

greatly when a man becomes inwardly athirst for God.

The pity of it is that so far from realizing that all these workings, powers and exertions are bound to express themselves in love of God, so that loving God with all the soul may become real, the children of God, for the most part, hold themselves back within their own retreat, seek God with only one power of their soul, and not infrequently criticize a brother who seeks salvation by the use of another soul-power than they themselves employ. "With all thy soul," said Jesus. "With a part of my soul," they reply. And just because they are truly pious and sincere of purpose, they do not tremble at the thought of leaving the rest of their soul inactive for God.

28

I SAW ALSO THE LORD.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the Only true God." But then we must not only know God intellectually, but with every power at our disposal. As knowledge it must be the result and summary of every observation and perception. In connection with this at once the question arises whether imagination, or more generally, the power of representation, plays a part in this. A superficial mind inclines to answer this Spirit means that all corporeity and materiality must be excluded from it, no manifestation of negatively. For God is Spirit. And if the word God is possible in any way whatever. If all outward divine manifestation is unthinkable, how can we make a representation of God. We can

make forms and figures of idols after the manner of heathen nations, but these are contrivances pure and simple. And in this matter of knowing God, which is eternal life, we have no interest in cunningly constructed fabrications. We want reality. Hence we would say that there can be no representation of God, no outward manifestation of him can show itself, for the reason that his absolute spirituality excludes every idea of matter, form or dimension.

But however convincing this may seem, it does not end the matter. How can we interpret Isaiah's words in the narrative of his vision-call (6:1)? Including the record of the year in which it happened he declares: "I also saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."

We leave the question unanswered whether Isaiah saw some outside appearance, or whether something presented itself to him in his inner range of vision. It is enough that God manifested himself to the prophet in such a way that it enabled him to give a description of it in writing. It was an appearance which took such a forcible hold upon him, in connection with which so many things took place, and which resulted in such important prophecies, that it affected all his after life.

We who in his inspirations and prophecies honor the work of the Holy Ghost, can not take this vision of his call as a meaningless product of an unhealthy imagination. There was reality in this vision, and an action on the part of God. And we conclude that among the many means by which God can make himself known to man, he

has also used observable representation, however transient.

In the New, as well as in the Old Testament, we read repeatedly of angel-appearances and of appearances of the Messiah before his incarnation. And are not angels spirits like God himself, incorporeal and immaterial? We hear repeatedly that angels appear, and speak and act. The angel that smote the armies of Sennacherib stands in line with the angel that led Peter out of prison. Before his incarnation the existence of Christ was purely spiritual, but with him the outward manifestation, and with it the clear representation, went so far in ancient times that the patriarch received him in his tent and entertained him with a meal at his table. It is well known that this is scoffed at, and that it is put to the score of innocent fiction; but less superficial psychology is not satisfied with this, and inclines to attach to such an account a much higher, inner value. When during his earthly ministry Christ accepted the Old Testament records of such appearances literally, including those which referred to himself, and ratified them in their immediate signification, what other conclusion can we reach, than that a certain appearance and a certain representation, of a Being which like that of God is purely spiritual by itself, is not unthinkable.

The Scripture always pictures this appearance and representation in the religious life, with human features. In connection with the Cherubim we read of animal forms, of a lion and so on, which serve to represent great power and glory. But in every meeting with man the appearance of an

angel, of the Messiah, or as in Isaiah 6, of the Eternal Being himself, takes place in human form, in human dress, and with the use of human language. With appearances of angels there is no mention of wings, borrowed from the animal world; of these we read in connection with Seraphs surrounding God's throne.

The fixed application of the human form in this connection is significant. The appearance of spirits in human form is immediately connected with the creation of man after God's image. Christ himself is called the Image of the Invisible God, "the express Image of his person." And we are told that man is created after this Image, so that there is a certain likeness between these two. What then could have been more natural than that the Eternal God, in order to reveal himself to man, either by himself or by his angels, should have passed over from himself to his Image, and from his Image to man? The very thought that there is an Image of God implies that it is a mistake to think that there can be no distinction and no expression in a spirit. It shows that God's life by itself is not an unbroken sameness, but that it consists of an infinite yet undivided fulness of distinctions, and that this varied life which is continually present with him in his consciousness, is to him the Image of his Divine Being.

In any case it is certain that when God created man after his Image, this Image was there before he could create man after it. And also that this Image has always provided the way by which to reveal himself to man in human form. This was only completed in the fulness of time at Bethlehem, though it was foreshadowed in previous

appearances. In connection, therefore, with the knowledge of God, which is eternal life, the imaginative life of our spirit must also be considered.

The key to this secret is, that spirit and matter, God and the world, are distinguished from one another in such a way that it can never be ignored. For if we do we are, whether we will or not, irresistibly drawn into Pantheism. While on the other hand it can not be denied that God has created the world, so that whatever there is in the world can never express anything else than what has been thought out by God, even the Word from all eternity. Likewise as regards our soul and body, it must be inexorably maintained, that these are two, even in this sense, that after death the soul continues its life in the disembodied state until the resurrection. Though again it should not be forgotten that soul and body complement one another, and that the soul can only reveal the fulness of its power through the body.

This gives rise to a threefold realm of activity. One is the realm of pure spiritual activity. Another is the realm of activity through and with the aid of the body. And there is also a mixed domain, in which the spirit truly operates purely spiritually, but with data from the world of sense.

The use of images in spoken language can not be reckoned with this. We know by these that we mean something metaphorical, something outside of reality. When the righteous is said to be as courageous as a lion, everyone understands that it does not mean a real, devouring beast. But it is different in dreams. Then we see people and co-operate with them. We engage in conversa-

tion. We are attacked. And everything seems so real to us that on awakening in fright, we find it difficult to believe that the burglar who threatened our life does not stand by our bed.

This impression of reality in what is imagined is still stronger and much more acute in a vision. One can almost say that visions are dreams which one dreams not in sleep upon the bed, but by day, while one is fully awake. And though this vision-life is far more common in the East than it is with us, yet it is a mistake to suppose that it does not exist among us. Meanwhile an appearance far excels in clearness and reality both dream and vision. That we feel so little at home in this realm is only explained from the fact that science can not tell anything about these spiritual operations. It lacks sufficient, certain data for observation, and has not been able thus far to enter this mysterious domain. Before this world of real workings, it stands helpless. This encourages unbelieving science proudly to deny the reality of it, while believing science, confessing its inability to grasp it, gratefully accepts what has been revealed regarding it in Scripture.

We should be on our guard therefore lest we say that in connection with our knowledge of God the imaginative life has no message for us. The intellectual man who asserts this, contradicts Scripture all too boldly. The second commandment certainly binds us; that is to say, it forbids us to make an image of God, even in our imagination. The imaginative life may operate in behalf of the knowledge of God, when God quickens it in us; as in the case of Isaiah's vision of his call, or in the appearances to Abraham.

This forming of images has at last been perfected in the "human nature" of Christ. After he had entered into glory, Christ appeared to St. John on Patmos in his human nature and the manner of this appearance has been committed to writing for us. This is the only appearance of Christ, given to the church, that may and should govern our imaginative life.

To this we add that in a child of God even here something of his Father is manifest. The nobler the Christian life, the more this is visible. The weaker the Christian life, the less apparent it is. But when a Christian life is deeply spiritual, they who are equally devout, see through it, as it were, something of the Image of the Eternal God. From this it follows that if we are God's children it is our high calling, not by our imagination, but by the image-forming manifestation of our entire personality to cause something of the Father to be seen by those who are of the household of faith.

"IF ANY MAN WILL DO HIS WILL."

In behalf of the knowledge of God there is great power in conformity to his will. God becomes known to us by studious thought, by play of the imagination, by inner experience and in other ways. But it can not be denied that he also becomes known to us by the will. Within the last fifty years the will has been put in the foreground, by which to interpret many things which no one associated with it before. An important school of philosophy has emphasized the will