively few avail themselves fully of His ever-proffered assistance, and it thus happens that in this dispensation of the Holy Ghost, that one gift which is most fully assured to believers, is the one which most Christians are conscious of receiving in very imperfect measure. If it be true, as very many Christians believe, that the spiritual power of Pentecost may re-appear in our day, that in fact, we live in the Pentecostal age, and have within our reach the same "power from on high" which the first disciples received, it becomes a most serious duty for all earnest believers to know by personal experience what the Pentecostal measure of the Spirit is. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, and to have His abiding presence with us, and we should not rest satisfied a single hour till we know what God would have us understand by these expressions. Especially is this important to believers in a country like India. We are confronted by an empire of disbelievers, and need the power of the Holy Ghost as much as the first disciples did when they went forth to bring the Roman Empire to Christ. If India is ever converted, it must be accomplished through the agency of a Pentecostal Church, and that Church or that band of believers which first realizes the Pentecostal outpouring and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, will have done the most signal service for Christianity in India which has yet been accomplished.

Impressed by these convictions, a number of Christian friends have resolved to hold a Camp Meeting during the Easter holidays for the special purpose of waiting upon God for the realization of this great blessing. They purpose to search the Word for indications of God's will in the matter, and to wait upon Him in expectant prayer for the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost. The meeting will be held in a grove at Lanowlee, forty miles from Poona, on the G. I. P. Railway. Tents will be provided for those who come, and the services will be held in the shade of the trees, after the manner of the American Camp Meetings. The elevation of Lanowlee is such that the weather is comparatively cool, and tent life not only endurable but actually pleasant. The meeting will begin on the 11th of April, and continue one week. Christian friends of all denominations are cordially invited to be present.

The above was handed us by Miss Drake, who stopped for a day or two in the city, on her way, for the recovery of her health, to the United States. Just as her voice failed her, and she was commending her case to God, she received a letter from a lady of wealth in Boston, U.S., offering to bear all her expenses in the voyage, &c., to America, and back to India. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The above is the first Camp meeting ever held in India. The object for which it was called together, with intelligence of a similar character from China and Africa, and other parts of the world, clearly indicate that the hour for "the brightness of the Divine rising upon Zion" has come, and all "the kindred of the earth" are about to experience the benign results. The meeting above referred to has, of course, been held, and we expect to receive, and present to our readers, from a minister who was to be present during the services, a full account of the same.



# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 17

### China.

A letter just received by a friend of ours, T. D. Marshall, Esq., from Dr. Berdud, of Ningpo, China, contains the following very interesting and important intelligence:

"From Peking and Tien-tsin we are receiving the most cheering accounts: One hundred and eleven persons were baptized near Peking only a few weeks ago, with the report that there were 1,500 more inquirers. At Lao-ting (near Tientsin) we have just received news of a Pentecostal blessing, 300 being received into the Church. This is the same place where, ten years ago, they had a remarkable work of God. Very remarkable about it all is the fact that the foreign Missionaries had very little to do with the work directly, and that God blessed the Native agency. A lesson for us all, no doubt."

A Religious Movement.

# Divine Life

**Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.**

## **Chapter 18**

### **A Religious Movement.**

A remarkable religious movement is reported among the natives of India east of Tinnevely, some 16,000 having sent in their names to Bishop Caldwell and placed themselves under instruction for baptism. Village after village, the bishop states, is laying aside its heathenism, and seeking admission into the fold of Christ. The causes assigned for this remarkable movement are the four evangelistic tours of the bishop last year, and gratitude for English help during the late famine. The bishop has made an application to the Propagation Society for ten additional clergymen and seventy catechists, and a special appeal has been made for the purpose.-Homeward Mail.

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 19

### Conference in Amsterdam.

It is a very pleasing and cheering fact that believers in the doctrine of the Higher Life have become so numerous and strong in Holland, that they are able, without help from abroad, to hold large and successful conferences on the subject in the leading cities and towns in that kingdom. Such Conferences, as our readers have learned, have recently been held in Hamburg and Utrecht. Another, as Dr. Fraure informs us, has been called to meet in Amsterdam, "on the 11th of June next, to continue ten days." Special prayers are earnestly requested by those calling the Conference for its success. This request all our readers, and all who love the cause and hear of the Conference, will certainly heed.

# Divine Life

**Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.**

## Chapter 20

### Dr. Palmer.

We have just received an interesting letter from Dr. W. C. Palmer. Dr. and Mrs. Palmer are names familiar and respected in England, especially in those religious circles where aspirations for personal holiness exist. Fourteen years ago they visited this ancestral land, and laboured effectively in various localities during the space of four years. The traces of their teaching and the fruits of their service are still manifest. In Cardiff Methodism is strong. A leading member told us that they traced the beginning of their great prosperity to the visit of Dr. and Mrs. Palmer. In another city where this denomination is numerous and influential, we were informed by the most prominent member of the church there, that he was converted through the agency of these devoted servants of God. He also stated that a clergyman, now officiating in that city and whose house of worship we were then passing, was also converted, side by side, with him the same memorable night. A clergyman, it may be necessary to state for the understanding of the American reader, according to English parlance, is a minister of the Church of England. In still another city we were informed by a minister, who was present and participated in the meeting conducted by Dr. and Mrs. Palmer, that seventy souls were converted in a single evening. It will be remembered by some that a remarkable revival influence swept over Ireland and England at the period here referred to. When the seventy souls were saved the minister stated to us that Dr. Palmer, rejoicingly and full of wonder, said, "such a scene has never occurred since the Pentecost" It is worthy of note that a meeting for the advancement of the experience of holiness has been held every Tuesday afternoon, in Dr. and Mrs. Palmer's home, for more than forty years continuously. During all these years this lambent flame of holy light has been burning and shining right in the centre of the great city of New York. Provision is made for a large congregation by throwing three spacious and communicating rooms together, where such men as Dr. Bangs, Prof. Upham, Dr. Olin, Dr. Mahan, Mr. Boardman, and Bishop Hamline, and many others have drunk in holy inspirations.

In the letter before us a reference is made to the presence of Dr. Mahan in one of these meetings, many years ago, which we venture to copy.

"Your mention of dear Dr. Mahan touched a chord of love that vibrated through our being. We fully believe that if the blessed Master was on earth, and called to give testimony, He would say of Him as of another of His friends, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." There has been no vacillations in his character or profession. Like that old and tried friend that God thought so much of that He had him enrolled for all coming time in that Book that is to endure for ever, "I KNOW ow ABRAHAM," that is, I can trust him, and know that he will be true under all circumstances.

"Or if Paul had been writing a letter of introduction for Bro. Mahan he would say of him as he did of Timothy, "I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." If Paul had written such a letter of recommendation, I should have been thankful for the privilege of endorsing it. I do not know if Dr. Mahan will remember dining with us when Bishop Hamline was one of the company. After he left, the Bishop observed it would not be necessary for Bro. Mahan to say that he enjoyed the blessing of perfect love, for it shines out of his countenance.

"These meetings are still overflowing.

"A LOWREY ."

"Steadfast in the Faith."

During the great revival in Boston, U.S., under the labours of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, a year ago the past winter, upwards of 300 drunkards were hopefully converted. On occasion of their late visit to that city, nearly one year having transpired, it was found that all those: 300 converts, about ten excepted, were "Shining as lights in the world." One fact is undeniable, that the gospel, and that only, "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

# Divine Life

Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

## Chapter 21

### An Extraordinary Meeting.

BY DR. LOWREY.

A few years ago three or four brethren in Bolton, Lancashire, England, became much interested in the subject of holiness. They united together by the force of spiritual affinities, to hold weekly meetings, for the diffusion of this blessed experience. Accordingly they engaged competent speakers to present and discuss different aspects of this great theme. These services became so interesting and productive, that some one conceived the idea of supplementing the weekly feast with an all-day conference, and Good Friday was happily chosen for the occasion. This day in England is observed as a national holiday, partly religious and partly recreative. It was a hallowed thought, therefore, to consecrate this period to the advancement of spiritual life. The following is part of the programme of the last anniversary, which occurred April 19, 1878.

We say a part of the programme, for the meetings were too numerous to be noticed in detail. There were no less than ten meetings on Friday, two on Saturday, and four on the following Sabbath. All were largely attended, deeply interesting and fruitful of saving results.

On Friday and Saturday, of course, the attendance was most numerous. On Friday, the Anniversary proper, many came from Manchester and other contiguous towns, and some from distant places. The day opened with a devotional meeting at 7.30 a. m., conducted by the Rev. W. Gluyas Pascoe, of Liverpool; at 10.30, a sermon by Rev. A. Lowrey, D.D., subject-"Holiness and how to obtain it;" 1.30, a meeting for prayer, conducted by Alderman Sinclair, of Manchester; 2.30, address by Rev. W. G. Pascoe, subject-"Counsels and encouragements;" 3.30, address by Dr. Lowrey, "Enduement of Power;" 4 to 5, meeting for testimony; 5, tea, in the school room; 5 30, meetings in vestry for questions and devotional exercises, conducted by Dr. and Mrs. Lowrey; 6.30, Meeting for short addresses, prayer, and praise.

On Saturday evening, and all day Sabbath, similar services were held, in addition to two sermons preached by Rev. Dr. Lowrey, directly on the subject of entire sanctification as attainable by faith.

The afternoon meeting, which was largely attended by the Sabbath School scholars and teachers, was addressed by Dr. and Mrs. Lowrey.

All the services were crowned by the felt presence of the Saviour. Many claimed to have trusted Him for full salvation. The anniversary day was the best Good Friday we ever witnessed. It was indeed good-superlatively good. We are not much in favour of holy days, but if we could have a holiness anniversary on each one, we might be reconciled to the revival of the whole superstitious calendar. If even the commemoration of reputed saints could be made to quicken the Church into a new and holy life, it would go far to extenuate the unauthorized celebration of their cherished memories. In days to come our thoughts will fondly recur to the friends and scenes of the Bolton Anniversary.

But it must be recollected that we speak of this meeting, not because it was better than many others we have enjoyed during the past year in the United Kingdom, but because it was unique in character.

Our hearts will never cease to bound with joy and swell with gratitude, when we think of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, York, Bradford, Scarborough, Wolverhampton, Cardff, Liverpool, Red Hill, Barnet, Taunton, and London. These places are all made Elims to us. They will ever evolve pleasing remembrances, and excite prayer and hope that the horizon of spiritual light, real and holy influence, will continue to expand until the world is blessed with the effulgence of perfect day.