# HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

# Household of Faith.

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## *ERRATA.*

Page 46, 7th line from foot, "humiliation" should be "human."
" 47, 8th line from top, "national" should be "rational."
" 169, 8th line, "procrastination" should be "prostration."
" 172, 14th from foot, "national" should be "natural."

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MOTTO FOR 1888:—"For to me, to live is Christ."

# Help and Food

FOR

*THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.*

## FILLING THE HAND.

"*And he put all upon Aaron's hands, and upon his sons' hands, and waved them for a wave-offering before the Lord. And Moses took them from off their hands, and burnt them on the altar upon the burnt-offering; they were consecrations for a sweet savor; it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord.*" (Lev. viii. 27, 28.)

IT has been often remarked that "consecration" in this passage is *filling the hand.* Aaron and his sons are practically consecrated to God by the putting into their hands the fat and shoulder of the ram, with cakes and wafer of the meat- (or meal-) offering, and waving them for a wave-offering before the Lord. Then they are taken and burnt upon the altar as a sweet savor.

Before this, and in order to it, we must remember, they have been washed (these priests) in water, and sprinkled with the blood of sacrifice; and this has been put upon the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot. Even so must we, if we are to be priests

to God, be washed with the "washing of regeneration," and have our "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," being set apart to Him as His by the power of the same cleansing blood which has bought us, that we should be no more our own. Thus cleansed from sin, and become the servants of God, we have our fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.

As priests, our occupation is with the holy things; and this practical consecration is just *occupation*. All Christians are priests to God, and it is *our business* to attend to these things. The hand, in the type before us, speaks of all our activities, our labor. The ear is that by which we receive instruction; the foot speaks of our individual walk before God; but the hand is that by which we lay hold of things around, and mold and transform them. By the hand, man shows himself the natural vicegerent of God upon earth; and thus, while the ear and foot have been equally set apart to Him by the blood of atonement, the hand it is now that is to be *filled* for consecration: we are to be *taught our business*. Blessed be God, it is indeed true that—

"With Him is *all* our business now."

Some one may object, indeed, that in saying this we go much too far. Our circumstances in the world will not allow of any thing like this; indeed, it is our mere secular employment that we habitually call our "business." And it is true that as Christians, alas! we not only pick up the language of the world, but sanction its thoughts. Nevertheless, it is also plainly true, and easily to be proved from Scripture, that the Christian's business is

with Christ. No less than Paul's is our motto to be, "To me to *live* is Christ;" and what does that mean, except that all that makes up our life—the whole business of our life—is Christ?

By this it is not denied at all, as it would be absurd and impossible to deny, that each one of us has his earthly calling, duties to fulfill which carry us into the world, and require a large part of our time to be spent in their discharge. We have families to provide for, and that is often a work of much toil, yet "he that provideth not for his own, specially for those of his own house, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Christianity loses sight of none of these claims, but enforces them all upon us: they are as many as our links of connection with other men; every link is a responsibility; every responsibility toward man a responsibility to God also.

This is sufficiently solemn; and it is nothing but a misuse of grace to make it lessen for us its solemnity. Life is full of seriousness; the more serious our sense of it the better.

Yet while "all things are full of labor," as the preacher says, and the Christian does not escape from this, yet "*Labor not* for the meat that perisheth" is the Lord's own word to us; a word of simpler meaning than we may have apprehended in it. For, in truth, we are never to labor for the perishing food, but are privileged rather to labor for Him who has appointed our path, and to whom our duty is. Our duty thus becomes to us that yoke of Christ which is easy, and in which we find rest. Our business is with Him: its recompense from Himself; and if we had to toil ten or more hours a day for *Him*, would it be a spiritual weight

to drag us down from communion with Him, or rather a service in which for all our need and in all our weakness His power and fullness should be more than sufficiency?

Alas! for these Christless businesses in which self-will is rampant, and the "gain to me" is not "loss for Christ"! When shall we learn that there is no spot on earth in which there is not a battle between two forces? no course that we can take which is merely neutral between Christ and the world, between God and mammon? Here is a spiritual leprosy which pollutes the whole life and secularizes it: for if *the business be secular, no part of the life can be kept sacred.*

How significant a thing, then, is this priestly consecration, in which our *hands* are filled with Christ. Our hands are to wave before God the fat and the shoulder and the cakes of the meal-offering. We are to keep Him thus before God, presenting Him in the energy of His devotedness (the fat), in the burden-sustaining "shoulder," in the perfection of His life of holy balance and consistency in the power of the Holy Ghost. God is to see in us this memorial of His beloved Son, *whatever we put our hand to;* not merely an imitation of Him, but a devotedness derived from the apprehension of His, a power which is His strength made perfect in weakness,—a life, in short, which is but the life of Christ, developed by the power of the Spirit in us. For "out of His fullness have all we received, even grace upon grace."

Is it not of our priestly consecration we are reminded, when, from week to week, on the first day of the week, before its toil begins, we, as His disciples, come together to break bread? Is He

not for faith put afresh into our hands, that we may receive Him in the place He has taken for us, and in occupation with Him begin again and again the henceforth of our lives? He thus claims possession of us every way, fills our eyes, our hands, makes Himself ours that we may be His, that henceforth whatever we look at, it may be Christ we see; whatever we handle, we may touch Christ in it. How sweet to be reminded! how solemn the need of being thus reminded!

Christian reader, have you so learnt Christ? To see Him in every thing, find Him every where, have your whole business with Him, take in nothing any other yoke than His yoke? This is rest, liberty, power. To come short of it is distraction and confusion. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

"That I am Thine, my Lord and God,
Sprinkled and ransomed by Thy blood,—
Repeat that word once more,
With such an energy and light,
That this world's flattery nor spite
To shake me never may have power.

"From various cares my heart retires,
Though deep and boundless its desires;
I'm now to please but One:
Him, before whom the elders bow,
With Him is all my business now,
And with the souls that are His own.

"This is my joy that ne'er can fail,
To see my Saviour's arm prevail,
To mark the steps of grace;
How new-born souls, convinced of sin,
His blood revealed to them within,
Extol the Lamb in every place.

"With these my happy lot is cast!
Through the world's deserts rude and waste,
Or through its gardens fair;
Whether the storms of trouble sweep,
Or all in dead supineness sleep,
Still to go on be all my care.

"See, the dear sheep by Jesus drawn
In blest simplicity move on;
They trust His Shepherd's crook.
Beholders many faults may find,
But they can guess at Jesus' mind,
Content if written in His book.

"O all ye wise, ye rich, ye just,
Who the blood's doctrine have discussed,
And judge it weak and slight:
Grant that I may (the rest's your own)
In shame and poverty sit down
At this one well-spring of delight.

"Indeed, if Jesus ne'er was slain,
Or aught can make His ransom vain,
That now it heals no more,—
If His heart's tenderness has fled,
If of a Church He is not Head,
Nor Lord of all, as heretofore,

"Then,—so refers my state to Him,
Unwarranted I must esteem,
And wretched all I do.
Ah, my heart throbs, and seizes fast
The covenant that will ever last;
It knows, it knows, these things are true.

"No, my dear Lord, in following Thee,
And not in dark uncertainty,
This foot obedient moves:
'Tis with a Brother and a King,
Who many to His yoke will bring,
Who ever lives and ever loves.

"Now, then, my Way, my Truth, my Life,
Henceforth let sorrow, doubt, and strife
Drop off like autumn leaves;
Henceforth, as privileged by Thee,
Simple and undistracted be,
My soul which to Thy sceptre cleaves.

"Let me my weary mind recline
On that eternal love of Thine,
And human thoughts forget;
Childlike, attend what Thou wilt say,
Go forth and do it while 'tis day,
Nor ever leave my sweet retreat.

"At all times to my spirit bear
An inward witness, soft and clear,
Of Thy redeeming power;
This will instruct Thy child and fit,
Will sparkle forth whate'er is mist,
For exigence of every hour.

"When all the sequel is well weighed,
I cast myself upon Thine aid,
A sea, where none can sink;
Yea, in that sphere I stand, poor worm,
Where Thou wilt for Thy name perform
Above whate'er I ask or think."

(*Gambold.*)

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## A BRIGHT SUNSET.

"*Not a cloud above, not a spot within.*"

"LET me die the death of the righteous," said Balaam of old, "and let my last end be like his." (Num. xxiii. 10.) And who knows but that there was a measure of sincerity in the words of the hireling prophet, as from the "top of the rocks" he beheld the thousands of God's people encamping in divinely prescribed order around that cloud-capped tabernacle?

No wonder, either, that even this poor money-loving prophet should at that moment give vent to such an expression; for Israel was indeed a blessed people. Jehovah Himself was in the midst of her, at once her Saviour, her Defender and her Guide.

Yet, what a moral contradiction it was to hear this lover of the "wages of *unrighteousness*" saying, "Let me die the death of the *righteous*, and let my last end be like his."

Well, reader, I know neither your course of life nor your state of soul. God knows both. But I dare venture to say that the substance of Balaam's prayer has been the burden of your thoughts, aye, many a time. Now I want to ask you to think a little more of those three monosyllables, "*my last end*"! Repeat them over to yourself again and again,—"MY last end." Take a pencil and write them down, if you will; but weigh well their meaning, I pray you, so that at least one of God's desires may be realized in your case. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their *latter end!*" (Deut. xxxii. 29.)

Life's journey *will* come to a close some day. That is certain. You may even now be very near the end. A long eternity is before you, and, whether you like it or not, you are inseparably linked with it. I solemnly ask you, therefore, as you look beyond all earthly plans and pleasures—beyond earthly friendships and earthly ties—beyond life's latest hour, *What are your prospects? What shall the end be?*

But I have a bright tale to tell you, and I want your attention. The happy subject of it, Richard H——, was for years a valued personal friend and

fellow-laborer. From boyhood's days he had known and loved the Lord, and from that time to the "home-call" his deepest delight was to serve and follow Him.

But it is of his *end* I desire to speak particularly. Shortly before he passed away, and after a visit from the doctor who attended him, he expressed a particular wish to know what he thought of his physical state. On being told that "*departure*" was soon to be looked for, he burst forth into quite an ecstasy of joy, saying, "Good news! good news from the far country! Set the bells a-ringing. Hoist a flag outside, to announce that I, a sinner of the earth, washed in Christ's blood, am going into the heavens; and going by a work that has glorified God. Good news! good news!" he again exclaimed, "it's like breaking up school, and going home."

It was a few days after this when, for nearly the last time on earth, I was privileged to see him. Physical weakness, through the rapid inroads of consumption, seemed to be increasing. But, oh, while things seen and temporal were gradually fading away, how strong a grip had faith got of that which is "unseen and eternal!"

After a warm, familiar greeting, he said, and said in such a way as it is impossible to describe on paper, "You haven't come here to see *death*, Georgie. *Death isn't here—not a bit of it.* It's *regions* behind *me*, and *He* is before me." Then, looking up to heaven, he said, as if in some deep, happy reverie, "Holiness! the more holiness the better; the more righteousness the better; the brighter the glory the better. They can but bring out to my soul the value of my title."

What a bright sunset! What a peaceful close to life's short day! Death, with all its accompaniments, was nothing to him. Nay, he would n't have it that he was dying, but *only going home.* And I shall not be a bit surprised, unsaved reader, if you tell us that you would fain have *your* last end like his.

But, mark, let your wishes be what they may, depend upon this, that to *live without Christ* is the surest method you could possibly adopt of *dying without mercy.* Oh that the Spirit of God might awaken you this moment!

But let us inquire what was the real secret of such a victory as the one just referred to. He had n't a word to say, or a thought to bestow, upon *his* good works or pious life; though I may safely say that all who knew him can testify of his self-denying, heavenly-minded devotedness, both to Christ and His people, and that for many years ere he was called home. But it was Christ Himself, his own gracious Saviour, who covered his vision and filled his heart, so that every thing else —grim death itself not excepted—was, as he so graphically expressed it, "*regions behind him.*"

Once, no doubt, like thousands more, he had turned his eye *inward* upon himself to find something which he thought God might accept as a ground for blessing him, and something, therefore, which he too might rest his hopes upon. But, when weary and disappointed in such a search, the Spirit of God had turned his longing gaze to One in whom God could and *did* delight, whose finished work at Calvary *He had* accepted. Yes, reader, it is the look *without* that brings the peace *within.* "Look unto *Me*, and *be* ye saved," is

the message from a Saviour-God to guilty men. (Isa. xlv. 22.)

Notice, now, it is not "Look at *yourself* till you *feel* you are saved."

That may be man's gospel, but it certainly is not God's.

God is not looking at *you*, dear reader, to see whether *you* are worthy of His confidence. He knows you are not, and has told you so. Your heart, He declares, is without its match for treachery—"deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." (Jer. xvii. 9.)

God's eye rests with delight and satisfaction upon His beloved Son. He thinks every thing of Jesus. He has highly exalted Him; enthroned and crowned Him; put every thing into His hands and under His feet,—yea, given Him power over *all flesh*. God has intrusted Him with the giving of eternal life, with the dispensing of His righteous judgment. He is to be the Head of heavenly government—"King of kings,"—in that bright millennial day; "*for He must reign*," says the Holy Ghost, and we who love Him say, "Alleluiah! Alleluiah!" The once-despised and hated Nazarene, God's King in Zion! How it makes the heart well over with joy to think of it!

"*He shall reign* from pole to pole,
With illimitable sway;
He shall reign till, like a scroll,
Yonder heaven shall pass away."

Well, then, I repeat, the gospel does not ask you, dear troubled soul, whether or not you are sufficiently worthy for God to trust *you;* but it brings the blessed welcome news that His Son is suffi-

ciently worthy for you to trust *Him;* that in turning away from all thoughts of your *bad self*, as well as from all your vain efforts to establish a *good self*, and, reposing the confidence of your heart in the worthy Son of God as your Saviour, everlasting life is yours. Listen to the highest of all authorities: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on *Me hath* everlasting life." (Jno. vi. 47.)

Oh, let me ask you, then, "What think *ye* of Christ?" It was this blessed Saviour, this crowned, honored, exalted, beloved Son of God, and Son of Man in heavenly glory, that was before the happy soul of this dear departing disciple.

"But," says one, "how was it that the *holiness* and *righteousness* of God,—yea, the very brightness of the light of the *glory of God* seemed friendly to him?"

*Friendly* to him! Yes, as friendly as the cross, as we shall see. But let us first listen to the words of Him who hung upon that cross,—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" —gave Him to be "lifted up" as a victim for sin. On this ground the believing sinner stands before God, free from all condemnation.

Faith can say, "If the righteous Son of God was delivered *for* my offenses; and *if God has accepted that sacrifice*, I must be delivered *from* my offenses."

But then God has not only given His Son to be delivered up to death and judgment *for* us, He has given Him in resurrection-life and glory *to* us.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life *in* Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 23.) "He made Him to be sin *for* us" (2 Cor. v. 21); but He has also made Him "wisdom, and

*righteousness*, and *sanctification*, and redemption" *to* us. (1 Cor. i. 30.)

Bear in mind, too, that this is not Christian *attainment*. It is the common portion of all that believe in Christ. The Holy Ghost speaks of them as *created* in *righteousness* and true *holiness* (Eph. iv. 24), and of course *creation* is not *attainment*. It is what God has *made* them *in Christ*.

The old creation is said to be *by* Christ (see Col. i. 16), while the new creation is *in* Christ (see Eph. ii. 10.) Now this happy young Christian had learned, not only to look from self to *Calvary's Victim* for the righteous discharge, and therefore the full forgiveness, of his many sins, but also to look off from self to Christ, the *heavenly Victor* for perfect acceptance before the throne of God. With childlike simplicity *he believed what God told him in His Word*, not only that the work of Christ on the cross was accepted for him, but that he too was "accepted *in the Beloved*." (Eph. i. 6.)

Thus, you see, he *knew from God's Word* that Christ was his *righteousness*, and Christ his *sanctification;* and as to the *glory of God* being friendly, why, the effulgent brightness of that glory shines in the very face of the very Man who once "bore our sins in His own body on the tree." (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

What a trumpet-tongued witness is this, that those sins are forever put away from before the eye of God!

Well, dear Christian reader, this same Lord Jesus is soon coming again, and then once more shall we meet our dear brother shining in the fair beauty of Christ Himself. Oh, what a prospect! No wonder the believer's heart leaps within him at the thought of it.

But "what shall the end be of them that obey *not* the gospel?" "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Oh, reader, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there may be *but a step between thee and death.* And don't forget that if *death* finds thee in thy sins, *judgment* also will find thee in thy sins, and an eternity in the lake of fire will be the *never-ending end* of thy guilty history. *As God is true*, HELL is the certain doom of the unrepentant. Oh, why will ye die? God waits to be gracious still.

*Geo. C.*

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## A FAITHFUL WITNESS.

A WITNESS for God is the most uncompromising man on the face of the earth. He never lowers the flag. He never adapts his testimony to altered circumstances. General unfaithfulness only nerves him—braces him up to a more complete surrender to his Master's interests. No surrender of the truth is ever thought of. He may die, death *alone* being the check to the course and testimony of the witness, but he will never sacrifice one iota of his testimony. He is a man who counts not his life dear to him if he may but finish his course with joy. A witness is essentially a martyr, the word for both being the same in the Greek. "God, and His glory!" is his watchword.

Would you be a faithful witness for God—another Antipas, "*one* against *all*"? Then you may have to seal your testimony with your blood, as Stephen in the midst of religious Israel, or Antipas amongst the professing people of God. (Acts vii. and Rev.

ii. 13.) A true servant of God never defends his character—that the Lord takes care of—and woe be to the man who wantonly takes liberties with the character and ways of God's witness. He enters into a controversy with God, as Num. xii. solemnly intimates. A witness for God is a man who meekly bears reproach, suffering, and distress, but is consumed—yea, burns when the glory of his Master is in question (Ex. xxxii.).

May the Lord lead to increased and unswerving faithfulness to the Master and His mission.

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# PRESENT THINGS,

## As Foreshown in the Book of Revelation.

### THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)

#### *Sardis: Sleeping Among the Dead.*

(Rev. iii. 1-7.)

IN the address to the Church at Thyatira, we have found the Lord announcing His coming, and bidding His saints wait to share with Him then the authority which the false church was assuming to have already. Thyatira presents us thus with a phase of things which goes on at least till the Lord comes for His saints; not, indeed, till the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon the world, but until He comes as the Morning-Star, the herald of the day before the day appears.

In Sardis, we have, therefore, not a development of the Thyatira condition, but in many respects, as it is easy to see, what is in entire opposition to it.

Thyatira, or popery, is the last phase of the church in its Jewish hierarchic and ritualistic growth; and although there has been all through a remnant different in spirit, and becoming finally more or less distinctly separate, even outwardly, as among the Waldensian and kindred bodies, yet up to this point there has been in fact a certain unity: it could claim to be, before the eyes of men at least, the Catholic church.

True, there had been already a separation; not now of others from it, but of this latest development itself from others. Rome had separated herself from the churches of the east—the Greek and Syrian churches, which remained in the condition we have traced at Pergamos. The Catholic church of the west had become the *Roman* Catholic. Yet, in character, the system was the same throughout; here more, there less, developed—that was all. But now we come to a new thing,—a breach and a new beginning. There is now in Sardis, not the claim of infallibility, not (as what is prominent) corruption of doctrine, not persecution of the saints, not the exercise of authority in the same sense,—none of these things characterize Sardis. What characterizes is sufficiently definite in the Lord's charge here: it is lack of spiritual power,—nay, in the body as such, of life itself. "Thou hast a name to live, and thou art dead."

Yet they had "received and heard," and are bidden to "hold fast" this, "and repent." Just as Ephesus had been, at the commencement of decline, called back to remember their first state, so here there has been a fresh beginning in God's grace, a recovery of His word and truth, a new beginning, from which (alas!) already there is decline. Again,

they have not answered to His grace, and those things which remained among them from this revival were languishing and ready to die. And no wonder, when the charge against them is considered. The body addressed is a professing but unconverted one: with a *name to live*, it is *dead*.

There is but too little difficulty in applying this. A breach with Rome, a restoration of the Word of God, a fresh revival of truth, ending, however, in a system or systems characterized by a fatal defect of spiritual power, and churches with an unconverted membership, God's saints being scattered through the mass,—living themselves, but unable to vitalize it: such are the characteristics, easily to be read, of the *national churches* which sprang out of the Protestant Reformation.

Let it be well understood: it is not the Reformation itself that is depicted here. So far as it was this, the Reformation was the blessed work of God, and the Lord does not judge, and can never need to judge, His own work. He refers to what His grace had done for them—to what they had received and heard. Their responsibility was, to take heed to it, and hold it fast; and already they had failed in doing so. This was therefore the ground of judgment.

Notice how Christ is represented here. He has "the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." There is no failure in the fullness of spiritual energy on His part, no possibility of failure in His love and care for His people. Yet this power is not found practically in that which has sprung out of the seed sown by the Reformation. With more pretension than before, for they have now a *name to live*—a name assumed to be in the book of life,

the actual condition of the mass is that of death: not feebleness merely, but death.

Yet there are exceptions: not simply those alive, but still more—that have not defiled their garments; and of these the Lord speaks in the warmest terms of praise. "They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." Indeed, these are only "a few names." Others may be alive, but in a scene of death (and the defilement which results from contact with the dead is emphasized in the symbols of the Old Testament) the many of those alive even are defiled. But the mass are dead altogether—dead, with a name to live.

In His promise to the overcomer, the Lord further refers to this: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life." The book of life is understood by the majority of people to be only in the Lord's hands, and all the names written in it to be written by Himself. Hence, those ignorant of the gospel stumble over this blotting out of the book of life, as supposing it is the blotting out of the names of those once saved. But there is no such thought here. There is not the slightest hint that those mentioned ever had life at all: they had a "*name* to live"—only a name.

On the contrary, you find in Rev. xiii. 8 the very opposite thought as to those "written," as we ought to read it, with the margin of the Revised Version, "from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb slain." There, this fact of their being written in the book *from the foundation* of the world is given as their security from being deceived by and worshiping the beast. Sovereign grace, that is, is their only and sufficient security.

Here, on the other hand, the book has got into man's hand, and he writes names in it as he pleases. It is a figure, of course, all through. The Lord, in His own time, corrects the book, and then He blots out the names of those to whom only the name belongs.

Now the "name to live" has a very special meaning in connection with Reformation times. The putting people's names into the book of life (while here on earth) is in no way characteristic of popery. *Saints*, for them, are only the dead, and not the living. The living she warns that "no man knows whether he is worthy of favor or hatred," and that it is not safe to be too sure. Her pardons, indulgences, sacraments, only show by their very multiplicity how difficult a thing she believes salvation is. Darkness is the essence of her system, and she thrives upon it.

On the other hand, the Reformation recovered the blessed gospel, and the word of reconciliation was preached with no uncertain sound. The doctrine of assurance was maintained with the utmost energy, and was stigmatized by the Council of Trent as "the vain confidence of the heretics." They even pushed it to an extreme, asserting (at least, some of the most prominent reformers did,) that assurance was of the very essence of saving faith itself, and that unless a man *knew* himself to be forgiven, he might be sure that he was *not* forgiven.

It is plain, then, that Protestantism put a man's name in the book of life in a way that popery did not at all.

Two immense things the Reformation gave us, which have never since been wholly lost,—an open Bible, in a language to be understood; and on the

other hand, the gospel, at least in some of its most essential features. These are inestimable blessings, which would that we had hearts to value more.

Of the men, too, who were the dear and honored instruments in handing them down to us we cannot speak with enough affection and esteem. God honored them—how many!—taking them to Himself in fiery chariots, from which their voices come, thrilling us with the accents of the heaven opening to receive them. Those who disparage them will have to hear, one day, their names confessed and honored by Him they served, as those of whom the world was not worthy.

But on the other hand, we must not make, as many are doing, the Reformation the measure of divine truth. They are not loyal to the Reformation really who accept any thing beside Scripture as the measure and test of this. The broken and conflicting voices which are heard the moment it is a question no longer of the gospel but of the church and its government, assure us that if here Scripture has spoken, the churches of the Reformation do not in the same sense convey to us its utterances. Lutherism is not Calvinism, the Church of England is not the Church of Geneva here. We must needs, whether we will or not, take Scripture to decide amid claims so conflicting; and when we do so, we find, with no great difficulty, that no one of these takes us back to the Church as it was at the beginning—the body of Christ, or the house of living stones—at all.

Instead of this, as is well known, the churches of the Reformation were essentially national churches. Not in every country, of course, able to attain the full ideal,—as in France, where Rome retained its

ascendency by such cruel means,—but always of that pattern. Rome had herself prepared the way for this. The nations of Europe were already professedly Christian nations, and it was not to be expected that those who escaped from Jezebel's tyranny would give up their long hereditary claim to Christianity. The adoption of an evangelical creed did not and could not change the reality of what they were. They learned the formula, put their names upon the church books as Protestants, learned to battle fiercely for the gospel of peace, and how could you deny their title to be Christians? Yet, as to the many, it was but the "name to live."

We must learn to distinguish two elements in the ecclesiastical revolution of those times. There was, first of all, a most mighty and most manifest work of God. The Scriptures, released from their imprisonment in a foreign tongue, began to speak to responsive human hearts with the decision and persuasiveness that the Word of God alone can have. Christ began once more to teach as one having authority, and not as the scribes. The blessed doctrine of justification by faith every where brought souls held fast in bondage into liberty and the knowledge of a Saviour-God. The ecclesiastical yoke could not hold any longer those whom the truth had freed; and where Christ had become thus the soul's rightful Lord, the yoke of Rome was but the tyranny of Antichrist.

This was the first and most powerful element in Protestantism; not a political movement, but a movement of faith. Luther, solitary at Worms, in the presence of the mightiest political power in Europe, was the testimony that the work was of

Him. His strength was manifest in human weakness. Had that place of weakness been retained all through,—had but God been allowed to show that power was of Him alone, how different would have been the result! And it is due to the foremost name of Protestantism to acknowledge that, as far as carnal weapons were concerned, Luther would have rightly refused them a place in a warfare which was God's. At any rate, to think of Protestantism as essentially a political movement is to do it glaring injustice, and to contradict the plainest facts.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the political element which so soon entered into it. Rome had made the nations every where feel the iron hand of her despotism, and the national reaction against her was the natural result of her intolerable and insolent oppression. The notorious wickedness of her chiefs had long destroyed all real respect. Her power stood now in an excessive and degrading superstition. She lived upon men's vices and their fears; and where the light fell and removed the darkness, the fears were removed also, where the vices were not. Men learned to look upon the power they had cringed to with contrary feelings, deep in proportion to their depth before. Their interests, political and otherwise, coincided with the spiritual movement which divine power had produced. Soldiers, politicians, governments, made common cause with the men of faith. It was hard not to welcome such apparently God-sent allies, when on every side persecution raged. The movement increased in external power and importance, but its character was in just that proportion lowered and perverted.

And now there was need of defined principles to give cohesion to elements which the Spirit of God no longer sufficed to bind together. Outside, there was the pressure of Rome, a compact and immensely powerful body, armed, drilled, and intensely hostile. Organization was soon a necessity; but of what or whom? To proclaim the true Church would have been to cast off their allies, to insure the continuance of persecution and reproach, to leave Rome unchecked, triumphant. I do not say that the true thought of the Church ever dawned upon them; but I do say that their alliance with the world was a sure means of hindering their seeing it. There were formed instead national churches, with evangelical creeds, used as pieces of state-craft, and political power to back them, not divine.

It is simple enough, that if a creed had been a necessity for His Church, the wisdom of God could easily have given us an infallible one, and His love could not have failed to do so. On the contrary, He has given us that which He testifies to as able to furnish the man of God thoroughly unto all good works, but which people feel at once to be as different from a creed as can be.

Why do people want a creed? As something more plainly and easily read than Scripture. Scripture is infinite: the need must be definite. Of Scripture, every one makes what he likes; what is wanted is something different—something that shall not be capable of two meanings, plain to all—spiritual and unspiritual, Church and world alike.

It has been before contended that Scripture is clearer, plainer really, than any word of man; and so indeed it is; beside being, in divine wisdom,

written so as to meet, as nothing else can meet, with perfect foresight of the future, all the thoughts of men. It is thus the only sufficient guard and protection against heresy to the end of time. And yet it is no contradiction to this to own that there is some truth from the point of view taken by those who contend for this, between the creed and Scripture.

*From their point of view.* For the apostle's words limit us somewhat when we speak of the intelligibility of Scripture. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,"—but for what?—"that the MAN OF GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

So that Scripture, profitable for doctrine as it is, does need a certain state of soul for its proper apprehension. It needs not indeed great attainments, human learning, deep research,—although all these have their use, and are not despised by it; but it absolutely requires (what may be found in the lowest and poorest just as well,) *devotedness*—that we be *God's men:* what by possession and profession all Christians are, but alas! not what all, even of true Christians, always practically are. This is the single eye, which we must have for the body to be full of light.

But this being so, we can easily see that the Bible is not just the book for a court of law, and it is not the suited thing for a national creed. The truth is not meant to be accessible to the merely natural mind. Nay, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they

are spiritually discerned." The Bible is not crystalized for us into doctrines, but its truths are exhibited and only known as living realities to those who are in the true sense alive. It is so essentially unlike a creed, that we may be assured that nothing like a creed was in God's design. He did not mean to give what might serve as a motto for political partizanship, or a banner for any other than spiritual warfare.

Nationalism, then,—the union of the living and the dead—was never in His mind. He meant spirituality to be a first necessity, and an absolute one, for the discernment of His thoughts: and men, when they substitute in this respect the blessed word of God for their plainer creed, show really that herein they are at cross purposes with Him.

"Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," is the exact moral description, as it is the plain condemnation of nationalism. Of more this, no doubt, but still of this. It is not the idea of the Church of God at all, but a Christianized world, with Christians scattered through it: a place so defiling, that but few indeed can keep their garments undefiled. Connected with the truth, as popery is not, such a system betrays the truth which it professedly upholds. The character of the last days is developed by it: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud, blasphemers," the retaining all that is natural to them under the garb of Christianity; "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." The direct command is, "From such, turn away."

This is the effect of popularized truth,—popularized as God never meant His truth to be. Of course this is to be distinguished from the *preaching* of His

truth, than which nothing assuredly is more in accordance with His mind. His gospel is to go forth to every creature, and the blessings of an open Bible we could scarcely exaggerate. But by "*popularized* truth" is meant, what we have already *been speaking of, truth made into a party badge,* so as to be accepted by those with whom Christ is not; for He was never really popular, and still is not.

Popularized truth means, truth that has lost its power. It may be that for which martyrs died, and which when first given of God, or when afresh given, was full of quickening power. Popularized, it is so far lifeless. No exercise of soul in receiving it; no cross in professing it; men have got from their fathers what their fathers got from God: to their fathers it was shame, to them it is honor. There is nothing to test conscience, nothing to make them ask, Dare I take this without human sanction to commend—nay, in the face of all human discountenance? Yet only thus have we got it truly from God. The martyrs they talk of took it thus and suffered for it: *they* take it from their fathers—a principle which would have *condemned* the martyrs; and they take it without the slightest thought of *being* martyrs.

Truth is proclaimed as powerless by the unholy lives of its professors, while unholiness is recommended by the practice of those who are orthodox as to truth. And thus truth tends to die out of itself, as valueless, remaining all the while in the national creed, embalmed as a memorial of the past. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, which are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." This has

been long experienced with regard to all national systems too manifestly to need more than a bare allusion.

It is a system designedly adapted to worldly minds, and to be worked by political machinery. The Word of God is no necessity to it, except, it may be, to furnish a table of lessons; for the *authoritative* standard is the creed. The Spirit of God is not necessary to it; for colleges can manufacture preachers, and ecclesiastics ordain and send them forth apart from this. Christians are not necessary to it; they are too uncertain as a constituent part of a nation or its government to be capable of being reckoned on; nor is there any means of certainly determining who they are. A sacrament,—baptism or the Lord's supper,—takes here the place of less manageable tests.

And the grieved and insulted Spirit may be besought to breathe upon the lifeless mass, and fill the sails of the ship of state. But He must keep within the bounds prescribed by ritual, hierarchy, and parliament, or He will be treated as schismatical. And it must be remarked how often in this case a schism springs out of a large and manifest revival. Souls brought near to God, and made to feel the value of His Word, are not made thereby the more docile servants of a state-religion. The new wine will not be held in the old bottles. Statesmen are not thus favorable to such fresh enthusiasm, and no wonder: it divides the house which it is to their interest to keep as one.

(*To be continued.*)

## REVELATION V.

THE countless multitude on high,
Who tune their songs to Jesu's name,
All merit of their own deny,
And Jesu's worth alone proclaim.

Firm on the ground of sov'reign grace,
They stand before Jehovah's throne;
The only song in that blest place
Is, "Thou art worthy! Thou alone!"

With spotless robes of purest white,
And branches of triumphal palm,
They shout, with transports of delight,
Heaven's ceaseless universal psalm.

Salvation's glory all be paid
To Him who sits upon the throne;
And to the Lamb, whose blood was shed,
"Thou! Thou art worthy! Thou alone!"

For Thou wast slain, and in Thy blood
These robes were washed so spotless pure;
Thou mad'st us kings and priests to God,
Forever let Thy praise endure.

While thus the ransomed myriads shout,
"Amen!" the holy angels cry;
"Amen! amen!" resounds throughout
The boundless regions of the sky.

Let us with joy adopt the strain
We hope to sing forever there,—
"Worthy's the Lamb for sinners slain!—
Worthy alone the crown to wear."

Without one thought that 's good to plead,
Oh what could shield us from despair
But this: *though we are vile indeed,*
*The Lord our righteousness is there!*

# PRESENT THINGS,

## As Foreshown in the Book of Revelation.

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### THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)

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### *Sardis: Sleeping Among the Dead.*

(Rev. iii. 1-7.—*Continued.*)

BUT is not here the history of the churches of the Reformation—of Protestantism, in fact,—during the three centuries of its existence? Is not this the true account of its divisions, for which it is reproached? The Spirit of God is not, indeed, the author of confusion, but of peace,—of unity, and not disunion. But when people talk of schism, they should remember to what that term applies. As found in Scripture, it is "schism in the *body*" that is reprobated, and the *body of Christ* is not a national church. When men have joined together the living and the dead,—when they have subjugated consciences to formularies instead of Scripture,—to hierarchies instead of God, or to hierarchies in the name of God, what have they forced the blessed Spirit to do but to draw afresh the line they have obliterated between the living and the dead, between man's word and God's, between human authority and divine?

And His mode of doing this has been constantly to bring out of the inexhaustible treasure of His Word some fresh or forgotten truth, which would do that which the popularized truth in the creed had almost ceased to do—would test the souls of His people as to whether they were indeed the descendants of those who confessed Him of old.

whose tombs they built, and whose memories they had in honor. The fresh truth calls for fresh confession; costs, and is meant to cost, something; brings its confessors into opposition to the course around them, and separates them at once from those whose only desire is to go with the stream, and with whom the profession of Christ and the cross are widely separate.

Doubtless the division may separate between true Christians themselves; and this is in itself an evil, that true Christians should be separated; but the responsibility rests with those who are not quick-eared enough to hear God's call when it comes,—not single-eyed enough to discern the path in which the Lord is leading His own. We are bound, by the honor we owe to Him, to maintain that He cannot possibly be leading His own in contradictory paths—cannot possibly refuse the needed light to walk aright, however simple or ignorant the soul may be. No one strays and no one stumbles because God denies him light. But "the light of the body" practically "is the eye"—the inlet of it, and there the hinderance is. Thus a severance, sorrowfully enough, is made between real Christians; but the sin of it is *not* with those who separate from that which God has shown them to be evil, but with those who remain associated with the evil which is forcing out the true in heart. Separation from evil, so far from being a principle of division, would, if honestly followed, make for unity and peace, as leading upon a path where God's Spirit, ungrieved, could really unite and strengthen His people. With evil He cannot unite; and this, indeed, therefore, wherever admitted, is a principle of division.

I am not, therefore, upholding or making light of schism. The divisions of Protestantism are its shame, and to glory in them is to glory in one's shame. Error is manifold, contradictory, schismatic. Truth, however many-sided, is but one. Sects, in their multiplicity, may accommodate, no doubt, the religious tastes of man; but that only would show how purely human they are, how little divine.

The unity of the Spirit may be maintained, and allow indeed for growth in knowledge, and in unity of judgment as to many things. The Church of God has room for all that are God's, of whatever stature—fathers, young men, and babes. It can allow of—nay, insists upon the largest charity for those who differ from us in aught that would not link the name of Christ with His dishonor. But that is a very different thing from what is implied in a creed, and indeed I may say, is its fundamental opposite. For the creed defines, in a way that, if rigidly adhered to, *shuts out* toleration as to points of confessedly minor importance, where the Spirit of God would teach, not indifference, indeed, but the largest charity,—forcing its definitions upon all in a way *most* felt by the *most* conscientious. It is as necessary, as far as the creed goes, to believe in a child's being regenerate when baptized as it is to believe in the Son of God Himself. I grant there may be practical laxity, but for a soul before God that does not do. For such an one, with his eyes open, the subjection to human institutions in the things of God is just what he cannot and dare not yield.

"Schism in *the body*," then, is always wrong. *Separation from evil*, at all costs, is a necessity, and

always right. And from this have been gathered the freshness and power which have plainly characterized so many movements of this kind at the beginning. They began in self-judgment and devotedness. The evil at least they saw, and were exercised about, and the measure of truth they had was held in power. It was soon systematized, and in that proportion its power began to fail. The founders, if you look at their lives, were men of faith and power, suffering and enduring. The manners of the adherents were chastened, simple, primitive. Organized, popularized, with a large following, the freshness waned; and in the third or fourth generation, another sect had taken its place among the many, boasting of a history which it did not discern to be a satire upon its present condition.

The organization, the creed, are to preserve the truth. But did these give them the truth they are anxious to preserve? Surely not, as they must own. God in His love, God in His power, has given what man had proved his incompetency to retain. They cannot trust Him to retain it for them, after He has given it. He has used His Word to minister it; they turn round and use, for that blessed Word of His, a creed of their own manufacture to preserve it. The generations after follow their fathers' creed, and not the Word. The truth popularized is gone as "Spirit and Life." God has to work afresh and outside of what a little while ago He had Himself produced.

And the spiritual life of the time has come more and more to manifest itself in "revivals," which, so far as they are really such, are the protests of the Spirit of God against prevailing death continually

creeping over every thing; and oftentimes connected with fresh statements of truth, when the old have lost their power. The Lord's warning to Sardis points out this constant tendency to death. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die." "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent."

It is scarcely too much to say that every true revival, whatever the blessing for individuals,—nay, I might even say, in proportion to the blessing for individuals,—weakens the national system; and this for reasons we have been considering. The Spirit of God must needs work in opposition to the death produced by the system, and therefore against the system which produces the death. Souls quickened by the Spirit of God cannot go on contentedly under deadly and unchristian teaching, comforting themselves with the assurance of the article that "the evil" who sometimes "have chief authority in the ministration of the Word and sacraments" do yet "minister by Christ's commission and authority;" nor will they always be able to accept the ecclesiastical "yoke with unbelievers," because the system requires "every parishioner" to communicate, irrespective of any other security as to his conversion than his baptism and confirmation may imply.

It will be no marvel, then, to find, what any one with spiritual understanding must own, that at least the large proportion of those who could be said to "have not defiled their garments" in the history of Protestantism have been in some way or other dissenters from the national system. The first generation of English reformers were dis-

senters from Rome, and Rome did her best to keep them pure, in the fires she kindled for them. In the second and third generation from these, a people began to be separated, who from their honest endeavor to be right with God were nick-named "Puritans." I need not tell you what great names, which after-generations have learnt to love and honor, are found among this class,—a class with whom fine and pillory and imprisonment were familiar things. Every body knows that Bedford gaol was the "den" in which John Bunyan dreamed his memorable dream. In Scotland, the attempted enforcement of prelacy gave a succession of martyrs and confessors to the Presbyterian name, with whom, as elsewhere, their time of persecution was their time of real blessing, while the Episcopalianism which was riding rough-shod over them had gone already more than half way back to Rome.

With the movement under Wesley and Whitefield, nearer to our own times, we are naturally still more familiar; and that which issued in the Free Church of Scotland is still within the memory of a generation not yet passed away. All these, and many others, will exemplify the truth of what I have been saying; until, in our own days, the national systems are showing evident signs of decrepitude and breaking up; and Romanists and infidels are beginning their pæans on the downfall of Protestantism. We who are able to see it all in the light of Scripture can easily understand why all this is, and see only the truth of God's Word more and more manifested in it. Christianity flung as a cloak over a corpse can surely not warm it into life. Corruption will go on underneath, eating away the *form* of life, the only thing it ever had, until at last

the cloak will more or less fall off, and what was all along true become apparent.

When the Protestant churches shall be gone altogether, or gone as such, their *protest* will not be gone, but only transferred to another court. Heaven will take up what they have dropped. Babylon the Great will fall under divine judgment; and apostles and prophets, and God's people everywhere, will rejoice at her fall.

(*To be continued.*)

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## A Short-Hand Note From a Late Address.

WHAT a revelation we have in this third of John, beloved!—how wonderful it is! Though so familiar to us, it grows greater and fresher as the Spirit of God gives us to understand more the depths of its meaning. Fresh from the lips of the Son of God Himself, it burst forth upon the darkness of this world: "*God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son*"! Think of it!—the whole world lying under the power of Satan,—in the darkness of distance from God; in the misery brought in through sin and the solemn judgment of God upon it,—then it is these blessed words burst forth from the lips of the Son of God Himself, like the light of a glorious sun, breaking forth upon the darkness of this world: "*God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" Precious, wonderful revelation! yet how received by man?

We were singing a while ago,—

"When we see Thee as the victim,
Nailed to the accursed tree"—

The Son of God nailed to the tree!—yes, by man whom He had come to save! Is not this another wonder, declaring under what power of Satan and depths of darkness man was fallen in rebellion to God? Yet this declaration comes to the whole world: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son."

Is it not, beloved, a wonderful revelation?—this break of a glorious light upon this benighted world.

Bless God for it, all ye who know Him! My soul worships and blesses God for it.

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## What is it to Keep the Unity of the Spirit?

(Eph. iv. 3.)

THE blessed truth of God, as broad and catholic as it is spiritual and holy, is being constantly narrowed and stiffened into formality of some kind by the narrowness of our own hearts. We interpret the Word so much out of our hearts,—we see it so much in reference to our own circumstances merely,—the things that are before us are so apt to engross and prepossess us, that we are often little able to realize at all the mind of the Spirit in it. The narrowing of the application becomes a real perversion often thus. Sectarianism is natural to us; and sectarianism means but self,—"our own things," whether in a smaller or a larger circle, and "not the things of Jesus Christ."

We have also to remember that we may be easily insnared into the identification of these contrasted things with one another. "Our own things" readily *become* for us the "things of Jesus Christ." Scripture contracted by our selfishness becomes then also the *enforcement* of our selfishness in the name

of the Lord. The idol we have fashioned begins fashioning us; and by this process of action and reaction, how soon and how far may we be led astray! What cause have we to pray for the grace of self-judgment when we take God's Word into our hands, lest we bring our own thoughts into it, instead of receiving divine truth from it!

Has not the blessed truth of the unity of the Spirit suffered this sort of contraction at our hands? Has it not been often made to serve the purpose of a rigid and narrow ecclesiasticism, and pressed into the very opposite of that which the apostle so earnestly here enjoins? *Has* it been always used so as to foster the spirit of "all lowliness and meekness, *forbearing one another in love*"? Has it been sought even to be kept "in the bond of peace"?

But my purpose is not to pursue this at all just now, but to put and answer, as the Lord may enable me, the question, What *is* the "unity of the Spirit" we are to keep? and how then are we to keep it?—questions in the present day of very great importance surely, amid the strife of parties and opinions ever increasing, and when also there is danger of a mere liberalism which is not of God, effectually aided, with many, by the weariness of the strife itself.

These questions are not really difficult to answer, however, nor are the answers in any way themselves difficult or questionable. The apostle, in his next sentence, has given us the first of these. As old Matthew Henry would have said, the key hangs very near the door. "There is *one body and one Spirit*." Here are two unities, which are plainly to be distinguished, while as plainly related, and that unity of which the apostle speaks proceeds *from*

*this relation of one to the other.* The "unity of the Spirit" is the unity produced by the one Spirit as *animating and controlling* the "one body."

The unity of the body, it has been truly said, is not ours to keep. God has taken care for that. Whether we are practically acknowledging it or not, the body of Christ is one, and we are members one of another. But that which practically unites the body together is the living Spirit which puts the members in real and practical relation to one another. They are thus kept in communion with and true subjection to the Head, Christ Jesus. It is not a mere formal, but a true spiritual and intelligent oneness, owned and carried out in mutual sympathy and service,—a service which is duty no no less than privilege—and to the full extent of our ability, within a sphere not less than that of the whole body of Christ.

This is the answer to the first question, and there is surely no need to enlarge upon it, nor to enforce the truth of it. Its truth is manifest: the duty to one another flowing from our place together in the body of Christ will be owned by every true and loyal-hearted Christian wherever found.

But the question of greater difficulty, and therefore of greater interest at the present moment, is as to what is involved in the endeavor to keep the unity—to carry out this principle so easily recognized. The body is no longer manifestly one: the members are separated from one another, variously and widely. Each one of numberless divisions is united by and earnest to maintain the differences by which its adherents are sundered from the rest. Hence discordant views create discordant interests. Collision and conflict are the inevitable results.

More than this: in this strife of party interests, aid is welcome, and one must not too nicely investigate from whence it comes. Impoverished and distracted by internal feuds, the Church of God accepts, if it does not invite, the help of the world, perhaps loosely Christianized, sometimes not that, and sometimes even antichristian. How is a way to be found and held with God through this bewildering, shifting, maze of difficulties? How shall we take a step into this stream without being whirled from our feet by these eddying currents of human passion, emulation, and party zeal? How are we to be large enough yet discriminating enough?—"wise concerning that which is good, and simple concerning evil"?

And yet we are to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." As the duty remains, so do the way and means of fulfilling the duty. Isolation from whatever affects our brethren is not God's thought for us, who has joined the body together, and would have no schism in it. Whether we will or not, from this interdependence of one upon another we cannot escape. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." And while there may be and are great difficulties, these are but the means of testing and drawing out faith, never of confounding it.

How, then, are we to keep the unity of the Spirit? The answer may be given in a few words: by uniting ourselves in heart to every thing in which the Spirit's work is manifest, while turning from and refusing all (though it may be mixed up with this) in which, as tested by Scripture, the character of that work cannot be found.

This is but to apply to the matter before us the

principles of the apostle John's last two epistles. Love must be in the *truth*, is the motto of the second; The truth must be in *love*, is that of the third. And these are the two sides of the divine nature, "God is love" and "God is light," made to test our practical conduct. As "grace and truth," they together "came" to us "by Jesus Christ." We cannot sunder them: to sunder is to destroy. Without love, there is no truth in us: love is itself the first and fundamental truth. Without truth, love cannot be.

And so the apostle insists, If you keep God's commandments, *this* is His commandment, "that he who loveth God love his brother also." On the other hand, if you love your brethren, the children of God, "by this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and *keep His commandments*. For this *is* the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous."

How necessary, in a day of mixture such as the present, to remember these words! And how it would seem often as if we did not *believe* that "His commandments are not grievous"! How many are the plausible suggestions now that, at least within certain limits, the end sanctifies the means; and that if the object be to serve Christ, a little conciliation of the world and the flesh may secure an immense influence in His favor! No doubt, they would not like to be thought to patronize unholiness who do this, and in truth they do not mean to violate conscience: but it is *natural* conscience only which they have in mind; not conscience enlightened by the word of Christ,—for in His light they do not see light.

Keeping, then, in mind the only perfect standard

of what is "vile" or "precious," we have only come, after all, to the words of God to Jeremiah in a day of apostasy,—"If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth." Priceless words are these indeed, with all their simplicity. We shall do well to ponder them if as yet we have not, to recall them to remembrance if we have. For contact with an evil world, even when necessary, tends to dull our spiritual sense continually, and only by perpetual recurrence to the word of truth can our sanctification be maintained. Let us look, then, at these words to the old prophet, and see if they are not words of power for our day,—if they do not give us at least the underlying principle in the following out of which the unity of the Spirit will be most simply and surely kept.

It is true that in Jeremiah necessarily there is no mention or thought of the body of Christ. And this is now that in which (in a way unknown to the Old Testament,) the Spirit of God dwells. We will not forget that the Church, which Christ loved so as to give Himself for it, is the sphere of this unity which we have now before us. But this affects the details rather than the principles. The work of the Holy Spirit is in all ages morally the same: the work speaks of its Author, and has the impress of His own immutability.

First, then, let us notice carefully that in taking forth the precious from the vile, our *occupation* is with that which is precious. We do not hunt for the vile, although we cannot but recognize it when it comes before us. We judge it better by our refusal of it than by any amount of analysis and condemnation of it. Our part is, "whatsoever

things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," to "think on *these* things." This has a wonderful effect upon the heart. The occupation with evil tends to distress, discourage, and enfeeble on the one hand; on the other, to engender a spirit of controversy and harshness, closely allied with and near akin to a subtle self-righteousness. When that which is good occupies us, we are kept in rest, encouraged, and superior to the evil; love is not merely unchecked, but active, in the presence of what calls it out. If we strive, it is with the desire of rescuing what is of God and dear to Him from what injures and defiles it.

Secondly, this effort is supposed and enjoined in *taking forth* the precious from the vile. Every where the conflict of good with evil is going on, and divine grace is in unceasing, unwearied activity to win souls out of the darkness and corruption, to God and to the holiness which is the atmosphere in which He dwells. Of this activity we are ourselves the fruit, and in this way have become also its instruments. The world is a vast battle-ground, in which there are only two parties, essentially opposed. He that is not with Christ is against Him; he that gathereth not with Him scattereth abroad. Nor is there pause or relaxation in the continual struggle. To pause is to give way; to cease from conflict is to be overcome; to persevere is, on the other hand, to win certain victory, and every effort gathers strength for a fresh one. But assuredly we shall not without a struggle "take forth the precious from the vile;" for sin is an

armed and aggressive enemy, and the goods of the strong man can only be taken in the might of One who is stronger than he.

The main difficulty lies in this, that although there are but two parties in this strife, and the lines might seem easily enough drawn, in practice it is not so. There is an inner enemy as well as an outer one, and a battle-field in every Christian heart corresponding to that outside. Thus the power of the Spirit has to accomplish in us the work of deliverance from the evil within as well as around; and we have to be with Him, not only in winning from the *world* the trophies of divine grace, but also in delivering the people of God from themselves and from their fellows, as well as from the world around.

What makes the endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit so difficult, but this? Why does it require all lowliness and meekness and long-suffering, forbearing one another in love? It is because the body of Christ is composed of men in whom sin is and in whom it works; and thus unity can be only maintained by conflict: here, as in the individual, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you should not do the things that you would."

Thus no mere keeping of an external or ecclesiastical unity will suffice us here. Every where, as a first necessity, we need that discernment which only he that is spiritual can have. There is implied a constant exercise, a continual need of being before God, a practiced faith, a thorough individuality of walk, which mere ecclesiasticism, far from encouraging, always represses, as hostile to unity,

instead of favoring it. It is the unity of the *Spirit* that is to be kept, not that of the Church. And this can never be really kept, I do not say by a violated conscience merely, but by an unexercised one. The Spirit of God ever acts, indeed, in behalf of real unity; but in this very way it can only be attained by a close and intelligent following of His mind. Could the whole body act as one apart from this, it would only be the more completely contrary to the apostle's precept here.

*(To be continued.)*

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## THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

THIS is a very solemn subject, and yet it is one most satisfactory the better we understand it. I believe every act of our lives will be set forth there, so that God's grace and dealing with us with reference to our own acts will be known there. It is said in Rom. xiv., "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." The judgment-seat is there referred to in connection with the admonition to the brethren not to judge one another with respect to a day, or eating meat. I am disposed to think that only the deeds will be matters of manifestation; but so much is every act of our lives dependent on inward feelings, that it is in one sense hard to distinguish between deeds and thoughts. Acts always declare the strength of the thought or feeling. I believe all our doings shall be detailed there—not to us as in the flesh for condemnation, but to unfold to us the grace which has dealt with us, regenerate and unregenerate. Our whole history will be detailed there, and, in parallel line, the history of His grace and mercy toward us. The *why* and the *how* we did this or that will be declared then.

It is declarative, and not judicial, for us. We are not in the flesh before God. In His eye, blessed be His

name, we are dead; but then where we have walked after the flesh, we must see how we lost blessing—what a loss it has been to us; and on the other hand, His ways toward us all, in wisdom, mercy, and grace, will be fully known and comprehended for the first time. Of course, there will be no replying, but each history will be like a great transparency. How you yielded, and how He preserved; how you slipped, and how He rescued; how you approached danger and shame, and how He, by His own hand, interposed. I believe it will be the bride making herself ready, and I regard it as a wondrous moment. There will be no flesh there to receive condemnation, but the new nature will enter into the transcendent love and care which in true holiness and justice, even in grace, have followed us *every* step of our journey. Passages in our lives now utterly unexplained shall be all seen clearly then. Tendencies of our nature which we may not think would lead to desperate issues, and to curb which we may now be subjected to a discipline which we have not interpreted, will be fully explained there; and still more the very falls which distress us sorely now will be shown then as used to preserve us from worse. I do not believe that we shall get any thing like a full view of the evil of our flesh till then. We shall have done with the flesh then; but I believe the display of His grace individually to us will be so magnificent that even the sense of the evil of the flesh that were ours, if it were possible to intrude, will be prevented by the greatness of the other. Why do we not deny and mortify our members when we remember that hour? The Lord enable us to do more to the glory of His grace.

The subject leads the soul into a very full sense of our individual place—to think of each giving an account of himself to God.

I do not know that the judgment-seat of Christ is used oftener than in Rom. xiv. and 2 Cor. v. In the former, to prevent private judgment; in the latter, to provoke to present well-doing and self-judgment, in view of that day.

*J. N. D.*

## CURRENT EVENTS.

# The Mission Movement of To-Day.

ONE of the most interesting and significant features of the time is the rapid growth of the mission movement. In itself, it is surely full of the deepest interest to the Christian heart, the awakening of the Lord's people (though even yet but very partially,) to their responsibility to carry out His command to "preach the gospel to every creature." The results, too, have been striking proportionately to the effort made. The history is one full of stirring incident and power to arouse the deepest emotions. The work and the workmen call out our fullest sympathy, and demand our most earnest support; and here our prayers at least can penetrate into all fields, unhindered by what may and must often limit co-operation of another kind. Alas! how much are we strangers to what is (in the main,) of Christ and for Him! We know little, because we care so little; and then, again, it is assuredly true that we care so little oftentimes because we know so little.

A singularly interesting book has been published in the last year,* from which some idea may be gained of how God has been moving within the last century to open the world to the blessed gospel of His grace, as well as, in some measure, of how He has moved in humiliation hearts to send the gospel into these open doors. It would be a pleasure to be able to transfer to these pages some sufficient extracts to induce others to get the book itself, or to convey to those who may not be able to do this a scanty outline of the story there so well and wisely told. Dr. Pierson may without reproach be styled an enthusiast

*"*The Crisis of Missions*," by Rev. T. Pierson, D.D. This book may be had of Loizeaux Bros., 63 Fourth Ave., New York. Price, $1.25, post-paid.

upon his subject. Yet he is one who expects no conversion of the world as the result of present evangelizing, but the speedy coming of the Lord Himself.

As to the conversion of the world, a few figures, culled from a pamphlet* issued about the same time with the book just mentioned, should demonstrate how little has the century almost passed (since Wm. Carey went to India) done to give any national hope in this direction. The population of the world is set down in it as about 1,470,000,000. Of these, the Protestants number 135,000,000; the Greek church, 85,000,000; the Roman Catholics, 195,000,000. The total of Christendom is thus 415,000,000.

It does not need to argue how much, if we could ascertain the proportion among these of true Christians, these numbers would be reduced. Over against these 415,000,000 of professing followers of Christ (many, indeed, not even that, for what is the meaning in a census of the first class—Protestants?) we must place 8,000,000 of Jews, 173,000,000 of Mohammedans, and 874,000,000 of heathen,—1,055,000,000 in all. "When Carey wrote his famous inquiry, in 1786, he estimated the Mohammedans at 130,000,000 and the Pagans at 420,000,000,—equal to 550,000,000. This would give an increase of 493,000,000. But as we have come to the knowledge of vast populations in Africa and the East which could not be even guessed at in Carey's time, we must largely increase his estimate, but I am not prepared at present to say to what extent. Of this, however, I am sure, that the ACTUAL INCREASE during the hundred years is *much more* than the 200,000,000 at which I have put it."

As "results" of this century of missions, Mr. Johnston gives,—

"870,000 adults, converts from among the heathen, are now in full communion with the Church of Christ, as the result of Prot-

*"*A Century of Missions and Increase of the Heathen*," by Rev. Jas. Johnston, F. S. S.

estant missionary labors. These, with their families and dependents, form Christian communities scattered over almost every portion of the habitable globe; numbering, in the aggregate, at least 2,800,000 souls."

Thus, after a hundred years of missionary labor, we have 197,000,000 more of heathen to be reached by the gospel than when we began! "It is enough to note the fact," adds Mr. Johnston, "and its bearing on the *possibility of Christian missions, with their three millions of converts, overtaking the increasing one thousand millions of heathens and Mohammedans in the world.*" The italics are his own.

Other considerations make the outlook in this respect even more hopeless. The same writer adds,—

"It is full time that the Church of God looked this fact in the face, that *no religion which had been formulated into a system, or is possessed of sacred books, has even been arrested in its progress by our modern missions.* Hindooism, Boodhism, and Islam not only stand their ground, they are yearly making proselytes by tens of thousands. For one convert from any of these systems, they gain thousands from the inferior races, which they are absorbing into their systems."

He qualifies this statement thus far, that—

"It is true that Christian missions have made an impression on all these systems; many agencies have combined to unsettle the belief of Hindoos and Mohammedans, and it is no hyperbole to say that these systems of error have been *shaken.* But it depends upon the future of the Church's efforts whether the shaking is to lead to an awakening followed by a new lease of superstition and fanaticism, or to their overthrow. The shaking may not move the foundations of these systems, but, like the agitation of some chemical compounds, they may crystallize into new forms of error, more dangerous and deadly than the old."

To this last consideration the dechristianization of Christendom which is going on, spite of all real or apparent revivals, gives alarming force. We shall, however, speak of this, if the Lord will, at another time. It is enough to show here that the logic of facts is coming with irresistible force to demonstrate the truth of Scripture—that the world is not to be converted by present agencies. It has been indeed promised, and will be fulfilled, to Christ: "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for

Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession;" but *how* to be fulfilled is also declared to us: "Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps. ii. 9.)

If it were simply ignorance that had to be removed in the case of the heathen, then the light of Christianity might be counted on to dispel it. But it is not so; else their condition would be more their misfortune than their sin. In fact, Christendom itself, but for the sovereign mercy of God, had before this returned into utter heathenism. We have come already through the dark ages of professing Christianity. Before our eyes, men are lapsing into a deeper darkness which the sure word of prophecy declares. When the glory of the Lord shall arise (as yet it will) upon Israel, "*darkness* shall cover the earth, and *gross darkness* the peoples." (Isa. lx. 2.)

Yet this should not damp our zeal for the spread of the gospel, which the Lord's word directly enjoins, and with which His power will never be lacking. Results are not indeed what we would desire, and yet they are full of encouragement. Says Mr. Johnston once again,—

"The annual increase in mission converts averages, so far as we can learn, about six or eight per cent., while the increase to the membership of the churches at home does not average one per cent. per annum."

In many places, the testing of the reality of the work also has been sufficiently severe; as, for instance, in Madagascar; and some of the most notable records of faithfulness and endurance in modern times have come to us from the mission fields.

Dr. Pierson's book will give, in a short compass, the best idea of what has been accomplished and what is accomplishing in this way. And one of the most striking facts he brings before us is the way in which God has, by His providence, been opening door after door to the divinely given faith that laid hold upon the command to publish the gospel as a sure pledge of power to go before and to accompany it. Who will not be moved at this

record of one only of His marvelous doings among the Pacific islands?—

"Sixty years ago, the brig *Thaddeus* was nearing the Sandwich Islands, with the first missionaries to those habitations of darkness and cruelty, on board. Never was an enterprise, humanly speaking, more hopeless. Seventeen persons were going to these ten isles to evangelize them, to upheave the ocean, and flood them with the knowledge of the Lord; and against coast-barriers as formidable as ever the gospel encountered,—barbarism, sensuality, superstition, brutality. These people, lost to shame, went almost naked. Husbands had many wives, and wives had many husbands; and they exchanged as they would trade in any other commodity. Two-thirds of all the children died in infancy by the hands of their mothers, who would choke a babe, or bury it alive in the earth floor of the hut, to stop its crying. A nation of thieves, gamblers, drunkards, they sacrificed human beings as victims, and had neither science nor literature, however rude. Government was a farce; a taboo system made death the penalty for offenses so small that they might be committed without either will or knowledge; for a common man to allow his shadow to fall upon a chief, for instance, could be atoned for only as his head lay at the feet of that chief. No words can do justice to the moral and spiritual condition of those islands. It was a question whether such a people could be saved, even by the gospel; not a few doubted whether they were worth saving. Could you expect the sea to sweep against such barriers and wash them away? It would take a thousand years!

"But as the boat drew near the coast, Hopu, a native who, having found his way to this land and to Christ, was now going back, put off in a small boat for shore, and at once returning, swung his hat and shouted, '*Oohu's idols are no more!*' God had gone before these pioneers. The old king was dead, the images of the gods all burned, and the first death-blow struck at the taboo system,—*all this before the vessel's prow touched the beach*. The missionaries wrote in their journal, 'Sing, O heavens, for the Lord hath done it!'

"Ah, yes, the island system was sinking, and the huge barriers subsiding; the sea need not change its level, but only move in upon the sinking land. And so in two years the missionaries began to give them a written language and literature. The first convert was Keopulani, the king's mother. Within four years, the Christian Sabbath and Ten Commandments were formally recognized by government; and so the work went on, until within fifty years the islands took their place with other Christian nations, and became themselves centres of gospel light for the darkness around."

This is only a sample, though a striking one, of how

God has been working to remove hinderances and open doors within the century past. At the beginning of it, "there was little or no access to the great nations of the heathen world. China was walled about, Japan's ports were sealed, India was held by an English power hostile to missions, Africa impenetrable even to the explorer, and the isles of the sea crowded with cannibals more to be dreaded than the devouring waves of the angry ocean." Mohammedanism made death the penalty of change of faith; and "there was less hope of proper missionary work among Roman Catholics than among Polynesian cannibals." Beside all this, "tediously slow travel and transportation made neighbors foreigners; languages, strange and hard to master, hindered even converse and communication, and, formed in the matrix of heathenism, offered no mould for spiritual ideas; moreover, at least sixty such tongues must be reduced to writing, having no literature, nor even lexicon, nor grammar." Woman, again, among these nations, was secluded, degraded, and "denied all social status and individual rights, and even a *soul*. Worst of all, caste, that gigantic foe of human progress, forbade not only conversion, but communion among converts."

These are but some of the external hinderances that existed. It is most interesting to see how largely, and in what manner these difficulties have been overcome. With the exception of one country—Thibet, soon likely to throw down its barriers with the rest, the whole world is now accessible to missionary labor; and here and there peoples, themselves evangelized, are helping to send out the gospel to others. The Bible is in almost every tongue, and the number of those who offer themselves for missionary labor is so increased that means are lacking to send them out.

No doubt, if we look at the work and its methods, there are many things that hinder full and unalloyed satisfaction. Yet who but must own that God has been working, and

wonderfully working? Who but must be reminded of the words, "The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come"? Far off, assuredly, the end cannot be; and this going out of the gospel to the ends of the earth is, among so many signs, not the least. But not only in this way,—not only as onlookers,—should we be interested in it. It is Christ's work,—it is the proclamation of His dear name, that as such calls for our fellowship. How far behind are we, most of us, in this respect! And how often do we allow blemishes in the work to take away our interest in it, when they should rather stir our hearts to intercession and greater fervency of prayer in its behalf! "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication *for all saints*." Alas! how little we do this! How little are we able to lift ourselves out of the circle of our own horizon to link ourselves with what is dear to Christ upon earth!

Henceforth we may, if the Lord will, often return to look at features and details of the mission work, and in the meanwhile would recommend warmly Dr. Pierson's book, as a most helpful introduction to, and a means of engaging a more intelligent and practical interest in it.

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## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*Q.* 1.—"In '*Eight Lectures on Prophecy*' I read, 'Into this new *earth* the new Jerusalem, the glorified Church, will descend,' etc. I have just looked at Rev. xxi., but it does not seem clear to me. Will not the new earth be for the earthly people, and the new heaven for the heavenly people?"

*Ans.*—First, as to the expression "new heaven," in Rev. xxi. 1, it is evidently the atmospheric heaven only, and

not the "third heaven" of Paul's vision and the paradise of God. It is when the great white throne is set that the earth and the heaven flee away from before the face of Him who sits on it; and Peter describes the same change: "The heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

But it is true that the heavenly people will always remain so, as Israel and the millennial saints in general will always remain an earthly one. Nor does the descent of the new Jerusalem militate against this. We have to remember that the pictures in Revelation are not to be taken as literal description, and that in the heavenly city is the throne of God and the Lamb; moreover, it is said as to the new earth, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." This does not imply that God will forsake heaven for earth; and the Lord's promise to us is, "Where I am, there ye shall be also." Nor is it even said that the new Jerusalem will be on earth. Near and intimate connection there will be, assuredly; and this is all that the expressions can, without straining, be made to mean.

*Q.* 2.—"In Ex. xxii. 28, who are the 'gods' mentioned? and why are they not to revile them?"

*Ans.*—It is the same expression as in Ps. lxxxii. 6, which the Lord quotes in Jno. x. 34: "I said, Ye are gods," and of which He says that they are called gods to whom the word of God came. The force is doubtless that of "judges," divinely commissioned, and thus representing God. Those who reviled them thus spoke against God's authority in the judge. And the same principle now applies. Jude speaks of some as "filthy dreamers," who "defile the flesh, despise dominion, and *speak evil of dignities;*" and Peter has a similar warning: both in connection with evils which should characterize the latter days. The application to the present time is only too plain, and Christians should lay it to heart in the midst of a state of

things when so much license with the tongue is claimed and given.

*Q.* 3.—"What is meant by the expression 'baptized for the dead' in 1 Cor. xv. 29,—'Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they, then, baptized for the dead?'"

*Ans.*—The expression may be rendered, "baptized *in place of* the dead." The preposition translated "for" in both the Common and Revised Versions (ὑπέρ) is, in 2 Cor. v. 20 and Philem. 13, translated "instead of," although the Rev. Ver. has corrected it to "in behalf of" in both places. But the meaning "instead of" is admitted in the lexicons.

It might also be, and has been by many, translated "*over* the dead," according to the root idea of the preposition, without any change of meaning, perhaps even more vividly. For the thought in the mind of the apostle, as is evident by the whole passage, is of a battle-field, in which fresh combatants are taking the place of those removed by death. In those days, to become a Christian was to expose one's self to death; and why thus fill up the ranks decimated by so fierce a conflict if there be no resurrection? For then Christ is not risen, as he argues, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. "*Over* the dead" would be in this way vividly pictorial. But the meaning is, in any case, plain.

*Q.* 4.—"How am I to understand 2 Pet. ii. 12? Annihilationists regard this passage as a strong proof of their doctrine."

*Ans.*—The point pressed by annihilationists is the resemblance drawn between beasts and evil men. Says one of their leaders,—

"They resemble them in irrationality, and will be like them in their destiny. The beasts are made, or born, for φθορὰν (*extinction*), and wicked men will suffer φθορὰν also (Gal. vi.); but if this word signified *endless misery*, it could not be said that the 'natural irrational brutes' were 'made' for *that*."

Now it is freely and fully granted that *φθορά* does not mean "endless misery." I am not aware of any one having ever contended that it did. No one doubts, I suppose, that it means, in general in the New Testament, "corruption," physical or moral; and so it is always translated in the Common Version (Rom. viii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 42, 50; Gal. vi. 8; 2 Pet. i. 4; ii. 12, 19), except twice,—Col. ii. 22, "to perish," and in this place, "to be destroyed." It is derived from the verb *φθείρω*, which is similarly translated "to *corrupt*" (1 Cor. xv. 33; 2 Cor. vii. 2; xi. 3; Eph. iv. 22; Jude 10; Rev. xix. 2), except in 1 Cor. iii. 17, which I shall presently notice. In the passage before us it also occurs, though in a stronger form in the text King James' translators followed, and is therefore rendered "*utterly* perish." It is the word used once again in 2 Tim. iii. 8, "men of *corrupt* minds."

"Corruption" is evidently, then, the leading thought in the New-Testament use of the word. But the passage in 1 Cor. iii. 17 presents the word in a double sense, apparently, which it is hard to give in a translation, and the Common Version uses for it two words, "defile" and "destroy:" "If any man *defile* the temple of God, him shall God *destroy*." The *one* word, however, defining the sin and the punishment, is surely significant. It speaks solemnly of repayment *in kind*, which is a noticeable principle in the divine government: "Reward her even as she rewarded; and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." (Rev. xviii. 6.) We can retain this thought in Corinthians by a slight amplification: "If any man corrupt the temple of God, him shall God give over to corruption;" and this will be more really literal than the other translation.

If we now look again at 2 Pet. ii. 12, we shall find a like thought: "But these, as irrational beasts, made naturally for capture and corruption, speaking evil of things that they understand not, in their corruption shall also be given to corruption, acquiring for themselves the wages of un-

righteousness." I give here again as literal a translation as I can, retaining throughout a uniform rendering of the words in question. The Rev. Ver. gives in this place, "shall in their destroying surely be destroyed," and similarly in Corinthians,—"If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy," preserving the due connection of sin and punishment, but losing that with "for the temple of God is holy:"—the thought of the sin as the corruption of a holy thing.

But in this way the whole interest of annihilationists in the passage is taken away. I do not mean, but deny, that it serves them as it stands in our translations; for what they have to prove for this, and can never prove, is, that the destruction of a man is *extinction*, as that of the beast is. In itself, destruction never means this, but the removal out of the place for which the beast, or the man, or whatever else, was originally made. The beast, indeed, was only made to fill a temporary place. It was made, therefore, for destruction when its time runs out. Not so with man, and destruction for *him* means *judgment.*

*Phthŏra*, in the New Testament, seems always, however, to mean "corruption," which in the case of the beast is physical, of course; but it does not follow that because man is *likened* to the beast in his end, that the end is the *same.* Likeness is not identity, nor does it imply it. And what forbids the thought wholly is, that as applied to men in the passage here, the corruption is not physical at all, but spiritual; and to this, as having chosen it, they are given up. They are recompensed *in kind;* they reap as they sow: having sown to the flesh, they will *of the flesh* reap corruption. Judgment delivers them up to this: "he that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still."

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*For want of space, other questions are deferred till next month.*

# PRESENT THINGS,

## AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

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## THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)

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### *Sardis: Sleeping Among the Dead.*

(Rev. iii. 1-7.—*Continued.*)

A FEW words now about another thing.

If the Church reigns in the absence of Christ, what then? Why, then there must be something representing Him down here;—He must have a vicar. He is not present (even the world cannot mistake that), except spiritually. He is at God's right hand. That is the common faith of Christianity, and it is the faith even of Rome. Although, in spite of that, her altars are continually proclaiming Him corporally present, the faith of Christianity is that Christ is away.

But a visible kingdom requires a visible head; and I need not tell you that such they have given it. The pope is, for Rome, Christ's vicar; and this is only the natural development of the thought of church-government which historically preceded and led on to it, and which extends far beyond Rome. Presbyterianism, prelacy, popery, are but three steps in the same direction. Apostles are no more; and the Church is orphaned, if not governed in a visible manner. Hierarchial government in some form is a necessity to it.

Now the Lord has indeed a Vicar during His absence—a perfect, infallible Guide for His people, as well as a guide-book absolutely perfect. The

Church has not only a perfect body of discipline, but One also who is the Interpreter and Administrator of it. It is the characteristic of God's people that "as many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." So distinctive and so wonderful a blessing is the presence of the Holy Ghost with us now, that, although the disciples in our Lord's day were blessed, by the fact of His presence with them, beyond all the generations previous, yet He could say to them, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

His presence in the believer makes even his body the temple of the Holy Ghost. So His presence in the church makes it also "the temple of the living God." Looking at the Church, again, as the body of Christ, He is the one Spirit animating the body. As all the members move under the control of the spirit in the natural body, so in the body of Christ also: if the members do not understand and move in harmonious subjection to the spirit, we speak of it as disease; and it is not less, but more truly, so in the body of Christ.

If we open the Acts, we shall find every where His presence—greater than apostles, higher than the highest there. From the day of His descent at Pentecost, He is supreme over all; and that supremacy becomes the harmony of action, the unity of spirit in the lower sense. Sovereignly, He calls instruments as He will, and as sovereignly uses whom He calls. "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul," He says to the prophets and teachers at Antioch, "to the work whereunto I have called them. . . . And they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, de-

parted into Seleucia." How strange to read as power conferred on man to convey office what is really the naming of individuals by the Spirit Himself, as called and sent forth by Him: one of them being the man who asserts his own apostleship to be, "not *of* men, nor *by* man"!

"Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia, . . . they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not." "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days; who said to Paul by the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem." Not ordinarily, indeed, perhaps not often, was the bidding of the Spirit expressed as audibly; but the manner of communication was but circumstantial, and not of the essence of the matter. *He* was present, Comforter, Guide, Teacher, Witness; Spirit of the body, "dividing to every man severally as He will;" a divine Person, with divine power and divine authority.

Yet unseen! I grant the fatal flaw in all this for most. The Bible they can see, but it is not definite enough. The Spirit of God they cannot see, and, alas! cannot believe in, in a practical way. "Whom the world cannot receive," says the Lord Himself, of the Holy Ghost, "because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." And when the line between the Church and the world is gone, who can wonder that this unbelief should be permeating the mass of what is professedly Christ's? It is not only Rome that refuses to the blessed Spirit the place He has come to fill. The unbelief which has denied the sufficiency of Scripture, and supplemented it by creeds which come soon to supplant it, has denied

in the same way the sufficiency of the Holy Ghost, and supplemented His authority with hierarchical governments to which (whatever the theory) He is practically unnecessary.

If you ask people what they mean by "church-government," you will get various answers, no doubt; but they will all agree substantially in one thing. That one thing is, in an omission of what is, indeed, the key-stone of the arch. They will tell you, some, that they believe in an episcopal form of government, some a presbyterian, some a congregational. And if you ask them further, Where do they put the Holy Ghost? you will find the mass of people even denying any special presence of the Holy Ghost as characterizing this dispensation. They will tell you (so far, truly,) that the Spirit of God has always been acting in the world, from the creation of it; that the new birth has always been His work, from Abel, or from Adam, to this time. They believe, too, in certain special gifts at the day of Pentecost, and for some time thereafter. A distinctive "coming" in the place of Christ, a coming so important in character that it was expedient for Christ to go away that we might have it, they do not understand and do not believe in. One well-known man, an evangelical divine, Dr. Hugh McNeile, of Liverpool, when he had to admit that a personal "coming" of the Holy Ghost after the ascension of Christ was taught in the Word, could only account for it by the supposition that during the Lord's lifetime upon earth all the operation of the Spirit was limited to Himself alone, so that the three and thirty years of our Lord's presence were years in which no conversions could take place at all,—a barren time in the world's

history, a unique and utter desolation otherwise of spiritual influences!

And thus you will find that the *practical* faith in the Holy Ghost's presence now is scarcely faith in a *Person*. It is "influence," like rain, or dew, or gentle breeze,—and these are true and scriptural figures so far, but quite impersonal. They talk of a "measure of the Spirit," and every fresh stirring of heart they find is a fresh "baptism" of the Spirit. The evident and necessary result is that they lose the first requisite for faith in Him as One come down to take charge for Christ on earth, to dwell as God in the house of God, to animate and govern the body of Christ, as the spirit in man guides and governs the natural body.

Hence church-government, in people's minds, has nothing to do really with His presence here. Bishops, priests, and deacons may need, and of course do need, His influences. So, in theory, does the pope. But practically the ordering of things is (within certain limits, whether of church-tradition or of Scripture, so far as Scripture is supposed to serve,) in human hands, and subject to human wills. "The Church has power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith." "And those [ministers] we ought to judge lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work BY MEN who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to *call and send* ministers into the Lord's vineyard." But the Holy Ghost may not have "called or sent" them! Well, that, of course; and that is provided for: for "although in the visible church the evil be ever mingled with the good, *and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the Word* and

sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and DO MINISTER BY HIS COMMISSION AND AUTHORITY, we may use their ministry both in hearing of the Word of God and receiving of the sacraments"!!

Thus they may have Christ's commission although the Holy Ghost hath *not* "called or sent" them: Christ and the Holy Ghost are made to be at issue, and the Church can go on ordering and ordaining in despite of the Spirit Himself!

And this is *order;* while those who desire to yield subjection to the Word and Spirit of God alone are convicted of being rebels against proper authority, and sure to end in confusion and (as some have said,) in "atoms"! Yet faith will follow where God leads, owning indeed that in His path all will be confusion that is not subjection; and that, leave Him out, we at least have no resource. Let it be so: we will abide the issue.

But let us contemplate a little while now the other side of things. We have had before us what is intensely sorrowful, more provocative of tears than Jezebel's corruption. There, the very malignity of the evil roused the whole soul against it: here, there is the fruit of what was in the beginning a movement of God. He can speak of what they had seen and heard, and exhort to hold it fast. There are still "things that remain," although "ready to die." And how can we but sorrow intensely over what was so fair in its earliest promise, and received its baptism in the blood of martyrs?

Yet the word to the overcomer, once again recurring here, comforts us with its recurrence. It links us, if we have ears to hear, with the same little remnant that has ever been finding its way,

through storm and flood, to Him from whose love neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword can separate, and in which they have approved themselves, through Him, more than conquerors. The overcoming may be now in a new sphere, and separation may have to be from brethren, in some sense, of a common faith, heirs of great names in faith's records. Yet, in the *overcoming*, only *overcomers* are their true successors. Not those who, in our Lord's days, built the sepulchres of the prophets, represented them, or were linked with them, in His account, but those whom He sent forth to be persecuted by these same admirers of antiquity.

And God must teach us independence, even of one another,—that rightful independence which springs from real and lowly dependence upon Him. In His presence, what were even the greatest of His followers? How can I say to another, "Rabbi, Rabbi," when I must take the honor from Him that I deck another with? If I had not Him, it were lowliness; if I have Him, it is dishonor to Him.

It is not schism, this separate path, when not my own will leads me, but His Word and Spirit! It is not separation in heart from brethren, if Christ be dearer to me still than they. Nay, love to them approves itself only thus, as the apostle teaches us, "when we love God and keep His commandments." (1 Jno. v. 2.)

Faith's victories are not in applause wrung from a multitude, but in the path of One, true Joseph, separated from His brethren; and God has overruled the presence of evil (which, I need not say, He has not caused) to the giving us a path, at least

in its circumstances, the more Christlike. We are not left to the subjection to evil: He calls us to rise above it. The difficulties of the path are only to carry us through them all. Every encouragement throughout these epistles is held out simply to the overcomer. The Lord give us only the needed energy. The time is short: the end is at hand. The grace that is now sufficient for all daily need will soon be manifested in the crowning of the conquerors. Then those that are poor shall have the kingdom; the mourners shall be comforted; the meek shall have the inheritance; the hungerers and thirsters after righteousness shall be filled; above all, the pure in heart shall see God—the God whom sin for the time has banished from the earth He made.

*(To be continued.)*

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## WHAT IS IT TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT?

(Eph. iv. 3.—*Continued.*)

THE unity of the Spirit is to be kept, then, only by an earnest, active linking ourselves with what is of God among His people, with a steady refusal of all that is not of Him, however inseparably connected with it it may seem. With a whole heart for the people of God, just on that very account an intense opposition to all that hinders the full subjection to Christ's claim upon them—to holiness as measured by the Word, and therefore to fellowship in divine things among them. In maintaining this, what need of "all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love"! We are not permitted simply to withdraw ourselves, and escape from a conflict in

which the strife is for men against themselves. Love, while it abides, whether Godward or manward, will not suffer us to withdraw ourselves. "The whole Church of God *for* God,"—this and nothing less must be our banner, even though nothing seems so hopeless: for in truth we shall never see it until that day when the Lord's voice shall call us up out of the earth-mists that surround us, to unite us forever in the clear bright sky above.

What we want to realize is, that the unity of the Spirit means activity, not passiveness; that to keep it there must be an exercised conscience, as well as a heart aglow with spiritual energy,—love, the spring of power, of courage, and of endurance,—clear-sighted, as true love ever is. How blessed and peaceful a path after all, in fellowship with and under the control of the almighty Worker, upon whom all things wait, and who is working out unfailingly the blessing of His own! Faith with the light of this triumph in its heart finds in its way no invincible difficulty, and can go forward, confident and assured.

The method of compromise for the sake of union can never, it is plain, be taken or acquiesced in by one who would keep the unity of the Spirit. Liberty for the *conscience*, of course, there must be, which compromise forbids. We can neither bind our own nor that of others, for conscience owns but one Master. In our day, the want of unity is being felt increasingly, and efforts after union are the order of the day. "Union is strength" it is felt; but just here lies a serious danger for the soul. "In quietness and *confidence* shall be your strength" is the Lord's word to us. Organization and machinery are substituted for the work of individual faith and

conscience. The weakness is thus not felt, to which God is so absolute a necessity. Conscience finds other masters, or expediency dictates subjection to them. "Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" becomes, as of old, the fashion, even though it be more openly owned than of old that they *are* but commandments of men.

There is indeed *one* organization, and but one,—"one body;" there is one power for its growth and edification, and but one,—"one Spirit;" and there is "one Lord" alone. To add to these is but, in the spirit of it, if it be not ignorance, rebellion. The addition is a fatal subtraction. And that which was to help becomes an opposition to God, and an open door for the enemy. The little seed may thus become a tree, but the birds of the air will lodge in the branches of it.

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## On Isaiah LIII. 1-10; Psalm XLV. 2.

WHEN first I heard of Jesus,
It seemed some mystic tale,
A root of barren dryness,
No fragrance could exhale;
But as I came to know Him,
His precious name grew sweet,
And, like a perfumed rainbow,
Love arched the mercy-seat.

At first, I saw no beauty,—
No captivating spell;
Felt no divine emotion
In my cold bosom swell:
But when, through beams of glory,
God shone in Jesus' face,
All other objects tarnished
Before His matchless grace.

I read that He was wounded,
  And bruised upon the tree,
Yet felt no thrilling wonder,
  As though He died for me;
But since, oh, since I know it,
  And saw Him bear my load,
I cannot cease from praising
  My great redeeming God.

O Rose of rarest odor!
  O Lily white and pure!
O chiefest of ten thousand,
  Whose glory must endure!
The more I see Thy beauty,
  The more I know Thy grace,
The more I long unhindered
  To gaze upon Thy face.

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## COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS.

DEUTERONOMY viii. 7-9; xi. 10-12.

I WAS musing a little on the beautiful description given to Israel of the land (before they entered it) by Moses in Deut. viii. 7-9; xi. 10-12. He exhibits it to them in its *positive* and *comparative* excellencies—as it was in itself, and in contrast with Egypt. In itself, it was to be full of all manner of good things—*wheat*, *wine*, and *oil* (viii. 8); of which good things another scripture says, "Wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." (Ps. civ. 15.)

And not only was the soil, or land, itself to be thus the *storehouse* of these most needed and best things, but their hills and stones were to be *warehouses* of brass and iron, wanted in the common traffic and use of life in their place as well as the other (viii. 9).

But in contrast with Egypt, the character of the promised land is very blessedly described. Egypt was watered by the foot,—*i. e.*, the common industry of her people drawing off the water of the Nile upon their fields and gardens (xi. 10). Their river was every thing to them—and all they wanted was to be busy round its banks, and they could supply themselves out of it.

But Canaan was to be tilled by the Lord. He would water it from heaven Himself—His heart would care for it, and His eyes would rest on it from one end of the year to the other (xi. 11, 12). As another scripture says, "Thy land shall be married." (Isa. lxii.) A strong figure. The Lord was Himself the *husband*, or the *husbandman*, (kindred words, no doubt,) of the land of His people.

But, beside, Canaan was to be a land "of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills" (viii. 7). Egypt had a mighty river that was every thing to it, but the source of that river was unknown. Canaan, on the contrary, had no mighty river. A "brook," as it were, was its largest stream—even Jordan, compared with the Nile, was but as a streamlet of a river. But it had "fountains" springing up in all its hills and valleys. Its currents and channels may have been small, but it was full of the source and springs of those currents. This was just the opposite of Egypt. There, the current was mighty, but the source unknown; here, the channels were small and unimportant, but the sources were all known and enjoyed, together with their waters and streams.

And, as we know, beloved, that these two lands were mysteries,—the land of Egypt representing the world, or the place of nature, out of which the

redeemed are called, and Canaan, the scene of communion with God, into which the redeemed are brought,—so we may learn that these features of the two lands have meaning also. For the world can go on supplying itself from the great current of daily providential mercies and leave the source or parent of it altogether a secret, while the believer, or the Church, has to do with the great source or parent in all things and in every place; a fountain is to be known in every hill and every valley; and if the little tiny brooks be tasted, it is well known where they rise, and from what recess in glen or mountain they broke forth. Has not this a voice in it? The Nile itself commanded the notice of the world, while its birthplace was a mystery. No river in Canaan was worth the geographer's notice—at least, in the scale of rivers, but every hill and valley there had its fresh and sweet springs. And we may ask ourselves, In which land are we more at home? Do we like to walk in a place that is full of the presence of God—like Canaan? or would we choose a place like Egypt, where we may get all providential supplies, while keeping the great source of them at an unknown distance.

The character of heaven too is signified by this Canaan. It will be a *rest*, surely so; it will be deliverance from a dreary wasted wilderness, but it is to be a rest *full of the presence of God*, and of the incessant and abiding witnesses of that presence. *The fountain is to be every where.* (Rev. vii. 17.) May we the more welcome it, because of this! and the more we can dwell in the presence of the fountain now, may we be the better pleased. If we go up a hill or down to a valley, may the fountain meet our gladdened eye! *J. G. B.*

## CURRENT EVENTS.

# The Budding of the Fig-Tree.

THE fig-tree is used by our Lord as a figure of the Jewish nation. It was to enforce upon them the necessity of repentance that He uttered His well-known parable, in which a fig-tree planted in a vineyard, fruitless after three years' visitation, is made to shadow the peril of their condition.

Israel had been of old God's vine, planted in a very fruitful hill, fenced and cared for as He only could care. But they had repaid it all as only man repays the toil of the divine Husbandman. They had brought forth but wild grapes; and He had had to take away the hedge, and break down the wall, and lay the vineyard waste.

Out of the Babylonish captivity a remnant had been allowed to return to their land once more, and to be planted, not as the vine that once was, but as a fig-tree planted in the vineyard. This it was that God had now visited. Christ had come to His own, but His own had not received Him. He found but a cross; yet at the cross intercedes, like the dresser of the vineyard, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." So after the cross, Jerusalem gets the gospel, and, by the ministry of the Holy Ghost, is digged about and dunged. Nationally, there was rejection still, and the Roman ax cut down the tree.

But there is still hope of a tree, though it be cut down; and for Israel there is hope. The same prophetic Word that centuries before its occurrence predicted her long dispersion declares its end, their national revival, their partial return (still in unbelief) to their own land, the consequent judgment of God, inflicted by the hand of

surrounding nations, which befalls them there, the deliverance of a repentant remnant in their last extremity by the coming of the Lord from heaven, and their final complete restoration and blessing.

It is only with a small part of this that we shall be occupied at present. The large part of it waits for fulfillment at a time which (near as it may be,) will find the present dispensation at an end, and when Christians will be with their Lord. Let us trace briefly what has been fulfilled only, and look at what is being fulfilled before our eyes, the witness given by a nation in its unbelief to Him whom it has rejected and still rejects.

Seven hundred years before it came to pass, the prophet Micah foresaw this rejection. Looking on to a day even yet future, he beholds the last trouble of Jacob, out of which they will be delivered, and announces the reason for all this coming upon them: "Now gather thyself in troops, thou daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. . . . *Therefore will He give them up.*" (Ch. v. 1, 3.)

Here is a plain declaration of the reason why Jehovah delivers His people into their enemies' hand. But who is this "Judge of Israel"? The verse between the two that I have quoted gives a perfect explanation: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me who is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting!" Born at Bethlehem, yet the Eternal, spite of man's rejection, ordained of God as Israel's King,—could it be more perfectly declared that for their refusal of the *Lord Jesus Christ* they have been nationally given up?

But there is a limit to the period of this setting aside of the people: "Therefore shall He give them up until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel."

Israel herself is this travailing woman: when she hath brought forth for God, (as yet she has not,) then will the purpose of His chastening be attained, then will He withdraw His hand and speak comfortably to her; and then, mark, "the remnant of His"—the divine Ruler's—"brethren shall *return unto the children of Israel.*"

That is, Israel will have again, as of old, her distinct place with God. *Now*, if a Jew be converted, he becomes a member of Christ's body, and there is neither Jew nor Gentile. In the time of which we speak, the present dispensation will be over, the body of Christ complete: a converted Jew will be henceforth once more a Jew.

The cause of Israel's long abandonment by God is here fully revealed in those very Old-Testament Scriptures which they own to be of God. But we see also distinctly that on their repentance they will be received nationally once more. In the meantime, as the apostle says, "Blindness in part is happened unto Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; and so *all Israel* shall be saved, as it is written, 'There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' . . . As concerning the *gospel*, they are enemies,"—treated by God as enemies,—"for your sake; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake; for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. xi. 26–29.)

As long as the gospel—our Christian gospel—goes on, then, Israel (far from being brought in by it,) remain as enemies. The least true sign of national revival among them is a sign, therefore, of the gospel dispensation nearing its close. It is a sign that Christ is coming, that the blessing of the earth which comes with Israel's blessing (Rom. xi. 12, 15) is at hand; and therefore that Christians shall be soon gathered home to be with Christ. And so the Lord says; after having announced His appearing in the clouds of heaven, He adds, "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch hath now become tender,

and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." We do not see, indeed, nor can we as Christians expect to see, *all* the things of which He speaks, for His words clearly contemplate a Jewish remnant in Jerusalem after the Church is removed; but the fig-tree beginning to put forth leaves we do surely already see.

In a book which has been recently issued in a second edition,* Dr. Kellogg has so well summed up the evidence of this that there can be no need to do more than refer to its deeply interesting pages. He there first of all reminds us how literally have been accomplished the prophecies of the long season of Israel's humiliation. They were to be scattered from one end of the earth even to the other; to go into captivity; serving their enemies in hunger, thirst, and nakedness; and among these nations they were to find no ease, nor the sole of their foot to have rest, with a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind,—great plagues, and of long continuance. They were to be left few in number, an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations (Deut. xxviii. 41–67).

Their religious condition is pictured in a few striking words by Hosea: "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." Thus, while not idolators, they would be without the ordinances of their own religion. A strange thing indeed, but which must be the case while they are not in possession of the place where alone their offerings can be offered. It is significant that according to their own ritual *atonement for their sins* can be no longer made. How clear a testimony to them that the true atonement *has been* made!

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* "The Jews; or, Prediction and Fulfillment." By Sam'l H. Kellogg, D.D. May be had from Loizeaux Brothers, 63 Fourth Avenue, New York. Price, $1.25, post-paid.

As to the land itself, the predictions are no less exact. It was to become "utterly desolate." "The land shall not yield her increase, neither the trees of the land their fruits." (Lev. xxvi. 20.) "I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it." (*v.* 31.) "Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house shall become as the high places of the forest." (Mic. iii. 12.) "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." (Luke xxi. 24.)

Details as to the accomplishment of these things are given by Dr. Kellogg; but it scarcely needs to follow him here, for they are facts more or less familiar to us at the present day. He goes on to consider the promises of their restoration to their land "in the latter days," the reunion of the ten tribes with the two (Jer. xxx. 31; Ezek. xxxvii.), this restoration being final (Jer. xxxi. 40; Am. ix. 15) and *complete* (Ezek. xxxvi. 8, 10; Isa. xxvii. 12). He notices also their political condition to be an independent one (Jer. xxx. 8), and (the history of their long apostasies at an end,) the sanctuary of God to be in the midst of them for evermore (Ezek. xxxvii. 28). In all this, he is still upon ground familiar, through grace, to an increasing number of believers in the literal truthfulness of such prophetic Scripture in the present time.

Our practical interest begins with Dr. Kellogg's book when he asks the question, "Have any signs and beginnings yet appeared of a literal fulfillment of the ancient promises to Israel, such as, if the literal interpretation of these promises be correct, we have sooner or later to expect?" He adds,—

"The answer which history gives to this question is clear as the sunlight. That answer is without doubt affirmative. It is the indisputable fact that for now more than a hundred years the Jews have been steadily rising out of that depth of subjection and abasement in which they had lain for centuries; and that, concomitant with this have appeared among both Jews and

Gentiles many other exceptional phenomena predicted by the prophets, as to accompany or usher in Israel's final restoration. The facts which support this assertion are most impressive when we look at the past, and *full of very solemn omen* as to the swiftly approaching future."

The emancipation of the Jews from civil and legal disabilities began in the middle of the last century, the first act being the enfranchisement of the Jews in England in 1753, though parliament was compelled to repeal this the next year. About the same time, a Jew, Moses Mendelssohn, in Germany, by his influence upon his own people, and the effect of his life and writings upon the European nations, began the breaking down of hostile feelings on both sides. On the other hand, in France, as the result of manifold oppressions, both civil and religious, began the propagation of the reactionary doctrine of the absolute equality of men which brought about the revolution which convulsed at a later period, not only France, but Europe. In 1776, the United States of America embodied in their constitution this principle, that all men, without regard to creed or race, Gentile and Jew, should be held equal in right and privilege before the law.

"In Europe, the new and decisive movement began in 1783, when Joseph II. of Austria sounded the signal of the approaching revolution in an edict of toleration liberating the Jews throughout his dominions from the oppressions of centuries. By this decree, the odious 'body-tax' was abolished, and most of the vexatious restrictions upon them (such as, for example, forbade the Jew to wear a beard, or to leave his house on the festival days of the church, or to frequent places of pleasurable resort, etc.,) were removed. All the schools and universities of the Austrian empire were thrown open to the Jews. The spirit of revolution was now abroad. The air was full of voices presaging impending change. In 1784, Louis XVI. of France also abolished the body-tax, which reduced the Jew, as far as possible, to the level of a beast. In 1787, Frederic William of Prussia repealed many of the oppressive laws against the Jews which Frederic the Great had enacted . . . .

"So things were going on, when the French Revolution, with all its unprecedented terrors, burst upon bewildered Europe. The Lord had said by the prophets that when the hour of Israel's deliverance should come, He would make them that had

oppressed her 'drunk with their own blood,'* and that He would then take the cup of trembling out of the hand of Israel, and 'put it into the hand of them that had afflicted her.'† And so, as every one knows, it came to pass at that time. The great timepiece of the dispensation struck the predestined hour, the great revolution began, and Europe was straightway filled with fire and blood. Throne after throne went down in flame and judgment: and as the thrones of the Gentiles fell, every where fell with them the chains of ages from the limbs of Israel."

Space will not permit further detail. Dr. Kellogg next points out, from the thirty-seventh of Ezekiel, that a "tendency to *external organization* in the scattered nation was to be looked for, antecedent and preparatory to their actual reinstatement in their land and their conversion to God by the power of the Spirit of life." And he says, "In this again do we find fulfillment answering to prediction in the age in which we live." He adduces especially in proof of this "the formation, in 1860, of 'The Alliance Israélite Universelle,' an organization which has for its object the promotion and completion of the emancipation of the Jews in all lands, and their intellectual and moral elevation, as also the development of the Jewish population of the Holy Land."

He proceeds to speak of their predicted *wealth*, to be derived from the Gentiles that oppressed them,‡ and points out the startling way in which they are becoming the actual or virtual owners of the soil through a large part of Central and Eastern Europe.

"One of the liberal papers of Germany is quoted by the *New-York Tribune* as saying that 'the rapid rise of the Jewish nation to leadership is the great problem of the future for East Germany.' The writer justifies this opinion by the statement that 'all the lower forms of labor, in the workshops, the fields, the ditches, and the swamps, fall to the lot of the German element, while the constantly increasing Jewish element obtains enormous possessions in capital and land, and raises itself to power and influence in every department of public life.' "

Again, we are told,—

" 'It is a fact which can no longer be denied, that the population of the remote districts of Russia, Austria, Hungary, and Roumania

*Isa. xlix. 24-26. †Isa. li. 22, 23. ‡Isa. lx. 9; lxi. 6.

are only the nominal possessors of the soil, and, for the most part quite strictly, cultivate the land only for the Jews, to whom they have mortgaged their estates for their liquor debts.' 'In Russia, it is said already in 1869, seventy-three per cent. of the immovable property of certain provinces in the west, where the Jews are the most numerous, had passed from the hands of the Russians into those of the Jews.'"

"According to *Le Télégraphe*, Constantina, Algiers, and Oran belong almost completely to the Jews. The whole trade of Algiers is in their hands; and, in consequence of high and usurious rates of interest, a large proportion of the natives are fallen into the power of the Jews."

Again, in the matter of *education*, "Every where, they have entered eagerly into the intellectual contest; and already, as compared with Christians, are found in a *much larger* proportion of their total number, among the educated and educating classes." In Berlin, where the Jews are but five per cent. of the population, they are thirty per cent. of the students. In the University of Berlin, at a recent date, out of 3,609 students, 1,302 were Jews. In the High Schools of Vienna lately, of 2,448 students, 1,039 were registered as Jews. Prof. Treitschke, of the University of Berlin, is quoted as saying that, "while in the whole German empire the proportion of Jews is only one in seventy-five, yet in all the higher institutions of learning the proportion of Jews is one in ten. Prof. Von Schulte argues, from the educational statistics of the German empire, that "it needs no prophet to foretell that the offices of state, the legal and medical professions, trade and industry, will pass in ever-increasing proportion into the hands of the Jews;" and he adds, "The educational returns show the same state of things in Austria also."

After the statement of many like facts, Dr. K. gives the opinion of M. de Lavaleye, the eminent publicist of Belgium, that "the rapid rise of the Jewish element is a fact which may be observed all over Europe. If this upward movement continues, *the Israelites, a century hence, will be the masters of Europe.*"

The *increase* of the Jews is another prediction,* accord-

*Isa. lx. 22; Jer. xxxi. 27; Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

ing to the book before us, being now remarkably fulfilled. Basnage, a hundred and seventy-five years ago, estimated their number to be about 3,000,000. The lowest estimate at present more than doubles this. A high authority reckons them at not less than 12,000,000. There are said to be among them a larger proportion of births, and an exceptionally low average of mortality.

There is much more of exceeding interest in Dr. Kellogg's book, but it must suffice us now to mention one thing only—the preparation for their restoration to their land which is evidently being made. The crippling of Turkey, the power in possession of it, the increased and increasing interest in the "eastern question" on the part of the powers of Europe, the effect of recent Russian hostility in directing the eyes of many of the Jews in those parts to the land of their fathers, lying nearly vacant for them,—with these things almost all are familiar. We are all aware, also, that they are increasing in number in the land. Dr. Kellogg's statement, however, will add definiteness to our knowledge. I quote briefly, and fragmentarily only:—

"Until the year 1841, only three hundred Jews were permitted to live in Jerusalem. In that year, this restriction was removed, though the Jews were still confined by law to a narrow and filthy district of the city, next to the leper quarters. In 1867, however, by a firman of the Sultan, this restriction also was removed, and the Jews were allowed, in common with all foreigners, to purchase and own land in Palestine without becoming subjects of the Sultan." "Many Jews began at once to avail themselves of the right. The movement was further accelerated in 1874 by the adoption by Russia of the German system of military conscription, whereby the Jews—for the most part previously exempt from military service—found themselves all obliged to serve in the ranks for their worst oppressor. At once began a movement of the Jewish population from Russia to Palestine." "The outbreak of the Jewish persecutions in Europe, especially in Russia, has still further quickened this Palestinian movement." "Mr. De Haas, lately U. S. consul at Jerusalem, numbers those there as high as 20,000. This estimate, which takes no account of Jews found in other parts af Palestine, is yet nearly one-half the whole number that returned in the restoration from Babylon.

"Even before the recent Russian persecutions had given new

impulse to the movement of the Russian Jews toward the Holy Land, *The Jewish Chronicle* wrote, 'We are inundated with books on Palestine, and the air is thick with schemes for colonizing the Holy Land once more.'" "There is abundant evidence that the desire for the restoration of the Jewish nationality in Palestine, however it may have died out with most of the comfortable Jews in Western Europe and America, is keenly alive and active in that larger part of the nation which is found in Eastern Europe. A writer in *The Jewish Chronicle* says, '*Israel must once again take up the staff of the wanderer, and* abandon the graves of his ancestors. Where are the poor people to go? This question the Jews of Russia have themselves answered. The greater portion have determined to proceed to Palestine, the scene of our former glory and independence.' The Russian Jews number about 4,000,000, or about a third of the whole Jewish race. 'The Russian and Roumanian Jews,' again says *The Jewish Chronicle*, 'are bent on going to Palestine. Whatever we may think or say as to the practicability of the new exodus, it is evidently to take place. To all the objections that can be pointed out, the Jews of Russia and Roumania have one all-sufficient reply,—We cannot be worse off there than here! The movement is irresistible.'"

We close these extracts from Dr. Kellogg's book with sincere thanks to him for it. May our hearts be stirred as we realize in this budding of the fig-tree the sign of the summer at hand. While no signs are necessarily to precede the coming of our Lord, but we are to watch as *not* knowing the time, yet who can deny that there is all abroad in the air the voice of One who speaks in human history as the Governor of all its course; and that this voice says to us now, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" "Surely, I come quickly." May His whole Church be roused to give Him welcome, as it should!

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## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*Q.* 5.—"Do you think that the star which directed the Magi was a true star, such as we are to see this year?"

*Ans.*—I do not see how such a star could stand over the particular house in which the young child was. This

would surely point to some special phenomenon, and not to any of the ordinary heavenly bodies.

*Q.* 6.—The translation of Mark ix. 44, etc., is perfectly accurate. The expression "THEIR worm dieth not," speaking, no doubt, of the gnawing tooth of conscience, shows clearly that it is eternal torment, though from within, but to which the fire (of God's righteous wrath) answers from without,—eternal, therefore, as the other.

*Q.* 7.—"How do you explain Matt. xxi. 38 ("They said, 'This is the heir,'" etc.) in connection with Acts iii. 17,—'I wot that through ignorance ye did it.'"

*Ans.*—I apprehend that their *willful* ignorance partook of both characters—ignorance *and* knowledge: so that while grace could count it one, their responsibility was that of the other. Perfect, demonstrative proof had been given them, but the eyes are in the *heart*, (as Eph. i. 18 reads really,) and the world had seduced and hardened their hearts, and their minds were blinded. At bottom, it was the claim of God upon them which was the motive of their resistance, as the Lord tells them. But with this disposition of heart, they could easily gather many an argument against submission, and be really blind. If we shut our eyes, we do not, in fact, see; but then why did we shut our eyes?

*Q.* 8.—"Please explain Jno. xix. 11, last clause,—'Therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.'"

*Ans.*—Is it not that Judas, knowing as he did Christ's power to be beyond all that could be brought against Him, had availed himself of what He had declared as to the will of God concerning His death, to give Him up to it? Terrible was indeed the condition of heart which could pervert that blessed will for its own purpose. Compare the connection, Matt. xxvi. 12, 14.

*Q.* 9.—"How do you reconcile Gen. xi. 12 with Luke iii. 35, 36? In the first, Arphaxad is said to be the father of Salah, and in Luke, Cainan."

*Ans.*—Cainan is found in the present copies of the Septuagint in the genealogy of Shem in Gen. x. 24, xi. 12, and 1 Chron. i. 18; but not in 1 Chron. i. 24, and is nowhere named in the Hebrew copies, nor in any of the versions made from the Hebrew. Its insertion in the Septuagint is thought to be modern, and to harmonize with Luke. Beza's MS. (of the sixth century) does not contain it either, nor (it is thought) did the copy of Luke used by Irenæus. It is probable, therefore, that it is a very early interpolation.

*Q.* 10.—"What does Lev. xxvii. 28, 29 teach? a man devoted was not to be redeemed, but put to death?

*Ans.*—Yes; but this necessarily applied only to cases where the law pronounced the penalty, as in the judgment of idolatry. Otherwise, the life even of slaves was carefully guarded.

*Q.* 11.—"Would not Jephthah's offering up his daughter be an abomination, as in Deut. xii. 30, 31?"

*Ans.*—Certainly, if a real burnt-sacrifice is intended. But there is, after all, a question as to this on this very account. Keil's objections are worthy of consideration, and they are briefly these:—

(1) From the form of his vow, Jephthah must have contemplated the possibility (to say the least,) of a human offering. Yet not only did the law prohibit a sacrifice of this kind, but to have been offered, it must have been by a priest, upon the altar, or before the ark, and it is incredible that this should have been. Nor is a confessedly illegal offering to be thought of as designed to procure Jehovah's favor.

(2) Jephthah in his conduct toward the Ammonites shows no rashness nor want of knowledge such as this would have shown and this latter in all round about him.

(3) It is her virginity alone that she laments with her companions upon the mountains, and after the vow was fulfilled it is said, "she knew no man." Would not this point to a dedication to the Lord of another nature?

(4) The word "*burnt*-offering" is not the literal meaning of the Hebrew: it is literally "what ascends"—*all* of it; a whole-offering, and is at least susceptible of a spiritual meaning.

Such reasons as these cannot but make doubtful the performance of so atrocious a deed as the literal sacrifice of his daughter, by one of those judges of Israel raised up of Jehovah to deliver them, and on whom His Spirit came.

*Q.* 12.—"How do you account for the apparent discrepancy between 1 Kings xvi. 6, 8 and 2 Chron. xvi. 1, as to the time of Baasha's reign?"

*Ans.*—The text of Chronicles is here apparently incorrect, the letters "l" (30) and "i" (10), which are somewhat similar in the ancient Hebrew characters, having been interchanged by some copyist. It should be "the *sixteenth* year." In the same way the "forty-two" in chap. xxii. 2 is a mistake for "twenty-two" (*Keil*).

*Q.* 13.—"Does Isa. xxii. 22–24 refer to Christ? If so, what does ver. 25 mean,—the nail removed and cut down?"

*Ans.*—Eliakim and Shebna are surely (typically) Christ and Antichrist. But the last verse applies to Shebna's removal to give place to Eliakim. The nail that *is* fastened (at the time the prophet speaks) gives way to the nail that God *will* fasten.

*Q.* 14.—"In Num. xx. 9, Moses took the rod from before the Lord,—Aaron's almond-bearing rod, I take it,—and in the eleventh verse, with *his* rod smote the rock. Was this Aaron's rod, or Moses'? C. H. M. makes it Moses' rod. Is this correct? and can it be made plain from Scripture?"

*Ans.*—The most literal interpretation would seem to be

the best. The only question that can be raised is, Could the rod of the priesthood be called "*his* (Moses') rod"? Loosely it might, no doubt, as the rod he was then using, be called his, but strictly it was not so; and the spiritual meaning seems best to agree with the strict sense.

*Q.* 15.—"In 1 Sam. xvii. 12–14, we find David was the eighth son, but in 1 Chron. ii. 15, he is the seventh: why is this?"

*Ans.*—Keil supposes that one of Jesse's sons may have died without posterity, and so be omitted from the list in the latter place. I have nothing better to offer.

*Q.* 16.—"Why is no blood carried into the holiest in Lev. viii. 9, while it is in chap. xvi.?"

*Ans.*—No blood was *ever* carried in, except on the day of atonement, in which alone the entering of Christ into heaven *once* was represented, as far as could be under the law, by this entrance of the high-priest into the holiest "once a year." The sacrifices of this day were exalted over all the rest, and took place for "all their transgressions in all their sins," *as if no other sacrifice had any efficacy.* It is this day which the epistle to the Hebrews, therefore, dwells upon throughout; and it shows the one effectual offering which displaces all others. Yet, as being *only* the type, it was itself repeated year by year: its own witness that it spoke merely as a shadow of the coming substance.

*Q.* 17.—"What is meant in Lev. viii. 10, 11 by the anointing with oil of the altar and laver, as well as the tabernacle, before the sacrifices were offered? If the anointing of the tabernacle without blood indicates the Spirit's witness to Christ's personal glory throughout the created universe, does the anointing of the altar, etc., as well link it with redemption, and also indicate that by the eternal Spirit He offered Himself?"

*Ans.*—The altar and laver are of course the way (by

blood and water) into the presence of God; the tabernacle, His dwelling-place with men. All is consecrated and prepared by the Spirit of God according to perfect holiness, His necessary character. Then the same Spirit marks out and sets apart the One who is to make all this a reality for us; necessarily, therefore, Himself anointed without blood. The order of the anointing seems to me rather to connect these things (tabernacle, altar, and laver,) with Christ as Man, coming forward in due time and place to give effect to what was ordained of God for blessing.

*Q.* 18.—"How would you explain the scriptures which speak of God repenting, as in Gen. vi. 6, 7, and other places?"

*Ans.*—In Jer. xviii. 7–10, God openly proclaims the principle: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Nineveh spared, as in the book of Jonah, is a case in point. God acts as a man would who did repent; while in fact "God is not a man, to lie, nor the son of man, to repent." (Num. xxiii. 19.) Yet the whole truth is not in this change of action. God is not indifferent and without feeling, although we must take care not to impute imperfection to Him; but indifference would be the saddest of imperfection. The language used by Scripture is a necessary accommodation to our understanding, but, as a writer well says, "If it is an accommodation, let us be accommodated by it; since here all human minds are very much on a par. Our right feeling is much more concerned in this than our right understanding. We cannot rise to God, and we should reverently adore the effort, if we may so call it, which He makes to come down to us, to think our thinking, and thus to converse with us in our own language."

# PRESENT THINGS,

## AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

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## THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)

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### *Philadelphia: the Revival of the Word of Christ, and the Brotherhood of Christians.*

(Rev. iii. 7–13.)

WE come now to a phase of the Church's history of the deepest interest and of the greatest possible importance to us. How great it must be to realize a condition which the Lord can commend and only commend! For in this address to Philadelphia there is no word of reproof throughout. Warning there is, and of this we shall have to take special note; but reproof there is none! How blessed a condition to be in, when the "Holy" and the "True" can smile upon us thus with not a cloud to obscure His love! It should be, of course, the condition of Christians always; and sweet it is to remember that thus, all through the ages of its course, when as a phase of its history Philadelphia yet was not, the Church had its *Philadelphians* nevertheless. Manifestly it had when John was instructed to write this epistle; and if the general character of things around, even in an apostle's days, did not answer to this, only the greater would be the Lord's approbation of the few who were thus faithful. Overcomers they are whom He is commending; and the adverse condition of things around can never, let us mark it well, be really

*adverse to the overcoming.* They furnish, rather, some of the conditions of it. If we have but the *spirit* of the overcomer, all the evil, whether in the world or in the Church itself, will only make us this the more.

Before we take up the details of the address before us, let us seek to get hold of the character of the church in Philadelphia. And for this we must remember in the first place what we have seen to be represented by that in Sardis. Sardis undoubtedly stands for the national churches of the Reformation, in which masses of peoples, Christianized externally, not truly, possessed a "name to live," and yet were "dead." Among these, indeed, though few comparatively, were those not only living, but faithful,—men who walked in spirit apart, and did not defile their garments;—men of whom their Lord says, "They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." Yet their presence did not alter the general character of that in which they were—in it, but not of it.

Sardis, then, is the world, Christianized as far as possible to be still the world, with Christians scattered through it. Philadelphia stands with its principle of "brotherly love," in essential contrast with it as that in which the brotherhood of saints is found and recognized. *It represents the movement of the Spirit, therefore, to recover the true Church,* lost amid the confusion of Sardis, uniting the members of Christ together in one, outside the mere profession. This, if once fairly considered, will be evident. It is not meant, however, by this that this movement has any proportionate success as might seem thus assured. It is one of our strange and sorrowful yet familiar experiences,

that Christians can grieve, limit, quench, the Spirit in its action, and all the history of the Church that we have been examining is the reiterated assurance of this. Moreover, in the address to Philadelphia itself we have a very impressive warning to the same effect.

It has been already said, and is plain enough in it, that the Lord's message in this case contains no rebuke, but the sweetest possible sanction and encouragement. Not that there is Pentecostal energy or blessing indeed. "Thou hast a *little* strength" negatives such a thought, if we were disposed to entertain it. Still this is commendation, and not blame, and blame there is none. On this very account there seems a difficulty, which presses for solution. For the final blessing is assured, in this as every other of these epistles, to the *overcomer*: "Him that *overcometh* will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out." And here the reference is plainly to such pillars as Jachin ("He shall establish") and Boaz ("In which is strength") in the temple of old, and on the other hand to the "little strength" before ascribed to Philadelphia. He who has little strength becomes in the end a pillar of strength, and the true Philadelphian (it is inferred here,) is in fact the overcomer. Philadelphia is but the company of such.

But then it returns upon us with double force, what can be this *overcoming?* For in every case beside, but one, throughout these churches, it is plain that the overcoming is of things *inside* the church: in Ephesus, the failure of first love; in Pergamos, the settling in the world; in Thyatira, the doctrines and deeds of Jezebel; in Sardis, defilement with the dead; in Laodicea, the lukewarm

condition. In Smyrna, indeed, though there is a Judaizing party there, yet the direct promise seems to refer more to the threatening of death from without, although it cannot be denied that the Judaized Christianity found easier escape from this, and Satan's open violence might therefore well drive many (it can hardly be doubted, *did*,) into his secret snare.

But in Philadelphia, rich with the Lord's approval, yet with no such front of persecution to endure, it does require answer,—Where, then, the overcoming? By which, moreover, every true Philadelphian seems as much to be characterized as every Smyrnean was. Not every Ephesian was this, still less every one at Pergamos, or Thyatira, or Sardis, or Laodicea. The Philadelphian was such, as he *overcame*. But what peril then, or difficulty, or opposition? The answer is only one; the question admits no other.

There is nothing but commendation in the address,—that is, no *blame*. But there is warning, and in this warning is pointed out the danger that threatens. It is the *only* danger pointed out, and therefore clearly makes known to us what is to be overcome. The warning word is, "*Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*" Here, then, must be the overcoming. The danger is, of letting slip the Philadelphian character. And it is a real and pressing danger,—so pressing, that upon the mastery of it all blessing is suspended. It is the point of peril.

Philadelphia represents the Spirit of God working in living energy to deliver from that which is engulfing the people of God in a flood of worldliness. Alliance with the world is the forfeiture of

Christian position practically, and of enjoyed privilege. So the Word of God definitely declares. The unequal yoke,—the yoke with unbelievers,—must be refused, or the unclean thing forbids the Lord Almighty to be to His people the Father that He is (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18). Separation from the world is not any the more schism because this has been falsely called the Church; nor will "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," its moral characteristics, be purged out by the adoption of the Christian name. Thus the state religions are directly accountable for the divisions which have always marked them from the beginning of their history. Every revival tends to break them up. Where there is none, there we find continual gravitation to a lower level, which no orthodoxy of the creed can really avert.

The work of the Spirit, then, will necessarily bring about dissent from the national church. And it will be found that, at their beginnings at least, such movements have been very largely marked by a new fervency of spirit, a zeal and earnestness which have made their first generations men of power. The movement, purified by the opposition it has necessarily to endure, discovers and brings together the most spiritual. Consciences are exercised, the Word is felt and opened, Christ's presence becomes more necessary and more real, the fellowship of saints is valued. In a word, the character of the movement manifests itself as Philadelphian.

It is the voice and person of Christ which are here controlling, and he who is thus controlled is upon a path of unlimited progress and unspeakable blessing. The clue-line is in his hand which will

lead him out of all entanglements, from truth to truth, from strength to strength. There is but one condition here, and that is, manifestly, that he "*holds fast*" *the clue-line*. If he drops this, progress is at an end, his path becomes devious. Alas! is it a rare thing for those who have begun in the Spirit to be made perfect by the flesh?

Asshur went out from Babylon,—so far, well; but only to found Nineveh, Babylon's rival and counterpart. And this is the history of much that was spiritual in its beginning, and since has grown great. At first there was simplicity and faith, and Christ the Leader of true pilgrims. Now they are but conservators of a tradition of the past, and their glory is a golden age gone from them. They are often in this case earnest in holding fast, but not to a living Leader: they have dropped the clue of progress, and lost their crown to others. No wonder, then, at the emphasis laid upon this warning in the epistle.

This, then, is, in brief, what Philadelphia is. The application in particular may and will be differently made according to what we are and where we are ourselves; and we have special need of care to test ourselves truly by it. For to test *ourselves* is surely the use that we are called to make of so solemn and yet so blessed a word as this is. We are bound to ask, Are we such as keep Christ's word and do not deny His name, and who keep also the word of His patience? Blessed, thrice blessed for us if we are!

Let us look, then, with something like suited care, into the details of the Saviour's message,

(*To be continued.*)

# THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

## INTRODUCTION.

IN Peter's first epistle the heavenly inheritance in its holy and imperishable character is announced to Jewish Christians, to whom, as the apostle of the circumcision, he was appointed to minister, and whose earthly national hope had faded before their eyes, however sure to be revived in the last days. Those whom he addresses are spoken of as "sojourners of the dispersion" in five provinces of Asia Minor,—that is, they were away from their proper home and centre—Jerusalem and the land of their fathers.

This is their humiliation; but the resurrection of Christ, whom their nation had crucified, gave these believers, by that cross and resurrection, a new and living hope that could never fade. The character of the ministry in both these epistles is of a kind foreshadowed in the words of the Chief Shepherd to Peter, "Lovest thou Me?"—"Feed My lambs."—"Tend," "feed my sheep;" but this first epistle has its own rich and peculiar character in leading the soul by the still waters, and in green pastures. There is an absence of the defense of doctrine against corrupters, and an absence even of the development of doctrine compared with the consolations and encouragements, with of course needed exhortations as to holiness and the fear of God.

In John's first epistle, and in the epistle of James, there is an entering almost at once upon warnings and tests of false profession and seducing doctrine; and as to almost all Paul's epistles, their breadth

and compass in meeting and arming the saints against an incoming tide of evil is well known.

Excepting this first epistle of Peter, and Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, may we not say there is no other epistle in which evil within the Church is not more or less dealt with. But in those, though they are warned, as those ready or liable to fail, evil is not treated as having made headway within. The storm is without: they are sheltered within—a place of soul-rest. The enemy is shut out, and is to be withstood, in his wiles in the one case, and as a roaring lion in the other.

In the Ephesians, we are led on by a victorious Leader to enjoy the fruits of the heavenly land; and in the epistles of Peter, we are watched over of the Shepherd, and incited to diligent progress through the wilderness. And this comparison suggests a parallel comparison between the addresses to Smyrna and Philadelphia. In these alone of the seven churches is there a company addressed to whom no failure is imputed; and in the latter, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown," reminds us of the Ephesians "Be strong in the Lord;" and in the former, "Be thou faithful unto death" suggests or calls to mind the "fiery trial" in Peter;—again the wiles on the one hand and the roaring lion on the other.

It is worthy of note that it is in the gospel of John, in which the Lord is presented as the Good Shepherd, that we find recorded the commission to Peter to feed the sheep. In the other gospels, we have the commission to preach the gospel; but in John, the absence of such a commission, and this special one to Peter introduced, by which he was specially appointed to feed and care for the flock.

Let it be noted too that it is in that gospel that speaks of the Lord as Shepherd that we are told throughout of His divine glory and power. He is the Good Shepherd, and lays down His life; but He lays it down of Himself—no man takes it from Him—and He takes it again, having given up His spirit when all was accomplished and He had said, "It is finished." He is the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. It is very precious to us that the divine glory and power should especially shine out in that gospel that tells us,—nay, in which He Himself tells that He is the Good Shepherd. "All things were made by Him" is recorded in that gospel. He that dwells in the bosom of the Father —such an one is our Shepherd. We may well say, "I shall not want!" and rest fully in Him.

We have, then, in these epistles, the Chief Shepherd speaking to us through a chosen and prepared under-shepherd—one who was instructed, disciplined, chastened, matured by years of suffering, and now ripe for martyrdom. Such an one subject to God, the Spirit of God uses in his old age, as it were, leaning upon the top of his staff to pronounce a blessing on his brethren—to tell us of the exceeding great and precious promises, and of the gospel preached to us with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.

Peter, as well as Paul and John, like Caleb, maintains vigor in old age, bears fruit and flourishes.

For these examples, these witnesses to the power of God through faith, let us give thanks and glory to God, and take courage, and follow in their steps. It is not necessary to decline in the Christian course. We know it is not, but we fail, and see it all around; but let us, therefore, dwell upon these precious

examples, that we may show diligence, and have renewed strength as the journey lengthens.

The new position *in Christ* prominent in Paul's writings is only referred to by Peter in the benediction at the end of the first epistle. It does not appear as a doctrine in Peter, nor resurrection with Christ and being in Him in heavenly places; nor do we get here the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer and in the Church; nor the doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ, of which Paul was the minister specially (Col. i. 25); nor the doctrine of eternal life.

Even the term "forgiveness of sins" does not appear in Peter's epistles, while of course the fact is always present in his doctrine.

These differences and omissions are interesting to note—deeply interesting to the devout mind—as showing the overruling hand of the Spirit in leading the writer to record only that which was consistent with his own voice of ministry and subject.

However well versed he was in kindred truths, they are not introduced by him; they are found elsewhere. This shows the hand of God, and is precious to contemplate. The writer communicates only what God gave him to communicate. Therefore each part agrees with the whole in divine precision, and fits into its place like the stones in the temple.

Peter ministers the salvation spoken of by the prophets of old (chap. i. 10), while Paul, beside this, ministers also about the Church—a mystery not made known before to the sons of men—a new revelation (Eph. iii. 4–10). Naturally, in Peter's as well as in Paul's epistles we have the heavenly inheritance and the hope of eternal glory. It is not

higher truth in Paul and lower truth in Peter, but divinely perfect parts of a perfect salvation—a perfect whole; it is deep and high and broad. "To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" (Eph. iii. 19) is a deep experience; so also in Peter, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

According to the character of the epistle, there are numerous references to or quotations from the Old Testament (verses 2, 10, 11, 12, 16 of chap. i., and so on throughout), and the last verse of chap. ii. peculiarly indicates what class of people are addressed. "For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." Even when astray, they are spoken of as sheep,—that is, nominally the people of God; not Gentiles, but Jews. Gentiles were not as sheep going astray. We do not find such a mode of address in Paul; they were simply afar off, and without God, and without hope; but as to the Jews (as of all Israel), relationship is acknowledged even when they are afar from God, as in Luke xv. both the Pharisees and the publicans and sinners are compared to sons in a family—the elder and the younger,—while both classes depicted refer to the unconverted state.

To the flock, Peter speaks of the Shepherd; to the elders, of the Chief Shepherd, who would reward the under-shepherds. Paul, in addressing the uncircumcision, no where speaks of the Shepherd, only in the *Hebrews* again appropriately the Shepherd is mentioned in closing the epistle.

As we have the Shepherd in Peter, so also the roaring lion,—the one caring for the sheep, the

other seeking to devour. In the New Testament, we are warned to contend against Satan, not in the Old. This again is an interesting feature, and shows, what appears more and more, the distinctness of character of the New Testament from the Old. In the New Testament, God's people are, as it were, full-grown men—soldiers in conflict in the field—the world subject to Satan as its god—Christians called out from it, witnesses for their absent and rejected Leader. The world was not stamped with its character in the Old Testament as it is now. One nation was chosen, and put on trial by the law, as in a sense representing all men—not yet condemned, but under trial,—the verdict not yet rendered. But now it is otherwise. The trial is ended, the law broken, and the Son of God put to death on the cross. Satan, who was behind the scenes, is brought to the front; the world is marked for judgment. It has chosen its leader; and the world, the flesh, and the devil are ranged against the follower of Christ.

Surely, in the Old Testament as now, Satan was against the saint, and the saint armed against him by the Word; but now "all is out," so to speak,—all publicly declared, sides taken, and an increased power, no doubt, of Satan in the world; and an increased energy called for in the saint, and supplied by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Naturally, therefore, in such a world, the followers of Christ become strangers (sojourners) and pilgrims, as was the Lord Himself. Before the eyes of the Jewish saints, their nation's hope for the time had faded and gone, the nation at large persecutors of the faithful, their city about to be destroyed, the wrath was come upon them to the utmost; but

these were begotten again,—such is the force of the term; collectively *begotten again* to a new hope, a living hope, by Christ's resurrection, which would never fade. The hope of an inheritance in heaven replaced the earthly national hope, which however sure to be revived in the last days, yet for the time, and on the ground of human responsibility, had utterly perished. It was what Stephen specially realized when he saw the people stoning him to death, and the heaven opened above him.

One feature of Stephen's address may be appropriately mentioned in this connection. In his brief outline of the history of the nation, he says, "*our* fathers," associating himself with the nation as a matter of fact; but when bringing home the charge against them at the close, he significantly changes the pronoun, and says, "As *your* fathers did, so do ye," —that is, he takes his place outside the nation, who were the religious people of the earth, the chosen people of God. He goes forth to Jesus, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. Immediately he beholds the opened heavens—the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

This we find it hard to do—to give up what we have been brought up in, and which has become as it were a part of ourselves. So Samuel found it hard to give up king Saul, and yet the one after God's heart is soon persecuted and hated by Saul, the self-righteous misuser of power, while the true king is an outcast in rejection. So Paul found it hard to give up Jerusalem, and yet Jerusalem had crucified the Lord, and scattered His lowly followers, and had the brand of Cain. So Abraham found it hard to give up Ishmael and Hagar, and yet Ishmael was a mocker of the son of promise,

and Hagar was of Egypt, the country that was to set itself up against God, to keep the promised seed from liberty and groaning in bondage.

Abraham, Samuel, Paul, cling to that which proves to be enmity against God,—and with devout religious intent, and themselves true children of God. Alas for the best of men in themselves! How utterly should we distrust ourselves and our feelings and attachments, religious and otherwise, and diligently seek grace that we may not be deceived, but be ready to forsake all and follow Christ—to go forth to Him again and again if called to—from that which tends to cluster round us and more or less to shut out Christ (Rev. iii. 20) while bearing His name!

Such the suggestions of the term "begotten again" to the living hope of the inheritance in heaven.

In comparing the first epistle with the second, we find in the first the Father's government of His children, judging without respect of persons (i. 17); judgment in the house of God (iv. 17); and in the second, God's judgment of the world—of the ungodly. Therefore in the first epistle the flood is mentioned as a type of salvation ("saved by water"), and in the second as a type of judgment ("the world . . overflowed with water, perished"), and used as a premonition of "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

So also in the second,—excepting the reference to the testimony of Christ on the mount, the name of the Father is not mentioned: it is "God" and "the Lord."

*(To be continued.)* *E. S. L.*

# The Practical Uses of a Weekly Laying By.

*"Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."* (1 Cor. xvi. 2)

THE text before us refers no doubt to a certain collection for the poor at Jerusalem, and may seem, and has seemed, to many, on this account, to speak simply of what was suited to a particular occasion, and not at all of an habitual custom to be observed. There is just so much truth in this as to make the deception easy; and yet it is but a deception. Why observe the first day of the week? Why break the bread then rather than at any other time? Why break it so often as once a week? There is no law about any of these things: nothing more than what might seem a casual statement of what the disciples at such a place did at such a time. Here, in fact, people have found, and find, occasion to object, and will find. The Christian has no positive law about such things as these. The thing God values is not enforced observance of rites and days, but a heart that prizes opportunities of service and the privileges of His love. For such, there are *guidance* and *encouragement:* he who requires more is *not in the spirit to serve or to enjoy.*

For surely these words, as all else in Scripture, are "written for our learning." They are not mere records of the past, but the voice to us of the Living One, present with us as with those in the apostles' days. We are by grace Christians as they were. In all the principles which govern our path eighteen hundred years can make no difference.

And the word before us is no mere arbitrary or

reasonless injunction. It contains principles of very great importance, which bear upon our spiritual life, which we cannot without loss neglect, and that a loss which it would be hard to estimate. He who has forbidden idle words, Himself speaks none. It is my purpose now to show, as He enables me, how great significance there is in these.

For those to whom this epistle came, it is plain that there was a direct apostolic injunction, leaving much indeed to the conscience of the individual, but bringing him face to face with his responsibility before God; making him view it also in the light of the grace shown him. "Upon the first day of the week"—the day in which Christ rose again from the dead for our justification,—he was to consider how God had prospered him, and estimate what would be a proportionate return to Him, such as would manifest his sense of the divine goodness shown him. How healthful a thing to be brought to consider this, and to be called in a practical way to show *at what* we value the grace that has visited us!

Is it too much to express a fear that many and many a child of God never *does* face seriously his accountability in this way? and that few there are indeed who habituate themselves to such a reviewing again and again of benefits received, and of response invited to? In a loose way it may be easy to say, "We give what we can afford;" but who without such a reckoning with himself, seriously carried out, can undertake to say *what* he can afford? And how profitable this summoning before one, from time to time, of receipts and expenditure, in view of our stewardship! What sort of a steward is he who keeps no particular account?

The question must be thus raised, not merely, How much have I in hand out of which to lay by for Him to whom all belongs; but rather, How does He who looks upon all my life here as elsewhere view it all? Would I have Him the Auditor of all these accounts,—the income and the outgoing? What a time for these questions, the day of rest and quiet in His presence, the day of remembrance of my Lord's immeasurable outlay, giving Himself a ransom for my soul!

Seriously this is to be weighed and decided. Am I giving [not what others give, not what many would think right, or perhaps a great deal; but] to please Him really,—what with an honest, upright, and thankful heart I can put into His hand, and count upon Him to receive at mine?—a hand anointed with the blood of sacrifice?

Seriously,—not hastily; not under sudden impulse: "that there be no gatherings when I come." Yet how much the apostle's presence might quicken the spirit of giving among them! How much in the present day is known to depend upon the presence and exhortation of some one of recognized power and influence, and the oratorical appeal to human sensibilities? *All this the apostle disclaims.* For it he substitutes the power of the *divine* presence, and the deliberate purpose of heart derived from realization of God's wondrous grace. The common mode to-day shows, alas! wise calculation, if the amount of a collection from a promiscuous audience be the thing under consideration. We may reckon upon the stirring of man's emotional nature under outside influence brought to bear upon him. He to whom the earth belongs, and the fullness of it, values but the fruit

of His own Spirit in the heart of him who is a worshiper in truth.

This laying by week by week is not, then, the response merely to some appeal pressingly urged, and affecting me emotionally; but the effect of recognized principle, and a heart weighing things in the presence of God. And this alone is the true guard against being betrayed by mere emotion, while it will leave us only the more open to be affected by every holy and right one.

The casual appeal, moreover, may easily find one really unprovided, if we have not, as a matter of principle, taken care to make provision.

Little by little, with constant and steady increase, we may easily come to possess what, except in this way, would be entirely beyond us. And this without exhaustion or distress. Men pay easily in regular, small installments what in one sum, apart from this, they would never have competency for. And the apostle has in mind, as he tells the Corinthians elsewhere, that they shall not be burdened. On the other hand, on this very account, how many small sums, thought little of because small, slip away from us in mere self-indulgences, which in the aggregate would be an amount to startle us, or, put into the treasury, might be a matter of how much thankfulness to God!

At the best, he who gives casually gives fitfully, and in general scantily enough, even though often he may be lavish. On the other hand, the store laid by from week to week soon makes itself felt as a call to wise economy. The Lord's fund is to be managed and dispensed in the sense of stewardship, which it will surely foster in the soul. It will not be then the question merely how to relieve

some need which is at hand, and which looks perhaps on this account larger or more imperative than it really is, but how to put out what is intrusted to us in the best possible way. The wisdom that is from God will in this way come to be habitually sought more also, and surely found.

A store, such as we are speaking of, instead of being reserved for casual demands upon it, comes itself to demand channels for its outflow. Instead of merely being sought by the occasion, we should become seekers of it. And having tasted the joy of this, the heart becomes enlarged: "he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully"—or, as the word is, "in blessing." Enlargement of heart will surely find enlarged opportunities. Active sympathies will become practical activities. And to him that is with God, God's power will manifest itself. This will be found a path on which if one has truly entered, there will be no turning back; one of those ways in which men go from strength to strength. But how few have entered it!

The tithes in Israel were not all that God demanded from His people of old. The rest of the sabbatic years was another large demand upon a faith in which He would have them practiced. Beside all this, there were various offerings upon special occasions, while voluntary offerings were encouraged beyond these. How poor, in comparison with all this, is in general the scale of giving among Christians! a mere fraction out of superfluity often, and in no recognized proportion at all! An uncertain, intermittent, dribbling out from a half-choked spring. The very freeness of the giving—"every man as he is disposed in his heart"—taken as a permission for *withholding*

even! with no account made of what this speaks of the heart that can thus abuse God's precious grace; no consideration given to the balancing truth so solemnly urged by the apostle, "But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly,"—no care about the harvest in this field!

Brethren, has God need of us and our money? "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee," He says. Yet this is of divine grace to the heart that God is attracting to Himself,—as to the woman of Samaria from the lips of love incarnate, "Give Me to drink!" What answer shall the bride give to the voice of her Beloved when He seeks the pleasant fruits of His garden? Have we given Him His answer—fitting answer? Or when shall we give it Him?

My persuasion is, that if we would be really right with God, we must return to the apostolic rule in this matter. And also that in proportion as we do return *heartily* to it, we shall find how God has cared for *us* also, in seeking this from us. The voice of another dispensation still speaks to us: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house; and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

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"It is well to be poor, when the knowledge of our poverty serves but to unfold to us the exhaustless riches of divine grace. That grace can never suffer any one to go empty away. It can never tell any one that he is too poor. It can meet the very deepest human need; and not only so, but it is glorified in meeting it."

## CURRENT EVENTS.

# The Resurrection of the Nations.

THE prophecy of a millennium we find only in the final book of the New Testament, the book of Revelation; but for the detail of the blessing with which the earth is to be filled at that time, we must go to the prophets of the Old Testament. And here we find, as the apostle of the Gentiles assures us, Israel's promises (Rom. ix. 3), as in the New Testament we find the Christian ones. As *we* are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places" (Eph. i. 3), so Israel has as to the earth by the sure word of God, whose gifts and calling are without repentance, the adoption as first-born among its families (Ex. iv. 22). Hence, wherever the picture of earthly blessedness is presented by the prophets, Israel is in the forefront of it. The destination of the Church is to heaven, but Israel is to "blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit." (Isa. xxvii. 6.) And "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (chap. ii. 3).

The blessing of the world is thus bound up with the blessing of Israel; and while Israel is an outcast from her land, and under the rod of the divine displeasure, the world also waits, and the prophetic history is suspended. The whole present time is a gap in Old-Testament prophecy, in which God is doing no doubt a more wonderful work, and in which the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" bring out "things kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xiii. 11, 35.) When these shall be finished, and the fullness of the Gentiles now gathering

for heaven be come in, then the broken-off thread of this history will be resumed, and followed to its completion.

In the present time, Israel is thus as it were dead and buried, and when she appears again, her appearance is spoken of as a resurrection from the the dead. "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord." (Ezek. xxxvii. 12–14.)

But not only does Israel come up again as by a resurrection; the same thing is true of the nations of the earth with which she was in connection when her obliteration from the map of the world took place; they too have had their decay and dissolution, and been succeeded by others in the field in which they flourished; and they too are to revive and take their place again as of old, and with Israel receive their judgment and their blessing from God. This it is important to understand, as ignorance of it is leading many into confusion, in applying to the physically dead these figures of national resurrection. Thus God says to Israel by Isaiah: "Thy dead shall live, My corpses* shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (chap. xxvi. 19).

So also Hosea: "After two days He will revive us: on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight" (chap. vi. 2).

So Ezekiel, in the passage just now quoted; and so Daniel, who is perhaps of all most commonly misunderstood: "And many of those that sleep in the dust of the

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*"*Nebelah:* a word without a plural, but frequently used in a plural sense, as in chap. v. 25, and so connected with" the plural verb.—(Delitzsch.)

earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

It is not my purpose now, nor needful to it, to prove the application of these scriptures or fix their meaning. It is not of Israel that I purpose now to speak, but of the nations in historic association with Israel when as yet she held her place among them. And it is not a question of the symbols under which in Scripture their revival is spoken of, but of the fact of the revival itself as Scripture declares it. A comparison here of Daniel and Revelation will very quickly show that it is a fact, parallel to and synchronous with that of that revival of Israel in the latter days, of which, it cannot be denied by any simple reader of it, that scripture speaks.

The theme of Daniel is evidently the "times of the Gentiles,"—that is, of their domination over Israel. It begins with the Babylonish captivity, and the setting up of the first of the four Gentile empires, and predicts their course until the setting up of the kingdom of the Son of Man, and the subjection of all to Him under whom Israel will yet find deliverance and blessing. The second and the seventh chapters, in the visions of Nebuchadnezzar and the prophet himself, span this whole period. The second chapter shows us the image in its continuance until the stone cut without hands smites and destroys it, and then fills the earth. The seventh yet more plainly shows the fourth beast existing till the Son of Man comes in the clouds of heaven, and supreme and everlasting dominion is given to Him.

Now a great difficulty here seems to present itself as to the application of this. The fourth or Roman empire, according to this, lasts until the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Yet if we are to take this in its simple apparent meaning, it might well be asked how this can be shown to be consistent with the fact. Christ is not so come, and yet the Roman empire is in fact passed away; and that not smitten in its height with a sudden

blow, but after a long process of corruption and decay. How shall we account for this, then? For the Word of God is perfect, and "Scripture cannot broken:" heaven and earth shall pass away, but His glorious Word shall never pass away.

The gap in Old-Testament prophecy, of which we have spoken, is not, of course, revealed by the Old Testament itself. We must look to the New Testament for it. And here it is the book of Revelation comes in to supplement the book of Daniel. No one doubts, or can doubt, that the first beast of Rev. xiii., found again in xvii., is in fact the fourth of Dan. vii. Yet there is this that at first sight would seem inconsistent with it, that in Revelation the prophet, writing in the times of the Roman empire, sees it yet as rising once more from the sea. This, it may be said perhaps, is but a glance back at its original beginning: the seventeenth chapter, however, negatives this, while it explains the apparent anomaly; for here, the beast as seen by the prophet is identified with its own *eighth head*, while he yet recognizes what seems to be again a contradiction to this, that he is *under the sixth head*. "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. They are also seven kings: five are fallen, and *one is*"—the sixth,—"and another is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even *he is the eighth*, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

Thus the empire that he sees is a *future form of one then existing;* and not only so, but it is also one which "was, and *is not*," but which appears of course again, as it is stated in the eighth verse: "And the beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and *shall come*." (*R. V.*)

The matter is fully cleared, then. The Gentile empire which had enslaved and scattered Israel itself breaks up and falls into ruin, but, with Israel, also revives in the latter day. Then indeed in a new form, and as the instrument of the enemy, so that it revives but to go into perdition. This I do not follow out now. It is enough to have shown that the time of the end is marked by the restoration of the Roman empire.

In the eighth chapter of Daniel, we have a similar prophecy as to the third of the Gentile beasts, continuing its history also to the coming of Christ. *Imperial* rule indeed passes from it, but the kingdom of Alexander has its representative among the notable powers of the latter days. The prophecy has been applied, indeed, to Antiochus Epiphanes, but can only apply to him as a type of a greater, for he who interprets the prophet's vision declares distinctly it is for the "time of the end;" and this is emphasized by repetition:—"Understand, O son of man, for at the time of the end shall be the vision." And again, "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation, for it *belongeth to the appointed time of the end*" (*v.* 19, *R.V.*) He too, like the last head of the Roman empire, stands up against the Prince of princes; and like him also is "broken without hand."

This, there need be no question, is the last "king of the north" in the eleventh chapter, a Grecian king throughout, whose course and end are just like those of the king of the eighth chapter. Zechariah also refers to Greece as in conflict with Israel, when God at last interferes for His people" (chap. ix. 13).

But here also the gap in prophecy prepares us for a lapse and revival, similar to what we have seen with regard to Rome; and history already affirms both the one and the other.

The revival of the Roman empire we do not yet see: a remarkable note of preparation has been sounded, however. Rome is once more the capital of a united Italy:

and this national resurrection has been witnessed by the present generation; so sudden and unexpected also was it as to manifest the hand of God in a remarkable way. In but ten years from the commencement of the movement, the disunited states, sundered for centuries, and in continual conflict with one another, had come together. The "swift and comparatively bloodless conquest of the Two Sicilies is one of the most extraordinary incidents in modern history." Venice was gained from Austria; the papal states from the pope. Bone had come to bone, and sinews and flesh covered them, by what might well be deemed a resurrection from the dead.

The revival of Greece, though as yet but partial, had already taken place. Greece had been for a much longer period in a state of utter prostration. From nearly a century and a half before the Christian era, when it succumbed to Rome, for almost two thousand years her history had been but that of her conquerors. Yet Greece is again a kingdom, free, aggressive, growing, and yet to have an eminent though still dependent position in the time near to come: "his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power" (Dan. viii. 24).

These two witnesses, Greece and Italy, should be enough by themselves to show us that the time of the end is fast approaching; but our Lord in the gospel of Luke carries us further, and extends indefinitely this principle of the revival of nations as a sign of this. Not only does He say here, "Behold the fig-tree," as in Matthew,—words of which we have already seen the significance,—but He adds, "and *all* the trees:" "Behold the fig tree and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand; so likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." (Luke xxi. 29–31.)

Inasmuch, then, as we have seen that the fig-tree is the figure of the Jewish nation, and its putting forth leaves

speaks of its awakening, as it *is* awakening out of its sleep of centuries; the shooting out of all the trees can only intimate a *general* outburst of national life and feeling, especially in the lands which come directly into view in Scripture,—the prophetic earth. Is there any thing answering to this, then, to be found among the nations of of the present day? If so, in proportion to the breadth of the field of view will be the significance of the sign.

And just now it is not difficult to trace this written in broad characters right across the face of the political heavens. To a united Italy succeeded with scarcely an interval a united Germany, under the leadership of German-Prussia, instead of the less than semi-German Austria. On the other hand, Belgium had some time before seceded from her union with Holland on the same principle: Belgium being Celtic, and Holland Saxon. And the same under-current is at work in the claim of "home-rule" in Celtic Ireland, the cry of "Ireland for the Irish!" already waking up a faint echo of "Wales for the Welsh!"

Lastly, Russia aims (and has almost attained) to be the head of a Slavonic union, a people whose settlements extend from the Elbe to Kamtchatka, and from the Frozen to the Adriatic Sea, the whole of eastern Europe being mainly occupied by them.

Assuredly, then, the trees are putting forth their leaves; and this spirit of the age will doubtless operate in restoring Israel to her full place among the nations. A foreign element every where, they do not assimilate with the populations among which they sojourn, while their land providentially lies vacant for them. The Word of God assures us of the issue, and it cannot be far off.

The rise of Russia seems not an example of the resurrection of the nations. It is the development of a new power, as significant as any resurrection, and if not known among the nations of the past in Scripture, it is known in the prophetic vision of the future. More and more are

interpreters constrained to recognize in Russia the power depicted as coming up against restored Israel in Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.. It is now widely admitted that we should there read (as the Septuagint and lately the Revised Version), "Gog, of the land of Magog, the *prince of Rosh*, Meshech, and Tubal." The connected names in the passage speak for themselves. "Rosh" we have modernized in Russia; "Meshech," in Moscow, Muscovy; "Tubal," in Tobolsk. Of other nations in Gog's company, Persia and Armenia (Togarmah) at least are plain: we need not, for our purpose, examine the rest. How plainly the rise, so late in the world's history, of this last enemy of Israel—spreading down continually nearer toward the "land of unwalled villages," as it is,—is depicted in the challenge, "Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time, by My servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years, that I would bring thee against them?"

This fact, that Gog is spoken of not merely here by one, but by the prophets of many years, necessarily leads us to look for him under another name in their writings. Accordingly it is believed by some that he is that power which represents the old Assyrian (as in Isaiah and Micah,) in the last days. As to his position, he may well fill it, and it is even claimed that the title "czar" is "Assyrian." If this be so, Russia also *is* an example of the resurrection of nations. But we cannot pursue this topic here.

But, at any rate, the indications of the "time of the end" are plain. The trees are putting forth leaves. The winter of the world may struggle fiercely yet, but it is doomed. We *know*, blessed be God! that "summer is nigh"! But for this the summer's sun must come. The world's winter is *arctic*,—winter and night in one; but Christ as the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and then the Sun shall not withdraw itself; the days of darkness shall be ended.

# PRESENT THINGS,

## As Foreshown in the Book of Revelation.

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### THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)

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### *Philadelphia: the Revival of the Word of Christ, and the Brotherhood of Christians.*

(Rev. iii. 7-13.—*Continued.*)

IT has been often observed, and is evidently true, that the person of the Lord is more prominent in this address than in any of the others. It is a beautiful testimony that He is being Himself sought after with a new earnestness, to which He with a full heart responds. And the character in which He displays Himself is that of holiness and truth; for there is no way of nearness to Him but by separation from the evil that He hates, and being formed by the truth which He reveals. The Word is separative and formative. The mark of its reception is, the abandonment of *all* iniquity, marked as such, not by the common conscience of men, but by the Word itself. This is the sign of entrance into the sanctuary—of the presence of the Lord realized, when in *His* light we see light.

*Absolute truthfulness is rare indeed.* The penalties attending it are so many, often to be escaped by so slight a swerving from the strict path,—a path often so lonely and without sympathy, and so barren as it might seem in its isolation. Even to Christians, Christ often appears to have deserted it. And then after all to break down there! and what so likely as to break down? In this way we

may connive at self-deception; for what do all these reasonings amount to, but that the path is to be a path of faith to us now as it ever was, and difficulties are to be as ever the test of faith?

Here, then, is conscience challenged as we enter on this address to Philadelphia. Have we indeed the "courage of our convictions"? or, perhaps, have we the courage to *expose ourselves* to possible conviction?

And note that the "holy" goes before the "true." There may be "truth," or "*genuineness*," as the word means, where after all *holiness* is not maintained. Satan succeeds by some puzzle for the mind in diverting many from a true issue. *Authority* may be pressed and bowed to as from God, and the soul awed into subjection to what it dares not approach near enough to recognize in its true character. Conscience may act, but blindfold, at the bidding of another than its "one Master." With Him, on the other hand, the "*holiness*" it is that guarantees the "truth."

He who thus declares Himself invites after all to no path of uselessness: He has the key of David, is Ruler over the kingdom absolutely, opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens; and to those whom He addresses, pledges an open door, plainly for service, as the whole tenor here implies, and as the apostle three times over uses the expression (1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3). Who could be in Christ's company without finding on the one hand His rejection, on the other how human hearts recognize their Lord? Here is no contradiction, but what every page of the gospels bears witness of to us.

Assuredly faith will still be necessary, and a judgment by results will be often much mistaken.

If we wait for these to authenticate our course to us, we must in the meanwhile walk doubtfully, and not in faith. These words are an assurance rather to those who may be pursuing what to sense seems doubtful enough as to its issue. *He* affirms it to them. If they have the character here,—if they are with the Holy and the True,—holy with the Holy, true with the True,—then precisely because of this assurance, they need not ask, Will this be fulfilled—is it being fulfilled to us? Our eyes must be upon the path and the Leader. Success, where it seems fullest, must yet be tested rather by the future than the present—rather by eternity than time; and he who follows it most will be most distracted by other voices than His who speaks here. What tempter lures indeed the servants of Christ like this? For how many does *success*, rather than the Word of God, sanction their measures, while alluring them into direct opposition to the Word! If even gained in true obedience, how often does the flattery of great achievement unbalance a soul which adversity could only school to more endurance! These things are but common-places of experience; and in view of them, we need not wonder if God has, in general, been sparing in measuring out to His people great success.

And yet finally the success is great indeed, as it is certain to those who conform to the rule laid down as of old to Joshua: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success." Alas! how much oftener is this thought to be insured by

a supple and worldly wisdom than by a close and undeviating adherence to the Word of God!

The Lord now gives here, as elsewhere, what He approves in them: "For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name."

A little strength He marks and approves; yet it is but a little. No Pentecostal energy revived, no faith that can move mountains, shall we find here. The "day of small things," in the Christian as in the Jewish history, is not at its beginning, but at its close. It is a great mistake to confound the day of Ezra with the day of David. And although it may be said, and truly, that eternal life and the power of the Spirit know no decrepitude, yet our day and generation leave their imprint on us. They should not; we are not blameless in it; yet they do. Still "a little strength" is here approval.

And how is this marked? Surely in what follows,—"Thou hast kept My word, and not denied My name." It is not in gifts restored to the Church, as some claim now; it is not in ecclesiastical position, nor in numbers, nor in place among men;—in none of these things is there strength before God, but in *obedience and devotedness.*

We have seen in Thyatira Jezebel's word claimed as inspired and authoritative; we have seen, too, in Sardis, a separation from and refusal of such claim: yet the Church, though no longer inspired, teaches still. There is, as men say, an open Bible, (blessed be God for it!) and with this, a certain necessary diffusion of light. The Reformation creeds insist upon the fundamental truths of the gospel, and these have been sealed by the lives and deaths of the martyrs. At the first, also, these

creeds are in harmony with the convictions of those who subscribe them, although very soon dissent has to be embodied in a separate creed. Then a strife of creeds begins which has been the shame and reproach of Protestantism,—which has added schism to schism and sect to sect.

For the creed in Protestantism,—the pretension to catholicity, as in Rome, being gone,—*means* sectarianism. Who that has the thought of Christ's Church would undertake to frame a confession or constitution for it? Hence all such things now are local, and professedly for a part only. It is a fencing off of a greater or less number from the rest. If you cannot agree, you are at best dismissed to go elsewhere, and find or make a party for yourself.

But he who will keep Christ's word can bind himself to none,—must preserve his individuality of conscience, subject to one Master only; as much so as if there were no other Christians but himself on earth: and in a true walk with God, the knowledge of Himself, acquaintance with His Word increases with each step of the way. The light brightens to the perfect day, and in this brightening light we are called to walk, true to it, and to Him whose light it is. An immense thing it is, in a day like this, to be keeping, with an exercised heart, the word of Christ! Not a word here and there; not following it until the cost may be too much; but through honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report. For is there right obedience *any where*, when there is not in our purpose obedience *every* where? Can He whom we serve accept a compromise to His own dishonor, when we really tell Him we will do this, but not that, at His bidding? Solemn questions these,

which may His grace keep ringing in our ears, until they wake up only harmonies of joy and peace within our souls, and not self-accusation.

Let us understand that keeping Christ's word means, if it mean any thing, honest subjection to the whole of it: to that of which we may not even perceive the importance, as if we did; calling nothing little which He enjoins—of what has equal authority with the weightiest to emphasize it for us. Herein is often the truest test of a right spirit in us, when we obey not in uncertainty, but in darkness; and go out upon His leading, not knowing where.

We have need to remember, too, that our own contrary wills are often the most effectual hinderances to receiving what is really Christ's word. How solemn it is to think that of the mass of things in which we differ from each other as Christians, this contrariety must needs account for very much the larger part. The Lord's words are plain enough, and universally applicable, that "if any one will do God's will, he *shall* know of the doctrine whether it be of God." It is due to Him to own that as the blessed Spirit of God could not lead into contradictory beliefs, these differences must be of us, and not of Him. But then, found as they are in so many whom we must esteem as godly men, what a warning they give us of how much that is not of God,—of real insubjection—may be found even in such. So far as we have indeed whole-heartedly followed Him, who can doubt that He has led us right? But then how little really unreserved following of Him there must be after all!

And who can measure the loss even now? and who then can measure the eternal loss, when we

thus let slip communion with Himself? And how many are trying to win it back, or make up for its absence by filling their hands with work for Him, as if they were almost persuaded that "to obey is" *not* "better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

How plainly perceptible it is when a soul reaches the barrier line beyond which he *will* not go! Activities may go on, and the whole *outward* man be no other than it was, yet there is something gone from the soul which at once one with God will discern as hindering fellowship. How sorrowful to lose one another's company this way, while yet perhaps the feet go on together! But if we lose Christ's companionship, what shall replace it?

Naturally and necessarily connected, then, with "Thou hast kept My word," is this: "and hast not denied My name." Christ's name expresses what He is. "They shall call His name 'Emmanuel,' which being interpreted is, 'God with us.'" And to fulfill this, He is named "Jesus"—"Jehovah saving;" for save He must, that God may dwell among us. Thus, again, He is "Christ," the Anointed One, to fill the Mediator's place,—with God for us, with us for God. Who that knows it would deny this blessed name?

What does it express, what does it emphasize for us but communion with God? He hath come out after us, left His place and glory, to let the light of that glory in upon our hearts. It is in Him, this glory, in—

> "The person of the Christ,
> Enfolding every grace."

Justified we must be, to be able to draw nigh; and without sanctification "no man shall see the Lord;"

but the Lord Himself is thus the end and sum of all. "Christ is all," says one whose life spake with his lips; and "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him."

It is, as often said, what gives the peculiar glow to the picture of Philadelphia here, that it is Christ personally who fills the scene of their vision, and who associates them with Himself. This is what gives them their name, surely, in its spiritual power and value; for never was Christ welcomed into a heart but He made room in it for all His people. This is true linking with one another when we are united by the Centre,—when our association is first of all with Christ, and this determines the measure and character of all other associations. For indeed there is much, even among the people of God, that is not Philadelphian, but only a corrupt and evil counterfeit. If our "part" is first of all to be with Christ, let us hear Him say, "Except I wash thee, thou hast no *part with Me*." And this is not spoken of the first general "washing" when we are born anew, which the Lord expressly distinguishes from this washing of the feet, the cleansing from all defilement by the way. If *He* washes, there can be no compromise with defilement; our feet must be in His hand; there must be surrender to Him at all points, so that He may be able to show us *all* that is evil in His sight. Thus alone can we have part with Him; and therefore in this way only can we have rightly part with one another.

To this such union as can be obtained by compromise is in essential contradiction. It is mere

*confederacy*, whatever may be the end proposed. God has one method for us by which we may walk together according to His mind, and only one. We are to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." By taking the same road, we are necessarily brought together. The road is guaranteed to us by its four decisive marks; and here there can be no compromise, we must not give up any one of these. Moreover, it is thus by a path in the strictest sense *individual* that we find our *company;* yet it is wide enough to contain "*all* that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." Its characters are, first of all, "righteousness," and this must be maintained before we can properly speak of "faith" at all. But *then* "faith" marks the conscience in the presence of a living Lord, as well as a heart confiding in Him; and so it is only that we can have this restful, practical confidence, as we walk in conscious recognition of and obedience to His will. Here "love" then comes in due place,—we can now let our hearts out; and in this atmosphere love will develop itself. While lastly, "peace" characterizes it in view of opposition and conflict and trouble: the Lord is over all the uprising of the waterfloods.

In all this, it may be said, there is nothing but the most complete individualism; yet here it is we find the divine law of association. There is no confederation, no agreement, no prescription of terms to one another. One Master prescribes to every one his place, and in accepting that place we find the true law of co-operation with one another. United to Him as members of His body, we are, to begin with, "members one of another." This is not a question submitted to us, whether we

shall be one; and to form other unions, while it may be ignorance, is none the less complete opposition to His will. Alas! in our day it is not "union is *obedience*" that is the motto, but "union is *strength*;" and for whatever purpose men may have, they *combine*. Strength of a certain sort is found, no doubt; but it is not where he found it who says, "When I am *weak*, then am I strong;" "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

Individuality is thus lost, a majority decides for the remainder; for the advantage gained, certain things which we do not approve must be acquiesced in. Conscience, at first uneasy, becomes more tolerant. More demands made upon it find less and less the power of resistance. Christ's word is given up, and what is due to His name forgotten. How many have thus lost in their souls the sensitiveness to sin they once had; yet the apostle insists, "Let him that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Blessed, thrice blessed are they who, if they have but a little strength, yet have kept His word, and do not deny His name.

*(To be continued.)*

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## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

### CHAP. I. 1–5.

WE have already noticed that the epistle is addressed to Jewish Christians, but the second verse calls them "elect;" and then follows a remarkable outline of the work of the Trinity. Election is according to the foreknowledge of God

the Father; sanctification is by the Spirit; and that sanctification is unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

As to works of law, all was lost; the works of the flesh were unholy; but by the Father's counsels and choice, and the Spirit's inward work in the new birth, and the cleansing of the blood of Jesus, they were set apart to the path of obedience.

The effect of the Spirit's work in the new birth is a nature that is holy—a being who is pure and holy: "Seeing ye have purified your souls (*v.* 22) in obeying the truth through the Spirit,"—that is, as in John iii., we are born of water (obedience to the truth) and of the Spirit. Thus the sanctification of the second verse and the purification of the twenty-second verse refer to the holy nature we receive when born of God. It is by the Spirit we are sanctified in the second verse, by the truth, and by the Spirit we are purified in the twenty-second verse, and correspondingly in Jno. xv. 3—"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

The seed in the good ground is the Word received when the will is broken. This is at once repentance toward God and faith toward Christ; and this work is wrought by the Spirit; and we have a new nature according to which we delight in obedience and love, whereas the mind of the flesh is enmity to God and to one's neighbor.

Therefore in ver. 22, those who have been thus purified by the new birth are to walk according to it: "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." In ver. 22, it is obedience which is toward God; here, it is love which is toward one another—fruits of the new life to the glory of our

God, and for our joy and blessing. How great the contrast to the works of the flesh, which have filled the world, and, alas! the Church too, with shame and sorrow! But in the contrast shines the glory of God. "Unto obedience" (*v.* 1), "as obedient children" (*v.* 14), and "obeying the truth" (*v.* 22) show obedience to be the character of faith,—as in Rom. xvi. 26, the gospel is made known to all nations "for the obedience of faith."

We must distinguish between the sanctifying of the Spirit and the Spirit indwelling. The Holy Spirit comes to abide in the one who is already sanctified, as Jehovah came to dwell in the temple when it had been built and set apart to God. We are born of the Spirit on believing,—that is, we are by the Spirit (as by the blood and by the water—the Word) set apart, or sanctified, to God from the evil nature within and from the world without, when born of God,—that is, when we believe on Christ.

Now we are prepared for the Spirit to come and dwell in us as His temple, as in Eph. i. 13—"In whom after that ye believed," or, as it should be, "In whom having believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." This is the order of Scripture: First, born of the Spirit on believing (and in effect sanctified), then also indwelt, or sealed, by the Spirit; but the latter truth is not a doctrine of the apostle Peter in these epistles, though implied in chap. i. 13.

"Sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood" has its type in Lev. viii. 30—"And Moses took of the anointing oil (type of the Spirit), and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his

garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him." But in Lev. xiv. 14 the order is different: First, the blood; then, the oil upon the blood afterward; because there it is a type, not of the sanctifying of the Spirit, but of the sealing of the Spirit upon one already sanctified.

The doctrine of election according to the foreknowledge of God the Father is here presented. It is full of solemnity and of tenderness of love. "Many are called, but few are chosen." The solemn reality is, that all naturally with one consent refuse (Luke xiv. 18); and it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy (Rom. ix.). But how precious to the believer to know that he was chosen—that he is the object of the Father's love, "as the elect of God, holy and beloved." (Col. iii.) "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

There is tenderness of love in this, and the effect in the believer who knows this love is, to work affections that correspond,—"Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind." It is as we know and enjoy the electing grace of God, and the Father's love in Christ, that we become worshipers in spirit and in truth. We become worshipers toward God; and toward one another, ministers of love and of good; and there is no other power for this in the world but the sovereign electing grace of God by which we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Unbelief will question, and harden the heart;

but faith rests in the love of God, and worships Him, and rejoices.

Does this show indifference to others—to the world—to the lost? Nay, it is the very power of ministry to others, and has been for these eighteen hundred years; for whence has the gospel gone out to the whole world? Was it by the law? No, but from those who had known this grace, and could not but make it known to others. Am I saved? I rejoice to know it was only grace that did it. Have I neighbors unsaved? The word is, "Preach the gospel unto every creature;" "and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17); for God "would have all men to be saved, . . . for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 4); and yet "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it."

Here the reasoning mind will adopt one extreme or another error, but faith embraces and holds to the truth which makes equally plain the love and grace of God, and the righteous judgment of God, and man's responsibility. Faith believes that God is good, and that He forgives the repentant sinner; that He is just, and that He will judge the evil-doer. This is to the glory of God; and thus He reveals Himself in His Word, and faith delights in His Word, and will refuse to reason against it, but will receive all sides of the truth in its fullness.

Those that believe are saved; but such are *born of God—born again.* They enter into a new life, which could not be by law,—that is, by works; for works can only be according to the life already there—the fruit is according to the tree; but chil-

dren of God are "born, not of blood (not of Abraham, for example), nor of the will of the flesh (not of works), nor of the will of man (by no power in man, Jew or Gentile), but of God." (Jno. i. 13.)

How great a revelation (see Gal. iii. 23), then, to these Jewish Christians, to have the heart lifted up from works of law, which tell us only of sin and shortcoming, to the knowledge that we are the elect of God the Father, the work His, and the glory His forever, to us the joy of worship and thanksgiving forever, and willing service!

"Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied," is His salutation. This is the good-will of God for us as we read and hear His Word; and each moment of our lives, we stand in grace (Rom. v. 2); but we also need grace ministered to us to sustain us (Heb. iv. 16); and peace is supplied to us from on high, to keep the feet, to keep the heart, in the difficult ways of the great and terrible wilderness. Like the diver, our life is sustained from above. The words "be multiplied" are peculiar to these two epistles, and are perhaps added because we are here being prepared for the fiery furnace and varied testings of the wilderness more than in other epistles (chap. i. 7, 17; ii. 20; iii. 13; iv. 12; v. 10). From the annoyances and sufferings of a servant in a household, to the extreme of sufferings, grace is multiplied to the Christian through all, that the soul may be kept in peace, and the Lord's name be glorified in us.

Let us picture to our minds a people of old drawing near to a mount that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and a voice that made them tremble, and what a contrast to the salutation we are considering—"grace and

peace"! In the one case, we have what man is before a holy God; in the other, what God is in grace for man. The Christian needs to lay firmly hold of grace, for it is not only peace to the soul, but the power for holiness. (See Rom. vi.)

And now the apostle who had once looked into the empty tomb in doubt and perplexity, breaks forth into praise and blessing, that by the resurrection of Christ from the dead they had been called to a new and living and heavenly hope that could never perish. All is of grace now, and in the hands of God—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had wrought this salvation in His abounding mercy, and a heavenly and unfading inheritance is reserved for us, and we, by God's power, through faith, are kept for it. It is through faith, but the power is of God from first to last (Rom. i. 16; Heb. vii. 25; 2 Tim. i. 8, 9).

The salvation is not yet revealed, but it is ready to be in the last time. When the Lord ascended, may we not say our place there was prepared—our salvation was ready to be revealed? It was "when He had by Himself purged our sins" that He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) Therefore His appearance in the presence of God for us (ix. 24) meant, a place prepared for us. But when this salvation shall be revealed, we shall appear with Him in glory.

We are saved now, as regards the soul (v. 9; 2 Tim. i. 9), but the Church is not yet delivered out of this scene of humiliation (Rom. viii. 18) as it will be at the Lord's second coming. In that sense, our salvation is future.

The saint who dies rests from conflict, and enjoys the presence of the Lord; but the salvation

we look for will be when the dead saints are raised and the living ones changed, and all are together caught up into the air, to be forever with the Lord, with bodies of glory like to His (1 Thess. iv. 15; Phil. iii. 21) at His second coming. For this we should be watching hourly. It will not be the end of the world, but the end of this present period of grace, during which the Church is being gathered out, and after which apostate Christendom will be given up to delusion (2 Thess. ii.), and the great tribulation will come upon the whole world (Rev. iii. 10), to be followed by the millennium, or a thousand years of blessing, righteousness, and peace upon the earth, at the close of which will be the resurrection and judgment of the wicked before the great white throne and the beginning of eternity. (Rev. xix.; xx.)

The salvation, then, that we look for will be at the resurrection of the just (Acts xxiv. 15), the resurrection of life (Jno. v. 28), the first resurrection (Rev. xx.), which precedes the second by more than a thousand years, and which is the ever-present blessed hope and expectation of the Church.

The Thessalonian saints were told to have on, for a helmet, "*the hope of salvation*,"—that is, the hope of deliverance by the Lord's coming, which is specially unfolded as a doctrine in first and second Thessalonians.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power." May we be daily walking in newness of life, in the power of which, by the Spirit, the believer will enter into heavenly glory at the first resurrection, at the second coming of the Lord.

*(To be continued.)* *E. S. L.*

# THE GROUND OF ASSURANCE.

*"To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."* (Rom. iv. 5.)

MANY a sincere soul is perplexed by the question, whether his faith is of the right kind or not. Granting, as we must, that there is a dead faith and a living faith, that "faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone," and that even the devils may believe, after a certain sort, without it being any sign or evidence of good in them, the natural thought is, therefore, to look in upon one's self, and find out whether our faith is such as saves or not. Even apparent scripture may be quoted, and often is, for self-examination upon this point, as for instance, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves," —a text upon which many a sermon has been preached with most false application, inviting Christians to continual *doubt*, under the specious pretext of *making sure* of their Christianity.

For it is plain that if the apostle, writing to those already accepted as Christians, invites them yet to examine and see if such they really were, he supposes them to be in doubt upon the point, or else that they *ought* to doubt; and if this be a right thing to urge upon all Christians, as he urged upon those at Corinth, then they ought never to be beyond doubting. And thus the plain inconsistency of such a recommendation is seen, and that what is called making sure of salvation would be really making all *unsure*.

The fact is, that those who make self-examination the way of assurance, are compelled in most cases

to own that upon that very ground none can be *quite* sure. For is not the heart "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"? And if people object that that is only true of those who have not a *new* heart,—even allowing that, we may well ask, Is there not in the case before us just the question to be answered—whether we have the the new heart? We have no right to take for granted the very thing to be proved. If our hearts *are* new, there is of course no question as to our being "in the faith." If there is doubt about that, there is very grave doubt as to whether we shall get a proper answer to any question upon that point we can put to them. Scripture asserts, as a broad, general truth as to this, that "he that trusteth his own heart is a fool."

But then, what about the apostle's exhortation? Just this (which may be said of many another thing apparently brought from Scripture): it is *mis*-quoted, because only *half*-quoted. Reproving the Corinthians for the doubts they had begun to entertain as to whether Christ had indeed spoken by him, he puts it to them that *then* they must question their own Christianity. They owed their own conversion to his preaching, and if Christ had not spoken *by him*, then He had never spoken *to them*. The beginning of the sentence, obscured to a careless reader by some intervening words, which I omit, is in 2 Cor. xiii. 3, and the whole argument (for such it is,) reads thus: "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, . . examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: *prove your own selves*." And then, instead of taking it for granted that they would seriously do that, he asked them whether they needed to examine, "Know ye not, your own

selves, how that Christ is in you—except ye be reprobates?" If they took that latter ground, the proof of Christ speaking in him was indeed gone.

He appeals, then, to the certainty of their knowledge about themselves to reprove their *un*certainty about *him*self; and tells them, if they are going to set about proving in the one case, they had better set about proving in the other. And this is what people take up as an exhortation to all Christians seriously to examine themselves to see if their Christianity be not all a mistake!

But the question remains, If only they that believe are justified, and moreover there is a false and dead faith, as well as a real living one, how am I to know whether I have the right kind of faith except by self-examination?

Now the text at the head of this paper, if weighed in the soul, will give us, I surely believe, the means of answering this. Christ died for the ungodly. Yea, "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." This is most evidently how the apostle can say in the text that God "justifieth the ungodly," and also "to him that worketh not." If my condition is one of real impotence, of one without strength, then righteousness must be "to him that worketh not" in my case, or for me not at all. That is simple,—at least, if justification is the beginning of a Christian course. That it is so is just as simple too, because it is "the ungodly" whom He justifies: the sinner, and not the saint. I have not, then, to work myself out from sinnership into saintship before I am justified: as a sinner, I begin with that.

Faith, therefore, in One who justifies the ungodly, works necessarily this as a main thing, that I cease

*from* working for justification. The two things necessarily go together here: "to him that worketh not, *but* believeth." He justifies *the* ungodly. I am that. I have not therefore to get to be something else, but simply to *own my condition in the presence of His grace*, and I am righteous: this faith is counted unto me for righteousness.

There can thus be no doubt as to my having justifying faith. The faith that, seeing God stoop down to take up sinners, makes me give up self-righteousness, to take my place as a sinner before Him, is true and justifying.

But notice, then, this faith is occupied, *not* with itself, but with the grace of God in Christ. I have got, in a certain sense, a step lower even than "he that believeth on Him hath everlasting life." That is, it is not even the sense of *my believing* that comforts and settles my soul, but the sense of love which has come down to me as a *sinner*. I see my *sin*, not my faith. My sin is easy to be seen, my faith much less easy. And, wonderful to say, it is my sin which gives me title to my Saviour. I give up all pretension to be anything; I take my place before God, not as a worker, but as a sinner; the grace which justifies the sinner is what enables me to take a place before Him just as that; and doing so, I *am* justified; and have the true and saving faith.

This settles also another question. People ask how you can say that you have the direct testimony of the Word of God for your salvation so as to make it sin to doubt that. Plainly, it is sin to doubt God's word. "But," they contend, "while you have God's word that all believers will be saved, you have not that same word that *you* are a be-

liever: that must be an argument at best, and you may be mistaken."

I admit at once that it is an argument that such and such an one is a believer. But it does *not* follow that the Word of God does not give me direct and positive testimony to what I am. For, as we have seen, that testimony is, that Christ died for the ungodly, and that God justifies the ungodly. Dropping all effort, then,—all pretension to do any thing, or to be any thing but "ungodly," I see a Saviour for me, as that, whose love, whose power, whose all-sufficiency, it *would* be "sin to doubt." There is my assurance. I have title to *trust* HIM, if not myself. Can I trust Him *too much?*

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*Q.* 19.—"Will you please explain Gal. vi. 8? How can we sow to the Spirit and reap life everlasting, since everlasting life is the gift of God?"

*Ans.*—You have the two thoughts brought together in the last verses of Rom. vi.: "Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life; *for* the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." Here what is the *end* of a holy course is none the less the gift of God. It is only its being the latter indeed could secure its being the former, for who could demand it as "wages"? So it is "they that have done good" that come forth to the "resurrection of life" (Jno. v. 29). Scripture is full of such things. God has ordained for us the end, and thus there is no uncertainty about it; but in grace also He has ordained the way by which we should reach it.

But eternal life is not merely an end in the future; it is also a thing existing now in the believer,—"eternal life abiding in him" (1 Jno. iii. 15). We go into it as a condition by and by, but it is in us already as born of God.

*For want of space, other questions are deferred till next month.*

## CURRENT EVENTS.

# PROF. DRUMMOND AND THE TEACHING OF NATURE.

"MANY shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," says the inspired Word: how wonderfully fulfilled none can surely doubt. Let us notice too, if we have not, that these are not independent, but strictly connected statements: the running to and fro is, and is represented to be, the cause of the increase of knowledge.

Knowledge consists, to a large extent at least, in the observing of differences, bringing out thus the essential features of each object before the mind, as well as its relation to other objects. Comparison is thus the great *means* of knowledge. Whatever the provocative of a running to and fro upon the earth, an age of traveling means opportunities of comparison, and the fostering of a spirit of research. Thus the present facilities of travel connect with the undeniable growth and spread of every kind of knowledge.

I say advisedly "of *every kind* of knowledge." Of course I do not mean by this that there will be more conversions to God,—this is in the power of the Spirit of God alone to effect; yet I do mean that the knowledge of divine things, or (if you will,) the *opening up* of them to knowledge, cannot be excepted from this necessary increase. Scripture is always indeed the true and only key to every thing. Without it, there would be, as to all that is of real importance for man to know, nothing but utter darkness—a darkness that might be felt. Nay, more; the voice of prophecy declares that upon all the present increase of knowledge shall come such an eclipse; for "behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples,"

when the glory of the Lord rises upon Israel. (Isa. lx.) Thus the pride and idolatry of intellect will yet meet its terrible rebuke from God.

And yet, I repeat that no kind of knowledge—*objective* knowledge—can be excepted from the prophet's statement. Indeed, if it be allowed to apply at all,* it can scarcely be doubted that the application is mainly to spiritual things. Nor could one suppose, surely, an increase of natural knowledge without some corresponding increase in this direction. The various departments of knowledge so depend on one another,—the world of nature, the history of men, even their sins and errors (spite of themselves) so testify for God,—Scripture touches the whole circle of knowledge in such various ways, that we may be well assured this would be impossible.

It is this connection that exposes revelation to attack also from all sides. Man being what the cross has proved him to be, it was inevitable that there would be such attacks. On the other hand, that God should use these to bring out and manifest the power of His word, we might well expect. It has been always so. Science is now the battle-field, but the foe is not science; it is as ever the unbelief of man, driven out of other refuges, and concentrating its forces behind the shelter of forms but dimly seen as yet. In darkness, more plainly than ever, is their retreat, hypothesis, mystery, agnosticism, are their weapons. Their advocates have themselves most plainly pointed out the issue to be between revelation or despair, —the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, or the Unknowable.

Is it worth while to dispute with them the field of which they vaunt that they have secure possession? With

*Keil thus (in his *Comm. on Dan.*, p. 486,) remarks: "*Shut* signifies . . . to go to and fro, to pass through a land in order to seek out or search, to go about spying. . . . From these renderings, there arises for this passage before us the meaning, to search through, to examine a book." But no examples are given. For my purpose here, I need not examine the application further; for it is still true, whether Daniel speak of it or not, that this has actually been fulfilled.

revelation ours, need we contest the field of science? So much has this been dragged through the mire of evolutionistic infidelity, that in the mind of many it is useless to try and save it now. Why go outside of Scripture on to a doubtful ground of nature and observation and reasoning where so many stumble?

Just this last is, no doubt, the most forcible of arguments. It is not the attacks of infidelity that we have so much cause to dread as the well-intentioned efforts of those who, seeing the ship of revelation laboring in the tempest, hastily come in to help her by throwing out her precious freight into the sea. Inspiration, creation, and other capital doctrines of the Word have been thus again and again laid hold of for destruction, and no wonder if there should be fear of any new attempt at reconciling what never was opposed with the loss of what never was in peril.

Prof. Drummond's book* is one of these late attempts, and it is certainly not one of the feeblest. It has had a very wide circulation, has been greeted with enthusiastic praise, and denounced also with special energy. This perhaps is only what might be expected in the case of a work of real talent upon so important a subject by a man not unknown. But it makes it difficult for one to speak who sympathizes with both sides, and therefore, as a matter of course, with neither.

There was real cause for alarm. Prof. Drummond tells you at the outset that science with him has brought about "an *entire re-casting of truth*" (p. viii.). His "spiritual world before was a chaos of facts;" "it was the one region still unpossessed by law. I saw then why men of science distrust theology; why those who have learned to look upon law as authority grow cold to it—it was the great exception" (p. x.).

While his spiritual world was thus a chaos, nature alone

*"Natural Law in the Spiritual World." By Henry Drummond, F. R. S. E.; F. G. S.

appeared to him firm. "And the reason is palpable. No man can study modern science without a change coming over his view of truth. What impresses him about nature is its solidity. He is there standing upon actual things, among fixed laws" (xx.). "There is a sense of solidity about a law of nature which belongs to nothing else in the world. Here at last, amid all that is shifting, is one thing sure, . . . one thing that holds its way to me eternally, uncorrupted, and undefiled" (xiii.). "In these laws, one stands face to face with truth, solid and unchangeable" (p. 4.).

Yet it seems they are not easy to define, and must be taken on authority. "The laws of nature are simply the statements of the orderly condition of things in nature, what is found in nature by a *sufficient number of competent observers. What these laws are in themselves is not agreed. That they have any absolute existence even, is far from certain"!* (p. 5.)

Thus "theology" is delivered into the hands of a sufficient number of natural observers; and science thus offers if in the first place "to corroborate theology, in the second, *to purify it*" (xviii.). "And while there are some departments of theology where its jurisdiction cannot be sought, there are others in which nature may have to *define the contents as well as* the limits of belief" (xxi.). And "men must oppose with every energy they possess what *seems* to them to oppose the eternal course of things" (xxi.).

No wonder if by this process there should be in result "an entire re-casting of truth." No wonder rather if there be a casting out of truth. "The old ground of faith, authority, is given up" (p. 26.). Yet what is the testimony of a "sufficient number of competent observers"? Is it impossible that Scripture, with its innumerable lines of proof—"many infallible proofs" (Acts i. 3.)—should be equally trustworthy?

The principles of Prof. Drummond's book, then, are

alarming enough for the Christian. And he carries them out consistently. All through you will find, side by side, quotations from the apostles of Christ and the apostles of evolution, and treated, one would think, with almost equal reverence.

The result is very much what might be anticipated from all this, although there is a certain looseness of language which allows one to hope that what is said may not after all convey his real meaning. Yet, if it be so, he has had time to disclaim what has been imputed to him, and we cannot hear that he has done so. Whatever, then, his own views, the words remain with all their mischievous effect for the many who have been captivated by the brilliancy of the presentation, as well as (I must add) the truth that they contain; for that they contain truth is to me incontestable. And it is this mixture of what is true and valuable with what is false and evil, that is to be dreaded; for by it the enemy of our souls obtains a double victory; either he prevails upon us to reject the truth because of the falsehood mixed with it, or else to receive the two together. God's word to us, as to Jeremiah, is, "If thou shalt *take forth* the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth."

Here are some of the statements in question:—

"We should be forsaking the lines of nature were we to imagine for a moment that the new creation was to be formed out of nothing. *Ex nihilo nihil*—nothing can be made out of nothing. *Matter is uncreatable and indestructible;* nature and man can only form and transform" (p. 297).

Here there is that looseness of statement of which I have spoken. "*Matter* is uncreatable and indestructible;" but he is speaking of the new creation, the divine work in a soul. Is this, then, "matter"? and cannot *God* create or destroy matter, if it were? "*Nature* and man can only form and transform;" but what, then, is "nature"? Is it God, or what He has created? If the latter, what marvel? if the former, did not God, then, create the world?

Again we have (p. 236),—

"This primary idea . . . leads to a doctrine of immortality,

or, to speak more correctly, of life, far surpassing any that had been expressed in the formulas of the current philosophy or theology, and resting upon premises and conceptions altogether different. In fact, it can dispense both with the philosophical thesis of the immateriality or indestructibility of the human soul, and with the theological thesis of the miraculous corporeal reconstruction of our person: theses, the first of which is altogether *foreign to the religion of the Bible, and the second, absolutely opposed to reason.*"

It is true that this is a quotation from a German author (Reuss), but it is quoted with approbation by Prof. Drummond, who certainly endorses here the materiality of the soul and the denial of the resurrection. And this confirms the worst meaning of the extract made before. Annihilationism naturally goes with it also, and this the definition of eternal life which he accepts from Herbert Spencer distinctly corroborates, for eternal life is, according to it, nothing but eternal material existence, and the whole question with Prof. Drummond in his essay on it is, how to escape extinction at death. That he who does not receive eternal life must become extinct seems surely the inevitable conclusion.

Again we have (p. 281),—

"The completion of life is now a supreme question. It is important to observe how it is being answered. If we ask science or philosophy, they will refer us to evolution."

And he goes on to speak of struggle for life, etc., the elements of the most extreme Darwinian form.

Thus it is very evident that the denunciation of the book before us has not been without reason. That is denied in it which involves all Christianity in its denial; for "if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 16, 17.)

The denial of the resurrection, the immateriality of the soul, the creation of matter, and the advocacy of full evolution in its extreme Darwinian form, are surely enough to startle the dullest Christian into refusal of a book which deliberately proposes these for our acceptance. Yet its author was accepted at Northfield and at Chautauqua.

(*To be continued.*)

# A PLEA FOR MEXICO.

THERE are ten millions of souls in Mexico alone, without speaking of regions vast and populous of Central and South America, who are without the gospel, save in a very limited degree.

Mexico has had no reformation. Romanism has reigned supreme over heart and conscience, body and soul, and left with scarce a ray of light these millions, save as Protestants have done some of love's labor among them. God has, in His wisdom, and with purposes of grace, smitten the power of the pope of Rome, and through liberalism, (often another name for infidelity,) opened the door for the proclamation of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Statistics, lately published, give as the number of workers, of all shades of opinion, foreign and native missionaries, schoolmasters, etc., 442; and of communicants, 12,135. Some devoted men, according to the light they have, are found in the ranks of these workers, whom Christ will reward in that day, and of whom we dare not say they do not serve Him, though they follow not us, nor are in, as far as ecclesiastical position goes, the truth. All honor to those who with less light have risked their lives to make Christ known! Of these, 62 have won the martyr's crown, while others still languish in prison upon false charges, in places where Rome has most power left her. On the other hand, some unworthy men and means have been used, which has of course hindered the work.

These millions know, for the most part, absolutely nothing but certain Christian names which

are connected, in their minds, with superstition and falsehood, and which convey to them no fragment even of the truth of the gospel. Purgatory is their expectation after death, out of which the prayers and masses of the priests alone can deliver, and this only obtainable through the last cent extortion can wring from them, though it be the bread of their children, which yet Rome calls them to give up in exchange for her lies.

(At a place in New Mexico, the native missionary read Jno. xiv., and his hearers ridiculed it, and said, "We did not know He had a Father;" and went to him afterward and asked what he meant by saying His Father had a *mansion*.)

When the prophet was convicted deeply of his sin in the presence of the glory of Christ, and the live coal from the altar had touched his lips and cleansed them, he heard a voice saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" The ready answer came, "Here am I: send me." Paul gives us as the spring of his service this: "The love of Christ constraineth us," etc. How many who have learned that to give their hearts to God is not the gospel, who yet have not practically learned what Paul writes of the Macedonians, viz., "They first gave their own selves to the Lord." Neither Isaiah nor Paul kept back from the Lord what was His by the double right of creation, and what was infinitely more costly—*redemption*.

Much of the sorrow and division so ripe among saints to-day has its root in the spirit of the world, which has had so large a place in the church.

The mass of the population round us has had and refuses the truth. Where this obtains, God commonly sends a famine of the Word. The ten

millions in Mexico have had no such trial, and are in danger of learning the corruption and infidelity of apostate Christendom before they hear the truths of redemption and the love of God. Who will help tell them of Him who came to seek and save what was lost? and who has left behind those wonderful words for us to reflect on, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth." "And how shall they hear without a preacher" that gospel which brings "repentance unto life"? What I have written is with no desire to distract from their work the Lord's servants laboring in other fields. Still less to urge any to go unsent where disaster and defeat at the hands of the enemy will meet them as quickly as any where, and perhaps in a worse way. But are there none who are holding back from what the Lord has laid upon them, and who would do well to search their hearts as to this, and seek His mind?

The day, one hopes, is not far distant, if the Lord tarries, when the difficulties which still hamper the work will be further relaxed. What is intended by the reform laws as a check upon popery hinders also the progress of the truth, undesignedly. But the popish effort to regain control will probably lead to a further blow at her power, and the removal of the restrictions upon the efforts of others. May we not also pray for a fresh working of the Holy Spirit of God, to cause the seed sown to spring up,—"to give light to them that sit in *darkness* and the *shadow* of *death*, and to guide our feet into the way of peace."

*Robt. T. Grant.*

*El Paso, Texas, May 17th*, 1888.

# PRESENT THINGS,

## As Foreshown in the Book of Revelation.

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### THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)

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*Philadelphia: the Revival of the Word of Christ, and the Brotherhood of Christians.*

(Rev. iii. 7–13.—*Concluded.*)

THE next verse seems somewhat strangely to connect Philadelphia with Smyrna: "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Here again comes before us that class through which Satan had wrought the downfall of the already declining Church. Judaism, set aside by God, is now one of Satan's best weapons and most subtle snares. Great Babylon has built her superstructure upon this foundation, and displaced with the ritualism, the sacerdotalism, and the legalism of an earlier time, the simplicity and open speech, the equal priesthood and completed sacrifice, the free grace and full salvation, of Christianity. It is not after all so strange, therefore, that if in Philadelphia we find the heart fresh awakened after Christ, His Word preached with fresh energy and held with more appreciation, on the other hand Satan's old attempt should be renewed. And this the words here seem to indicate. They assure us also, no doubt, that for the true Philadelphian it will end only in defeat, and the acknowledgment

of their enemies that they are objects of Christ's special love, yet this does not assume that the onset will have no success. God permits these things for the trial of His own, and there was only One who could say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath *nothing* in Me."

In fact, if we look at the history of the movement which has been for years going on, we shall find that along with revived study of the Word, and energetic evangelizing, and the drawing of Christians to one another, there has been an undoubted revival of ritualism also, and that not in Rome where it never had slept, but in Protestantism. The Puseyite or Tractarian movement, as it used to be called, had all the freshness and energy of a revival, and its success was marked. At the present time, it is less noted only because its influence is become a thing of course; and Protestant Episcopalianism is largely leavened with it.

This may be thought outside Philadelphia, according to our definition of it, but it is one of the things it is called to meet. Nearer home, however, in less developed forms, the same spirit is manifesting itself. The fruits of many a revival and separation from the church-establishments of Protestantism have been blighted by a spirit of conformity to that which had been left. The chapels have become churches, the ministry a priesthood, the congregations multitudinous and indiscriminate under this influence; and the desire for Christian union has been perverted into a desire for *denominational* union, a more or less ignoring of differences which were once matters of conscience for the soul, but have become rather matters of dispute left to the champions of conflicting creeds.

Even for those most widely removed (as it might seem) from all this, the same influences are at work, and should be no less dreaded. Ecclesiasticism, clerisy, the substitution of corporate for individual conscience,—these are all elements of a return-movement, the ebb of the tide which once seemed as if it could not so soon fail. But they are elements also of that Judaism with which man's mind, if it slip away from God, so readily assimilates. In fact it is all that is natural to man, and of himself he never gets beyond it.

Let us take heed, then, that we be true Philadelphians. Tested we shall be assuredly all round, and in different *forms* if the spirit be not different. The Word here is the assurance, is it not? for the faith that might quail and question as the results of the trial become apparent. Not now, but by and by, things shall be manifested, and where Christ's heart is shall come out openly.

Meanwhile there is another promise: "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Here is still the keeping of Christ's word: all blessing lies in the track of obedience; but it is now a peculiar character of that Word, and as manifesting a character of Christ Himself,—His *patience*, or *endurance*. It was of course a character of His on earth; it is also a character that He is manifesting where He sits now, upon the throne of heaven. He has but to ask, and the rod of iron shall be His to dash to pieces all opposition, like a potter's vessel. Yet He waits; not unobservant of the trials of His saints, not surely as unsympathetic

with them. But He waits, that God's purpose may be fully wrought and the discipline of His people fully accomplished. It seems to me another mark of Philadelphia herself being tested by that of which the previous verse has spoken. They have needed patience: they have learnt it in the apprehension of that patience of His who Himself exercises it, with power in His hands which could change the face of things as in a moment. They have *kept* that word of His patience,—feeling the trial, but learning the consolation. Then, when the hour of trial for the dwellers upon earth shall come, they shall be out of it! Suited all this is, surely. And that word even, "dwellers upon earth," suits exactly the Judaized synagogue of Satan of which the Lord has spoken. For the expression has a moral force, like that where Pergamos is described as "*dwelling* where Satan's throne is." The hour is the hour of terrible tribulation, which, involving Israel first (Matt. xxiv. 21), will extend also to the Gentiles (Rev. vii. 14, *R.V.*), and reap with its scythe of destruction the tarefield of Christendom; God's wheat having been removed from it.

Into this time of judgment no saint, indeed, of the present time can come. And this has been with some an objection to such an interpretation of the words before us. But it would be only be that, if they were to be *confined* to Philadelphia, which is not the case. The promise to Smyrna is equally such to every child of God that ever was. Will any of these be hurt of the second death? Assuredly no; and yet not the less suited to the sufferers in Smyrna was that word of comfort. So here: doubtless God's people have all been in various ways made to apprehend the word of Christ's

patience, and will be kept out of the hour of trial for apostate Christendom.

But the word is suited especially here, because that which separates the saints from it, and from the possibility of sharing its judgments, is at hand. More decisively now He announces, "I come *quickly*." The day of grace is running out with the day of patience. Soon it shall be Christ's presence and glory. The centuries of delay have come to years, the years are soon to be months, the months days, the days moments. "I come quickly:" this is to be shown in its power for the soul by its keeping the exhortation, "*Hold that fast which thou hast*, that no man take thy crown."

But all shows it to be a time of drift,—a time of declensions as well as revivals: overcomer is he only who holds fast. The Spirit of God moving, the Word manifesting its power, conscience responding; yet every where the ebb after the flow, the trial which sifts, separates, individualizes. By and by comes the terrible *back*-flow of Laodicea. Think not Philadelphia is a haven of refuge where we may lie at anchor and never feel it. Not so,—oh, not so: this is the fatal delusion of Laodicea itself: "Hold that fast which thou hast!" The tug, if it has not come, is coming: *hold thou fast!*

But to what?—hold *what* fast? The *word*, and the *name*, and the *patience* of Christ. Not the word of even the leaders of God's raising up. The truth must ever commend the man, *never the man the truth*. One great danger is, lest, having begun with the former principle, we slip into the latter. Even the truth they teach is not truth received till it has been gotten at the Master's feet and in communion with Himself,—till you can hold it, not with the

eyes *shut*, but with eyes open,—till you can maintain it for truth against the very instrument used of God to give it you, if need be. "If WE, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

*Then*, HOLD FAST! When it is no longer a question if it be the truth, but only of its consequences. Hold fast: though those who have held it with you, or before you, give it up; though it separate you from all else whomsoever; though it be worse dishonored by the evil of those who profess it; though it seem utterly useless to hope of any good from it: in the face of the world, in the face of the devil, in the face of the saints,—"hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown!"

For many a crown has been lost, and many a crown will be lost, if the Lord should tarry. Yet he who will hold fast shall find Christ's arms underneath him, Christ's hands upon his hands. He shall not only keep, he shall be kept; in the might of Christ's victory he shall stand, and the crown given he shall cast before the Giver of it as a trophy of His own conquest, and the fruit of His grace.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God; and he shall go no more out. And I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God, and I will write upon him My new name."

A fixed eternal place in the sanctuary of God; identification with the display of God as revealed in Christ forever; identification with the abiding-place of His affections, in which heaven and earth shall meet at last in an eternal embrace of love; identification with the manifestation of Christ in

His new eternal relationship to this whole scene:—this is what seems to be expressed in the promise here. But who shall give it proper utterance? What an end for the weak one who under trial still holds fast to Christ and His word! How blessed the stability of this scene by which He would establish our hearts amid the perpetual flux by which we are surrounded. How sweet the identification with Himself of the feeble one who has but owned on earth the authority of Him whom heaven and earth will own in joy in but a moment! It is a text to be expounded by the Holy Ghost to the heart of the overcomer, rather than to be spread out upon the page here. It is a sanctuary word, and the ear receives but a little thereof.

*(To be continued.)*

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## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

### CHAP. I. 6–12.

WE are now, so to speak, upon a hill-top from whence we view the "city that hath foundations," and the country that is heavenly,—and what a prospect is before us!

Nothing that the eye has seen can be compared to it; for "it is written, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9.) This being our hope, it is added, in the chapter before us, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice," as in Rom. v. "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

But let us pause here to consider, What is it we are speaking of? A prospect such as no eye has seen, opened out before us, made known to us by the Spirit of God, and wherein we "greatly rejoice."

Mark the words, and their strength,—"greatly rejoice." In what? In that which is always before the eye of faith, and ever the same, in hope of which we are said to greatly rejoice. The occasion of this great joy, then, never changes, only we are constantly getting nearer to its realization.

Now, we live by the food we eat, and spiritually we live by every word of God. But *are* we living by this word? *do* we greatly rejoice? If we are rebuked, we are comforted as well; for is it not deep comfort to know that we may constantly rejoice in this certain and blessed hope, since we are called upon to do so? All Christians have inward and deep joy at the unutterably blessed prospect before them; but how fluctuating is that joy in most of us, which ought to be a strong and steady tide bearing us onward in the power of God for worship and for service! Why are dying Christians often specially lifted up, but that the dross has been rapidly purged away by their chastening, the gaze being set upon glory, and the world receding from view? But why should not this be our abiding state?—why should we not abide in Christ, and resist the first allurement to depart from that place of abiding peace, though we have to cut off the right hand or pluck out the right eye? But no policy or philosophy can keep us there,—only the obedience of faith, and holy fear, by His grace.

The Lord Himself, "for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross."

First, the energy of hope, ever nearer its realization—"the day is at hand;" then, readiness to forsake all and follow Him.

But now comes the trial of the faith as gold is tried in a furnace. We have to descend into the valley of experience—of experience of suffering, for there is a needs-be, and there the heart rests. But though we descend into the valley, yet we abide on the hill-top; for the human figure fails, because by the grace of God we are to abide in our hope while we pass on through the trial; and the right word here is not "heaviness," which might imply failure, but "put to grief"—"Though now for a season, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold temptations."

"Grief" we cannot avoid; but we need not be cast down, and in this there is great power and comfort from God. If we had been told in the Word that gloom and heaviness were a necessity, it would be hard indeed; and yet, by strange inconsistency, we are ready to impatiently refuse the exhortations that comfort—as if it were a privilege and a right to be at times overcome with sorrow and the trials of the way. Let no one make light of sorrow, in their own case or that of others, or aim or pretend to be easily above it: a superficial and flippant reference to comforting scriptures, or imposing them as a law upon sorrow, is but an insult to sorrow—sacred depths with which a stranger can't intermeddle. Such an effort, however sincere, is not true ministry to sorrow; "Jesus wept" is the divine rebuke to such an error.

But neither extreme justifies the other: sorrow is not to be made light of; nor, on the other hand, are we to view it as if God's hand were not in it,

either in sullen or shy seclusion, or in that imperious spirit of grief that would have the world clad in blackness because of our own woe. He would have us rather come forth brighter and stronger to love and serve others by the refining; and when we have learned to say, "Thy will be done," He delights to draw very near, and to minister deep and sweet consolation.

There are two things that men think little of that God highly esteems,—the "meek and quiet spirit" is one, in the sight of God, of great price (chap. iii. 4), and "the trial of our faith, which is more precious (*R.V.*) than of gold which perishes." This precious word in Peter makes plain to us the reason for sore trials that we experience. The faith tested and proved genuine, as was Abraham's is acceptable to God. The pure metal gratifies the refiner,—the pure gold; but gold is perishable after all, but faith has fruit that will endure forever. And He who tests and refines supplies the strength to endure, as at the burning bush; but there must be the testing, and only that which is of God can endure. In Gen. xv., Abram beheld, when the sun had gone down (significant of the darkness of this world), a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp passing between the pieces of the sacrifice. God was marking out the basis and conditions of a covenant with His people: salvation by the cross—by a sacrifice, the Word as our lamp, and the furnace of trial. But whether it is the burning bush, or the three in Daniel in the burning fiery furnace, or the martyr's faith amid the flames of many fires, that which is of God endures, and it will be to His praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Christ, and to the praise and glory of His people;

for "glory, honor, and peace" (Rom. ii.) await any one that worketh good.

The appearing of Jesus Christ is the time when all will be brought to light. Nothing is of real value that will not shine then. That which is of faith—that which is by the grace of Christ—that which is the denial of ourselves, and submission to God, and love to our brethren, and humbling of ourselves, will be honored and exalted then—before God, the holy angels,—the great examination and exhibition day. Therefore nothing that we do is unimportant. "Every man shall give account of himself to God." This will always encourage to diligence every true heart, like a faithful servant who labors with both interest and zeal when he knows that his master's eye will survey every part of his work, and that he will bestow approval and reward.

Faithful servants "love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 8.) for they seek to walk honestly, as in the day, knowing that they are made manifest unto God. They are letting the light of the coming day into the secret corners of their heart already, that the ways and maxims of darkness may not prevail with them. We do not need to wait for that day to know what will please the Lord. He has told us in His Word, and according to that Word all will be judged.

May we delight to view all things in our hearts and in our lives in the light of that coming day.

"Whom not having seen ye love, in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." To these precious words, every truly converted heart responds with deep delight, as the lame man leaped and walked and praised God. We love Him, we

rejoice in Him, with joy deeper than can be told. And then the expression used is too full to be easily otherwise expressed, "full of glory,"—that is, a joy looking on to the glory, as it were already lit up with the light of the coming day, like Stephen's face—as the face of an angel. This joy must have filled Paul's heart when he said, "I am ready to be offered." How great the difference between the world and the Christian! Of the one it is said, "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father;" of the other, that in that same One so hated, he rejoices with joy unspeakable. What a striking suggestion of the new nature in contrast with the old—the carnal mind, which is enmity against God! May the love of Christ possess our hearts, and draw them out every hour.

And now the soul's salvation is spoken of as received by the believer, and this is the salvation spoken of by the prophets, who were themselves interested to inquire into the scope of their own prophecies. What they declared was revealed to them from on high—from God. With reverent minds, they inquired, and searched diligently, about the sufferings of Christ, and the glories to follow. It was the Spirit of Christ in them that testified of those things. These statements are of deep interest, telling us of the power by which the prophets spoke, and of their own exercises of heart about the things foretold. God used them as instruments, by a power beyond themselves, but their souls were in communion with God; and thus, devoutly waiting upon God, God revealed to them that they were ministering things for those who were to come after. "Not unto themselves, but unto you did they minister those things." The

words "*unto you*" are frequent and emphatic in this chapter, to remind this feeble remnant of faithful ones that though despised and feeble, yet rich and precious things were now in Christianity being ministered unto them by the gospel. The prophets looked eagerly forward to these things. John the Baptist said, "This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled." Simeon said, "Now, Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace; . . . for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." And the Lord Himself said (Matt. xiii.) to His own, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and you ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them (did not see them); and to hear those things which ye hear, and did not hear them." And in this verse before us, we are told the angels desire to look into these things.

Thus are we graciously encouraged to value what has been brought to us by the gospel. Naturally, these Jews, dispersed in foreign lands, and in humiliation, would look back to the times of the prophets, and to the times of David and of Solomon-glory, as times of greater blessing and power. And such is our own tendency; but in reality, those of Old-Testament times looked forward with deep longing and wonder to what we now enjoy. Do we consider this? The consideration of it is thus pressed upon us by this holy Scripture; and as we think of it, the soul is filled with holy awe and deep joy, and the present is filled up for us with the presence of God. "Old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." And

this glad tidings is preached to us with or in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

The power that brought us from death to life, even that power that brought Christ from the dead (Rom. viii. 11), is the power by which we receive the gospel. And that works in us to enjoy the things freely given to us of God.

If we are seated at the gospel-feast—the royal banquet, the fatlings killed, and clad in the best robe, with sounds of heaven's joy about us, may our hearts be filled with the joy of heaven, and with abhorrence of sin, and with the calm but deep persuasion that the power of God is with us, to give entire victory over all that we have to meet.

*E. S. L.*

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## "BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS."

A CORRESPONDENT writes, perplexed, as many more have been, to reconcile the forgiveness which every believer has in Christ, and the baptism for the remission of sins which the apostle Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, and which Ananias pressed upon the repentant Saul of Tarsus: "Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord."

It is a point of real importance, and as to which many interpretations are given which disfigure the precious gospel of Christ, and even destroy its efficacy. The Romanist uses the latter class of texts in behalf of a sacramental system in which the grace of Christ flows only through the channels of church-ordinances. The ritualist of every grade agrees substantially with the Romanist. The

so-called Disciple body, with many more heterodox, though making faith in some sort a necessary prerequisite, take otherwise the same ground, while one at least of the smaller and wilder sections of Adventists argue for them the necessity of the baptism of infants on exactly the Romanist ground, that without it there is no salvation. Many Protestants, on the other hand, overlook or practically deny this class of texts.

They become simple when we learn to separate the actual remission of sins through the blood of Christ to those who believe in Him, from that *testimony of it upon earth* which He has ordained to be preached, not only in the gospel to all, but individually to every one who owns Him as Lord in the day of grace. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" is the apostle Peter's text in the second of Acts. The application of it in both the cases mentioned is the same. The convicted Jews, repenting of their rejection of the Lord, are baptized in His name for remission of sins. Saul washes away his sins calling on the name of the Lord. But the cleansing by blood and the washing of water are distinct, and the latter saves in "figure" only: "The like *figure* whereunto even baptism doth also now *save* us." (1 Pet. iii. 21.) It is a preaching in *act* to the individual who had received the word of the gospel —a beautiful, definite making over to him who believes in Christ of the effect of Christ's work.

But this is necessarily, on man's part, declarative and conditional only. Man cannot read the heart, nor has he heaven's treasury of grace in his hands. He can but witness to it. Hence baptism is but initiation into the kingdom on earth of which men

have the "keys." Not of heaven, but of the *kingdom* of heaven. Baptism and the Word, as these two keys, are thus the means of discipling (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) But the parables of the kingdom and the warning as to discipleship fully show that the blessing here is conditional, not absolute, as in the case of remission itself (Matt. xviii. 32, 34.) In this line, all the conditions and warnings of Scripture will be found.

Mischief will result to the soul who confounds this declarative remission of the disciple on earth with the absolute grace of Christ to the believer, which is apart from all ordinances, complete and eternal. Never is a child of God, justified and accepted in Christ, the possessor of eternal life, put as such upon any doubtful footing. And no rite or ordinance can impart these blessings.

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## EXTRACT OF A LETTER.

"THE learning the place that grace has given us in Christ risen has brought very great delight, for the sense of the blessed nearness to Him which it gives us remains a settled thing. Yet how needful to remember that the power for resting the head on His bosom is through our having our feet in His hands. Nor does all this alter the fact that as the moment of His coming draws near, and our longing hearts repeat, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," the sense of His absence grows too. We cannot be satisfied till we see His face, and are forever with and like Him."

## CURRENT EVENTS.

### PROF. DRUMMOND AND THE TEACHING OF NATURE.

*(Continued.)*

YET I have already stated that there is truth in Prof. Drummond's book; and it is this which has laid hold upon so many; it is truth, too, which we cannot give up because of the association in which we find it there. But it needs limiting and defining, both: it needs, in fact, re-statement; and this, if we get the right standpoint, I believe it not to be difficult to give it.

Really we cannot give up nature to the infidel, nor the facts of nature, where truly that; no, nor the study of nature, as if it were God's witness no longer, and could only deceive the one who listened to it. It is true, *godless* science can even manufacture "facts,"—just by reason of its supreme faith in theories which necessitate them; while it is *certain* to *select* them according to the "law" of which Mr. Lewes speaks, "that we only see what interests us, and only assimilate what is adapted to our condition," and which thus "causes the mind to *select its evidence.*" How great in this way must be the evil done by text-books in which not all the facts, but a chosen number of them only are presented to the learner, who perhaps never goes beyond these, unable, save as to the merest fraction, to verify them at all! But this only shows the danger of leaving science in the hands of unbelievers. Shut men's minds out from the study of nature, we cannot if we would. It is God's own witness, expressly appealed to by Scripture itself as that, and that witness it would be a terrible thing to have to renounce as if it were *false* witness, and to answer the apostle's question, "Doth not nature itself teach you?" with a negative of this kind. Shut men's minds out from it, therefore, we would not if we could.

Yet the danger is terribly increased by the fact which this book of Prof. Drummond's so alarmingly illustrates, that not only from unbelievers comes this perversion of truth, but that Christians so easily can be carried away with what is not science, but usurps its name. This ought surely to make us ask, Is there not some guiding principle of interpretation, which may be a safeguard to us? Has God not provided such?—some clue-line by which to thread our way through the forest whose depths we can never fully explore, yet where we should be able to pause and worship, without danger of being lost? Such a clue indeed there is, if only we will accept it, and it lies near where Prof. Drummond's error lies, in the adoption of that "Principle of Continuity," or, as we may better call it perhaps, the principle of *Unity* which pervades the works of the one God,—Creator and Redeemer.

I cannot express myself better here than I have done in the pages of a MS. which may, if the Lord permit, one day see the light. Its argument at this point is just the *continuity* of nature and Scripture,—the unity of the first with the later witness for God; and that, according to the very principle of nature itself, the later revelation *must interpret the earlier*,—not indeed without getting back from it some of the light which it throws upon it, as we may easily understand, yet keeping ever its own higher place.

"The God of revelation has but one Revealer. Christ it is in whom, from first to last, He has manifested Himself to us. He is the Word, His Living Utterance. 'By Him,' little as it may be even yet believed, 'were all things made; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.' Creation is thus part of revelation, as indeed we are distinctly told: the primary one, but as that, the *least* distinct, and not the most. The written Word itself begins obscurely, brightens as it goes on, and ends in mid-day splendor, which illumines all before it. Thus here also not the beginning gives us to know the end, but

the end rather the beginning. So not creation interprets the Word, but the Word creation. And for this last, Christ must be known. Not the seed interprets, but the flower and fruit.

"It must be one revelation, for the God of whom it speaks is one. Thus, as one has argued, the law of continuity is not broken. The types and parables, and indeed our common speech as well, are all based upon this essential unity. It is thus we argue from the natural to the spiritual, and are really just as much entitled to argue from the spiritual to the natural, instinctively accepting the truth of analogies which a more deliberate judgment approves and confirms. But, as I have said, the usual way is, to take the natural as illustrating and enforcing the spiritual, and for obvious reasons. The analogy must needs work both ways, if it work one, that is clear. But it takes, we think, only nature to know nature: to know the spiritual, we must *be* spiritual. True this is, but not the whole truth. Conviction of spiritual truth may be impressed on natural men,—the very parables are witnesses of this. And then—however unwelcome the thought may be,—nature itself can be only deeply known by the spiritual understanding. In the end, which is Christ, we find the beginning. He is both; Lord of all worlds, whom when the elders praise, the heavens and earth and all therein break out in harmony. (Rev. v. 9–13.)

"This is the attractive truth in what we have heard much of lately, the presence of 'Natural Law in the Spiritual World.' It is only the order of *apprehension* which troubles us in this. Put in the reverse way, you have more the order of fact; and from '*Spiritual* Law in the *Natural* World,' no believer in Christ would for a moment shrink. We may put it in a better form still, and call it, 'The Unity of Divine Manifestation every where.' But this would no doubt bring our wonder to an end. The attractiveness of novelty would be lost in such a proposition; and novelty there is in the author's view, as well as truth

also, as I have said. But the trouble is here: not that the earth should be, down to its elemental foundations, part of its Maker's universal kingdom, but that, in the way of statement, *nature* should seem rather to govern than be governed, and actually be put in the interpreter's place to read the riddle of spiritual things. Here, indeed, there is room for plentiful confusion, which our author has not escaped; and when the chiefs of an agnostic evolutionism are elevated to the rank of professors in the college of spiritual truth, it is not strange if many should refuse it, it is rather strange that any should accept.

"Yet nature remains unfallen from its place as the eldest of revelations. Corrupted indeed in man, even this has only, in a sense, confirmed its witness to us as from Him to whom man's ruin was no surprise, and redemption no after-thought. Assuredly, such a world as is around us would to an unfallen being be an inexplicable mystery; and we do not wonder to see the yet unfallen parents of our race shut off from it in a specially prepared and sheltered Eden of delight, which might be for them a better witness of creating Love,—a memory of blessing to them when fallen. And when sent forth into the earth then, they could find still amid conflicting elements around the assurance from this strange sympathy with the new strife within them, of omniscient foresight, undeceived and undethroned.

"Has science altered this when she bids me note that the very ground they trod on was already but the wreck of former worlds? yet that mountain-upheavals and glacier-plow, and the long list of catastrophic forces, had been used of Him who is the God of resurrection to prepare and fertilize and beautify their yet wondrous dwelling-place? 'Out of death, life' was already the grand redemption-hymn, prophecy and promise of an infinitely grander one.

"'Doth not nature itself teach you?' asks a guide we may not refuse. What shall we answer him? If man has

filled Olympus with his deities, the sky is still serene as ever there, and we may worship there without suspicion. But for this, the later revelation must fill up the gaps and interpret the parables of the earlier one, and then with fear dispelled, neither the demons of the mist shall hurt us, nor the earth be filled but with the whirr of soulless machinery, using souls for its material,—an infinite and remorseless prodigality without return. Nay, with one of old we will sit and sing,—

> "'Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?
> Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?
> If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there!
> If I make my bed in hades, lo, Thou art there!
> If I take the wings of the morning,
> And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
> Even there shall Thy hand lead me!
> And Thy right hand shall hold me!'"

This principle of continuity (or of unity) we may well accept, then. God's work and His Word are thus one, and it does not need for this that we should apply the law of gravitation to spirit, as even Prof. Drummond allows us to escape from this, *if spirit be in no sense material*, which we take to be the fact. We might and should make other limitations, but which detract nothing from the truth that God's work and His Word have a real and beautiful correspondence, of which Mr. Drummond gives us in his first example, "Biogenesis" (or, Life from life alone), an instructive illustration. He is here on the safe ground of fact, as wide as the whole field of organic nature. It is quite otherwise when he undertakes to define "eternal life" by Herbert Spencer, and say of the Lord's words in Jno. xvii. 3, "For eighteen hundred years, only one definition of eternal life was before the world. *Now there are two.*"

Even the Lord's words are not a definition of what in itself it is, but only of the character by which it is manifested in the soul that receives it,—a very different thing. And Herbert Spencer's definition would necessitate the

annihilation of the wicked, a result which indeed to many now would be not unwelcome.

The doctrines of science must not be allowed to recast the doctrines of the Word; but the Word must mould our science, and enable us to interpret aright the teachings of nature.* And this will give us lines large enough to inclose and give its true position to every fact with which nature can furnish us; while thus the whole will be transfigured into new and spiritual beauty, fit for the display of Deity to us, and surrounding us continually with admonitions of His presence and encouragement of His love. How would "day unto day" thus "utter speech, and night unto night tell knowledge"! The argument that Scripture was not intended to teach us science would be then seen as a partial truth miserably misused. Who indeed shall dare to say what Scripture cannot teach to him who is before God to learn? And once let all truth be claimed for God as that which must needs testify for Him, the opposition between secular and sacred will end here as it ends in every true Christian life devoted to Him. Here, if the business be secular, can the life be as it should be—sacred? Have we not seen enough to know that a merely secular means a merely godless science? The realm in which Scripture has no voice is a realm in which God is not the King. Woe to the man who enters there!

Still more evidently is it true, then, that "where He speaks, whatever be the subject, it must be truth He speaks. 'Satan is a liar, and the father of it.' God is no more 'a man, that He should lie,' than He is 'the son of man, that He should repent.' And this applies equally to all subjects. He could no more give me false physics than false argument,—untrue statements as to sun or moon or

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*Take but one fact,—that of the fall; how are we to have any true science or philosophy if we ignore this? The evil that is here, if man take not the shame of it, must be imputed to God as weakness at least, as one well-known man of late explicitly imputed it. He thought God had done the best He could! Of old, Gnosticism and Manicheism had said similar things: *matter* was, in their eyes, too intractable.

firmament than as to Christ or salvation. Once admit a possibility of error, though it be infinitesimal, it must shake one's conviction as to the whole. 'If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?' Take away the truthfulness of Scripture in matters in which it can be tested, how shall we accredit it where it cannot be tested? 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.' Such is the declaration of the Lord Himself. And with the Word of God, what may be pleaded for man may not be pleaded. Man is fallible and ignorant where yet he may be honest and true. With the Omniscient, mistake is impossible, and we dare not urge it."

To conclude, the work of God is as *really* a revelation of God as His Word is. The principle of continuity (or unity) requires that they should speak one language, and they do throughout. *Spiritual law reigns in the natural world.* While just as the plant in its flower and fruit interprets the seed, and just as the New Testament is the interpreter of the Old, so is the Word of God that which must give the proper understanding of creation. A science careless of God is none. It cannot be permitted to "recast" for us the truths of Scripture; but Scripture is adequate to "recast," purify, and perfect science. The clue to the natural is to be found only in the spiritual, for which indeed alone it exists.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*Q.* 20.—"What is the meaning of Rom. viii. 12, 13?"

*Ans.*—It is the same enforcement of the practical fruit of faith which we find so often in these chapters. "Faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone." So, whatever the orthodoxy professed, "if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." On the other hand, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." This is

not putting a legal condition into the gospel, but showing the necessary consequences of its reception: "for as many as are led of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

The beautiful way in which this is stated is worthy of admiration. There is in the Greek a double form of the future, and both forms are used here. The first statement is not "ye *shall* die," but "ye are *about* to die": for grace might at any time take one off this road, and save a soul from death. On the other hand, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live:" here the certainty of the result is assured. There is no doubt whatever that those who are upon *this* road will reach the goal they seek.

As with all these conditional statements we must remember that they apply to professing Christians *as* such. We are not to say, "Oh, but we are true believers, and this does not apply to us." Only if you take in all that profess, both true and false, could it be said. For, suppose you say to true believers, singled out as that, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," you make a doubt as to their security. And again, if you say to mere professors, "If ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," this is law, and impossible. Take in all professors alike, and then say it, and you are but showing how the true are distinguished from the false. And so, we have seen, the apostle uses it.

*Q.* 21.—"Will you explain 1 Cor. xiv. 27?"

*Ans.*—Only two or three were to speak, for more would be unprofitable, and so the prophesying is restricted also (*v.* 29). And they were to speak in turn, without confusion.

*Q.* 22.—"Does the Greek word, *ekklesia*, used for 'church' in the New Testament, signify, 'called-out ones'? I had supposed it signified an 'assembly,' and might be used for a gathering of unsaved, as well as of saints."

*Ans.*—The last is surely so: it is used for the riotous meeting at Ephesus dismissed by the town clerk. But the other is also true. Archbishop Trench says, "The word by which the Church is named is itself an example—a more illustrious one could scarcely be found—of the gradual ennobling of a word. For we have '*ekklesia*' in three distinct stages of meaning,—the heathen, the Jewish, and the Christian. In respect of the first, *ekklesia*, as all know, was the lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all those possessed of the right of citizenship, for the transaction of the public affairs. That they were *summoned* is expressed in the latter part of the word; that they were summoned *out of* the whole population, a select portion of it, including neither the populace, nor yet strangers, nor those who had forfeited their civic rights, this is expressed in the first. Both the *calling* and the calling *out* are moments to be remembered, when the word is assumed into a higher Christian sense, for in them the chief part of its peculiar adaptation to its auguster uses lies." (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, vol. i., pp. 17, 18.)

*Q.* 23.—"What difference is there between these expressions in Ps. cxix., 'commandments,' 'precepts,' 'testimonies,' 'statutes,' 'judgments'?"

*Ans.*—"Commandments" speak of the authority of the Law-giver; "precepts," of a charge or deposit committed to man; "testimonies," of God's witness in them concerning Himself; "statutes," of their definiteness and stability; "judgments," of their moral nature. "Ordinances," in ver. 91, should be "judgments," and is elsewhere in general a translation of one of the other words, generally that for "statutes" or for "judgments."

*Q.* 24.—"What is the meaning of 'their inventions' in Ps. xcix. 8?"

*Ans.*—Simply "their doings," as the Revised Version now renders it.

# PRESENT THINGS,

## AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

## THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)

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### *Laodicea: What Brings the Time of Christ's Patience to an End.*

(Rev. iii. 14–22.)

WE come now to the solemn close of these addresses, the Lord's last word to the churches; and it is very striking that we come to that close here, just after that epistle to Philadelphia, in which we have seen recognized a certain real return of heart to Christ, and a true revival by His Word and Spirit. Now, there are, on the contrary, procrastination and collapse: and the most serious thing is that these are the infallible signs of the failure on the part of Philadelphia itself. *Laodicea springs out of Philadelphia.* The blessing there leads to the judgment here.

In the states of the professing church which these addresses have already pictured, there is not only historical succession, but development. Even Protestantism sprang out of the bosom of Romanism, as Philadelphia out of Protestantism. In neither case is the one absorbed into the other, however. Romanism continues, outside the Reformation. The signs of a remnant are unmistakable in Philadelphia. Moreover, "overcomers" are implied in each case until the coming of the Lord. In Thyatira, thus, they are exhorted to "hold fast till I come; and he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." In Sardis, "If therefore thou shalt

not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief." In Philadelphia, "I come quickly." In this way, Protestantism, springing out of Romanism, runs henceforth side by side with it to the end. Philadelphia springs out of Protestantism, and similarly accompanies it. And so Laodicea, we may conclude, springs out of Philadelphia, and runs its course parallel with the rest.

But there is more positive proof. For if in Sardis there has been the absolute coldness of death, in Philadelphia, the glow of revival, in Laodicea there is the fatal lukewarmness which shows at once the effect (and the limited effect) of one upon another. And this is why the cold of Sardis itself is preferable to the lukewarmness of Laodicea. All God's grace has been spent in vain upon it.

Laodicea gives us, then, the failure of Protestantism, as Thyatira of that which assumes to be the Catholic Church. It is the complete failure of Christendom the second time; and now, in the full light of an open Bible, and after repeated intervention of God in wide-spread and protracted revival and blessing. The full end of patience has at last been reached, and the time to display also the results of the divine work, which no failure or opposition of man can in any wise hinder.

But before entering upon the details of this address to Laodicea, let us inquire as to the name itself. It was given to a city by Antiochus II., after his enlargement of it, in honor of his wife Laodice, and is a compound of two words—*laos*, "people," and *dike*. "*Dike*" is given by the dictionaries as having the three meanings, closely connected together, (1) of "manner, custom, usage;" (2) of "right;" (3) of "requirement," and so "venge-

ance," punitive justice. We have thus three possible meanings: "custom of the people," "people's right," "judgment of the people." And these three things have equally plain and solemn connection with one another.

For it is indeed the "people's custom" that is here unfolded. If under popery it is rather the usurpation of the leaders that is the question, in Protestantism, with its open Bible, the *people* are tested as never before. The earliest ages of Christianity, dependent upon the toilsome labor of copyists for the multiplication of copies of the Word, had in no wise the privileges of which the Reformation, with its providentially furnished printing-press, at once came into possession. Hence, also, responsibilities as great, and brought home to the door of every man. People may still be ignorant, but it is now assuredly a willing ignorance. They may still seek to cast responsibility upon others, and blindly follow still leaders as blind, but this has necessarily now another character from what it had before. Hence it is the *people* who are now being manifested,—their way which is being made apparent; and judgment, however delayed, must at last follow with proportional energy. Thus two significant applications of this word "Laodicea" are made evident.

But again, and connected with this, there is a feature of the last days which Scripture puts prominently forward,—the self-assertion which indeed on man's part has never been lacking, but which now pervades, in a manner not before seen, the masses of the population. That Protestantism has favored this, is one of the reproaches of the Romanists. And it is undeniably true that in one

sense it *has* favored it. The breaking of ecclesiastical yokes,—the yoke of a tyranny more prostrating than any other,—with that awaking of the mind of man which is ever found where the light of the Word of God has penetrated,—has produced a state of things in which, if Christ's yoke be not accepted, man's will will assuredly assert itself as never before. And so it has proved; and so Scripture long before declared that it would be. "Laodicea," in its third sense, as "people's *right*," has become, morally, spiritually, and politically also, the watchword of the times. On the one hand, there is an immense march of civilization, a predicted running to and fro, and increase of knowledge; on the other, an uprise of what threatens civilization, and is ominous of an approaching end of the whole state.

"People's right!" The rights of the masses! and which the masses themselves mean to define and pronounce upon. Here is that condition of things which Hobbes, more than two centuries since, declared to be the national condition, and which he rightly said *meant universal war*. For who is to judge as to these conflicting interests? and who is to enforce the judgment? Class will disagree with class,—nay, individual with individual: every man's hand will be against his brother; might will make right upon a scale the world has never seen, until out of this surging sea a power rises strong enough to command once more. Then they that will be lords shall have a lord, and they that will not receive Christ shall have Antichrist. So the Word of God declares. For this ominous watchword, "people's rights," in the end of centuries of divine long-suffering, is a terrible claim in

the ears of a God, strong, if yet so patient, and who is provoked every day.

It is a claim which denies the fall, and the sentence confirmed by countless individual sins,—the claim of a world which has refused and crucified the Son of God come into it in simplest loving mercy;—which would take the earth out of its Maker's hand, and enrich itself at His cost and to His dishonor. What wonder if they should quarrel over the spoils of victory, and the nations be quaking, as they are, over the success of their policy of liberty and equal rights? When democracy meant only the curbing of the despotic power of rulers, when it meant still respect for wealth and rank, and law and order, they could rejoice over it, and cite it as the evidence of morally improved times. Arbitrary power only was to be restrained: there was to be equal justice, and quietness and assurance as the effect of righteousness. Certainly the abuse of power had been great enough to provoke reprisals, and make the downfall of absolutism an apparent real advancement. But man was and is the same; and the mistake has been ever to suppose that alterations of this kind could really heal or touch a moral state which was the essence of the trouble. The leprosy, skinned over here, would only break out elsewhere, for it was deeper than the surface,—in the blood, in the vitals of humanity itself.

Who can say where the movement for men's rights shall stop? If they be rights, must it not be unrighteousness to stop any where? Who can say to the restless, resistless, surge of the sea, Come no further! here shall thy waves be stayed? There were, there are, most real and gigantic evils,—tyr-

annies which no form of government yet devised has taken into account, or probably can take. What does every man's right to his own imply? What is "his own"? How can you take from wealth the power which wealth implies? or allow power without allowing the abuse of it? Settle all inequalities, make one general plain of all the mountains upon earth, you have stopped the fertilizing rivers also which the mountains roll over the plains and in the valleys which you deprecate, but for whose benefit, spite of all, they rise.

Rights! what scale have you of rights? Listen to the voices from a lower level than you desire, which will interpret for you, and enforce their interpretation,—socialism, communism, nihilism,—dread names, not merely for the monarch, but for the man of property also, and for the law-abiding citizen. People's rights are already in terrible conflict with one another, and in their name how many wrongs may be inflicted yet! This Laodicea of politics is destined to be the rock upon which all governmental reform will end in anarchy and chaos. He who can read the great typical book of nature may read the scriptural presages upon a scroll written with lamentation and mourning and woe: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Luke xxi. 25, 26).

But the removal of the things that can be shaken will only make way for a kingdom, not such as they anticipate, absolute beyond all the tyrannies of old,

a "rod of iron," which shall break as potsherds all the opposing powers of man, yet be the shepherd's rod under which the poor of the flock will lie down at last in peace, and none shall make them afraid. How refreshing to turn from what has been engaging us to contemplate such a rule as the world has never seen!

"He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people; He shall save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor. . . . In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him" (Ps. lxxii. 2–4, 7, 8, 11).

But, it may be objected, this is altogether political: what has this to do with Laodicea *as a condition of the churches?* It would have little indeed to do with it if only the Church realized its separation from the world. As it is, it has very much indeed to do,—so much, that in Christendom a political Laodicea involves, as a matter of course, an ecclesiastical one. The world and the Church are so allied, so mingled, so permeate each other now, that ideally alone will they endure separation. And as a matter of fact, "people's rights" has become scarcely less an ecclesiastical than a political watchword. In this sphere, the masses are rising up against the long rule of their spiritual leaders, and claiming their rights at their hands. The oldest and best established oligarchies are accepting pop-

ular methods and forms upon all sides. The few must yield to the many. They choose their pastors as they choose their lawyer or their doctor, and insist upon having what they pay for. What can be a better "right" than that? Thus, however, it is clear, they "heap to themselves teachers," if you must not assume that they have "itching ears." But, in truth, the ear it is that is largely consulted; and necessarily so, where the very idea at the bottom is a commercial equivalent, and popular majorities rule, as quantity instead of quality. Even in the Church, and at its best, the most spiritual have never been the larger number. How much less in churches demoralized by heterogeneous mixture, competing for power and popularity!

Think of it, however, as we may, there is no doubt that, in church as well as state, "liberal" thoughts are prevailing,—democratic forms are succeeding to the old aristocratic ones. And here certainly Philadelphia has prepared the way for Laodicea. Distinctive priesthood, and the vested rights of clerisy, have in measure yielded to the free evangelization going on, and the equality of Christian brotherhood, and it is impossible not to rejoice that this should be so. But yet who can doubt that the overthrow, such as it is, of these ecclesiastical superstitions has favored claims that are no more of God than they? The laity may dispossess the clergy, and dominion pass from one class to another without reverting to the hands to which it really belongs. Christ is alone Master, not clergy, and not people. Ministers are indeed servants, as the very name imports, yet not servants of *men*,—a thing against which the apostle so

vehemently contends. "Ye are bought with a price; be ye not the servants of men: if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Thus these two things are in essential opposition. Christ needs to be in His true place,—a thing which so marks Philadelphia, but from which Laodicea excludes Him as does Thyatira. Bring Christ in, and the ministers are *His* servants. Bring Christ in, and the people are *His* people. His service, on the part of all alike, is true and equal freedom at once to all.

But the spiritual phase of Laodicea we are now to follow. May we do it honestly, with hearts open to receive rebuke; remembering that, not ecclesiastical place, but spirit, is in question. It is an old deceit to pride one's self on possession of the truth, while yet the sanctification by the truth is unknown. And this indeed makes a large part of the character of what is before us.

The Lord presents Himself here as the one One who amid the general failure is "the Amen, the faithful and true witness:" *He* has not failed.

He is the Amen: "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ," says the apostle, "who was preached among you by us, even by me and Sylvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea. For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. i. 19, 20). No uncertainty, no doubtfulness, is there in Christ or His Word. He is always simple, positive "Yea," speaking one thing, absolutely to be depended on. If we have but a word of His, it is a blessed reality, given us in God's infinite love, which we may rest our souls on for eternity, and which can never fail us. This is a

resource which the denial of verbal inspiration would completely take from us; but His own assurance is, "Scripture cannot be broken" (Jno. x. 35). If it be a question, as in the case which the Lord is speaking of here, of but a title applied by an inspired writer to a certain class of men, there must be perfect suitability and divine wisdom in the application. "If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, *and Scripture cannot be broken.*" How precious is this assurance! Coming where it does, is it not itself a significant warning, this claim of His as "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness" to such a generation as the present? Does He not in it challenge the unbelief so common all around us?

But this presentation of Himself as a true and faithful Witness is in contrast with the failure of the Church, which has been any thing but that. He is just about to remove the candlestick because it has been unfaithful and untrue. But His people's shortcoming is not His own. Infidelity may seek to justify itself by the failure of Christians; and even Christians, alas! are almost capable of taking it as in some sort a reflection upon Himself. But "if we are unfaithful, he abideth faithful," as the Rev. Ver. rightly puts it now (2 Tim. ii. 13). And He is just ready to rise up and bring in that day in which, with the revelation of all things, this faithfulness of His will appear abundantly. In the general wreck, this only now remains to Him.

He proclaims Himself with this: "The Beginning of the creation of God." The old creation, spoiled by sin, is passing away; its history is nearly completed; its judgment has been long since pronounced in the cross, and in Christ risen from the

dead is begun all that God owns as really His,—first and always in His thought, and for which the ruin of the old only prepared the way.

When the Psalmist lifted up his eyes to heaven, and in view of God's glorious handiwork there exclaims, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" the answer is, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honor; Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." But of whom is he speaking? As the apostle in the second of Hebrews assures us, not of the first, but of the Second Man. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." It is Christ in whom the true ideal of man is realized, and of whom the first Adam was but the fleeting image, and in many respects the contrast.

Now in Laodicea, with Christ outside, it cannot be the new creation in which their riches are. Yet they say they are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. Thus there are things which are gain to them which they have not counted loss for Christ.

It is an exceedingly solemn thing that the very truth which with all its grace judges and sets aside man most thoroughly is the very truth which he is prone to take and use for the purpose of self-gratulation. Take the law: God gave it "that *every* mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). But how has man used, and how is he using it? Always to establish his own righteousness by it. The large

part of the Christian world, so called, to-day is taking the "strength of sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56) to accomplish holiness by it, and are taking salvation itself to be, "not" indeed "by the *merit* of works, but" yet "by works as a condition."

So, exactly, with Christianity: God has brought in the truth of new creation, the world before Him lying under death and judgment. Yet man takes the blessed truth of Christianity to patch up the world with it, and make it better if he can. And in the very presence of the ruin and break-up of things on every side, men are vaunting the success of the effort. On the eve of judgment, they are fulfilling the Scripture-portents of such a time by their smooth auguries of prosperity and peace.

No doubt God's Spirit is really and largely working; but His end and man's thought are diverse, in that, while He is converting souls to "deliver them *out of* this present evil world," man's thought is an improved world, a Christian world: the effect of which is, to amalgamate Christians and the world, and spoil the scriptural character of Christianity altogether.

But in these last days God has given many to recognize the truth of the Word as to this. He has revived the truth of new creation, and revealed to us the practical and fruitful consequences which result from a place in Christ, where He is, in the heavens. But the question for us is, What are we doing, then, with the truth we recognize? Shall we talk of being in Christ a new creation, old things passed away, and all things become new, and yet cling to what has in it all the moral elements that make up the world—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"?

Is it theory with us, or practical reality, to have "put on the new man, who is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is ALL, and in all"? Has the Lord need to appeal to us as the One who is "the Beginning of the creation of God"? If so, is not Laodiceanism with us in that proportion?

To Laodicea, as to the rest, He says, "I know thy *works*." Here is the test,—the only true one. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth." This is the certain and near end of professing Christendom. Of course He will not spew His own beloved people out of His mouth. He must take these first of all to Himself before He can reject the whole mass as nauseous. And we have already seen, in the address to Philadelphia, that the Lord tells them He will keep them out of the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world:—not merely out of the temptation; He might hide them in the desert so, but out of the *hour* of it. For this, He must take them out of the world altogether. And that is what the "I come quickly" connected with this also intimates.

Here, then, we have the brief, solemn pause before the Lord takes His people to Himself. He must do this before the professing body can be spewed out of His mouth. He cannot so reject even the poorest, weakest, most wayward of His own. And it is important to insist upon this, because there is abroad a view according to which

only a class of better than ordinary Christians will be taken up when the Lord comes, while the rest will be left upon earth to go through the tribulation which follows this, when the earth is enduring the vials of His wrath. They point to the promise to Philadelphia as in this way the promise to a special class; and the ten virgins of our Lord's parable they maintain to be all Christians, as they bring forward the fact of their being "virgins" to prove;—only foolish ones, unwatchful and unready, with indeed the oil of the Spirit in their lamps, but no *extra* supply in their "vessels." Thus their lamps, which had been burning, cease to burn at last, and the fresh supply of oil they get is obtained too late for admission to the marriage. The Lord rejects them only as the *bride:* they lose their place in this, and are shut out to be purified by tribulation, and made ready for the kingdom afterward.

But how many precious realities must be denied in order to hold this view! Is it our faithfulness, then, that gives us a place among those who are admitted to the dignity of the bride of Christ? Is the Lord when He comes indeed going to discriminate in this way between less and more faithfulness?—between ordinary and extraordinary Christians? What an engine is this for turning the blessed and purifying hope into a means of self-occupation and despair! If things are so, where is the line of acceptance to be drawn? and on what side of it are we? Is my joyful expectation of this blessed time to be based on the belief in my own superiority to many of my brethren? What comfortable Pharisaism, or what legal distress must such a view involve!

If true, why should such a discrimination be made between the living saints alone? Why should

it not equally affect the dead? And then, is there to be a purgatory to purify these?

As to Scripture, the support it gives to any such view is only apparent, and results from an interpretation of single passages, which is at issue with its whole doctrinal teaching. The coming of the Lord to remove His saints is not in Scripture ever connected even with our responsibilities and their adjudication, but with the fulfillment of the hope with which grace has inspired us. Our responsibilities and the reward of our works are connected with that which is called the "appearing" or "manifestation" or "revelation of Christ,"—His coming *with* His saints, not *for* them. At the door of the Father's house to which He welcomes us when He comes, no sentry stands, no challenge is required. We go into it as purged by the precious blood of Christ, and in Christ. Already are we not only entitled, but "*meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

When He comes to the world, and His people take their places with Him as associated with Him in government, then dignities, honors, rewards of work, will find their place. It will be "Have thou authority over ten"—"be thou also over five cities." But salvation, righteousness, the child's place with the Father, membership of the body of Christ, our relationship to Christ as His bride,—nay, even our being kings and priests unto His God and Father, are things which, as they are not gained, so they are not lost by any work of ours at all. Christ has procured them for us, and grace bestows them,—grace, and grace alone.

When, therefore, the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and

the trump of God, is there discrimination among those in Christ?—of the dead who shall be raised? of the living who shall be changed? Nay, but the "dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; so shall we be ever with the Lord." Blessed words! how they pierce and scatter the chilling fogs of legalism, and make the "blessed hope," not a means of sorest perplexity and doubt, but hope indeed!

Nor are the passages which these writers build upon in contradiction with this at all. The promise to the overcomer at Philadelphia is one of a class which, as the eye runs over them throughout these apocalyptic addresses, show plainly that they apply more or less to every true believer. Take the promise to him at Ephesus, and ask, Will any believer *not* "eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God"? Take that to Smyrna, and ask, Will any "be hurt of the second death"? And so on through the remainder. Their special significance in relation to the overcomer in the cases there pointed out is not in the least diminished by their general application to all believers.

Again, as to the ten virgins, it is a mistake to suppose that in that character (*according to the parable,*) Christians are represented as espoused to Christ at all. Those who go forth to meet the bridegroom are not the bride; and to make them this, disjoints the parable. According to the whole tenor of the prophecy in these chapters, the Jewish people and the earth are in the foreground, and the parable of the virgins only parenthetically brings in the connection of Christians with these.

According to the common language of the Old-Testament prophets, the Lord is coming to take a *Jewish* bride; and on His way to do this, His people of the present time are called up to meet Him and return with Him. So much is implied in the expression in the Greek. It is thus when He is come *to earth* that the foolish virgins are rejected, and cast out of His kingdom altogether. The parable is a parable of the *kingdom;* and the kingdom, in all the parables, speaks of earth, not heaven, and of the whole field of profession. "Virgins," "servants," and the like titles, merely intimate responsible profession, not necessarily the truth of it. *He* was a servant who had laid up his lord's money in a napkin, and never really served at all. He was a servant, but a wicked one; and so with these "foolish" virgins.

Oil they are explicitly stated not to have; and though their lamps are only represented as "*going* out," when the cry is raised, "Behold, the bridegroom!" this is the constant style of these parables, in which the inner thoughts of the soul are mirrored and exposed, not dogmatic truth taught. In their own imaginations, the Pharisees were the "ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance;" not in dogmatic reality. Moreover, the Lord's words of rejection, "I know you not," are decisive from One who "*knoweth* them that are His," and can never disown them.

No, He cannot spew His own out of His mouth, but must have them with Him out of the world before the first drops of the storm of judgment fall. Even then it will be made manifest, before He rejects the public professing body, that they have on their part rejected Him. Christendom ends in

open apostasy. The day of the Lord will not come except there come a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed. Popery, evil as it is, and antichristian too, is not the last evil, nor the worst. It is the sinful *woman*, not the *man*. It has been revealed over three hundred years as this, and the day of the Lord is not yet come. *The* Antichrist will deny the Father and the Son alike.

*(To be continued.)*

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# "THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

## I. WHAT THE KINGDOM IS.

THERE is perhaps no term in Scripture so largely used and so little understood as that of "the kingdom of heaven." Yet its importance must be (in some measure at least,) proportionate to the frequency of its use. It is only, indeed, one book—the gospel of Matthew,—in which it is found, though there thirty-one times; but the kindred expression, "the kingdom of God," is used much more extensively, and in some parables in other gospels is found in its stead. Taken together, these expressions have a very large place in the New Testament, and their interpretation will correspondingly affect a great deal of Scripture. I propose, therefore, a serious examination of the doctrine of the kingdom as covered by these terms, and to inquire as to the practical bearing of the doctrine also, which assuredly there must be, for "all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

"The kingdom of heaven" is a New-Testament

term, then; but it has its roots in the Old Testament. The idea is found in the germ in Daniel, in the prophet's words to Nebuchadnezzar, who, effectually humbled by his durance among the beasts, should learn by it that "*the heavens do rule*" (chap. iv. 26). This is expanded afterward into the thought that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (*v.* 32). Here we have but the *idea*, however,—the rule of *God*, supreme necessarily over men. Here there is no thought of a special, limited, dispensational kingdom. *This* "dominion," as the king himself says, "is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation" (*v.* 34).

But the book of Daniel carries us further than this in the direction we are seeking. Historically and prophetically both, it has for its scope "the times of the Gentiles," of which the Lord speaks (Luke xxi. 24),—that is, of Gentile supremacy over Israel. But this is the consequence of her sin, and of God's controversy with her, and it means the interruption of His own dwelling in her midst, as of old He did, and as He yet will do. For Jerusalem shall yet be, saith the Lord, "the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." (Ezek. xliii. 7.)

The "place of His throne" had been given up before Nebuchadnezzar could lay waste the city and the temple, and a notable change, therefore, is found in the Old-Testament books which give us the history of that solemn and important time. The ark had been the symbolic throne of Him who "sitteth between the cherubim;" and as "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth" it had

passed through Jordan to take possession of the land. (Josh. iii. 11.) Now the glory had left its dwelling-place on earth, as Ezekiel had seen (chap. x. 18; xi. 23), and the very decree which ordains the rebuilding of the temple is that of a Persian king to whom the "God of *heaven* has given all the kingdoms of the earth." (2 Chron. xxxvi. 23; Ezra i. 2.)

This is no mere casual expression. It is characteristic of the books of the captivity—of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. Although the eternal throne of God can never be given up, yet a dispensational throne is now removed; and this is what characterizes the times of the Gentiles,—a responsible throne on earth which is set up by God, and yet not God's throne, *not* the kingdom of God. For the kingdom of God men must wait, but in hope; for the kingdom of God shall come.

Daniel accordingly shows us the end of these Gentile empires, and beyond them all a wholly different one: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Chap. ii. 44.)

This is in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, but the features of this final kingdom he is not able more distinctly to see. The vision granted later to the prophet (chap. vii.) develops, as we may easily see, the spiritual significance both of the Gentile powers and of that which supersedes them. For the king, the image has the form of a man, though with no breath of life in it; and there is brilliancy enough, though increasing degeneracy. But to the prophet's eyes there is no human form, no unity; plenty of

life and vigor, but bestial. On the other hand, as to the final kingdom, though not much is seen as to detail, one feature newly given is of the sweetest encouragement. It is that the government is in the hands of One like a *son of man*, under whom the saints too possess the kingdom.

Here, then, is a "kingdom of heaven"—a heavenly rule on earth,—a final world-wide triumph of righteousness and peace. We recognize it as that of which all the prophets speak, the expansion of the first prophecy of the victory of the woman's Seed, —the unforgotten goal and purpose of the ages.

Old-Testament prophecy soon comes to an end after the voice in Daniel has uttered itself. There is a long pause of expectancy, and then one more than a prophet takes up the burden of those many years past, and announces the kingdom of heaven as at hand. But the people are not ready: and the voice is of one crying in the wilderness, a priest who has forsaken the sanctuary, and stands apart from men. The baptism of repentance must precede the remission of sins. The mountain must be leveled with the plain, that the way of the Lord may be prepared.

Then there is another Voice, and He who was announced is come. The kingdom is presented, now with the signs and powers which make good its claim, and are ready to establish it among men. Nothing is wanting, except, alas! the loyal hearts that should greet their divine King; but here is a lack that nothing can compensate for. The more fully manifested, the more fully He is rejected. He finds in a Gentile the faith He cannot find in Israel. (Matt. viii. 10.) And thereupon declares that many shall come from the east and the west, and sit

down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, with wailing and gnashing of teeth.

The steps of His rejection it is not necessary here to trace. The twelfth chapter of Matthew already shows it complete. His mighty works, instinct with the power and love of God, they ascribe to Beelzebub, and He warns them that for blasphemy against the Holy Ghost there is never forgiveness. They sought signs, but none should be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonas, the Son of Man three days and nights in the heart of the earth. The chapter ends with the solemn disowning of natural ties: whosoever did the will of His Father in heaven, the same was His brother and sister and mother.

This introduces the thirteenth chapter, in which seven parables give us the prophetic character of the kingdom of heaven as it now is, the King rejected and away. Instead of finding fruit in His vineyard, He goes forth to sow the seed of fresh fruit among the Gentiles. Speaking in parables, because hearing they heard and understood not, He instructs His disciples in the "*mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven" (*v.* 11),—that is, in things not forming part of what had been revealed in Judaism, things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world (*v.* 35).

We see, in fact, in these parables that while the essential idea of the kingdom of heaven is preserved, the form of it is widely different. It is still a kingdom of *heaven*, and in the hands of the Son of Man; not yet, however, established in power, but committed into the hands of men, and of men

who fail in the administration of it. Thus there is disorder, and a possibility of evil even in high places,—purging and rectification needed when the King comes in power. "He shall send forth His angels, and they shall purge out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." The mysteries of the kingdom terminate thus in its manifestation. The kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ (Rev. i. 9) looks on to His kingdom and glory (1 Thess. iii. 12), when the fruits of the present sowing-time are husbanded.

These two forms of the kingdom of heaven need to be distinguished carefully. The Lord's address to Laodicea very plainly distinguishes them: "Him that overcometh will I give to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne." It is as Son of Man He is seen in these addresses; *His own* throne, therefore, is clearly what is His as Man, in contrast with the *Father's* throne, the divine one. It is plain at once that while His saints are promised to sit with Him upon the one, none but One Himself divine could sit upon the other.

The Lord has, then, a present kingdom; but in it we can serve only and not reign. We are "translated into the kingdom of *God's* dear Son." (Col. i. 13.) The time for Christians to reign cannot be yet; cannot be till He takes the kingdom in the form in which the Old Testament shows it,—comes as Son of Man, and reigns publicly.

It is with His present kingdom we are now occupied. This is established in a very different way, namely, by the sowing of the seed—"the *Word* of the kingdom." The kingdom extends no further than as this is, in some way, "sown in the heart."

Yet it may not be savingly. It is the sphere of profession and privilege that is before us. The devil may take away that which was sown in the heart. The man may have no root in himself, the heart being a "heart of stone." Or the springing up of what is native to the soil may choke the good seed so that it is unfruitful. By and by, among the wheat also the enemy sows tares. All this is a picture of the kingdom.

There may be other aspects of it, and there are. We may be called, as in the last three parables of this series, to look at the divine plan and purpose, which cannot fail of accomplishment; but from the human side there cleaves to it ever the idea of condition, of possible failure, of a mixture of evil with the good, of coming judgment needed to rectify this. If the idea of mercy come in, it is still conditional, never pure grace, as witness the parable which closes the eighteenth chapter of the same gospel.

The King is away, the administration in the hands of man in the meantime: this accounts for most of the characters we are considering. It is the distinctive, fundamental feature of this "mystery"-form; and as such, we must now examine it more attentively.

*(To be continued.)*

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## WILDERNESS FRUITS.

THE wilderness is yet to "bud and blossom as the rose." This is to be a literal fact, no doubt. Like all other such it conveys to us also an assurance that is full of comfort. The wil-

derness is the familiar type for us of the world in its present aspect, which the history of Israel has made our own in a multitude of precious lessons never to be forgotten. Who would blot out that inimitable record which Exodus and Numbers give first, and then Deuteronomy recapitulates, for practical wisdom when the land at last is reached, and the people of the Lord enjoy their heritage?

True, it is a record of difficulty, danger, and privation; of weakness, failure, and defeat. Little there is to minister to the pride of man. From Marah to Abel-shittim, the road is marked with monuments and sepulchres of those whose carcasses had fallen there. Every hand, from infancy to feeble old age, seems to have been writing only epitaphs with this inscription: "Cease ye from man!" But this is the first necessary lesson for us, and the only painful one. Once we have put our seal to this, we need not carry the crape of the funeral any longer. "Out of death life" is the voice of all nature round us. "Let the dead bury their dead," utters a greater Voice: "Go thou, and preach the kingdom of God."

Then look again at this wilderness, and see how on its barren sands you can every-where trace the pathway of the power of the Almighty. Day by day, the utter weakness manifests and glorifies the unfailing Strength. Everlasting arms are round about. The guiding Pillar, always nature's opposite, shuts out the scorching rays of midday,—lights up at night into a blaze of glory,—that by day or night they may go forward at its bidding. And all this not merely to meet need; *that* could be done with such economy of power as in general God's wise and holy government displays: but here with a lavish miracle which witnesses of One meaning to make His people know His nearness and His transcendence over nature. "In all their affliction He was

afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and He carried them all the days of old." (Isa. lxiii. 9.)

How precious all this, when we learn that all this amazing forth-putting of power in their behalf "happened to them for types, and is written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come"! As type is less than antitype,—as the natural pales before the spiritual,—so the wilderness, for the eye that can take it in, must be for us a scene of wonderful unvailing of the divine glory indeed! and the meanness of our lives, with what significance it is invested! For faith—for faith—this is how God is with us! how He seeks to make known to us His presence and His love.

A celebrated philosopher undertook to show that this world, notwithstanding the sin and evil of it, is the best of possible worlds. We may say that *for its purpose* it is surely the best. None other could so exhibit the weakness of the creature in contrast with the omnipotent love of the Creator. In no other could it have been so said, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2 Cor. iv. 7.) And this same earthen vessel has given to the bird of heaven a capacity for suffering and death (Lev. xiv.), in which the grace of God has found its only adequate expression.

Here is the great example of matchless obedience that has been given us, "that we should walk in His steps;" and what angel might not covet the opportunity to do so? In what other world could all the graces of Christian life be so exhibited, where power is manifested in renunciation and self-sacrifice? Read the list in Colossians (chap. iii. 12–16), and see how this spirit characterizes it: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of *mercies*, kindness, humbleness

of mind, *meekness, long-suffering; forbearing* one another, and *forgiving* one another: . . . even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." How little reason have we to complain, if God has given us an opportunity to develop and exhibit such things, and in this follow and glorify our common Master!

Trial this means, of course: what else? But the trial of a faith more precious than of gold, that it may be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. A trial which now works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.

The world is a wilderness; and just the good of it is that it is a wilderness. To the men of the world it is not that, but an Egypt, through which the judgments of God sweep indeed and desolate it, but leave it Egypt still. To the redeemed it is a wilderness; but as that, not orderless, not meaningless, not unfruitful; but whose harvests are reaped for eternity, and whose harvest-song is sung in heaven.

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## PAUL'S SHIPWRECK.

(Acts xxvii.)

WE have in this chapter the prisoner become the saviour. The vessel goes to pieces. The lives of all are preserved. But it was not the vessel, but the promise that preserved the travelers. They had been committed to the ship; but the ship breaks asunder, and the promise, not the ship, becomes their safety. All stewardships fail, and prove unfaithful. The Church as the witness, or candlestick, is broken and removed; but that which is of God Himself—His truth, His love, His promise—survives, as fresh and perfect as ever; and none who trust in Him, and in Him alone, shall ever be confounded. The voyage may end in complete wreck,—the

dispensation may end in apostasy; but all who hang on the promise of God through God's Messenger, though man's Prisoner, are brought safely through. Some swim, others *float on planks. Some may be strong, and work* their way more in the solitary strength of the Spirit; others, weaker, may hang about fragments that float around on the surface here and there inviting the timid and the unskilled: but whether they swim, or rest on the planks, all—strong and weak together, reach the shore. They cannot perish, for the God of the promise has them in His hand, and no wind or wave can dash them thence.

This is not Paul's voyage only, but ours. It is the safety of wrecked mariners,—the safety of all believers who trust in the promise—the God of the promise, the covenant sealed and made sure, the purchased as well as promised blessing and security of a poor ruined, helpless, and tossed soul who has by faith found his way and taken refuge in the sanctuary of peace, though all props and stays here fail him. Cisterns may be broken, but the fountain is as fresh and full as ever. Chorazin and Bethsaida may disappoint Jesus, but the Father does not. Hymenæus and Philetus may disappoint Paul, but God's foundations do not. "All men forsook me," says he on a great occasion, "but the Lord stood by me." And the Psalmist in triumph exclaims, "If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do? The Lord is in His holy temple!" Yes, the way to magnify our security is, to see it in the midst of perils and alarms. The very depth of the waters around honored the strength and sufficiency of the ark to Noah; the ruthlessness of the sword in passing through Egypt glorified the blood that was sheltering the first-born of Israel; and the solemn terrors of the coming day of the Lord will but enhance the safety and the joy of the ransomed, whether with Jesus in the heavens, or as the remnant in their "chambers" in the land.—(*Selected.*)

# "THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

## 2. THE KINGDOM IN THE HANDS OF MEN.

THE kingdom in its present form is established and ruled by the *word* of an absent King. *Being* absent, it is clearly His word which speaks for Him,—which represents His authority. His kingdom is a kingdom of truth, according to His own words to Pilate, who asks Him, "Art Thou a king, then?" And He answers, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should *bear witness unto the truth.* Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." (Jno. xviii. 37.)

"Master"—or "Teacher"—"and Lord" are necessarily associated in thought. "Ye call Me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am." (Jno. xiii. 13.) "Master" implies, of necessity, an authority, in Him absolute: and in this full sense He says to His disciples, "One is your Master, even Christ." (Matt. xxviii. 8.) To receive His word is thus to bow to His authority: His word is, as in the parable (Matt. xviii. 19), "the word of the kingdom." His subjects are thus nothing else than His disciples, and discipling is now into the kingdom of heaven—"every scribe which is *instructed* into the kingdom of heaven," in the end of the same chapter (*v.* 52), is literally, "discipled."

In the parables of the kingdom thus we find pictured the sphere of discipleship, embracing true and false alike. There are tares and wheat, fishes good and bad, wise and foolish virgins, guests that have not on the wedding-garment, servants that

have never truly served at all. The end declares the difference; and in the end the Son of Man purges out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity. Till the harvest (which is "the end of the age"—*not* "world"), the tares and wheat, the good and the evil, are found together.

The kingdom, then, covers the whole field of profession. Those in it may be or may not be what they assume to be; and thus blessings of it are conditional accordingly. People may enter it in two ways; there is an outer and an inner sphere, as it were, in the kingdom itself. There is a mere outward belonging to it, not in heart: there is an inward and real entering in, to which salvation attaches: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It is here, of course, not merely a "Lord, Lord," but a true subjection of soul to Him.

All this will come out more as we go on with our subject. Yet it is well to realize it at the outset; for it makes simple much that otherwise would be dark and difficult enough. The conditionality of every thing is in accord with the general idea of a kingdom, where government, though it be *gracious*, is not yet pure *grace;* and where grace is shown, not in setting aside requirement, but in enabling for its fulfillment. This is how the children of God, as subjects of the kingdom, manifest themselves; and there is a whole class of passages in Scripture which, speaking in this manner, are often misread alike, yet in two opposite ways, by those who would maintain and those who refuse the full reality of divine grace toward men. The one class would take Paul's expression, "I keep

under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest after having preached to others I myself should be a castaway," as meaning only that his service might be *disapproved;* while the other will have it that Paul fears here for his ultimate salvation. Neither view is correct: the term "castaway" is that translated "reprobate" in 2 Cor. 13, and it is of himself he speaks, and not his service. While the New Testament assures us, in its whole testimony in many concurrent lines of careful teaching, that true Christians "are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. x. 39).

The kingdom of heaven, then, in the form in which we are now considering it, is a kingdom of the truth, by subjection to which its true disciples are manifested. We are now to look at it as committed into the hands of men, the Lord being absent. It is plain that He uses men to minister "the word of the kingdom," and that a certain administration of its affairs is intended in the words, "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," "whose sins ye remit, they are remitted to them." The nature and limit of these assurances we shall have to inquire into immediately, but that the disciples are in some sense commissioned to represent their Lord, is clear and unequivocal.

The first of these we find for the first time in a promise given to Peter, when in the midst of nearly universal unbelief he confesses his faith in Christ as the Son of the living God: "Blessed art thou, Simon bar Jonah," replies the Lord, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My

Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 17–19).

The keys of the kingdom are symbolic of authority over it; and almost the same language the Lord uses of Himself in the address to Philadelphia—"He that hath the key of David; that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." The Pharisees He denounces for shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men: "Ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. xxiii. 13). And to the lawyers He says similarly (Luke xi. 52), "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the *key of knowledge:* ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

All this agrees with what we have before seen—that the kingdom is a kingdom of the truth: thus the key speaks of entrance into the kingdom, and the entrance into such a kingdom is by the key of knowledge. The key speaks thus really, if not exclusively, of the power of discipling.

The power of binding and loosing, according to the Rabbinical writings, belonged to and described the office of a teacher. "The Rabbi set apart to 'loose or bind' might authoritatively declare what was binding on the conscience and what not; and in Talmudical writings, the phrase continually recurs by which a teacher or a school is said to *loose* or to *bind*,—*i. e.*, to declare something obligatory or non-obligatory."* It is plain, then, that if the

*Edersheim's "History of the Jewish Nation," p. 405.

power of the keys speaks of entrance or admission into the kingdom,—of discipling,—that of binding and loosing applies to the regulation of the conduct of those already admitted or discipled, whatever may be the limits of this power. The latter naturally connects itself with the former, and follows it.

There remains the question, Was the power of the keys personal to Peter only? The Romanist, it is well known, not only makes him the rock upon which the Church is built, but gives him in a special way the keys of heaven. The Church is, however, as distinct from the kingdom as the *kingdom* of heaven from heaven itself. With the former we have nothing to do just now: as to the latter, it is well to remark that the promise itself limits itself to *earth* as the sphere of this binding or loosing. "Whatsoever thou shalt bind *on earth*" does not mean "whatsoever thou, being on earth, shalt bind," but just what it says. The earth is where only the binding applies; and "shall be bound in heaven" means simply that heaven being for the kingdom the seat of authority, it would confirm the act of its representatives on earth. On earth,—for earth,—alone is there power, though he who rebels against it rebels against the authority of heaven. It is as where the Lord says, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me" (Matt. x. 40). The delegated power on earth represents the authority behind it.

But even for Rome, the keys belong not simply to Peter. There are successors to his chair. And the Protestant view, in which they represent the power of administrating the Word and sacraments, must of course admit others as participants in this. Nor need there be a doubt that as Peter's faith was

but the faith of the other disciples, so they as well as he participate in this promise. No doubt as his energy makes him foremost in confession, so also he retains a foremost place throughout; and so at Pentecost he opens the kingdom of heaven to the Jews, as afterward he is chosen of God to open it to the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius. But we can scarcely think of these two instances as being the only use made of the keys of the kingdom. The power of binding and loosing which is here also explicitly promised to Peter, we find in the eighteenth chapter of the same gospel (*v.* 18) extended to others also; and if the power of the keys be the power of administration or of discipling into the kingdom as we have seen, then the commission in the closing chapter explicitly extends this also: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth,"—the kingdom was just ready to begin,—"go ye, therefore, and teach" (or, as the margin and the Revised Version now, "make disciples of") "all nations." And that here successors are contemplated is plainly taught in the closing words: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Thus the administration of the kingdom is committed to men. They are to initiate and receive others into it; they are to regulate it for and under Him. So completely is it intrusted to their care, that in the gospel of Mark the Lord represents the kingdom of God to be "as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, *he knoweth not how*" (chap. iv. 26, 27). Not, of course, that His care over His people

sleeps; but outwardly things happen in that which is professedly in subjection to Him without any open interference on His part. "But when the fruit is brought forth" (or "ripe," in the Rev. Ver.) "immediately He putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." So will He presently put in the sickle; for, spite of man's doing, the harvest comes in its due season.

Yet in the meanwhile the kingdom takes strange shapes, and because it is true that He will have His harvest, and because it has been forgotten that the seed springs and grows up He knoweth not how, it has been taken for granted that if the kingdom of heaven is in the Word of God said to be "like" such and such things,—"like" mustard-seed, or "like" leaven in a woman's hand,—this decides that all is *according to His mind.* In fact, it is far otherwise; for this expression, "He knoweth not how," if it does not mean to convey, as we know it does not, any real ignorance, then does certainly imply that the growth spoken of is strange, irregular, *as if* He knew not. So it is said, "The Lord *knoweth* the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps. i. 6). And if it be the fact of course that He knoweth the proud, yet to distinguish it from this approving knowledge it is added, "The proud He knoweth *afar off*" (Ps. cxxxviii. 6).

So of the growth of His kingdom in man's hand it may be truly said, He knoweth it not, or He knoweth it afar off; no new thing, alas! of that which comes of man's responsibility; here the words of the Psalmist surely apply, if any where, "Man being in honor abideth not" (Ps. xlix. 12). Dispensation after dispensation has illustrated this

rule: none have confirmed it more signally than the present.

Thus in the second parable of Matt. xiii. it is "*while men slept*, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat" (*v.* 25). Thus, "while the bridegroom tarried," the whole company of professed watchers, wise as well as foolish, "*all* slumbered and slept" (Matt. xxv. 5). But the history of this declension we shall look at, if the Lord will, at another time. We have yet more precisely to see first how the kingdom of heaven is entered, and what are the divine regulations for it. To appreciate the disorder, we must learn first of all the order; for it is plain that God has not committed it to man's mere *will*, but to his charge. He is to bind and loose, not despotically, but as himself in subjection to the will of Another. We must return, therefore, now to the subject of the keys.

*(To be continued.)*

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## FRUIT.

WHAT is the real significance of FRUIT? Every physiologist knows that the fruit of a plant is simply an *arrested and metamorphosed branch.* This is proved by the fact that all the parts of the flower,—viz., the calyx, the corolla, and the pistil, will readily change into normal leaves, and the peduncle into a normal branch; and also by the gradual transition of leaves proper into floral parts. In very wet or warm springs, some of the flower-buds of the pear and apple are occasionally forced into active vegetative growth, so as to completely break up the flower, and change it

into an ordinary leafy branch. It is also by no means uncommon to see a green branch covered with leaves, growing out of the heart of a fully expanded crimson rose, or from the summit of a large and perfectly formed pear, or from a ripe strawberry, or from the apex of the cone of the larch. . . All those cases in which the terminal bud goes on to grow, even through the flower and fruit, clearly prove that the flower or fruit which, according to the normal method, arrests all further development of the axis that bears it, is a mere metamorphosed branch. The bud of a plant which, under the ordinary laws of vegetation, would have elongated into a leafy branch, remains in a special case shortened, and develops finally, according to some regular law, blossom and fruit instead. Its further growth is thus stayed; it has attained the end of its existence; its life terminates with the ripe fruit that drops off to the ground. Whereas the bud that does not produce a flower or fruit grows into a branch, lives for years, and may ultimately attain almost the dimensions of the main trunk itself, clothed with half the foliage of the tree.

In producing blossom and fruit, therefore, a branch *sacrifices itself*, yields up its own individual vegetative life for the sake of another life that is to spring from it, and to perpetuate the species. Every annual plant dies when it has produced blossom and fruit; every individual branch in a tree (which corresponds with an annual plant) also dies when it has blossomed and fruited. Delay in flowering prolongs life. By nipping off the flowers as soon as they appear, the duration of some plants may be greatly extended; by converting single

blossoms into double, and thus preventing their seeding, annuals may even become perennials. . .

The great spiritual principle which every blossom shadows forth is *self-sacrifice*. The plant produces a flower, and consequently a fruit, for the purpose of imparting life—yea, more abundant life,—and in the production of flower and fruit it dies. It gives its own life for another's—one life for the sake of countless lives that are to spring from it in long succession, generation after generation. And is it not most instructive to notice that it is in this self-sacrifice of the plant that *all its beauty comes out and culminates?* The blossom and fruit in which it gives its own life for another, are the loveliest of all its parts. God has crowned this self-denial and blessing of others with all the glory of color and the grace of form, the sweetness of perfume, and the richness of flavor.

And is it not so in the kingdom of grace? Christian fruit is an arrest and transformation of the branch in the True Vine. Instead of growing for its own ends, it produces the blossoms of holiness and the fruits of righteousness, for the glory of God and the good of men. The life of selfishness, self-righteousness, and self-seeking is cut short, and changed into the life of self-denial. The believer who is united to Christ considers the time past of his life sufficient to have wrought the will of the flesh, and henceforth lives no more unto himself, but unto Him that died for him and rose again. The Christian life begins in self-sacrifice: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." We can bring forth no fruit that is pleasing to God until, besought by His mercies, we yield ourselves a living sacrifice to Him. . . . Fruit in the natural

and spiritual worlds originates from self-sacrifice. This is the arrest of the natural bud, the metamorphosis of the self-pleasing branch—the passage, as in the case of St. Paul, through an ideal death, through the martyrdom of will and deed, to nobler action, to a heavenly life even, on earth.

And in this self-sacrifice all the beauty of the Christian life comes out and culminates. The life that lives for another in so doing bursts into flower, and shows its brightest hues, and yields its sweetest fragrance. As the common coarse green leaf changes into the delicately formed and brilliantly colored petals in the conversion of leaf-buds into flower-buds, so in the conversion of lovers of pleasures into lovers of God—the common things of life, the gifts and attainments of the natural man, are taken up into a higher experience, and beautified and ennobled. Nothing is lost in the transferrence, but all is changed and enriched. All is given to Christ, and all is received back a hundredfold. Solomon in all his glory is not arrayed like one of those human blossoms on the tree of life, that can say, "I am not my own, but bought with a price, and therefore bound to glorify God in my body and spirit, which are His."

Every spot on which the disciple talks with Jesus of His decease, and is bound by the cords of love to the same altar, is verily a Mount of Transfiguration. There the glory of the inner life bursts through, and irradiates even the outer garment. The face of Moses, when he descended from the mount, shone with a supernatural splendor, because he yielded himself up for the good of Israel. The face of Stephen became like an angel's when he gave up his life a witness for Christ, and in imi-

tation of his Master's wondrous self-forgetfulness, prayed for his murderers: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And has not many an unknown man and woman been similarly transfigured when becoming one with Christ's Spirit in sublime self-abnegation? Have we not seen the glory of self-sacrifice ennobling even the aspect of the countenance, the expression of the eye, the carriage of the form, making the plainest and homeliest face beautiful and heroic? Who has not beheld, with a feeling almost of awe, some lowly root out of a dry ground blossoming into a miracle of beauty as he entered into the cloud with His Lord, and was baptized with His baptism? The pain of martyrs, the losses of self-sacrificing devotion, are indeed the blossoms of life,—"the culminating points at which humanity has displayed its true glory and reached its highest level." In the sacrifice of self-will in its bud and root to God, a glory and a bliss are opened up of which the selfish worldling is utterly ignorant and destitute. We "*prove* what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

"For who gives, giving doth win back his gift;
And knowledge by division grows to more;
Who hides the Master's talent shall die poor,
And starve at last of his own thankless thrift.

"I did this for another; and, behold,
My work hath blood on it! but thine hath none:
Done for thyself, it dies in being done;
To what thou buyest thou thyself art sold.

"Give thyself utterly away. Be lost. [own;
Choose some one—some thing; not thyself, thine
Thou canst not perish, but thrice greater grown,—
Thy gain the greatest where thy loss was most.

"Thou in another shalt thyself new find.
The single globule, lost in the wide sea,
Becomes an ocean. Each identity
Is greatest in the greatness of its kind.

"Who serves for gain, a slave, by thankless pelf
Is paid; who gives himself is priceless, free,
I gave myself, a man, to God: lo, He
Renders me back a saint unto myself."

(*Hugh McMillan: "The True Vine."*)

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# PRESENT THINGS,

## As Foreshown in the Book of Revelation.

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### THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)

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### *Laodicea: What Brings the Time of Christ's Patience to an End.*

(Rev. iii. 14-22.)—*Continued.*

HOW solemn to contemplate the last end of what began so differently! How above all solemn to consider that both at the beginning and the end, the sin and failure of the true people of God it is which initiates and completes the ruin! Who can doubt that Christians themselves are largely taking up this self-complacent assumption —"rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing"?

Even by some who deem the time of harvest drawing near we are invited to consider the fact that if the tares are ripening for it, yet the wheat must be *ripening too;* and that this means that the present generation of Christians is spiritually in

advance of every other! We are bidden observe the great awakening of the missionary spirit, the restoration of gifts of healing to the Church, and so on. Surely we are rich, and increased with goods, if this be our condition! And is there not a creed, connected very much with the latter claim, and largely professed among those who naturally take their place as the very leaders of the Christianity of the day, which comes very near indeed to Laodicean profession? How could the claim to be rich and increased with goods be more really made than by those who profess what they will not indeed call "sinless" and yet do assert for it what ought to be a still loftier title,—that of "*Christian* perfection."

Christian perfection is of course the very summit —the *ne plus ultra* of Christianity. Higher than this no one can hope to go: with such a condition God Himself must be completely satisfied. As Christ is, (so they apply it,) so are they in this world. Perfect knowledge, perfect wisdom, they do not suppose they have, but "perfect *love*" is the term which exactly fits and describes their condition. They perfectly obey the divine law, and for a large class there remains in them no corruption of nature even, although many would not go as far as that. There are many grades of the doctrine, and correspondingly it affects very distinct classes of Christian profession. Its wide acceptance is a very noticeable thing in these days, an unmistakable sign of the times.

For the term "perfection," and that as applied to Christians, there is scripture, of course. The devil, in deceiving the people of God, will always, if he can, use scripture to accomplish his object.

But the term there does not mean what in the dialect of the "higher life" it is made to mean. Take one of the strongest texts used, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" —the context shows decisively what is meant. We speak of a thing as perfect which has all its parts, without at all regarding the finish of its parts. So the Lord tells us that as children we must resemble our Father, and for this exhibit all the features of our Father's character. We must not only love those who love us, but as He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends His rain on the just and on the unjust, we must exhibit this feature of His character also: "Love your enemies, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 44, 45.)

"Perfection" is also used for the mature Christian condition, as a glance at the margin of Heb. v. 14 will show. The term there—"of full age"—is in the margin rendered "perfect," just as in 1 Cor. xiv. 20, "be *men*" is in the margin rendered "be perfect," or "of a ripe age." It is used thus with two applications: in Hebrews, Christianity itself is perfection, or maturity, in contrast with Judaism, which was a state of childhood. But again, among Christians there are those perfect, or mature, in contrast with being babes; and the apostle Paul, in the third of Philippians, in which he *disclaims* the having attained, or being already perfect, (as a consummation which he would not reach until with Christ in glory,) classes himself immediately after among those who *had* in another sense "attained:" "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

There are many texts which I cannot now go through; but this should prevent the catching at a word, as people are prone to do. Plenty about perfection there is, no doubt, in Scripture; but if we set up *any* standard short of walking as Christ walked, we are really lowering it. If, on the other hand, we can measure ourselves with Christ, and yet feel no rebuke, we must be indeed inordinately, if not incredibly, self-complacent.

Mischief is wrought in two ways by the idea. In the first place, sin must be palliated, excused, covered by misleading names. Lust is called temptation, and sometimes even daring dishonor done to Christ Himself by the insinuation that He too was in like manner tempted. So people quote, "He was in all points tempted like as we are, *yet* without sin," as if it meant that *He* had such inward desires, only restrained them, so that there was no positive outbreak. This, the actual blasphemy of Irving and Thomas, in milder and less pronounced forms infects many in the present day. The text they quote in the common version favors these views too much. And the Revised Version unhappily perpetuates the error. There is properly, as any one may see by the italics (Heb. v. 15), no word in the original representing "yet." "He was tempted in all points, like as we are, apart from sin" is the true rendering. You must not imply sin in any way in the Holy One of God. Sin it is that produces lust, as the seventh of Romans decisively teaches, as on the other hand lust, again, brings forth the positive outward sin. *He* had neither; no inward incitement as no sin in act, and herein was our total opposite, who, as Scripture assures us, "in *many* things offend, *all*." (Jas. iii. 2.)

But again, the character of holiness is sadly spoiled by this perfectionism. In the lips of many, "holiness" means "perfection," and nothing else, and so does "sanctification." And yet in fact holiness itself is marred and perverted by this claim as made. It becomes self-occupation, self-assertion. "Seraphic" men are held up to admiration. And how much of Christ really do you find in the experience so largely boasted of by those who advocate the doctrine? It may be in words—is it in reality, "not I, but Christ liveth in me"? or is it in fact a glorified, transfigured, but very self-conscious I, that lives and reigns throughout them? They do not see that, as the natural life in a state of health does not engross or claim the attention,—as the heart's pulsation, or the lung's work is not furthered, but disturbed, by thinking of it,—as the man in hospital it is who talks of his good days, because they are scarce, and as the dyspeptic it is who "feels" his stomach,—so this aim at a self-conscious holiness produces but a poor, degenerate, sickly Christianity at best. Is it far off from that which says, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knows not that it is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked?

"I counsel thee," says the Lord to Laodicea here—"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."

Three things are here which they are exhorted to "buy." So wealthy are they, the Lord will not talk of *giving* to them. And indeed it would be a

happy thing for them to exchange their riches for them,—false glitter for true gold. This is the first thing: *gold*. A frequent symbol this is, we know, in Scripture, and pure gold (as here, "tried in the fire,") for what is divine. In the ark of the testimony, and in the furniture of the holy places generally, gold covered all. The apostle, I believe, gives us the exact meaning, when he speaks of the *golden* cherubim as the "cherubim of *glory*, shadowing the mercy-seat. This "glory" is the display of what God is. God glorifies Himself when He shines out in the blessed reality of what He is; and Christ is the true ark in which two materials are found together—gold and shittim-wood. The radiance of divine glory is the gold; the shittim-wood, the precious verity of manhood.

Can we not see why to Laodicea "gold tried in the fire" is the first requisite? Their riches were but paper money, manufactured out of the rags of self-righteousness, and of merely conventional, not intrinsic value. Christ was what they lacked: divine glory in the only face in which it shines undimmed. This is the power of Christianity, its essence and its power alike, and this is what their false, pretentious Christianity lacked so terribly: occupation with Christ,—discernment of what and where all that is true and valuable in Christianity is to be found. To know where this is, is to have it. Faith that finds this treasure is welcome to its enjoyment. To be without it, is to be poor indeed.

The next thing is, "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." This is, no doubt, practical righteousness of life and walk. There is a connection between this and the former, which

when we have their meaning becomes evident enough. Unless you have the divine glory in the face of Jesus shining for your soul, you will find no ability to live and walk aright. The "white" is the full, undivided ray of light; and God is light. How is our life to be the reflection of this, except as "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," is shining in our hearts, "to give out the light of the knowledge of the glory of Christ in the face of Jesus Christ?" Leviticus must precede Numbers ever. We must go in to see God in the sanctuary before we can possibly come out and walk with Him in the world.

Finally, we have here, "and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Thus there was utter blindness,—the condition of the Pharisees over again. *They* did not realize it. They said, "We see," and thus their "sin remained." For the consciously blind, there is with Christ effectual healing; but they, alas! needed not the physician.

These characters, taken in their full extent, reveal a state which is assuredly not Christian. We must not, however, on this account suppose, as some have done, that Laodicea thus represents merely the unbelievers among the Christian profession. Of Sardis it is distinctly said, "Thou hast a name to live, and thou art *dead*," and yet there are owned among them those who are not only alive, but "have not defiled their garments." This shows that we must beware of ascribing the characteristics of the mass to all the individuals in it. It is a state of things as to which all found in association with it have the gravest responsibility; but to say it is only to be applied to the unconverted is to deprive the warning given of all its power. It is

to enable every consciously converted man to wash his hands of the responsibility. Whereas all around us, not only are the signs of Laodiceanism growing continually more manifest, but the infection also of Christians with its spirit. And here again also it is apparent how Philadelphia may open the way to Laodicea itself.

Philadelphia proclaims the brotherhood of Christians, seeks the true Church, insists upon the evil of division, and the maintenance of individual conscience in consistency with the recognition of the one body of Christ in all its members. Laodicea—Satan's counterfeit—proclaims also that the church is one, that union is strength, in order to bring about a grand confederacy in which truth shall be sacrificed for company's sake, and the power conferred by numbers. To the eyes of men, Laodicea becomes thus only the true carrying out of the Philadelphian idea,—itself a better and grander Philadelphia. Here Christ may in the very *name* of Christ be put outside the door,—a development of principles which are far and wide leavening men's minds, and preparing the way for the dark and dread apostasy in which the dispensation is announced of God to end.

*(To be continued.)*

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## THINGS BEYOND US.

"IT is quite beyond me," are words that are often heard from one and another with regard to some presentation of spiritual things. Coming from different quarters, the significance of the expression is necessarily also different. It may be a

simple statement of fact, without *any* moral significance. It may be confession of ignorance, real and lamented. It may be a sarcasm, implying the fault to be with the speaker rather than the hearer, the writer rather than the reader. It may be, alas! and very often is, the unintentional revelation of a state of soul which needs to be considered seriously, for it is in itself most serious.

That as to the fact there are for every one of us things that are beyond us, must be conceded at once. There are babes and young men, as well as fathers: and the farthest advanced will most readily perhaps accept in this respect in the apostle's language, "Not that I have already attained, neither am already perfect." He said it as one pressing on continually; and there is never a place reached by us where there is need of this no longer. As a matter of knowledge, "we know in part," "we see through a glass darkly," and as long as we know but in part, yet with no hard and fast line drawn to hinder indefinite attainment, there will still be unexplored fields beckoning us—things that are beyond us still.

The question is, do we speak of "things beyond us," with desire after them, and an earnest mind to press on after them, as travelers talk of the blue hills which yet are in the horizon, but which draw nearer steadily as they progress? Or do we speak of them as with an intervening chasm between us and them, which we never expect to pass, and so, having no hope of it, naturally make no effort.

In this case—and this is the alarming thing about it,—we have ceased to be travelers plainly; we have *settled down*. Is not this the fact at least with many who use such expressions?

Let us make any exceptions needed, however, that we may charge no one wrongfully. There *are* things beyond us which we may have to accept as *that. Life is short, and needs a wise economy of* strength and effort that it may be to its fullest possibility fruitful. It is easy to distract ourselves even by a multiplicity of pursuits, individually worthy enough. We cannot all be critics of Scripture-texts, or students of the Bible languages, or versed in controversy or apologetics. It would sometimes be for real blessing to recognize in such ways a sphere beyond us, and rigorously restrict ourselves within the limit of true expediency. Even among profitable things thorough earnestness will seek that which is *most* profitable, and by close pruning of mere branch and leaf, procure the best attainable *fruit.* With all this it is very far *from my object to find fault. Would that we only* knew better how to practice it.

But it is different wholly when we come to the range, immense as it is, of Scripture truth—of that of which it is said, "*All* Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." We have here no option at all, no discriminative power to put away from us any part of what God has given for our learning, and as truth for our sanctification. He who does this is setting up to be wiser than God, despising the love that provided for our need, missing the very thing which he professes to seek by it. Doctrines, such as that of the coming of the Lord, and of which Scripture is full from one end to the other, are dismissed in this

way as mere curious questions, irrelevant to holiness, and for which there is not space in a rightly filled up life. But indeed how many of our Bibles, if the unused parts were but to atrophy and drop out, would judge us by their gaps as thus far practical unbelievers! For how many of us the prophets prophesy almost in vain! And if, going deeper than this, we think of chapters and of sections of the books, what a curious net-work of ruin would the pages present, if all these unheeded counselors withdrew themselves from our neglect—dismissed themselves from a thankless service!

It must be confessed that in God's school the scholars are very differently treated from what we might expect, or from the way in which the schools of the day carry on the educational process. In God's school—where from the lowest to the highest all are scholars—there are babes, young men, fathers—every variety of attainment, and measure of capacity. Yet we have no *class*-books for these different classes, but one common *school*-book for all grades at once. The simplest parts of Scripture are at the same time often the deepest; the truths of the Word of God are in every page most exquisitely and most intricately interlaced together. It is no mere entanglement, which calls for a hand to separate and unravel; but a perfect, divine manufacture, the beauty no less than the complicity of which resists all such attempts. God means, evidently, that child and mature man shall sit side by side, upon the same bench, and ponder the same lesson, while nevertheless each learns according to his capacity that which harmonizes with and perfects his previous lessons.

But there is to be no picking and choosing of the

scholar, no *putting himself in class:* the blessed Spirit of God, true and only Teacher here, does this unfailingly, dividing to every one his portion of meat in due season. The scholar is to be subject, conscious of his dependence, led along, eye and ear open, amid things confessedly beyond him, part of his discipline to realize this, while encouraged by the assurance that these things too are his own, and by the way he finds them, one after another, actually becoming his. So vast are his possessions, he finds no where a limit; so great in themselves, that if he "think he knoweth *any thing*, he knoweth *nothing* yet as he ought to know." Patience and energy are being thus continually called for; hope is stimulated and assured as well; earnests of his inheritance are being constantly put into his hand. This is God's way of teaching, and our hearts as well as minds approve it.

A ministry of what is—at the moment—beyond us is, therefore, what we need as Christians. If we are to be led on, it must be by the putting before us that which as yet we have not attained, and which without energy of soul on our part will lie ever beyond attainment. For while energy itself may be roused and sustained by ministry, this can without it put nothing into our possession at all. Even the roots of a plant spread themselves under the ground to seek their food, though unconscious. But as we rise in the scale of being, it is still more and more apparent that the law is, "Seek and ye shall find." The nourishment must lie close around the rootlets of the plant; but the animal, and in proportion to its rank in the scale of existence, must seek its food from afar, or it will die of starvation. And when we come to man, what a life-labor

is his to secure it! On this very account indeed he would plead that in spiritual things the law should not hold good; and in the thought of many, grace sets it aside or reverses it; but this is an entire and a most injurious mistake. God is still "the Rewarder of them that *diligently seek* Him." (Heb. xi. 6.) It is still "*giving all diligence*, add to your faith" such and such things (2 Pet. i. 5); and again, "give *diligence*, to make your calling and election sure" (*v.* 10). Still we are to run a race, and forgetting the things which are behind, to reach on after the things which are before. . . . .

Let it not be missed, that all progress spiritually means progress in the truth itself—that sanctfication is by the truth (Jno. xvii. 17). It is true this does not necessarily mean more head-knowledge, but often more heart-knowledge. Yet it is the truth itself by which we progress, and only so. There is a secret infidelity here which takes all the failure on the part of those who have the truth as the failure of the truth itself, and thus while insisting upon the "essentials" of Christianity would make all else a thing indifferent. But the failure only shows how little often that which is mentally known is learnt in the heart. To cast the reproach of this upon the truth itself is really wickedness. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live" is the assurance of the Old Testament, taken up and emphasized by the Saviour Himself, as in the wilderness He repelled the tempter. By this let us repel the tempter still. The very hidden things of the Word are for blessing and sanctification to them that search them out; and they are hidden just to draw forth the energy that will search them out. Like the earth's

deep mines, only here and there tilted up and opened to the light, to invite further exploration of their riches, so the Word of God has its lodes of precious ore for the diligent heart—hid in parable, in figures, in names, in numbers, in genealogical lists, and what not. And here, all that glitters *is* true gold: you will find no dross, no base admixture.

Therefore the law: "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, *then* shalt thou"—what? gain some out-of-the-way accomplishment? some unpractical curiosities for the mantle-piece, or literary lumber? Nay, but "*then* shalt thou understand THE FEAR OF THE LORD, and find the KNOWLEDGE OF GOD." (Prov. ii. 3, 4.)

Let it be truth, and what the Word teaches, then we have surely what enriches, satisfies, sanctifies. What looks barren at first sight may carry more wealth within than where the fertile soil repays with full harvests the easy labor of the husbandman. Look at Israel's land of promise, and you shall find it largely a ridge of rocks and hills, the very place to breed a hardy and energetic race. And here the Philistines are not, but on the low level of the coast. "Their gods are gods of the hills," said their Syrian foes; and though this were not the truth, yet it was but the perversion of a truth. Judah's—the law-giver—was a "hill-country." Jerusalem was enthroned upon the hills. God's dwelling-place is Mount Zion, which He loves.

It is certain that in divine things we are called to diligence if anywhere, and the diligent soul it is

that shall be made fat. It is not, of course, that we have all equal time to devote to Bible-study, although it is certain too that here, above all, may we not say, the will can make a way. Scripture carried in the mind can be ministered by the Spirit of God, meditated on amid necessary toil, and, instead of making the task heavier, lighten it exceedingly. But the question is not of how much time is at our disposal, but of the heart we have to dispose of it,—the purpose to enter upon our possessions,—the pilgrim yearning to go on, and make the horizon of to-day the attainment of to-morrow.

Such will still and ever find "things beyond" them; but this will not discourage, but incite forward. They will say, "Not that I have attained, but I press on." Is it not indeed commonly the reason for stopping short, not because the acquisition of truth is unpractical, but for the opposite reason? I have said sometimes, it is as if Scripture were written out on sign-posts by the way we travel; we must travel the road in order to read it therefore. And it will be found in general that the energy which does not find its outlet here, is in fact going off in other directions.

I conclude with this, that if things are, as to knowledge, beyond us, we are wholly incompetent to judge of them; if they are Scripture-truths, to think of them as unpractical is accusing God their Author; to stop short of possessing them, is to defraud ourselves of our inheritance.

Surely, "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."

# ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*Ans.* 25.—The difficulty as to Rev. xx. 4–6 is an old one, but arises merely from a want of understanding as to the language of Scripture, to which, nevertheless, our own very nearly conforms. We speak of "souls" when we mean "persons," and so does Scripture, only more largely. "My soul" is used there as an emphatic "I." Thus Balaam, "Let *me* (my soul) die the death of the righteous." And Abraham, "My soul shall live." Again, in Isa. xlvi. 2, "Themselves are gone into captivity," margin, "their soul;" in Ps. lxxviii. 50, "He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;" and again, in 1 Chron. v. 21, margin, "They took away . . . of souls of men a hundred thousand." Thus there is no real difficulty in "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded, and they lived."

But there *would be* a very real difficulty with our common use of soul. "Risen with Christ" is indeed a truth for us already, but it is not ever represented as a resurrection of the *soul*. It is *we* who are dead in trespasses and sins, and who are risen with Christ. You may say it applies to the soul. Granted, if you analyze it, but Scripture never uses an incongruous thought, as this would be. It was not Christ's *soul* that rose (in this sense of soul), and it is *with Him* we are risen. To say "risen in soul" would not give the proper thought.

Moreover, we have in ver. 4, 5 (first part), a vision, and in 5 (last part) and 6, the *interpretation* of the vision. Now the interpretation *needs* no interpretation; and it shows how literally the vision itself is to be understood. This, like the name of a picture underneath it, assures us that it is a true resurrection that the vision represents. Nor is it of martys only. There are those, first of all, who are sitting on thrones; then a *special company* of martyrs is raised, and added to these. All of them together constitute "the first resurrection," in which every one is "blessed and holy" who "has part." It is a resurrection of saints alone (comp. Luke xx. 36).

# PRESENT THINGS,

## AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

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## THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Concluded.*)

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### *Laodicea: What Brings the Time of Christ's Patience to an End.*

(Rev. iii. 14-22.)—*Concluded.*

CONFEDERACY is, politically and socially, a character of the times. In mercantile affairs of every kind, companies are getting to be more and more every where the rule. The strength realized by union is here well recognized. In the rise of the popular element, combination is not merely an advantage; it is an imperative necessity. By its means alone can the poor man make his voice be heard upon nearer equality of terms with the capitalist, the laborer with his employer. Yet here the true individuality which God would have,—the individuality of conscience with which alone real uprightness of conduct can be maintained,—has to be lost and give way to the will of the majority.

No power can be attained by the body at large thus except by ruinous self-sacrifice on the part of its members. It must have unity, the unity of a machine, or nothing can be effected; but for this, heart and conscience must be leveled down to wood and iron. It is essential that freedom of individual action there should be none; and thus there is no tyranny so great as the tyranny often here exercised,—no more ruthless treading down of the most sacred and personal rights than with those in whose

mouths the cry of "People's rights!" is oftenest and loudest.

*Religious* associations may seem often in their laxity as opposite to this as can be, and yet the laxity itself be as contrary to God, and bind me as much to His dishonor. What seems the largest liberality may thus be the very spirit of disobedience, and to this it is that every thing in the present day is tending. Satan can press upon us the evil of division just there where division is *not* an evil, but a right and godly separation from evil; and he can point out good to be accomplished, to make us little careful as to the means by which it is proposed to accomplish it. A united Christian church which should become so by making it a matter of indifference whether Christ were God or only the highest kind of man would certainly be his greatest achievement. The startling thing to-day is, that men considered evangelical can accept associations of this kind; and the platform upon which they stand widens continually: what would have been liberality a short time since is now narrowness. The world moves; but the unbending word of God which moves not, against this it will dash itself only to its destruction.

Amid this concourse and confederacy of men, communion with God becomes continually more restricted: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." This door is plainly individual,—not of the church, but of the heart. But then it is as plain that the church-door is shut against Him; not that He has shut it, or Himself spewed the church out of His mouth. He is still lingering in His love,—

still saying, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent." But they do not repent. He is as when at Nazareth in the days of His earthly ministry (rejected by those who should have known Him best,) it is written of Him, "And He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid His hand upon a few sick folk, and healed them." He could not do what He would; He would do what He could: "And He marveled at their unbelief; and He went round about the villages, teaching." So here, rejected by the body at large, He tries one door after another, in this solemn pause before the end. He would not judge in the mass; so He tries in detail. And *if* any heart responds,—for all seem to have shut Him out, but He will not take it yet as final,—then He will come in there, and sup: that soul shall yet to its everlasting joy entertain its Lord.

But the time hastens, and the nearness of the end is shown by the closing promise to the overcomer: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne." He speaks, as He appears to the apostle, as Son of Man here. It is His kingdom as Son of Man He is about to take: that special throne from which as with a rod of iron He will break in pieces all opposition, and bring every thing into subjection to God. For it is His to do this. He has laid the foundation in the work of the cross: His hands shall finish it. All judgment is His, because He is the Son of Man. And judgment itself now is the only work left for mercy to accomplish. So there comes—most terrible of all wrath, the *wrath of the Lamb*,—the wrath of love itself: the wrath of Him

who has been watching all these patient centuries the oppression of the meek, in whose ears have been the cries of the fallen in the terrible strife; He of whom the wicked hath said in his heart, He will not require it; yet who beholdeth mischief and spite to requite it with His hand; to whom the poor committeth himself, who is the Helper of the fatherless. HE now riseth up. "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord: I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him."

In a word, the present day of grace is in this promise marked as just at its end. And with this the Church, as the vessel of the testimony of that grace, is being removed from the earth. The "present things" at which we have been looking are just over. The Christian dispensation has run its course. The saints removed to heaven, the rest that are left are but reprobate, and fall soon into utter apostasy. Then comes the earth's great trial-time, the time of Jacob's trouble, out of which yet he shall be delivered; the heading up of unbelief in gigantic forms of evil, dimly (and but dimly) now looming up amid the shadows of the horizon. Beyond it yet the glory of a brighter day, when the redeemed of the Lord shall come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; when a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment; and a MAN shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Sweeter than all and brighter the joy above,

when in the mansions of the Father's house that promise shall be fulfilled, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

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## "I'VE LOST SEVEN YEARS' ENJOYMENT."

AFTER ten days of special meetings in a town in New Zealand, I was on the way to the railway station with my luggage. A man, working in a garden where I was to pass, observed me approaching. Quickly making his way to the fence, he reached over his hand, saying, "Let me shake hands with you." "Most gladly," I replied, as it then came before me that he had been to the meetings, though we had not had the opportunity of conversing before.

"Man," he said, grasping me very warmly by the hand, "I've lost seven years' enjoyment."

"How is that?" I inquired.

He went on to tell how he had been converted seven years before. He had felt and known that it was a real change, but he was also conscious that he had been occupied with his feelings, and had never enjoyed peace. His time had been taken up with trying to hold on to what he had received, lest it should slip, and he should fall away. He knew that he had something not known before, though it was an unsatisfactory experience. He prayed, read, watched, attended meetings, always fearing that unless he was careful and persevered he would lose the blessing. But he said,—

"I have been hearing you at these meetings, and

I now see that it is what God has said about Christ, and I'm a free man."

The simplicity, the earnestness, the gladness of the man give his words more than usual significance. A little reflection upon them readily suggests some very practical lessons as to how the gospel ought to be preached, heard, received, and enjoyed.

Much that is preached fails to bring out what one might call the divine side of the gospel. Too frequently what is heard is much more what might suit man rather than God. Human need is more considered than divine holiness. What the sinner needs and receives on believing is pressed so much, that what was needed for and rendered to God, in the atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ, is frequently overlooked. But self-interest often plans and prepares its own punishment. Being absorbed with the thought of the sinner's need, we may forget or even fail to take in the importance of what is due to God. The prodigal thought of bread and a servant's place instead of what alone would suit a son with the father. But hearers naturally fall in with what is put to suit themselves. Yet such preachers and hearers have often such poor times of it that it would almost seem as if the blind had been leading the blind, and both had fallen into the ditch. They have not only lost enjoyment, like the young man mentioned, but have had the positive misery of having to say—

"'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought,
Do I love the Lord, or no,
Am I His, or am I not?"

A live sheep bleating in a ditch, or in a bog, or

in a thicket, is better than a dead lion. The young man had better have lost seven years' enjoyment than to have have been all that time dead in trespasses and sins. But there is a more excellent way than being left to either alternative. The full gospel may be told out and received with its proper results of life, peace, liberty, and enjoyment. It need not only be that the sinner should come forth like Lazarus, "bound hand and foot with grave clothes;" the Lord still delights to say, "Loose him, and let him go."

What the young man heard, what set him free, was that God had considered and undertaken the work that was needed, not merely to satisfy the sinner, but what was needed to satisfy God. In giving His Son, and in accepting the work accomplished by Him in offering Himself without spot to God, it is evident that God satisfied Himself. He has shown it by rending the vail from top to bottom, and by raising Christ to His own right hand.

He has said it by sending the Holy Spirit to testify concerning all that believe, as He does, saying, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.)

God knew best—yea, He knew perfectly, what sins deserved. He also knew what would suit His own holiness and righteousness. God alone could authoritatively set forth what would maintain His own honor and glory. It will yet be seen that "He hath done this." (Ps. xxii. 31.) Then it should be clear at a glance that if what is needed for God, on account of sin, is provided and accepted by God, there can be no doubt about the need of the sinner being met. Human things are poor, feeble illus-

trations of such a divine transaction. But say the utmost demands of creditors are satisfied by one of the partners of the firm paying the sum required from his private to the firm's business account, the debtor should be satisfied when he is informed of this, and receives the receipted account. One who was his creditor, as his friend, has satisfied the legal claims of the firm. The friend's position as a partner in the firm, is a guarantee that the arrangement is satisfactory. The debtor will surely then fall in with and rejoice in the settlement. The friend may be poorer as to his private means, but the firm has not sustained any loss, and so a clear receipt can be given consistently. The debtor has simply to hear, read, believe, and give thanks for being righteously cleared through the grace of his friend. It is an illustration of grace reigning through righteousness. (Rom. v, 21.)

In some such manner, where the young man had been present, I had been showing that God had estimated what was needed, not only on the human, but on the divine side, and had provided His own Lamb, and had accepted, as He surely would accept, the sacrifice of His own provision. All had hitherto been done between Christ and God. This being so, God was free, in harmony with all that He is, as a holy and righteous God, to proclaim forgiveness to sinners, to justify him that believeth in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 26.) When the blood had been shed on the great day of atonement, it was first presented to God by being put on the mercy seat once, and then before the mercy seat seven times. (Lev. xvi. 15.) When God's nature and claims were met, the needs of the people were more than covered.

Thus, what God has provided, and found in, and said about, the work of Christ, is the good news announced to sinners. Indeed, it is what God is as revealed in grace that needs to be proclaimed and believed to give settled peace.

Then it is no longer merely a question of your doing, your feeling, or your realizing. If these things were true, if you felt all right within yourself, if you could conclude that you had attained to an improved state of soul, this would be good news about you. But that would not be the gospel. The gospel is about what is outside yourself —it is good news about God. It is not what you are to God, but what God is to you, now that Christ has died and risen. If not to be disturbed, this must be the ground of your peace. The One who thought, the One who wrought, the word that declares that all is done, are all outside of, and apart from, yourself, Then peace with God is not, in the first instance, a question of your experience. If one may so speak, God is telling you what has been the experience of Christ, and the experience of God, in connection with the accomplishing, and the acknowledging of the accomplishing, of a perfect atonement. It is then for you to hear, and hold to be true, what God has said about Christ. Bowing to it as the testimony of God that cannot lie, and as one who will not deceive, you may gladly say, if you cannot sing:—

"Rest, my soul the work is done,
Done by God's eternal Son;
This to faith is now so clear,
There's no room for torturing fear."

It was to this conclusion that the young man had

come by hearing the gospel otherwise than he was wont to hear it preached. He learned that God was satisfied. Now he saw that his acceptance did not depend on how he felt, or how he held on. In all such thoughts he had had himself before him. His mixed-up ideas as to the way he was accepted, and the means by which he was to be kept in God's favor, had caused continual anxiety. While believing on Christ to begin with, he was trying to believe in himself to go on with, and so it was no marvel that he had lost seven years' enjoyment. But with his newly-found enjoyment, instead of growing careless as to how he acted, he had a new and powerful motive for seeking to please the Lord. Instead of being on himself, his eye was now on the Lord; his ear was open unto God; his thoughts about acceptance, instead of turning in upon his feelings, were governed by the thoughts of God about Christ as written in the Word. He now saw that, rather than it being a question of his having rightly accepted Christ, it was a question of God having accepted Christ, as having done the work for him, and having seated Christ at his own right hand in token of being perfectly satisfied with the work of atonement. Indeed, as we have seen, God had satisfied Himself. Hearing this, believing this, the young man troubled about peace was satisfied. He then knew the truth, and the truth set him free. He might well say with joy and gladness, "I am a free man."

If not before now, why should you not see and say the same? You need not lose years, or months of enjoyment. You may have settled peace, blessed rest, even now. You may be free indeed. You may then have leisure to be occupied with the

Person who has saved you, so as to have the heart filled with praise, and your lips opened to commend your Redeemer. Then, as there is no longer any need for the miserable work of trying to hold on, your hands will be free for the service of the Lord. Yielding yourself up to Him, you may say, "O Lord, I am Thy servant; Thou hast loosed my bonds."

*W. C. J.*

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## "THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

### 3. THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM.

THE mere expression, "keys of the kingdom," shows clearly that there is a definite mode of entrance, and that the kingdom is not in its present form *territorial*, as the kingdoms of this world are. A Christianized country, for instance, is not by this, or any the more for it, a part of the kingdom of heaven. Men do not come into it by natural birth, as they do into these. There is a mode of entrance, a method of discipling, not in the hands of the men of this world, but in the hands of disciples only. There is a door by which to enter, and which is in their keeping.

Moreover it is a *double* door. There is not merely *a* key, but there are *keys* to it. We need not be afraid to insist upon the Lord's words in their full meaning; nay, we are *bound* to insist upon this. His words are precise, and require loyal acceptance; we must neither add to nor yet take from them.

This sets aside (as any *sufficient* application) what is often taken as explaining this commission to

Peter that he was the first to preach the gospel to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and to the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius afterward. It does not take *two* keys to open the same door twice, that is plain. And the proclamation of the gospel to men outside is by itself no real *admission* of any. It is the offer of its blessedness, but men must be received in individually, and for this a distinct form of admission is prescribed.

We have seen that the Lord speaks of the key of knowledge, that the kingdom is a kingdom of the truth, its sphere that of profession, of discipleship; that people are discipled into it. But the key of knowledge is plainly only one key, and we need yet another before the door will open. The other we find in the commission given by the risen Lord to the eleven after His resurrection, in which He is about to ascend to the throne of the kingdom,—all authority given to Him in heaven and in earth; He instructs them as to discipling the nations: for so it really reads, "Go and *disciple* all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, *teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

Here there are two keys: "baptizing" and "teaching" are the joint methods of discipling. In the one we have the key of knowledge; in the other that which as the outward part authoritatively admits into the body of disciples upon earth. Without this latter there would be no proper recognition of the body as such, nor of individual relationship to it, nor representation of the King's authority on earth.

Baptism is "unto Christ" (Rom. vi. 3), "unto the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts viii. 16), a putting on of Christ. (Gal. iii. 27.) It is a separation to Him as Master and Lord, as by the cloud and the sea the Israelites were marked off as followers of their divinely-appointed guide,—"baptized unto Moses." (1 Cor. x. 16.) "Unto the name of the Lord Jesus"—not "in"—defines it as the recognition of His Lordship—of the throne as His. Thus Paul also is exhorted by Ananias, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, *calling on the name of the Lord.* (Acts xxii. 16.) Thus also in Eph. iv. 5, "one *Lord*, one faith, one baptism," are joined together.

And thus as a "baptism unto death," Christ having died for us, it is a "being buried with Him by baptism unto death, . . . . that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead . . . . so also we should walk in newness of life." It is thus for us the passing out of the old into a new condition; a change in which our sins are washed away; as the apostle, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;" and as Ananias, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

"Whose sins you remit they are remitted to them," the Lord had said before this; words which cannot be applied, as some would apply them, to the preaching of the gospel. *We* do not, in the gospel, remit any one's sins. We do what is more blessed: we declare on God's part the terms upon which *He* remits. "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him *all that believe* are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) It is the declaration of the forgiveness of a certain

class, but it does not declare any one to be of that class, or to have received the forgiveness. And when a soul through grace believes the gospel, and receives forgiveness,—though it were I that preached it, it is still not from *me* that he receives it in any wise,—it is not *I* that remit. Here is a thing in which God and the soul meet personally, and not by representatives. And it is of the greatest possible moment to maintain this. It is just here that popery brings in her falsehoods, and builds the Church up into a barrier wall to shut God out into the old darkness.

Disciples have no place in the administration of such forgiveness. They are no more the channel than the source of it. God has not given this glory of His to another; and after this manner none can forgive sins but God alone. Let us only keep clear the distinction between heaven and the kingdom of heaven, and it will be impossible to make such mistakes as these. The kingdom of heaven is but the *shadow* of heaven upon earth. It witnesses to what is heavenly, finds its authority and sanction there, but remains still only the shadow. Useful and important in its place, it becomes only so much the more important that it retains that place. To confound the shadow with the substance is to degrade and displace both.

"I baptize with water," was John's answer to those who would have implied that, not being the Christ, to baptize was to invade His office. No use of *water* could possibly do that; and with water "Jesus Himself baptized not." No water can wash the soul; no spiritual transformation could be wrought by it. Divine power never works such marvels. The Creator uses His creation accord-

ing to the sphere to which it belongs; for which He made it; and Creator and Redeemer are but one blessed God. The mysteries of Babylon the great are no Christian mysteries, but magic. The perversion of truth manifests them as not from above but from beneath.

When, therefore, baptism is spoken of as for the remission of sins, and when the Lord says, "whosesoever sins you remit they are remitted unto them," it is certain that He does not mean that the water of baptism has power to wash the *soul*. What then is this remission? To understand this we must recognize it as the entrance into the kingdom, that in which one is received out of the outside world into the ranks of Christ's followers and subjects. It is plain that *ideally* the crossing of the line here is salvation—"the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." (1 Pet. iii. 21.) To cross the line in spirit is true salvation, and to this grand truth the whole figure witnesses. The controversy with the world is for the rejection of Christ; submission to Him means the controversy over, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts ii. 21.) Yet the activity in salvation is all on His side; men baptize not themselves, but *are* baptized. And this is the confession of guilt, of being under death; it is burial, yet *to* Christ, to His death: there is the power of life, not in baptism, but in Him to whom we are baptized: "Buried with Him by baptism unto death, that, as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. vi. 4.)

There is thus really a witness to the gospel in baptism which is beautiful in its simplicity. No

subtlety of understanding is needed for entering into it. No complexity of thought is here. Man's guilt and helplessness, and need of the work of Christ are vividly portrayed and powerfully enforced in it; while also the freeness and certainty of salvation are fully declared, and the blessing appropriated on God's part to the one received. Wilt thou have Christ for thy Lord? wilt thou indeed take thy place as His subject and disciple? Then here is remission of sins, here is salvation for thee, through the work of Christ which He accomplished for thee; take thy place among His disciples a saved man!

It is to be no doubt if He receives thee. He casteth out none. As surely as thou comest thou art received. "Repent and be baptized every one of you unto the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts. ii. 38.)

Thus the preaching of baptism is a clear, simple, straightforward gospel, with good holdfast for the fingers of drowning men. There are no refinements, and there is no doubt. So only could it represent the salvation of Christ, which is yea only, and not yea and nay,—rest, and self-torture.

But then it is evident also that this is but the shadow, the *witness* of salvation, not the salvation itself. Not all that are baptized are saved, alas! and this from no uncertainty in the gospel terms, but from uncertainty only as to the reality in the soul of the disciple. And in regard to many, how much uncertainty must there be. And this is expressly contemplated in those parables of the kingdom, in which the mysteries of it are shown forth. Ten virgins go forth alike to meet the Bridegroom;

but five of them are wise, and five are foolish. The wedding is furnished with guests, but among them comes the one who has not on a marriage-garment. And in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, at the close, this very matter of forgiveness is taken up, and we are taught in the person of the pitiless servant that forgiveness in the kingdom is not the full and absolute forgiveness which the gospel preaches, but conditional upon character. If the professed disciple turn out to be not one in heart, then the remission grounded on the supposition becomes finally no true remission. The blessings of the kingdom are all conditional and reversible.

Baptism, then, is admission into the kingdom of Christ, out of a world of sin, lying in the condemnation of it. It is reception among those to whom as His own remission belongs. But, as administered by man, the blessings and privileges of it must be received by faith or not received. And this reconciles the fact of baptism as admission into it with what the Lord says as to the necessity of conversion: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 3.) This is indeed the necessity for the class to whom the Lord addresses Himself. Discipleship means no less than this, if it be real. To enter into the kingdom is not merely to come into it in an outward way, but to come into it in spirit also, to be really subjects and followers of the Lord of the kingdom.

But this does not at all imply that people cannot be in it except as converted. The parables that the Lord uttered as to it show the reverse of this. Tares are in it as well as wheat; foolish virgins, as well as wise; in the end of the age, the Son of Man

will send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all that offend, and them which do iniquity. Thus the kingdom will be freed: but they must be in it to be gathered out.*

But the breadth of the kingdom we must look at more fully now, and together with this the relation to what by many is strangely confounded with it, —the Church, of which the Lord speaks to the apostle in the words preceding those we have been seeking to explain.

*(To be continued.)*

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# PRIESTHOOD AND PROPITIATION.

## I. PROPITIATION.

THE subject of our Lord's High-priesthood has been exercising many hearts of late. I propose to look at it, as He may enable me, not in the spirit of controversy as I trust, but as seeking the Scriptural solution of certain questions as to it which have been raised.

First, granting, as all must, that it is heavenly in character, where did it begin to be exercised—on earth or in heaven?

Secondly, what is propitiation? is it true priestly work? and when and how has it been effected?

In awakening attention to these subjects, God has surely purposes of blessedness for us—more

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* Our Lord's words to Nicodemus on the other hand are really different; and I do not ground this upon its being the "kingdom of God," of which He there speaks. While the kingdom of God gives a somewhat different aspect, it is true, it is nevertheless not a different *thing*. Parables of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew's gospel are in the other gospels parables of the kingdom of God, and among these are those of the leaven and the mustard-seed. But what makes the words of John's gospel different is that the Lord is speaking in them to a Jewish teacher with direct refer-

blessing, perhaps, than we can realize yet at all. Nothing but good can come from the free discussion of them. To shun to follow where He leads would be cowardice or indifference. Satan would turn it indeed to conflict, drive away the timid by the noise of battle, incapacitate others by the heat of it, and divert us from the blessing. But we are not ignorant of his devices; and if by grace we have conquered our own spirits, we need not fear him, nor with Isaac yield our wells of water to the Philistine. Faith may turn even Eseks and Sitnahs to Rehoboths; the living water is God's gift to all.

We come then to Scripture to seek its teaching as to priesthood and propitiation. And the first question we have naturally to ask is, what is the idea of priesthood, and what the office of the high-priest, as to this?

Now the high-priest is, of course, only *the* priest *par excellence;* and his office in its essential character is defined for us in the epistle to the Hebrews, where alone indeed the doctrine of our Lord's priesthood is unfolded. "Every high-priest taken from among men," then, we are told, "is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who

ence to Ezekiel's prophecy of Israel's conversion in the latter day. (Ezek. xxxvi. 24-26.) And this is how in fact they will be brought in, the sinners still remaining such being consumed out of their midst by judgment. Thus Isaiah speaks also of the time (chap. iv. 3, 4,)—"And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning."

That the Lord's words had a wider application than to Israel I do not for a moment question, but it is of the kingdom in its future state He speaks, when that which offends, and those who do iniquity, are removed from it. A teacher in Israel should have known the absolute necessity of such a change as new birth for the enjoyment of the blessings the prophets had declared.

can have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way, for that he himself is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people so also for himself, to offer for sins." (Chap. v. 1–3.)

Here we have only the Jewish high-priest, "taken from among men," and are warned afterward not to apply to the Lord, the being compassed with infirmity, on account of which he must offer for his own sins as well as others. Our high-priest is one "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." "The law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath maketh the Son." (Chap. vii. 26–28.)

With these exceptions, then, manifestly the description applies in the fullest way to the Lord; and we have it so applied in chap. ii. 17–18: "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation"—so rightly the *R. V.*—"for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."*

These two things are ascribed to the Lord in His

* The last sentence has, with some, raised a question of the meaning of the preceding one, and in the English there is perhaps some real difficulty. The succoring those that are tempted is a very different thing from making propitiation for their sins; and the Lord's sympathy here is not with men as sinners, but with saints in resisting sin. But the difficulty proceeds from want of knowledge of the language, in which the "for" is not an explanation of what precedes, but a further deduction from His being a merciful and faithful High-priest. We might render it more clearly perhaps by "indeed." Examples of this use of "for" (*gar*) may be found in the following passages, where it is omitted in the *A. V.* "[for] neither can they die any more" (Luke xx. 39); "[for] neither came I of Myself." (Jno. viii. 42.) In the following it is translated "indeed:" (1 Thess. iv. 10), "And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren;" (Rom. viii. 7), "Neither indeed can be." Many similar cases could be given, but these are enough to show the use.

character as High-priest—the making of propitiation, and succoring the tempted. The first has to do with men as sinners, the second, as saints. For both these things He had to be made like unto His brethren, to be a partaker in flesh and blood. Both these things are the work of the High-priest as such, and the making propitiation, or offering sacrifice for sins, is distinctly marked out as belonging both to the typical and antitypical priest. In particular it is pressed as to the Lord Jesus, that His being a merciful and faithful High-priest was *to* make propitiation.

It is impossible, therefore, to maintain that propitiation is not a priestly act; that indeed it was the priest who did it, but only because what Christ was in Himself cannot be separated from what He did. On the contrary it is distinctly, positively asserted that Christ was the High-priest *to do* this; it was part of His strictly official work, if any thing was.

But we must now ask further, what was it to make propitiation? The expression we have not again in Hebrews; but in ix. 5 the *mercy-seat* is indeed by its equivalent in the Septuagint, and what far better than our English word represents the Hebrew,—"the propitiatory," or place of propitiation. This is found also in Rom. iii. 25, where Christ is called "a propitiation through faith, by His blood." So the *R. V.* better translates it, as it shows *what* propitiates,—the blood which was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, and made it such.

Twice, also, in the epistle of John we have Christ named as "the propitiation for our sins." (1 Jno. ii. 2; iv. 10.)

The use of the word for "mercy-seat" extends our

view to the Old Testament, in which, by the help of the Septuagint, we find that the word "propitiation" is a regular equivalent for what in our common version is "atonement," and there is no other word to express this. We may thus easily follow out the study of the word with our English Bibles only.

It is to the day of atonement that the epistle to the Hebrews refers all through. It was then that the high-priest entered the holiest with the blood of atonement, and the whole work of the day except only the letting go of the scape-goat, and the burning of the sin-offerings (Lev. xvi. 26–28), fell upon him. No other could intrude. Even the killing of the victims, which ordinarily was not priestly work, was on this day committed to his hand (*vv.* 11–15.) Now, if we follow the ritual of that day as we find it in the 16th of Leviticus, and only substitute "propitiation" for "atonement," as we are entitled to do, we shall realize in what way propitiation was made,—in what way the passage in Heb. ii. is to be interpreted.

First, then, (*v.* 6) "Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and *make propitiation* for himself and for his house" . . . . (*v.* 10); "but the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to *make propitiation* with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness."

Then follow the details of the sin-offering work:

"And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself, and shall *make propitiation* for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bullock . . . . and take of the blood and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward."

So with the goat for Israel,—"he shall sprinkle the blood upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat, and he shall *make propitiation* for the holy place, . . . . and there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to *make propitiation* in the holy place, until he come out and have *made propitiation* for himself and for his household and for all the congregation of Israel."

But this does not end the work: "And he shall *go out* unto the altar that is before the Lord, and *make propitiation* for it, and take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about."

After the dismissal of the scapegoat further, Aaron "shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the offering of the people, and *make propitiation* for himself and for his people."

Thus "propitiation" is made both in the holiest and outside it, by sin-offering, burnt-offering, and even scapegoat. Did we pursue our inquiry further this wide application of the word would be shown continually, but we need not go beyond the day of atonement.

What is "propitiation"?

"Propitiation" is "appeasal," "satisfaction." This is undoubtedly the ordinary force of the Greek word outside of the New Testament. Here, too, the Lord puts in the mouth of the publican in the temple the prayer, "God be propitiated," as it literally is, "unto me a sinner. (Luke xviii. 13.) In the Old Testament we have similarly the use of the Hebrew word where Jacob says of Esau, "I

will appease (or propitiate) him with the present going before (Gen. xxxii. 20). There are no more instances of this use in Scripture, but these suffice to show the analogy of the two words used in the original.

Every sacrifice was a propitiation then, whether or not the blood was brought into the holiest. The blood was given for propitiation, and given *upon the altar* for propitiation, so it is expressly stated (Lev. xvii. 11). Yet no altar stood in the holiest. And while the slaying of the victim was not necessarily priestly, and *was not propitiation*, as it has been strangely taken to be, the offering of the blood was strictly confined to the priest.

Only the blood of the victim burned without the camp could enter the sanctuary. Neither trespass-, peace-, nor burnt-offering could be represented there. Yet the blood of the goat for Israel enters as freely as that of the bullock for the priestly house (the Church typically). The burning without the camp is the well-known figure of wrath and distance from God, which, borne by a substitute, are removed, and the soul brought nigh to God in peace. It is this exhaustion of wrath which allows the blood to enter the sanctuary. So the apostle clearly states, "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin are burned without the camp; wherefore Jesus, also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, *suffered without the gate* (Heb. xiii. 11, 12).

Another expression of this solemn reality we find in the darkness which fell in mid-day like a pall over the cross, and out of which the Lord's voice was heard in the question of the 22d psalm—a

question not unanswered though,—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Darkness is the withdrawal of light, and "God is light." Here was indeed the outside place of sorrow, hopeless save to Him who could there illumine it with His moral glory, and glorify God in the depths of unequaled distress. For three hours—from the sixth to the ninth*—He remains under it, passing out from it to die indeed, but with the assurance, "It is finished," and the cry of "Father," once more upon His lips.

We must learn to distinguish here, if yet we have not, two very distinct parts of the Lord's atoning work. Death and judgment were upon man. He must take them both in order to redeem. But with man, death introduces him to judgment, which is thus final and eternal. The Lord takes them in inverse order, judgment first, which, having fully borne, glorifying God in stooping to the full penalty of sin, He dies—atonement is completed.

Let us remember, then, the wrath is borne, exhausted, before He dies. The blessed Substitute has been presented to God as that, sin laid on Him by Jehovah as such, wrath poured out, an actual dealing of God with His soul in view of sin; and that is ended, the burden in this respect *removed;* and why removed? there is one answer possible—only one: *because the work is accepted;* if not, could He who had laid on Him the heavy burden lift it off? Thus He can say, "It is finished"; for though

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* Those who can read the spiritual meaning of Scripture numerals will realize it here. *Six* speaks of evil under the hand of God, limited and restrained; 9 is 3 x 3, the number of divine manifestation intensified by self-multiplication. With this the darkness passes, the same number 3 measuring and characterizing its whole duration. (See "The Numerical Structure of Scripture," pp. 33-34.)

He had to die, death is nothing now. Needed for atonement as the governmental penalty of sin, He can meet it with the weight from off His spirit, for the cup He feared is drained.

And now comes a main point for consideration: Is the acceptance of the atoning work looked at in the type as taking place in the sanctuary? or does the entrance of the blood there imply that it is *already* accepted?

Scripture shows clearly that the latter is the truth. Could the entrance of anything questionable be permitted in the holy place? Assuredly not by God. The blood enters, not under suspicion, but by its own power and value with Him. It enters "to make propitiation for the holy place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins;" but this implies no question of the blood which does this! The dwelling-place of God has been in the midst of a sinful people, spite of all their sins accumulating for a whole year, and the blood comes in its power to vindicate His throne in remaining thus. Notice, that after it has been sprinkled on the mercy-seat, it passes out from thence to the altar, exactly in the same way to be sprinkled upon it, and make propitiation for it, "to cleanse it and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." Is this, too, for the acceptance of the blood *a second time?* and if not, why then the first time?

How is this expressed, in the sprinkling of the mercy-seat, as it is not expressed in the sprinkling of the altar? In both cases it is for propitiation; in both it is cleansing for sin. By the one the throne is established; by the other the altar. How does

either raise or show a question as to the blood which does this? The only answer can be, in neither case is there any.

The propitiation in the holy place is only the *application* to the throne as to the altar, of satisfaction rendered to God, *not* in the holy place but outside it. Confessedly it is this as to the altar; equally must it be so as to the throne. And with this the *interpretation* in the New Testament agrees fully. The type is in the epistle to the Hebrews put side by side with its fulfillment. Let us look at it as stated there.

*(To be continued.)*

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## SPIRITUALITY IN GIVING.

IF we give to laborers only when we meet them, or because we desire them to come to us, will not those going to remote parts be left to want, and a premium be set upon going to certain centres? Proper exercise about this, and true interest in the ministry of the Word every where, with earnest petitions for guidance from the Lord of the harvest, will result in a right distribution of what is given. Let no one undertake to patronize the Lord's servants; and may none seek it. If not in prayerful communion with God, we are blunderers often in the holy things of His service. But the Lord is gracious, and encourages the cheerful giver.

*E. S. L.*

# "I HAVE CHRIST! WHAT WANT I MORE?"

"*Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.*"

IN the heart of London city,
'Mid the dwellings of the poor,
These bright, golden words were uttered,—
"I have Christ! what want I more?"

By a lonely, dying woman,
Stretched upon a garret-floor;
Having not one earthly comfort,—
"I have Christ! what want I more?"

He who heard them ran to fetch her
Something from the world's great store;
It was needless—died she, saying,—
"I have Christ! what want I more?"

But her words will live forever;
I repeat them o'er and o'er.
God delights to hear me saying,—
"I have Christ! what want I more?"

Oh, my dear, my fellow-sinner!
High and low, and rich and poor,
Can you say with deep thanksgiving,—
"*I have Christ!* what want I more?"

Look away from earth's attractions,
All earth's joys will soon be o'er;
Rest not, till each heart exclaimeth,—
"*I have Christ!* what want I more?"

*M. J. W.*

# PRIESTHOOD AND PROPITIATION.

## I. PROPITIATION.—(*Continued.*)

AND first, let us notice that the purification of the sanctuary is, in Hebrews as in Leviticus, what the blood accomplishes. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Chap. ix. 22–24.)

Thus Christ enters into the heavens to cleanse them for us; not as if His sacrifice had not been accepted already, but He brings in the power of the accepted sacrifice to give us entrance there. Of entrance indeed on our part the Old Testament type said nothing; there was yet no rent veil, the "first" or outer "tabernacle was still standing." This the later revelation adds to the earlier.

When He enters (once for all) He enters how? "By* His own blood," says the apostle—"in the power of it."† "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place; having obtained eternal redemption." And again, "Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the

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* *Διὰ*, "by means of," chap. ix. 12.

† *Ἐν*, "in" instrumentally, "in the power of,"—"with blood of others," ver. 25.

holy place every year with"—or "in the power of,"—"blood of others; but now, once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

In the last case we have indeed but the inference from the type, "in the power of blood of others;" but the first quotation is direct proof. He entered (as High-priest, of course,) by His own blood. Thus the power of the blood was proved by His very entrance. And this is seen by the fact that literally He carried in *no* blood; He simply went in Himself. Acceptance of His work preceded entrance, and thus in triumph and in power He entered.

At what time, and in what manner was this entrance for all? I answer, it was assuredly as risen from the dead, not otherwise. Take one of the beautiful and emphatic types of the Old Testament,—that of the two birds. The second bird, released after the death of his fellow, is the well-known symbol of Christ risen from the dead. But it bears with it, as it spreads its wings toward heaven, the precious blood which speaks of atonement finished. This, it may be said, is a matter of interpretation. This is true, but the interpretation is not doubtful; the sprinkling of blood upon the leper *before* release shows that He is raised again for our justification before entering heaven as thus viewed. It shows that this last is by ascension.

And the doctrine of Scripture is every where of one piece with this. If it is for our justification that Christ is raised, we are quickened and raised up with Him, and after this follows "seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Would it be Scriptural or consistent to disturb this order, and

to make the seating in the heavenly places *precede* the being quickened and raised up with Him?

Again,—"Wherefore He saith, *when He ascended up on high* He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men;"—and again: "That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and *set Him at His own right hand* in the heavenly places." (Eph. iv. 8; i. 19, 20.) Is not this the same entrance into heaven as when the apostle speaks of "the forerunner for us entered" and "an high-priest set on the throne of the majesty in the heaven," who "by His own blood entered in *once* into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. vi. 20; viii. 1; ix. 12)?

If it be "once"—that is, "once for all," He entered in, is not this His entrance? or could we say, that God set Him *twice* at His right hand?

Is not all this consistent? Has it not one voice? And is it not abundantly confirming of the immediate acceptance of the precious blood which needed only to be shed to be accepted? For "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost, and behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." (Matt. xxvii. 50–53.) Christ having been in the distance, there is none; and dying, death gives up its prisoners.

What, then, is the Scriptural doctrine of propitiation?

We have seen that propitiation and atonement are in fact identical: atonement *is* propitiation or satisfaction of the divine nature; apart from it wrath rests upon the sinner, even although God loves and seeks us when we are dead in trespasses and sins. This propitiation is by Another standing in our stead, bearing the wrath necessarily upon us, and then dying for our sins; His blood, therefore, the witness of complete satisfaction.

In the type the application of the blood propitiated as to whatever it was applied to: altar, throne, person were cleansed by its being sprinkled on them. In all this the blood itself was never in question, but manifested its power, and was borne witness to, in this application of it. In the antitype it is spiritually, not literally applied, of course: our *hearts* sprinkled from an evil conscience; *by* His blood Christ enters the heavens for us.

And this propitiation is manifested in progressive steps, in which all its value is brought out and made over to us.

First, by His passing out of the darkness into the light, the wrath borne and ended, which means satisfaction found.

Then the rent vail which follows His death, in which the way into the holiest is shown to be prepared.

Next, resurrection is the public justification of those that are His own.

Then He ascends to heaven, our forerunner and representative, and the Holy Ghost coming out is a witness to us.

(*To be continued.*)

# "THINGS THAT SHALL BE:"

## AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

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### *PART I.*

### INTRODUCTORY.

#### (1) *Prophecies leading up to these.*

OUR title to the following pages indicates our adherence in some sense to the interpretation of the book of Revelation which makes the body of it—the nineteen chapters upon which we are entering—apply to what is still for us future. Those who so apply it, whatever differences in detail there may be among them, are on this account called "futurists," in contrast with the large school of "Presentists" or "Historicalists," who find in it a progressive history of the Church from the beginning, and interpret it naturally by that history.

They are usually and strongly opposed to one another, as might be expected, although there is no *necessary* opposition in the views themselves. Both may be held, and have been held together, by some who hold that there is an incipient, real, though incomplete fulfillment of divine prophecy, as well as a final exhaustive one; the first being often an assurance and help to the meaning of the latter. And this I accept for myself as at least generally true, and true in the case before us, and that (to use the words of another) "they are both alike *practically* wrong who have slightingly rejected the one or the other [application], and thus respectively deprived the Church of each."

But while I thus would keep in mind and seek to profit by this double interpretation, the latter is what I desire, as God may enable me, to develop and insist upon, and this for more reasons than one, but especially just because

it is that which is alone complete and final, and still lying in the future for us; whereas the historical interpretation occupies us largely with the past,—a past still fruitful for us assuredly, but less full of personal appeal. This will indeed be questioned, and it is not yet the time to answer the question.

Clearly the first point now is to prove, if it can be proved, the futurity of the fulfillment of the prophecies which we are to examine,—that such fulfillment is required by the inspired language of the book itself, and by a comparison with other Scripture. This ascertained, we can look better at objections which have been made to it, and realize also the profit of what is to engage us.

The first principle to be got hold of is that given us by the apostle Peter, that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet. i. 20). It is *prophecy* that is in question here, not, all Scripture, as the Romanists would apply it. But also "private interpretation" is literally "*its own* interpretation." No single prophecy must be read alone,—as if it stood apart from the rest; but in connection with the whole plan of it in the Word. "For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man,"—is not therefore the expression of the many minds of men; "but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:"—there is One perfect mind throughout it.

Now the violation of this will be found to be largely the cause of the failure of expositors. They neglect a rule which the apostle emphasizes as of first importance —"knowing this *first*." It is comparatively easy to find some plausible application of a single passage; it is quite another thing to make this fit with a general prophetic testimony. Comparison of passage with passage on this subject is what we are invited and compelled to therefore, if we would have truth instead of theory, realized certainty rather than conjecture. What we hold must be

tested and retested by the application of similar Scripture, so that at least "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word" may "be established."

Moreover, it will be plainly of importance to find some comprehensive prophecy connecting itself with some fixed point, or points, on Scripture, with which others may be then securely connected. Such prophecies we may find again and again in the book of Daniel, a book in the closest relation also to the book of Revelation, as all expositors of whatever school are agreed absolutely. Turn we, then, in the first place, to the second of Daniel.

We have here Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the four Gentile empires under the symbol of a great image, which is brought to an end by the sudden descent of a stone cut without hands out of a mountain; the stone becoming then a great mountain which fills the whole earth. This stone is interpreted for us as the kingdom of God, which is seen thus in victorious opposition to the kingdoms of the world, suddenly and totally destroying them. It is after this only that it grows and fills the earth. The world-kingdoms are not pervaded or "leavened" by the kingdom of God, but run their course first, and are then at once destroyed by it. This fall of the stone is one of those fixed points for which we are looking, and it is future without doubt.

In the seventh chapter the prophet has a vision of these same four empires, now seen very differently as four wild beasts, while the kingdom of God is introduced by the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven. And here it is, if possible, still more plain that this kingdom only *commences* with the destruction of the former ones. There is no possibility of any side by side development. Of the "little horn" of the last beast it is said: "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given unto his hand until a time and times and the divid-

ing of time; but the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it to the end. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions should serve and obey Him."

Thus it is evident that the kingdom of God here is that which will be set up only when the Lord returns in the clouds of heaven; that till then the kingdoms of the Gentiles continue, and then they are once for all broken and set aside. In connection with the last beast, moreover, we have just before the end the rise of a power which shows itself a blasphemous and persecuting one, and which by this brings judgment down upon itself and the beast, or empire, with which it is connected. This horn lasts, moreover, (in this character) just three and a half prophetic times, and then the judgment sits, and his dominion is taken away.

Carrying, then, these things with us, let us now go on to the ninth chapter, a prophecy which, for intelligence in the general plan of divine wisdom, is central in importance, and, interpreting as little as we can help, let us put this in connection with what we have already seen.

It is the well-known prophecy of the seventy weeks. In it we have an answer to Daniel's confession of his sin, and the sin of his people Israel, and his supplication for the holy mountain of his God; and he is told:—

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

The meaning should be plain, that at the end of seventy determined weeks, *Jerusalem's* trausgression would be finished, and her sins would be at an end, her iniquity

being purged,* and everlasting righteousness brought in for her; and her holy place, now desecrated, be once more anointed. At the same time vision and prophecy would be sealed up† by a fulfillment in which it would reach its end and disappear. This last statement alone is enough to show that we have to do with what is future still.

The angel goes on to give Daniel more in detail the events of these seventy weeks. "Know, therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times."

There is no need for our purpose to inquire for the exact beginning of this time. We are not tracing exactly its fulfillment. It is enough for us that the prophecy itself assures us that at the end of sixty-nine weeks, Messiah shall come. The weeks must be weeks of years, therefore, as almost all orthodox commentators agree,—all, in fact, who recognize in them any real specification of time at all.‡ And with year-weeks the Jews were, as

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* *Kapper*, with the simple objective, speaks of atonement taking effect upon the object.

† "The figure of sealing is regarded by many interpreters in the sense of confirming, and that by filling up, with reference to the custom of impressing a seal on writing for the confirmation of its contents; and in illustration these references are given: 1 Kings xxi. 8, and Jer. xxxii. 10, 11, 44. But for this figurative use of the word to seal, no proof-passages are adduced from the Old Testament. Add to this that the word cannot be used here in a different sense from that in which it is used in the second passage. The sealing of the prophecy corresponds to the sealing of the transgression, and must be similarly understood." (Keil.) To "make an end of sins" is literally to "seal up sins."

The words "vision" and "prophecy" (literally "prophet") Keil says, "are used in comprehensive generality for all existing prophecies and prophets. Not only the prophecies, but the prophet who gives it,—*i.e.* not merely the prophet but the calling of the prophet must be sealed. Prophecies, and prophets are sealed when, by the full realization of all prophecies prophecy ceases, no prophets any more appear." (Keil on Daniel.)

‡ Keil regards the numbers as to be symbolically interpreted, which I do not doubt, while this does not in the least affect their chronological character.

we know, perfectly familiar. The whole period is thus ten jubilees.

Four hundred and eighty-three years, then, from the commencement of this period Messiah comes, and but seven years remain in which the full blessing should come in. It is this which has doubtless stumbled many as to the fulfillment to Israel and Jerusalem which the first words of the angel yet so clearly promise. Startling it is to have to recognize a break of over eighteen centuries in a period of time which seems so strictly defined. The next verse, however, prepares us for this, and accounts for it. Messiah comes to His own, and His own receive Him not. Thus the blessing is delayed, although, of course, the purposes of God are unrepenting.

"And after *the* threescore and two weeks"—as the Hebrew reads,—"shall Messiah be cut off, and *shall have nothing:*" so rightly the margin and the *R. V.* give. Instead of reception by a willing people, He finds rejection and a cross, does not therefore yet receive the promises. The city is not restored, but desolated: "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." All agree here that there is the destruction of the city by the Romans; most, therefore, assume that Titus is the "prince that shall come," but against this there are many reasons. For why in this case should the *people* be mentioned at all? Would it not be enough to say that the prince shall destroy—it being a matter of course that it would be through his people? Is it not plain that while the people and the prince are both emphasized for us, it is the *people* alone that are said to do this, only they are the people of the prince that shall come?

What importance attaches to Titus that he should be given this prominence, and in so concise a prophecy, in which every word seems measured out with greatest economy? Certainly no where else does he appear at all. Why, too, the "prince that shall come"? against the city?

but this would be strange tautology for the word of God! Of course if he were a leader of the host he would come against the city. But the expression is the very one which would be used to point out some great person predicted to arise, of whom Daniel had heard before.

But there is another mark attached to this person: "And his end shall be in the flood." Here our common version has indeed "the end thereof." But the end of what then? Not of the destruction of the city? Not of the city, for this is feminine in Hebrew, and would not agree with the pronoun. Not of the sanctuary, which could not be detached from the city in this way. Moreover, the article with flood—"*the* flood," as it should be—speaks again of some definite and known catastrophe. The whole passage is to be regarded as some relative clause, and connected with "shall come:" "the people of the prince that shall come and find his destruction in the flood." (Keil.)

This, of course, it is impossible to apply to Titus. Let us see how it does, in fact, apply.

The "*people* of the prince that shall come" we know historically as the Romans; the fourth beast or empire of the seventh chapter, it is conceded by the mass of interpreters, and susceptible of the most abundant proof, was also *Roman*. And now, looking at the prophetic history of the empire, surely it is not difficult to recognize in the little horn, whose actions bring judgment upon the beast, the prince that shall come whose end is in the flood. The closing statements in the chapter seem as if they should make doubt as to this really impossible.

We return for a moment, however, to what characterizes the rest of the period. The *R. V.* renders it well: "And even unto the end shall be war; desolations shall be determined."

The last verse of the prophecy now gives us in connection with tne doings of this little horn the last of the seventy weeks: "And he shall confirm a covenant with

the many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; and on account of the wing of abominations there shall be a desolator; even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

I have made in the translation some small and yet important alterations, which will be justified as we proceed. The first point to notice is that the last week is here divided in half, and that a half week of years—three and a half years—gives us another link which seems decisive with the history of the little horn. For "a time, times, and the dividing of a time" are times and laws given into the hands of this blasphemous and persecuting power, and here he causes sacrifice and oblation to cease for what is evidently this very period. This surely is a striking example of how times and laws have been given into his hands. And as the whole seventy weeks are determined upon Israel and Jerusalem, we see that the sacrifices must have been restored there. This naturally carries us back to the previous clause: "He shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week." It is not *the* covenant but *a* covenant: the definite article, misplaced here, has made people think of God's covenant with His people, and thus given aid to a false conception of its being Messiah that confirms it. But the antecedent to the pronoun "he" is certainly "the prince that shall come" as every other mark points in the same direction. On the other hand the article does stand before "many," making it "*the* many,"—*i.e.*, the mass of the Jewish people. The covenant becomes thus a political agreement with the mass of the Jewish nation for seven years; but in the week he breaks it, changes times and laws, and his tyranny begins.

*Why* he makes sacrifices and oblation to cease is easily seen from the seventh chapter. Every detail fits in the most exact way possible. The little horn speaks great words against the Most High, and wears out the saints of

the Most High. It is as sacrifice to God that he stops the Jewish service. And in perfect agreement we read here: "And on account of the wing of abominations there shall be a desolator." This is quite literal, as our common version is not. The *R. V.* differs from it by translating "*upon* the wing," which is the more usual rendering of the pronoun, my own being simply the equivalent of "for" in that with which we are familiar, "For the protection of idols" is, I do not doubt, the sense sufficiently. A desolator comes in consequence of idolatry introduced, and this lasts until the decreed time expires—until the full end of the seventy weeks.

Notice another point where the seventh chapter not only confirms but explains the ninth. We have seen that the latter declares that at the end of the determined time the blessing comes for Israel. But the details of the seventy weeks show nothing but disaster and evil, right down to their expiration. *How* the blessing comes it does not show; but this the seventh chapter already supplies. The horn prevails against the saints for the three and a half times or years of either prophecy; but this is "*till* the Ancient of Days" comes (*v.* 22), which in a moment changes all. Let the reader only turn to Zech. xiv., and see how, in the very midst of Israel's distress, the Lord appears: "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." And why? "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, . . . . and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee."

We see, then, how, as in a moment, the desolation ends. There is entire harmony thus far, and this in itself is one of the most convincing arguments for the truth of that which unites and harmonizes these different statements.

But we have not yet completed the review of Daniel's testimony, for in the final prophecy (chap. x.–xii.) we have what again in the clearest way supplements and confirms what has been gathered from the previous ones. We take it indeed from the long prophetic history with which it is connected, as yet not able even to glance at this, but trusting to the clearness of its own evidence for the relation it bears to what we have just been looking at :—

"And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall *take away the daily sacrifice*, and they shall *place the abomination that maketh desolate*" (chap. xi. 31).

"And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by Him that liveth forever that it shall be for a *time, times and a half;* and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

"And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand, two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way until the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (chap. xii. 7, 11–13).

Here it is clear that we have an equal period to the time, times and a half, if taken as three and a half years, as we have already taken them;* that first thirty and then forty-five days more are added successively to this period; the twelve hundred and ninety days date from the setting up of the abomination, and therefore we may conclude that the twelve hundred and sixty also do this; and that at the end of the longest period Daniel stands in his lot, implying surely that the resurrection of the saints has

* The year, of course, is to be calculated according to the Jewish reckoning at 360 days.

taken place. Thus all of these dates are connected with the end as were the former ones—with the coming of the Lord, and the setting up of His kingdom.

And the taking away the daily sacrifice and setting up the abomination of desolation which is connected with these dates, interprets clearly the causing sacrifice and oblation to cease, and the desolation on account of the wing of abomination, of the ninth chapter. It is a confirmation of what has already been our conclusion from the previous prophecy alone, which one may well believe irresistible to any unprejudiced mind. And yet it is far from all that Scripture has to give us with regard to a period to which evidently it attaches the very greatest importance.

*(To be continued.)*

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# "THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

## 4. THE BREADTH OF THE KINGDOM.

THERE is no need to produce further proof that the kingdom covers the whole profession of Christianity. A glance at the parables should settle this. But we have to see yet that it goes beyond even what we can properly call *profession;* that *discipleship* goes beyond this; the kingdom being indeed exactly commensurate with this last,—ideally, with the whole of the baptized.

And here I am reminded that in what I shall have to say I must speak contrary to the convictions of many beloved brethren, and seem, perhaps, even in speaking, to make light of these. I do not in the least, but sympathize fully with the strength

of their feelings regarding the dishonor done to Christ, and the injury done to men's souls by views widely current as to baptism. Babylon the great has been built up by the use of bricks for stones, and slime for mortar,—the substitution of human manufacture for divine creation,—of a "*sacramental* host of God's elect" for those "baptized by one Spirit into one body." And in the hands of these builders baptism has been made to build up a "great house" with vessels to dishonor, from which we are called to purge ourselves if we would be "vessels unto honor" (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21). Protest against this false ritualistic system can hardly go too far or be too strongly maintained.

The baptism of water has been confounded with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and infants have been supposed to be regenerated by it, and made partakers of a life that gave no sign, and bore no fruit for God, and but deluded those who trusted in it. Then, as they could not say that every one so baptized was fit for heaven, they had to send a large part of these man-made children of God to hell, and most of the rest to purgatory to be purified by fire there. While yet, without this baptismal regeneration, not even a little babe could go to heaven.

The fundamental error here is twofold: first, in confounding, as already said, the natural and the spiritual spheres. Water cannot cleanse a soul, nor impart spiritual life. It may be "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," but not "a means whereby we receive the same." Secondly, in confounding heaven and the kingdom of heaven, or again, the kingdom of heaven and the Church. And from these last two, Protestantism

has not in general, any more than Rome, escaped. The distinction between the two leaves a place of privilege and conditional blessing, which is not the Church, and yet which is not the world either, save as it is untrue to its character, and the principles of the world may leaven it. And this is what Scripture attests would happen, and history shows has happened.

But man's unbelief cannot make the faithfulness of God without effect. The kingdom of heaven, with its message of peace and reconciliation, remains the testimony of a love which goes out to all, and would gather in to God wherever the will of man is not hardening itself in opposition. We do not, in fact, in Scripture meet with that long delay of baptism, and that preparation of catechumens, which came in as baptism itself came to be looked upon as reception into the Church, and the symbol of the full Christian state. In the New Testament the catechumens were inside, not outside, the sphere of discipleship. Instead of being kept waiting at the threshold, the applicants were met with a generous and unsuspecting welcome. Three thousand were baptized on the day of Pentecost: how much preliminary instruction had they? And if, as at Samaria, a Simon Magus were received, with his heart not right in the sight of God, his reception had not defiled those tender arms of mercy which had been flung around him, and from which he had, as it were, to burst, to pursue the headlong path to everlasting ruin. I say, it is evident upon the face of Scripture, that baptism was not then fenced round, as many now would fence it round. It was a door, *not carelessly*, but readily and with a full heart, opened to the appli-

cant for it. No question of Christ's heart, no "if thou wilt" was to be permitted.

But notice also, no hint of the Church of God is connected with this, its occurrence even in Acts ii. 47 in the common version being a copyist's error. The doctrine of the Church was revealed to Paul much later, and he who "received of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 23), as to the institution of the Supper, had no commission to baptize (chap. i. 17). In the first is involved the question of communion; in the second, the responsibility is only individual.

This wider character of the kingdom we see further in our Lord's words as to the little children brought to Him. "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," are words which become very plain when we have seen what the kingdom is. In these little ones is no resisting will, and divine love would lay hold upon them for its own. Once see that the kingdom is not heaven, but a sphere of discipleship on earth, you can no more stumble at the thought of baptizing them than of taking them into your Sunday-schools. They belong, the Lord says, to His school at all times, and here He would meet them, put His hands on them, and bless them, as when on earth He did. The great arms of the Redeemer will not wait even for their final choice of Him to be made manifest, but would win them, prevail upon them by their tender clasp, mark them as His in *His* will, whatever even in the end may be *their own.* How precious is this thought of His, which then He turns to us to help carry out: "Bring them up," He says, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4).

They are His disciples, taken into His school, and to be brought up for Him. And who would, as such, reject them? Is it not because of the superstition which has been connected with the thought, and the confusion between the kingdom and the Church, that so many now reject the baptism of infants as a popish figment, while they would do for them gladly the very thing which baptism implies, and rightly think it any thing but popish?

Let them remember that baptism is not to take them to heaven as a charm, but to mark them as belonging to Christ's school on earth; that, as far as it goes, it is "baptism unto *death*," not life; burial, the putting the dead in death, where they belong; but in that touching confession of their need, baptizing them "unto Christ," "to His death," looking for all to come to them, not from the water, but from Christ, through His work for them, which we thus own. Find me in this one shred of popery or superstition, any one that will. It is only the sweet and suited, open and apparent action of One who says in it what He says of old: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven": words that charm our hearts, beloved brethren, and command our allegiance.

This character of the kingdom, then, is a beautiful one, that it represents to us the very character of Him who is on the throne of it,—the grace that casts out none that come, that would fain receive all, even those who break away at last from its shelter. Yes, such is the love of Jesus; and to me, while I own the difference of the dispensation, and do not want to press uncertain analogies, yet it

seems only the *more* suited that He, who in the days of law recognized the children of His people in the mark of circumcision, should now, in the grace that is come in with Christianity, not leave them without some corresponding mark. I am assured He has not done so; and the confusion and evil in His kingdom cannot affect the grace of it, or make it less certain that His kingdom it is. And when the limit of His patience has been reached, love it will be still that will act, the rod of iron will be the Shepherd's rod.

But we must now consider more attentively the distinction between the kingdom and the Church.

*(To be continued.)*

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## A Sermon in Strasburg in the 14th Century.

YOU know, dear children, that if you want fresh, pure water, you can get it best from the spring. The water that runs away in the pipes becomes warm and muddy.

God is the fountain-head of the true and living stream, and to Him alone can we go to drink our fill of the pure, bright water. "The king has brought us into His banqueting house, and His banner over us is love."

Oh, children, well and wisely does He order all for us, leading us by strange wild ways, to bring us at last into the great depth of love, unto Himself, the unfathomable blessedness. And that which there we learn to know is beyond all imag-

ining and all understanding—the foretaste of eternal joy.

All that He does for us, and all the hidden ways of God which no eye can see, are in order that He may bring us into the holy and blessed delight of His presence.

Hear how He calleth with His mighty voice, "Whosoever is athirst let him come and drink of the water of life freely."

Children, the thirst is first in Him; *He* thirsteth for the souls that are athirst for Him, and when He findeth us, He giveth us to drink so gloriously, so freely, and so fully, that from *us* there floweth the living water, a spring of everlasting life.

It is not reading of God, or hearing of Him, or knowing Him by sense or reason that will satisfy us, but it is *receiving* Him, drinking deeply of the blessed fountain that springs from the eternal depths—drinking from Himself where He is, and no other.

You know what a spring is, children, and what a cistern is. The cisterns become foul and dry, but the spring leaps up, and sparkles, and flows freely, fresh and sweet and pure.

Thus does the soul know God in a nearer and a better way than all masters and teachers can tell of Him. He is a good teacher who tells you to go straight to the school where the Holy Ghost is the schoolmaster. He loves to find the scholars there who are waiting to receive the high and blessed teaching that flows forth from the Father's heart.

If we hindered not His blessed work, how gladly, how fully would the tide of life and joy flow down, as a mighty rain filling the valleys and the depths, as the blessed rain for which Elijah prayed, when

the earth was dry and thirsty, so that naught could grow and blossom.

Children, it is the dry and thirsty land that calls for the great rain. And it is because we seek to satisfy our thirst with other things that the Holy Ghost is hindered.

Do you find that your heart is dry and barren? If you do, see that you do not run off to your confessor, but flee to God, and confess to Him. And He will lay His divine hand upon your head, and make you whole.

Oh how great, how inexpressible, how blessed, how immeasurable, is the gift of the Holy Ghost! Were you to compare a point, which has no dimensions with the whole world, the difference would be as nothing to that of heaven and earth and all that therein is, compared with the gift of the Spirit of God. The least that we can conceive of the Holy Ghost is a thousandfold more than all created things.

The Holy Ghost prepares the house in which He comes to dwell. And He fills the house with Himself, for He is God. Every chamber, every corner is filled with His presence, though often we are not aware of His presence and His work, because we are taken up with outward things, and He will not let us know the sweetness of His presence till we have closed the doors, and sit down in the stillness of rest, to listen to His voice. The disciples shut the doors for fears of the Jews.

Ah, dear children, beware of the dangerous Jews, who would take from you the secret of the Lord, and the sweetness of the company of God the Holy Ghost. The Jews in the disciples' days could only hurt their bodies, but this present

evil world will hurt the soul, and take from you the blessed intercourse of the heart with God. Go into company and join amusements where God is not and His honor is disregarded, and then will the presence of the Holy Ghost be lost to you, and His gifts will be powerless in your hand.

Do you say, "I only go to harmless amusements! I mean no ill. I must have pleasure and enjoyment at times"?

O God, Thou blessed, Thou precious, Thou eternal God! how can it be that Thou art not to the souls Thou hast created, the sweetest, the most beloved—the most glad and blessed joy? And rather than enjoy Thee will the soul turn to the sad, dark, polluting, deadly pleasure and enjoyment of this poor world, there to find peace and joy!

You say, it does you no harm? Go and say that to God; for, if that is true, your case is sorrowful indeed. It is that you have no delight in Him, and see no beauty in Him that you should desire Him.

In three ways, dear children, did the beloved Lord attract to Himself the heart of John.

First, the Lord Jesus calls him out of the world, to make him an apostle.

Next, did he grant to him to rest upon His loving breast.

Thirdly, and this was the greatest and most perfect nearness, when on the holy day of Pentecost He gave to him the Holy Ghost, and opened to him the door through which he should pass into the heavenly places.

Thus, children, does the Lord first call you from the world, and make you to be the messengers of

God. And next, He draws you close to Himself, that you may learn to know His holy gentleness and lowliness, and His deep and burning love, and His perfect unshrinking obedience.

And yet this is not all. Many have been drawn thus near, and many are satisfied to go no further. And yet they are far from the perfect nearness which the heart of Christ desires.

St. John lay at one moment on the breast of the Lord Jesus, and then he forsook him and fled.

If you have been brought so far as to rest on the breast of Christ, it is well. But yet there was to John a nearness still to come, one moment of which would be worth a hundred years of all that had gone before. The Holy Ghost was given to him—the door was opened.

Do you ask, "Have *I* gone further than John had gone when he had reached the second nearness?" I answer, "None can go beyond the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. But you may ask the question in another way. "Have you passed beyond all that is your own? all that has its sweetness in *your* enjoyment of the sweetness?"

For there is a nearness in which we lose ourselves, and God is all in all. This may come to us in one swift moment,—or we may wait for it with longing hearts, and learn to know it at last. It was of this that St. Paul spake, when he said that the things which the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart conceived, God hath now revealed to us by the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

The soul is drawn into the inner chamber, and there are the wonder and the riches revealed. And truly he who beholds them often must spend many a day in bed—for nature must sink beneath the ex-

ceeding weight of the great glory. John fell down as dead before Him. Paul knew not whether he were in the body or out of the body, when the door into this inner glory was opened, and he saw the face of Christ.*

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## A Hymn of Pre-Reformation Times.

TO praise Him in the dance! O glorious day!
The pilgrim journey done—
No more press forward on the weary way,
For all is reached and won.

His hand at last—the hand once pierced for me—
Forever holdeth mine;
O Lord, no songs, no harps of heaven will be
Sweet as one word of Thine!

Lord, altogether lovely, then at last
High shall the guerdon be;
Thy kiss outweigh the weary ages past
Of hearts that brake for Thee.

* * * * *

Yet now I know Thee as the hidden Bread,
The Living One who died;
Who sitteth at my table—by my bed—
Who walketh by my side.

I know Thee as the fountain of deep bliss
Whereof one drop shall make
The joys of all the world as bitterness,
My Lord, for Thy sweet sake.

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* These are the words of a Dominican monk, Dr. John Tauler, of whom Mrs. Bevan has told the story in her book lately published, "Three Friends of God: Records from the lives of John Tauler, Nicholas of Basle, and Henry Suso." We need not recommend the work more to those who value communion with God, and the memorials of His work in His own in the darkest days.

Lord, Thou hast loved me; and henceforth to me
  Earth's noonday is but gloom,
My soul sails forth on the eternal sea,
  And leaves the shores of doom.

I pass within the glory even now,
  Where shapes and words are not;
For joy that passeth words, O Lord, art Thou,
  A bliss that passeth thought.

I enter there, for Thou hast borne away
  The burden of my sin;
With conscience clear as heaven's unclouded day,
  Thy courts I enter in.

Heaven now for me—forever Christ and heaven—
  The endless *now* begun:
No *promise*, but a gift eternal *given*,
  Because the Work is done.

HENRY SUSO.
*From "Three Friends of God."*

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## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*Ans.* 26—John x. 27–29 is plain as divine love would make it. The Lord gives unto His people eternal life, and they shall never perish. There is no condition here, and we must make none. If, as people say, they could pluck themselves out of His hands, *then* they would perish; but He says they shall not. There is no other Scripture that clashes with this in the least. Falling from grace in Galatians, is abandoning it as one's ground before God, as the Galatians were doing,—adding the law to the gospel,—the very thing those do who urge the text so much. Let us take Scripture as it stands, and we shall be safe; where it speaks of conditions, insist on

them; where we find a glorious unconditional promise, receive it simply.

*Ans.* 27.—Acts. ii. 18, like xxi. 9, shows undoubtedly that women might have prophetic gift, and 1 Cor. xi. 5 prescribes as to its use. 1 Cor. xiv. 34 shows that it was not to be in the public assemblies where the whole church came together. There is nothing to forbid a women's prayer-meeting, but they must do nothing unsuited to the modesty becoming women, or the place which nature gave them (comp. xi. 14).

*Ans.* 28.—Heb. xiii. 17 should be as in the margin "those who guide you." Of course this must be by the Word, or it is not real guidance.

*Ans.* 29—We must surely take care in whatever we put our hand to that we have the authority of Scripture for it. If in any thing we do, or in the way we do it, we violate Scripture to secure what we suppose greater good, we do indeed adopt the terrible principle, "Let us do evil that good may come." On the other hand, our hearts are not right if they do not own and delight in what is of God wherever we may find it, though it may be mixed with much that we could not ourselves take part in. Our prayers, at least, are every-where due, and often we can be free to give practical help to what on the whole we can believe to be of God, while sorrowing over and refusing for ourselves what may be mixed up with it. Here we need to be much before God in order to find our way in times so difficult as the present.

*Ans.* 30.—As to Deut. xxxiii. 12, another has said of these blessings, that they show "the relationship of Jehovah with the people as in possession of the land;" and as to the verse in question, that "it would seem that the place of Benjamin, in relation with Jehovah, was in his favor, being kept near Him, as has been the case with that tribe within whose limits was Jerusalem."

*Ans.* 31.—In Isa. xxvi. 19 it should read "My corpses shall arise." The word for "corpses" is a "word without a plural, but frequently used in a plural sense, as in chap. v. 25," says Delitzsch. The passage is to be interpreted, no doubt, as Ezek. xxxvii. and other passages, of Israel's resurrection as a nation. God claims them, dead as they are, as His, and quickens them from the dead.

*Ans* 32.—In Matt. xxiv. 28, the "eagles" are the executioners of divine judgment, which find the corrupting object wherever it may be (comp. Luke xvii. 37). "They shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity."

*Ans.* 33.—In Jno. ii. 17, the "zeal of Thine house" is surely Christ's zeal for what was the habitation of Jehovah.

*Ans.* 34.—2 Tim. ii. 12 is a general principle, and of wide application. In the full sense the denial of Christ would be apostacy, and the "us" take in all that profess to be Christians; but there are important applications to those that are truly Christians, who, in proportion to their open confession of Him or not, find correspondingly or not His open countenance. I do not doubt that the boldest confessors are (if they be real) the happiest possessors (comp. 1 Pet. iv. 14).

*Ans.* 35.—"Eternal life" in Rom. ii. 7 is not a principle of life possessed here, but a state into which men go finally as in Matt. xxv. 46. It is a life which they will live, not the life by which they live it.

*Ans.* 36.—Luke xiv. 26: "If a man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother," simply means that he must be prepared to *act* as if he did this; there was to be no balancing between Christ's claims and those of the very nearest relationship.

# "THINGS THAT SHALL BE:"

## AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

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### *PART I.*—(*Continued.*)

### INTRODUCTORY.

### (2) *Prophecies of the New Testament.*

WHAT we have gathered, then, from these different prophecies is this:—

1. That the times of the Gentiles—of the Gentile empires—are closed in sudden overthrow by the kingdom of God established in the hands of One who, as Son of Man, comes in the clouds of heaven.

2. That the last form of Gentile power,—the Roman,—ends in blasphemous opposition to God and to His saints—opposition which brings the judgment down.

3. That this opposition displays itself in a special way in connection with the Jews, who, in the security of a covenant with the last head, have re-established their temple-worship at Jerusalem. Three and a half years from the end—a half-week of years—he breaks this covenant, causes the worship of Jehovah to cease, and replaces it by an idolatry which brings in desolation, a scourge from God, lasting until this period expires. Deliverance for the saints, and the end of Gentile dominion, come together with the sudden appearance of the Lord from heaven.

In all this the simple comparison of scripture with scripture has set aside the need of any labored interpretation. The time, times, and dividing of a time of the little horn's prevalence (Dan. vii.) correspond so in every feature with the last half week of the seventy in chap. ix.,

and the time, times, and a half of the twelfth chapter, that to force them asunder would seem almost manifest perversion. The successive prophecies agree with the preceding ones in the most perfect way, while adding each something of its own. The one mind of the Spirit runs evidently through them all.

We are now going to add in the same manner some New-Testament prophecies to the Old, and see if still Scripture will not speak for itself, and become its own interpreter,—if as definite certainty cannot be reached as to the main features of unfulfilled prophecy as with regard to any other part of inspired testimony.

And the first passage we naturally take up proclaims its own connection with what we have been looking at in Daniel. I refer, of course, to the great prophecy of Matt. xxiv. Read in the light of the prophecies to which it refers, it becomes as clear and intelligible as can be.

The Lord has announced to His disciples the impending overthrow of the temple. They thereupon put two questions to Him, which in their minds were no doubt more closely connected than they would be in ours: "Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?"

As to the first question, which of course refers to the destruction of the temple, we have little to do with it just now. The answer will be found more fully given in Luke xxi., in which the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place more than thirty-five years afterward, is explicitly announced. In Matthew it will be found that the Lord deals rather with the second, double question, where they seem evidently to identify the coming of the Lord with "the end of the age"—for "world" it is not, either here or in the thirteenth chapter, where the same expression is to be found. Literally, it is the "consummation of the age."

Now, remembering Daniel, and that these were Jewish questioners, with at present none but Jewish hopes, but

owning Jesus as their Messiah,—with no thought of the long interval which was in fact to elapse before His still future coming, it is plain that the age of which they spoke was the age of law—of Judaism as it then was. Of a Christian dispensation they could have no thought. The "coming" of which they spoke was doubtless connected with, if not derived from, the coming of the Son of Man of which Daniel had spoken. The "end of the age" we have found portrayed there in fact, in terms to which the Lord refers; but while they would necessarily think of it as the end of a Jewish age, most Christians would as naturally from their stand-point think of it as Christian.

For us, Judaism is gone forever, and it is a strange thing to speak of its revival; yet we have seen that Daniel shows us a week of special divine dealings with Judah and Jerusalem, cut off from the sixty-nine preceding by an unknown interval in which plainly Christianity has prevailed. And in this last week we find the temple-services again going on until their interruption by the head of Gentile power.

It is to this interruption the Lord refers, directly citing Daniel: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand;) then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains; let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes."

In Luke, where the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans, eighteen centuries ago, is prophesied, while the same injunction to flee to the mountains is given, the sign is different—"Jerusalem compassed with armies;" and these latter directions are omitted,—they would be plainly out of place. No such rapid and instant flight as is here spoken of was needed to escape the desolating hosts. It is merely therefore said; "Let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst

of it depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto."

But here, the enemy is in the midst, the saints are the objects of special enmity, and there must be no delay: "And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days; but pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." Here it is plain that Jews under the full rigor of Jewish law are contemplated.

And now comes another reference to Daniel. In his last prophecy we find that "at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." (Chap. xii. 1.)

Thus it is the great day of Jewish deliverance which is at hand, and they are delivered out of a time of unequaled trouble. The Lord's words echo and emphasize the words of Daniel: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no,—nor ever shall be. And except those days shall be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

The precise time of the tribulation is given by the Old-Testament prophet—three years and a half; and we see by the Lord's words that it is impossible to apply here the year-day theory, which would extend it to twelve hundred and sixty years. This certainly would not be shortening the days in any sense.

He follows with the announcement of false Christs and false prophets as characterizing this period,—an addition to the Old Testament of the greatest significance, and which we shall find developed in succeeding prophecies: "Then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe him not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs

and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert! go not forth; Behold, He is in the secret chambers! believe it not. For, as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

As in Daniel also, it is by this coming that the time of trouble is closed: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

For our purpose, it is not necessary to go further. The agreement with former prophecies is clear and conclusive. A latter-day remnant is seen in Jerusalem, distinctly Jewish in character, yet listening to Christ's words, and owned of God; and the end of the age of which the disciples inquire is identified with the broken-off last week of Daniel's seventy. The temple is again owned as "the holy place," though in the meanwhile defiled with idolatry, and this before the Lord's coming in the clouds of heaven. We necessarily ask ourselves, Where, then, is Christianity? and what does this presence once more of a *Jewish* "age" imply as to the present Christian dispensation?

To this, Scripture gives no undecided answer. It shows us that the Christian dispensation (properly so called,) is over then; that the Church, Christ's body, is complete; that all true Christians have been caught up to Christ, and are with Him; that the rest of the professing church has been spewed out of His mouth, according to His threatening to Laodicea; that the Lord is now taking

up again for blessing His people Israel and the earth, and we are again in the line of Old-Testament prophecy, and going on to the fulfillment of Old-Testament promises.

That these promises belong to Israel, literally,—His kinsmen according to the flesh,—we have the unexceptionable witness of the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. ix. 4), who also warns the Gentile professing body, that they stand only by faith, and if they abide not in the goodness of God which He has shown them, shall be cut off; and Israel, abiding *not* in unbelief, should be graffed back again into her own olive-tree. He tells us also that this receiving of them back shall be "life from the dead" to the nations of the world; that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, only till the fullness of the Gentiles is come in; and then *all* Israel—the nation as a whole—shall be saved. And he adds that while, as regards the *gospel*, they are [treated by God as] enemies for our sakes, as touching the election they are yet beloved for the father's sakes; because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. (Rom. xi. 13–29.)

Thus the wonderful change which Matt. xxiv. exhibits is fully accounted for. The Jews and Judaism once more owned, shows that the *Christian* "gospel," having completed its full gathering of Gentiles as designed by God, is going out no longer. Heaven (though we must make a certain exception which we shall by and by consider,) —heaven is full. The gathering for earth and blessing there is now commencing.

The Lord has spoken of false Christs and false prophets in connection with that time. Let us turn now to the apostle John's description of Antichrist. He warns us indeed that already in his time there were many; already there was the character of the "last time." He speaks of them as apostates, issuing from the professing church itself, never really Christians, though among them. (1 Jno. ii. 18, 19.) But he goes on to describe one special form, "*the* liar," "*the* antichrist," as his words really are.

"Who is the liar," he asks, "but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" And then he adds, "He is the antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." (*v.* 22.)

It will be found that there are here two forms of unbelief, which in this wicked one unite in one. The first is the Jewish one that denies that Jesus is the Christ. They do not deny that there *is* a Christ, but they deny Jesus to be this. The *full* Christian belief is not only that Jesus is the Christ, but that He is also the Son of the Father. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father,"—there are many of these now, as the Unitarians so called; but they deny the Son to make much of the Father: the full climax of unbelief in this great head of it is here, that he denieth both the Father and the Son.

Thus the antichrist denies Christianity altogether; but he owns Judaism, for the very denial that *Jesus* is the Christ implies, however, that there *is* Christ. And this is the complete *anti*christ, who is not only *against* Christ, but takes His place. And so the Lord speaks of "*false* Christs." These are, by profession, then, Jews, and the antichrist is a Jew.

How naturally the antichrist belongs, then, to a time when Christianity is gone from the earth, and a revived Judaism is in its old seat, and they are in expectation (as almost necessarily they would be,) of the speedy fulfillment now of the promise of Messiah. When the Lord came in the flesh, there was just such an expectation, and just such fruit of it in the appearance of false Christs. And the words in Matthew show that such a time there will be again; only now with a peculiar power of deception which only the elect escape. Among these blasphemous pretenders is the full prophetic antichrist.

Let us turn to another picture, which the apostle puts before the Thessalonians. (2 Thess. ii. 1–12.) Here we shall find what unites John and Matthew, connecting the developed evil of apostate Christendom with the revival of Judaism which the Lord's own words foreshow.

And I quote from the Revised Version, which is in many respects an improvement upon the common one:—

"Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him, to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present: let no man beguile you in any wise; for it will not be except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. . . . For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work, only there is one that restraineth now until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to naught by the manifestation of His coming: even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and all deceit of unrightousness for them that are perishing; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Thus the solemn end of Christendom is revealed. And already in the apostle's days the leaven of evil was at work, which but for a divine restraint upon it would before this have permeated the whole mass of profession. But the apostasy will come, if even now rather it is not begun, of which the issue and final head will be this lawless one, who will sweep away with him to common ruin all that receive not the love of the truth. They will believe a lie—literally, it is "*the* lie,"—and "who is *the* liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" He opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called

God or worshiped: certainly therefore "denieth the Father and the Son." But not only so: he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." How can we forbear to think of that abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, which the Lord has called our attention to from Daniel?

But here is a notable instance of the need we have of the apostle's warning that "no prophecy of the Scripture is to be interpreted by itself." To those rooted in the idea that Judaism is gone forever, and that the Christian Church is now the only "temple of God," what more natural and necessary than to interpret this of the pope? Nor do I for a moment say that he is not in the direct line of development; prophecy has oftentimes these incomplete anticipative fulfillments, which answer for the full and exhaustive one which is to come. But in the light of all that has preceded, we may be quite sure that any application to the head of Catholicism is only partial and anticipative. Popery has existed for too many centuries to be a sign of the coming day of the Lord; and one sitting as God in the temple of God is too simply explicative of the abomination of desolation in the holy place to make the application difficult or doubtful.

This wicked one, like the little horn of the fourth beast, finds his end also at the coming of the Lord. I do not mean by this that they are the same person, for they are not; but they belong to the same time, and are closely connected.

Thus, then, the New Testament agrees perfectly with the Old in its representation of the end of the age. But we have not examined yet its fullest and most decisive testimony, which we find, just where we would expect to find it, in the book of Revelation. But of this we propose a more extended examination; and we have been gathering together the Scripture-testimony elsewhere only as introductory to this which lies before us. May the Lord Himself direct our inquiries and govern our hearts

by the truth of His Word. It is not a mere intellectual study that we propose. We seek to have for our souls the spiritual power of what is unseen,—the future as light for the present,—the judgment of the Lord in the day of the Lord, in order to self-judgment now,—the joy of heaven for present communion. May He who alone can purge from our sight the dullness and drowsiness that so cling to us, our eyes anointed with His eye-salve, that we may see!

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# "THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

## 5. THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH.

TO most Christians perhaps, even at the present day, the kingdom and the Church are one. The Church practically is the whole body of professors: what else is the kingdom? They would not deny that these are different *aspects*,—that the thought connected with each is different, but they are aspects only of the same thing. We have now, then, to consider how far this difference extends—whether it be only of thought, or of the things themselves.

The kingdom we have seen to be the sphere of discipleship; the Church is, in its fundamental idea, the body of Christ,—it is the unity of His members. Notice that that action of the Spirit by which we are brought into this body is called "baptism:" "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) Scripture, by adopting this word in this connection, institutes a comparison, thus, between the kingdom and the Church. But the one baptism is an external rite; the other, inward and spiritual. The error of identifying the two

spheres has led to that of identifying the two baptisms; but the one is in the hand of man, the other in the power of God alone.

The Church is not only the body of Christ; it is also the house of God: and under this figure of a house the Lord first speaks of it in the gospels,—"Upon this rock I will *build* My Church." Peter, taking up and extending the Lord's words. shows us this building and its foundation clearly: "To whom coming, as unto a Living Stone, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.) But Paul it is, to whom the doctrine of the body of Christ was committed, who first explicitly calls the Church, as indwelt by the Holy Ghost, the house and the temple of God. (Heb. iii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 19.) As the Church, then, is in the kingdom, which is yet wider and external to it, it stands with respect to the kingdom as the temple to its outer court. In the former, the priestly family drew near and worshiped; in the other alone, the Israelite of the common people. Peter identifies, as it were, the house and the priesthood: "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood."

The house and body were, in God's design, and for a short time at the beginning, exactly commensurate. The one was composed of living stones, the other of living members. But men with their bad building have done as was foretold: they have unduly enlarged the house. They have built in "wood, hay, stubble." (1 Cor. iii. 12–17.) Thus the house is become "as a great house," in which there are vessels of gold and silver, of wood and of earth, and some to honor and some to dishonor." And it will be purged from its disorder only when the Master comes.

But we have not here to think of the disorder, but to look back to the beginning to get the true design of the divine Architect. The more simply we can do so the better.

In the kingdom, then, we have individual responsibility, conditional blessing, a place of privilege to which man has authority to introduce his fellow; in the Church, a place of absolute grace, relationship to one another, communion: and here belongs another institution which expresses this. Paul, the special apostle of the Church, to whom it was given to complete the doctrine of it, was not sent to baptize. (1 Cor. i. 17.) But he has, by distinct revelation from the Lord, the institution of the memorial feast, in which not only do we symbolically "eat the Lord's flesh and drink His blood," but in which also it is expressed that "we, being many, are one bread, one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." (Chap. xi. 24; x. 17.)

Baptism and the kingdom speak of conditional blessing and individual responsibility; the Church, and the breaking of bread, of already-enjoyed (therefore absolute) grace, and fellowship in it, relationship to one another and the Lord. The kingdom is the outer court of the sanctuary; the Church, the house of God, the sanctuary itself. The first affirms God's desire toward all; the last is the espoused object of Christ's unchanging love.

It may thus be seen why Paul, the "minister of the Church" as we have seen in a special sense, claims to be also specially the "minister of the gospel" (Col. i. 23), and to have as his peculiar mission "to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. i. 17), the last in some sort of opposition even to a commission to baptize. So he speaks of "*my* gospel"

(Rom. xvi. 25), associating with it the "mystery" of the Church. And, as has been fully shown by others, in fact it is Paul who alone speaks plainly of justification and of our place in Christ. With the other inspired writers it is rather forgiveness, although I do not say that there are not passages which look beyond this.

In the kingdom, the twelve are to sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matt. xix. 28.) Here we cannot imagine a thirteenth throne for Paul. The commission to baptize, we have seen, was given to them also, although Paul takes it up and acts upon it, as we all do since.

Paul thus completes—as the sense is in Col. i. 25—the word of God. The complete truth is given through him, and hence he preaches also the kingdom of God. (Acts xx. 25.) All lines of truth we shall find in his epistles who in his own person is the expression of the perfect grace of God. Nay, in a sense, he can bring out the very truth of the kingdom itself with more distinctness, because he is able to give along with it the full position and standing of the true believer.

Accordingly, nowhere so fully as in Paul's epistles do we find the warnings as to a fruitless profession with which we are so familiar. He who can say, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under law, but under grace," can on that very account the more insist that "to whom ye *yield yourselves* servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." (Rom. vi. 14, 16.) The freedom to which God has called us, the power with which He endues us, make the service of sin now so unutterably solemn; be-

cause it is manifestly on man's part the *choice* of evil: it is man's will in rejection of the grace of God.

On the other hand, even he in the experience of the seventh of Romans can still say, "The good that I would," "the evil that I would *not*," while of Christians characteristically it is said, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they* are the sons of God." (Chap. viii. 14.) The true Christian, conscious of the grace of which he is the subject, and established in a place which is unchangeably his, is just the one who submits himself joyfully to all the conditions of discipleship; and this is what Paul does in those words of his so often misinterpreted, (ix. 26, 27)—"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest after having preached to others I myself should be a castaway." He is here speaking as a disciple under the rules of the kingdom,—as a disciple to disciples; but he knows not only how to tread the courts of the Lord, but how, as a priest, to enter the sanctuary also, and to say, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us: who can separate us from the love of Christ?"

Here again, to keep the kingdom and the Church distinct, throws light upon the Word. Never will you find these conditions insisted on where it is a question of the child of God *as such*, or of justification and the place in Christ, membership in the body of Christ, or any thing which implies that divine grace has indeed wrought in the soul. All

such conditions apply to the disciple—to all disciples surely, but as such,—to the kingdom, the court of the temple. The Church is the temple of God itself, the place of enjoyed nearness and settled relationship.

Before we close this, it will be well to notice how the apostle separates these different spheres in the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians. His seven unities there comprise and are divided into three concentric circles of blessing, of which he begins with the innermost and proceeds outward. The innermost circle is that of the Church: "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Next, we have that of the kingdom: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Outside, again, is the world; not, of course, in the evil sense, but as the creation of God: "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all." This is the Scripture classification, which it has been our object to establish here.

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## "A COAL FROM THE ALTAR."

(Isaiah vi.)

THE lesson of this chapter, as we in our day may read it, is very full in its evangelic teaching. Its two broad features are these: that let man but take his true place before God, he shall surely find God's mercy for him; and then, also, that this *mercy* is, and must be, also *righteousness.* As the apostle puts it concerning the gospel, "It is the power of God unto *salvation* to every one that believeth;" and then why? "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." In God's

good news to fallen man is His righteousness revealed!

The prophet, though he be that—God's man toward the people, in the presence of God must fall as low as any other. A Manasseh, or a thief on the cross, could do no more than utter that cry, "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." And that is all the man of God can say. Like the Psalmist, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall *no man living* be justified."

It is the first essential thing for blessing to be brought just to this point: to the utter giving up of all pretension of any thing before God,—to the acceptance of His sentence of utter condemnation upon all the world;—all the world guilty before God. When we have reached that point, we do not look round with self-complacency upon our neighbors, to reflect upon how much guiltier they are than we. That word "LOST," if we know what it means, swallows up all other distinctions. It refuses to know any distinction. "Undone!" "Lost!" The sinner of the city and Isaiah the prophet absolutely upon the same level as to that!

Have you come down to that dead level, reader? Death is, you know, the abolisher of all distinctions. Men are dead;—*all* dead;—dead in trespasses and sins alike. Oh the hopelessness of that condition! Can you educate or improve death? Can human power do aught with death? No; God alone can quicken. You must have "life." You must be born again." No works can come of you but "*dead* works;" nothing that has not the odor of corruption in it, until you are born again,—born of God,—born of *His Word*, which liveth and abideth for-

ever: "and THIS is the word, which by the *gospel* is preached unto you." (1 Pet. i. 25.)

Where and as you are, then,—utterly powerless and helpless,—doing nothing, being nothing, promising nothing, you must receive the sweet and gladdening message of God's good news. You can be nothing, do nothing, till you have received it, for you are born again *by* it, and only so. You do not even begin to live to God until it does its work upon you.

And now, mark. No sooner is there the acknowledgment, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips," than the mercy of God supplies the remedy. "Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, 'Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.'"

How blessed! how worthy of God! No long, laborious process of cure is here! No conditions are imposed, no work of self-help is enjoined. The provision of grace is simple, immediate, and immediately effectual then and there. On the sinner's part is solely the confession of ruin which sin has wrought. The declaration of iniquity taken away and of sin purged meets it at once on God's part. It is preached to the "undone" one. God's word gives him the assurance of what is done for him. He is not left to examine himself, and to search out by his own feelings what is the mind of God toward him. He has to believe only, and be at peace.

And so it ever is. Every where the gospel proclaims for all, because all are sinners, the good

news of a salvation provided just for sinners. The call is, to "repent and believe the gospel,"—that is, to take the place of sinners, and just drink in the mercy provided for sinners. To "repent" is to give up the pretense and effort at *self*-justification. To "believe the gospel" is just to believe in the justification which God has provided.

"Being justified *freely* by His grace." "Freely," —what does that mean? "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." What *is* taking it freely? Surely, just believing that it is mine, unconditionally mine, because I want it. That I am to assure myself that it is mine if *I* "will," without any further question. This is the only "appropriation" Scripture knows of. The prophet confesses himself "undone." He is a needy, anxious, convicted one. He is thereupon assured that *his* iniquity is taken away, *his* sin is purged. That is what he is called on to appropriate. Not something that is not his own, but something that is freely his, just upon the ground of his being a poor lost one, needing it.

Many, if I could ask, Do you need a salvation such as this? would have no difficulty at all in giving answer that they did. And further, if I asked them, *would* they have just such a salvation if they could, would think it folly to ask such a question. With *them*, the question is of God's will, not of theirs. In Scripture, the question is of man's will, not of God's. "How often would *I* have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and YE would not." "Lord, if thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." "*I will*: be thou clean." "Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowl-

edge of the truth." Thus, if *we* will, there is no difficulty. For lost ones God has provided salvation through the work of Jesus. If *we* are that, and would have that salvation, it is ours. "It is not for us to question, but to believe our blessedness.

But what a strange mode of purging unclean lips—"a live coal" from the altar! A coal red-hot with the fire which has just been consuming the victim. Yes, "*our God is a consuming fire.*" What a picture of that indignation and wrath against sin which is a necessity in the nature of a holy God! And though He pity, yea, love the sinner, *that* cannot change His holiness. Set me in presence, then, of this righteous and holy God, how can He show me favor? How can the *righteousness* of God clear or justify me? It seems as impossible as that a "live coal" should purge instead of blasting human lips.

But look again. It is a coal from off the altar: a *live* coal still, for God's wrath against sin never can die out; God's righteousness never can be aught but what it ever has been. But this live coal from the altar of sacrifice is nevertheless changed in its character so far: it does *not* blast, but purges. And looking not at the type, but at the Antitype, the righteousness of God in the cross of Jesus Christ does *not* condemn, but justifies, the sinner. That cross surely is the altar of sacrifice where the live coal has done its work. It is where the righteousness of God has been declared as no where else; but where it is declared, perfect as ever, living and active in its antagonism to sin, and yet not against the sinner, but on his side. So that if I, confessing the sins which prove me one of those for whom He

died, take my place thus before Himself, I find Him faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

God has title to tell out His love—title to show it *me*—has earned this title at such a cost to Himself, that I cannot but believe He must love *much*, and love much to tell it out, and make souls happy in it. The gospel, sent out every where, is His witness that it is so. I cannot honor Him more than by giving credit to it.

Will you, beloved reader, if yet you have not? Will *you* let in this tale of joy which is seeking admittance to your heart at this moment? Is it too good to be believed? Too good for a tale from God Himself? Does it give Him more glory than He deserves? Only take your place with the prophet in this chapter; God's testimony to the work of Christ is this,—that it avails for *you;* for you, poor undone one, so glad to have this salvation if you only might, for *you* it avails;—"Your iniquity is taken away and your sin purged." Believe it and rejoice.

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## "UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST."

(Eph. iii. 8.)

*"Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."*
(2 Cor. viii. 9.)

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AYE, rich, with all the wealth of heaven's store,—
The gift of grace divine.
So rich, that earth, with all its treasured ore,
Fades into insignificance;—nay, more;—
Is utterly contemned, and spurned away,
By every heir of God and child of day.

How comes this wealth to sinners lost, undone?
It comes to us by grace, through God's dear Son,
Who saw our lost estate, and bare our woe,
That we might with Him dwell who loved us so.
Said I, "to dwell with *Him?*"—ah, there's the key
That unlocks all God's treasure-house for me!
In *Christ* I am, His boundless wealth I share,
God's Word declares I am His Son's coheir.
Blest saint of God!—earth's glories fade away
Before th' effulgence of eternal day.
Now let thy soul in Christ forever find
That wealth unsearchable.

*Lytham, England,*
*Sept. 13th*, 1888. *Rt. S.*

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# CORRESPONDENCE.

## Notes on Propitiation.

*Q.* 37.—"The spirit in which the article in *Help and Food* for September introduces the subjects of 'Priesthood and Propitiation' is very commendable. As one who has had much exercise as to these questions, and not yet clear, I make some notes, more in the way of inquiry than in the spirit of controversy, and more as looking into than teaching on the subjects.

"In the article, it is asked, 'What was it to make propitiation?' It is said to be 'appeasal'—'satisfaction.' Rom. iii. 25 is quoted (*R. V.*), 'A propitiation through faith, by His blood.' This 'shows *what* propitiates.' It is the *blood.* This is very distinct. In what follows, where it shows that we have 'only to substitute *propitiation* for *atonement*,' things are not to me so clear. It looks rather like a *begging* than a *solving* of the question. But let us test it. The scape-goat is 'presented alive before the Lord to *make propitiation* with him.' Now we have it

from Scripture that it is the *blood* that propitiates. Then the death of the victim must have taken place before the blood is obtained. This animal is alive,—there is no blood shed, hence this is propitiation *without* blood. Does this not show that the substitution of 'propitiation' for 'atonement' will not answer? Is the one term the real equivalent of the other? Is 'atonement' not a *generic*, and 'propitiation' not rather a *specific*, term? That is, does 'atonement' not apply to all in Lev. xvi., while 'propitiation' only applies to *one element*—the presentation of the blood on the mercy-seat? It seems simplest to think of propitiation *when that which propitiates is actually applied to the place of propitiation.* Then, strictly speaking, if this is so, we would have propitiation *only* when these two things are brought together. Then propitiation would not be made 'both in the holiest and outside of it,' and certainly not by the scape-goat. It would be made in the holiest, on the mercy-seat *alone.*

"Now as to the antitype. The article says, 'Let us remember, then, the wrath is borne, exhausted, before He dies. The blessed Substitute has been presented to God as that. Sin laid on Him by Jehovah as such, wrath poured out, an actual dealing of God with His soul in view of sin; and that is ended, the burden is *removed;* . . . . Thus He can say, 'It is finished;' for though He had to die, death is nothing now. Needed for atonement as the governmental penalty of sin, He can meet it with the weight off His spirit, for the cup He feared is drained.'

"Then, bearing in mind that it is the blood that propitiates, and that the mercy-seat, not the altar, is the propitiatory in the wrath-bearing as just described, there is no blood, no mercy-seat, hence no propitiation. 'The life of the flesh is in the blood,' so can it be said that there is blood till the life is taken, or given up? 'Without shedding of blood is no remission.' But we are told of 'wrath poured out,' 'the burden in this respect *removed*,' and that 'death is nothing now.' Then we have 'appeasal'—pro-

pitiation—before death, without blood, apart from the mercy-seat, and outside the sanctuary. But we have seen that it is the blood that propitiates; that, as the life is in the blood, death is necessary; that the mercy-seat is the propitiatory, and that is inside the sanctuary. These seem fatal objections to the paper.

"It is asked, as to the sprinkling of the blood on the altar after it has been sprinkled on the mercy-seat, 'Is this, too, for the acceptance of the blood *a second time?* And if not, why, then, the first? How is this expressed in the sprinkling of the mercy-seat, as it is not expressed in the sprinkling of the altar?' One might regret and indeed object to the reasoning, yet reply that the mercy-seat is the propitiatory, which the altar is not. The former was God's throne, which the latter was not. This makes a decided difference.

"Then the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy-seat was not always associated with *entrance* into the holiest. The idea of *access to* and *acceptance with* God, as usually connected with propitiation, seems to be rather overlooked in the paper. The case of the publican, as quoted, indeed, is in point: 'God, be propitiated unto me a sinner' gives the thought of acceptance before God on His throne. This important feature drops out of view rather when propitiation is connected with the altar, and also when viewed as taking place before the death on the cross.

"The question of the high-priest one may leave, as the paper is to be continued; but so far, it does not clear me on the important subject of propitiation."—*W. C. J.*

*Ans.*—I am unfeignedly thankful for our brother's communication. The Word is able to resolve all questions as to its own teaching, and on our part we ought to be able to submit all our own views to the test of the Word. Nor is this at all what can be rightly termed a fundamental doctrine. Where Christ's blessed work upon the cross is owned on all sides as that which alone brings us to God,

a difference of understanding as to some lesser points cannot be fundamental. And it is well if examination of the subject leads to a clearer realization of this. Scripture is plain as to it. While it speaks as clearly as possible of the sacrificial work of Christ as the only resting-place of the soul before God, it leaves many a thing as to it of great importance to be learned individually as we go on with God. To raise the cry of "fundamental error" wherever a doctrine dissented from *relates* even to fundamental *truths* is itself a grave mistake, and tends only to prevent a fair and full investigation of the matter. It acts upon many true souls by their fears, and like the cry of "heresy," is often the resort of weakness and ignorance merely. If there be fundamental error involved, we are in duty bound to show it not only to be "error," but to be "fundamental" also; but if it be, its full examination in the light of Scripture is only the more necessary.

Now for the first point raised by our brother,—the equivalence of "atonement" and "propitiation." The facts stand thus: In the Old Testament, we have but the one word for both; that must be conceded. In our version, there is no "propitiation," but "atonement" only. It is atonement in the holy place, atonement out of it, atonement by the scape-goat, and so on. Now the word for this is uniformly rendered in the Septuagint version—in every place in which our version gives "atonement"—by the word "propitiation." It is *propitiation* in the holy place, propitiation out of it, propitiation by the scape-goat: this cannot be denied.

Turning, then, to the New Testament and the Revised Version—confessedly more exact than the common one—we find this same Septuagint word "propitiation" used as translating the Old-Testament word for "atonement," and no other word used for it at all: "atonement" has dropped out, and "propitiation" takes its place. In other words, so far as we have any thing at all to guide us, the New-Testament and the Septuagint use is one.

Surely, then, this is some ground, to begin with, for believing that they *are* one. If one, the question is not "begged" at all; it is settled—perfectly settled. If not, then reason must be adduced why it is not. It is well known that in general the Greek of the Septuagint is that of the New Testament. That here we have an exception, it seems to me impossible to prove.

Now as to propitiation without blood by the scape-goat, it is surely no greater difficulty than *atonement* without blood. Let us remember that in the Old Testament there is, all through, one word for atonement, and that the positive statement of Lev. xvii. is, "It is the *blood* that maketh *atonement* for the soul." How is there any difficulty as to "propitiation," then, which there is not as to "atonement"?

Although it is the "*blood* that maketh atonement for the soul," yet in the lowest grade of the sin-offering, it is made by an offering of "fine flour" (Lev. v. 11–13), and in Num. xvi. 46, 47, by incense. Have we any warrant for saying that the same word shall be translated in the one case "propitiation," in the others, "atonement"? Surely none.

May not the difficulty be settled in this way, that whereas the blood was the ordinary and proper showing forth of what was required to put away sin, yet in certain cases another method might be adopted, not at the will of man, but of God?

At least, the word is the same—confessedly the same: the Old Testament indicates no difference; and the New Testament, so far as I am aware, none.

"It seems simplest," W. C. J. says, "to think of propitiation when that which propitiates is actually applied to the place of propitiation." Yet God says, "I have given it you *upon the altar* to make atonement for your souls." Now, granting, for the moment, that atonement may be generic, propitiation specific, *the generic term must include all the species:* the smaller must be included in the

larger. But it will be said, This clashes with propitiation in the holy place in any way. I answer, It makes the altar the first necessity, that is all; but that is very important for our purpose.

The mercy-seat was God's throne in the midst of Israel—where He dwelt between the cherubim. Thus it was of all importance that *there* should be a special testimony to the atoning work. The sevenfold sprinkling before it shows what is in question. We have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." No wonder, then, that here we should find a special "propitiatory." But the altar, it is said, was not that. Here, the point is, then, what does this mercy-seat, or propitiatory, imply? Surely for this we must look to the day of atonement, when alone the blood was sprinkled there, and see for what purpose it is stated to have been sprinkled. This, it seems to me, should be decisive. "He shall make propitiation *for* the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins, and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness."

Thus the mercy-seat is a propitiatory, because it enables God to remain, in mercy, among a sinful people. The blood sprinkled there propitiates the holiness of God *in this respect*, for them surely most important. But this is only a special application of the blood, already acceptable and accepted for the putting away of sin before this,—a propitiation as soon as shed,—propitiating, therefore, as to whatever it was applied to.

No doubt, then, there is a difference as to the mercy-seat and altar; but the blood was put on each for an exactly similar reason, and so it is stated. This, our brother does not seem to have taken fully into account.

And now, lastly, as to the blessed Antitype: what I have said, should clear this. But I would press only that there was wrath borne, (was there not?)—a cup of wrath actually

drained before death. When He cried, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," was He still under wrath? Nay, did He pass out of the body and bear it up to the throne of God, only there to be accepted? Let it be but a moment, if you please: in *principle*, there is no difference between a moment and an age: I ask earnestly, Did He do this?

I believe no Christian heart will say He did. And if He did not, the question which we have been here considering is completely settled.

Of course, apart from death atonement could not be: so I have said. Propitiation required man's full sentence to be borne. Yet it is true that when the cup of wrath was drained, propitiation was *thus far* accomplished. That is not, surely, "propitiation without blood," when it is said that death was still "needed for atonement." But I believe our brother must agree that, in comparison with the cup of wrath, "death was nothing." Is it not just this that makes the cross different from any mere martyr's death?

But I would add that the difficulty in all this matter seems rather a difficulty of clear interpretation of the Old-Testament types, and of the phraseology employed, than a difference as to the atoning work itself. No one of us really doubts that the Lord bore sin only upon the cross, not after it, or up to heaven. Thus, even in the type, the offering was always "before the Lord." (Lev. i. 3, 5, etc.) He was not afar off in heaven, or shut up in the holiest merely. Offerings that in no way went in there were distinctly owned as accepted of him, and sin removed from him who offered them. No one can question this, and it entirely corresponds with all our thoughts as to atonement.

But the difficulty is here: that wherever the blood is sprinkled, in the Mosaic ritual, "atonement" is said (as it were, afresh) to be made by it. It is a definite *application* of atonement to this or that person or thing; but this is with us differently expressed. A Jewish priest could in this way "make atonement" again and again with the

same blood; but for us, how would this repetition of atonement consist with our thoughts of it? For us, the *purging* would be manifold, but the *atonement* one. The thought is the same, however,—the expression different.

Now when we approach the subject of the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, we must keep this in mind. There is here this added difficulty, that approach to God on the mercy-seat is now ours, as it was not theirs. The way into the holiest is for us made manifest, and our blessings are in the heavenly places. For *them*, the mercy-seat was God's throne on earth,—His dwelling-place in the midst of His people. They approached there only by a representative, and never freely, while on this account their ordinary meeting-place with God was *at the altar of burnt-offering*. (Exod. xxix. 43.) This is very significant, that God could meet them elsewhere, and that at the very place where He gave the blood to be an atonement for their souls. An entering into the heavenly places was for them unknown.

But the mercy-seat exhibited to them the atoning blood as perpetuating God's dwelling-place among them,—hence was the true propitiatory, or place of atonement, in that sense of which I have just been speaking. For upon this, all their manifest relationship with God as His peculiar people depended. Thus, on the day of atonement, the blood was sprinkled first here, and then upon the altar, but for the same *purpose* in each case, to preserve them to the people by the purging of their sins.

For us, there is entrance into the heavenly places, and Christ Himself is our Propitiatory, or Mercy-Seat. Gone in, a Man, into the presence of God, His being there thus shows how indeed the precious blood by which He has entered abides before God forever. And by it we have boldness to enter into the holiest.

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**"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.)

# "THINGS THAT SHALL BE:"

## AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

### *PART I.—(Continued.)*

*The Throne in Heaven.* (Chap. iv. 1–3.)

WE come, then, to our theme, the book of Revelation. Our glance at prophecy has been for the purpose of putting this last and fullest of all in connection with the earlier ones, that we might not make it of "private interpretation." And when we come so to connect it, we find unmistakable evidence that a large part of the book is occupied with that predicted last week of Daniel, the events of which we have been considering. That the last "beast" of Daniel appears again in Rev. xiii. and xvii. is acknowledged, and must be, by all. But there is noticed as to it here, what history has made plain to us, that it was not to continue without interruption from its first commencement to its overthrow. It was to have its period of non-existence, and then come up again in greatly altered character as "from the bottomless pit." This is the blasphemous form in which we have seen it to end at the coming of the Lord; and the exact time of its prevalence in this way is given us as in Daniel—"forty and two months," or three years and a half (chap. xiii. 5).

And again and again this period confronts us. In the eleventh chapter, we find it as the time of sackcloth testimony of the two witnesses; in the twelfth chapter, stated as in Daniel, as "time, times, and a half," and again as "a thousand, two hundred, and threescore days," as that of the woman's nourishment in the wilderness from the face of the serpent. Much before this also we hear of an immense company of Gentiles as "come out of *the* great tribulation" (chap. vii. 14, *R.V.*)—quite evidently that spoken of in Daniel and in Matthew, the only one that

could be, in view of what is said there, announced as "*the* great" one. Thus from the seventh to the seventeenth chapters the last of the seventy weeks is clearly before us. But this implies, as we have seen, much. It shows that when this large portion of Revelation shall be fulfilled, the Christian dispensation will have passed away, Christians will be forever with the Lord, and the earthly people will be again those owned of Him, whatever the sorrows they may have yet to pass through, before their full blessing comes.

The *appearing* of the Lord in the clouds of heaven we find only in the nineteenth chapter, but then (as the apostle says,) "we shall appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). Our removal from the earth will therefore necessarily have taken place before: and thus he writes to the Thessalonians, that "the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 16,17).

Here it is plain how "those that sleep in Jesus God will bring with Him." There is no promiscuous resurrection of the dead; there is no picking out by judgment of sheep from goats, such as the twenty-fifth of Matthew very plainly teaches *will* take place when the Son of Man comes in His glory and be sitting on the throne of His glory. Here, on the contrary, we find but one company of raised and glorified saints caught up to meet and be with Him. Scripture is clear as to this blessed fact, which in itself affirms and emphasizes the gospel assurance that those who have Christ's word, and believe on Him who sent Him, shall not come into judgment. (Jno. v. 24, *R.V.*) This is, by such a text, made clear and certain enough.

But from this no one would understand that between this gathering up of the saints to meet the Lord and His appearing in glory with them there should be an interval

of months and years of earthly history. Nor can one be blamed, therefore, for being slow to assent to such a statement as this. Yet it is the truth; and one which can be perfectly well established from Scripture, although there is no single text which states it. And here is the place to give this some final consideration.

We have seen elsewhere that as the Old Testament ends with the promise of the "Sun of Righteousness," so the New Testament ends with that of the "Morning Star." Christ Himself is both, and in both His coming is intimated, but, as is plain, in very different connections. The sun brings the day, flooding the earth with light, and this is in suited connection with the blessing of an earthly people, whose the Old-Testament promises are (Rom.ix.4). The morning-star *heralds* the day, but does not bring it: it rises when the earth is still dark, shining as it were for heaven alone. And this to us speaks of our being with Christ before the blessing for the earth comes.

In the promise to Philadelphia also we find the assurance, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee out of the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Here, out of a universal hour of trial some saints at least are to be kept. How simply explicable this in their being taken out of the world to be with their Lord before the hour commences! how difficult to understand in any other way!

Accordingly, in those pictures of the world's trial which we have had before us, we have had no trace of the presence of Christians. All, as we have seen, speaks of Jews and Judaism as once more recognized,—a thing inconsistent with the existence of Christians and Christianity at the same time. As long as the present gospel goes out, "they are enemies for your sakes." (Rom. xi. 28.)

So also the antichristian snare, in the form it assumes, shows the same thing. Christ is looked for in the desert, or in the secret chambers, as appearing not from heaven,

but in the midst of the people; and the false Christ, when he comes, sits with divine honors in the temple of God.

Explicitly is it stated also in Isa. lx., that when the Lord arises upon Israel, and His glory is seen upon them, "*darkness* shall cover the earth, and *gross* darkness the peoples," a thing impossible if Christianity existed at the same time, yet perfectly plain in what we have been looking at. Indeed, the difficulty with these passages has been to realize the fact of such darkness as succeeding the present day of gospel light.

Again, the important scene in Matt. xxv., so misconceived by most interpreters even now, and for centuries taken as a picture of the general judgment, becomes thus perfectly intelligible, as it is only consistent with this view. It is the judgment of the living upon earth, after the Lord has come and set up His throne here; and the passage in Thessalonians, cited but a while ago, makes it absolutely certain that Christians will not be among the nations upon earth then. The dead are not in question either. There is no hint of resurrection, and *they* have their separate judgment, at the end of the thousand years of blessing, when the earth and the heavens flee away from before the face of Him that sits upon the throne (Rev. xx. 12).

But if the Lord called up the saints to meet Him in the air, and then immediately came on to the judgment of the earth, there *could* be no "sheep" to put upon His right hand. Universal judgment alone could follow. The fact of an interval between these two, such as we have been considering, at once clears the whole difficulty.

But the most convincing proofs of such an interval we find in the chapters that are now to engage our attention. Coming as they do between the history of the dispensation with which the addresses to the churches have already made us familiar, and the prophecies of the last week of Daniel, which follow so promptly and occupy so much space in the latter portion of the book. All through the

later addresses the announcement of the Lord's coming sounds with more and more urgency. In Thyatira, for the first time, they are exhorted, "Hold fast till I come." In Sardis, He is coming upon them as a thief, and they shall not know what hour He comes upon them. In Philadelphia, it is now, "I come *quickly*." And finally, Laodicea is ready to be spued out of His mouth, the last individual appeal being given, when the church as a whole has now rejected Him. In the fourth chapter, the "things that shall be after these" begin, and the apostle is at once caught up to heaven.

But we are now to proceed more leisurely. In so precious and wonderful a communication of divine grace we would gladly ponder every word, and allow nothing to escape us. But we are absolutely dependent upon the Spirit of God for aid, lest, after all, the very essence of them be lost. The various and contradictory interpretations that they have received may well teach us self-distrust, but not shake our confidence, that in proportion to our real simplicity and real desire to be taught of God, His truth will be discovered to us. He that seeks shall find. He will not for bread give us a stone, nor for a fish a serpent.

The "things that are" have come to an end. The voice that spake on earth is silent, but presently resumes from heaven. "After these things, I saw, and, behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, as of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, 'Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must come to pass after these.'"

Both the Common and the Revised Version have "hereafter." But this is vague. It would allow the prophecy that follows to be, after all, contemporaneous in its fulfillment with that of the addresses just completed. But the words are definite, and allow of no such idea. In the first chapter, the apostle had been bidden to "write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which shall be

after these;" and now he is reminded that he is come to this distinct division of his prophecy—"the things which must come to pass after these." The prophecy is orderly and successive, at least thus far.

Looking at the addresses to the churches, therefore, as depicting the phases of the professing church during the present dispensation, the meaning of the words would be, "The things which must come to pass *after the history of the Church is ended.*" If, then, such an interpretation of the two previous chapters is correct, the time we have reached is clearly enough defined. And how significant, at this point, the translation of the seer from earth to heaven! The voice with its trumpet-call is the first voice which he had heard—the voice of Jesus. No longer occupied with His lamps of testimony upon earth, He calls His servant up to Himself above.

And "immediately," he says, "I became in the Spirit." The distinctness of the new beginning is evident. Just so had he been, rapt in this ecstatic state, when he had had the former vision. It had not continued throughout, but now began afresh, his whole being absorbed in that which the Spirit of God communicated. He is, as it were, not in the body, as another apostle says of visions that he had received, that whether he was in the body or out of the body, he could not tell. (2 Cor. xii. 2): the Spirit of God was, so to speak, eyes and ears and all else to him.

And now by the Spirit he is rapt into heaven,—a new thing for a prophet, and as such, exceptional to John alone. Doubtless the heavens had opened before, even in Old-Testament times, though with reserve, and never to invite an entrance. Enoch, and afterward Elijah, had been taken there indeed, and comfort and blessing it was to know this. Still this was not an opening of it to men on earth. Heavenly visitants had appeared too among men, but they had no disclosures to make of the unseen sanctuary from which they came. Even in Job one might read also how the "sons of God came to present them-

selves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." And Micaiah at a much later day could say, "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him, on His right hand and on His left." Ezekiel, moreover, after this, that "the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." All this betokened, indeed, heaven's interest in earth, but it only serves to make evident the contrast with what we find here—a witness taken into heaven to bear testimony of what he found there.

The opening of the heavens is characteristic of New-Testament times. At the outset, the heavens are indeed, in the truest sense, opened when the Son of God lies in the manger of Bethlehem. And as He who reveals the Father is revealed, we are brought into communion with what spiritually constitutes heaven—with the Father and the Son. At the Lord's death, the vail of the sanctuary is rent asunder for us, and when He has ascended up, our Representative and Forerunner, the Holy Ghost sent down becomes in us the witness and earnest of heavenly things.

But the earnest shows that we have not yet possession, which John anticipatively brings us into. Paul also had been caught up into the third heaven—into paradise—and heard unspeakable things, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. (2 Cor. xii. 4.) But John finds utterance: he carries his writer's inkhorn into heaven, and reports what it was he saw there. He is bidden "Write," lest in his entrancement he should forget it. And how has the power of these communications been felt by those who have become heirs since to what has been thus written! Even those that have known least, have they not felt much? And how much more, then, should flow from deeper knowledge!

But then the character of this prophecy before us, in the very charm of its face-to-face vision, may assure us of what it speaks of and anticipates. It is our own call home this call of the prophet up to heaven, and how well it may thrill our hearts and gladden them as we listen to it!

Enter, then! Heaven is before us. Enter! It is the sanctuary. Not speculation do we seek, but enjoyment—holy and hallowing enjoyment. Not a thing here forbidden to us, and not a thing upon which the lusts of the flesh can fasten! To breathe this pure air, is to live indeed. To abide here is to make all the world can proffer an unmeaning emptiness, to brighten the dullest heart into glory, and make the tongue of the dumb to sing for joy.

Heaven! And the first thing the apostle sees is "a throne," and "One sitting on the throne."

It is the first necessity for all blessing, for, all stability, for all rest of heart. It is the assurance of order, of peace, of concord, of congruity: over all, a real, personal, living, and sovereign God. Not a democracy, but an absolutism; not laws which execute themselves, but the will of the All-wise, All-holy: fixed rule in free hands. It is this that sin would have overturned, and which has proved itself impossible to be overturned; whose eternity alone insures the absolute security of all else. Well may all crowns be cast before this throne, by which all are sustained and served. The sovereignty of God is surely the joy and triumph of every redeemed soul.

He who sits upon the throne is not and cannot be pictured, and the jasper and sardine stone to which He is compared have as yet yielded but little to the interpreter. As jewels, like those of the high-priest's breastplate, they represent, no doubt, the "Lights and Perfections" (Urim and Thummim) of God, unchanging, but seen, not in the inapproachable light itself, but in manifestations such as can be given to His creatures, and which display to them a various beauty they could not otherwise enjoy. "God is light," and the "*Father* of *lights*." The one colorless beam, broken up into the various colored prismatic rays, clothes the whole earth with its beauty. And the precious stones enshrine and crystallize these various rays.

If the "jasper" here be rather the *diamond*, as many

believe, then there does seem to be in it a most appropriate thought, and one it is hard to give up after having received it. The diamond is the brightest of gems, the nearest to the pure ray of light in its lustre, the most indestructible in character,—eminently fitted (as one might think) to be a symbol of the glory of Deity. But these are not its chief points of significance after all. The diamond is, as every one knows, but crystallized *carbon*, which we find in a pure form as graphite, the black-lead of our pencils. Carbon exists in these so opposite conditions, the symbol of divine glory (as it might be) on the one hand might on the other be that of evil and ruin and sin. And has not divine grace wrought in the transformation of our ruined humanity into the brightest display of divine glory? And could there be any thing of which we could be more fitly reminded here?*

God has forever displayed Himself in Christ, His perfect and glorious manifestation. He is "the effulgence of His glory, the express image of His substance." (Heb. i. 3.) It is not meant by that, what some have argued from it, that we shall see the Father only in Him. Scripture speaks of those who "in heaven always behold the face of the Father who is in heaven." (Matt. xviii. 10.) But the cross will not on that account lose its significance, nor the glory of the incarnate Son be the less needful for us.

And when we look on to the end of the book, and see the "city which hath foundations" in her eternal beauty, not only do we find the jasper as the first of these foundations, but the light—the lustre—of the city also is "like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal." (xxi. 11.)

This is at least all perfectly consistent. Its consistency and beauty may well plead for its acceptance by us, until,

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* Carbon is also the element characteristic of all organic products; so that organic chemistry has been called "the chemistry of the carbon compounds." It is thus connected with living forms, whether vegetable or animal. And I add, though this be a distinct thought, that crystallization is, as it were, the organization of the mineral.

at least, something that more commends itself can be produced.

The "sardine stone," or rather "sardius," is our carnelian, a stone much prized by the lapidary, and especially in the east, its most valued form being an unmixed bright red. The association with the jasper or diamond would suggest an association of thought; the diamond flashing with the red hues of the carnelian would necessitate almost the idea of the cross. Incarnation and redemption unite to make known the sovereign God.

It is not an objection, I believe, that in the next chapter we find explicitly the Lamb slain. The connection there is different, and God is never weary of Christ. Here it is the One upon the throne who is declared; and apart from Christ He could not be declared to us. The full radiance of divine glory are thus in the jasper and the sardine stone, or, as we have taken them to be, the diamond and the carnelian. The connection of the two throws light upon each, and the truth of its interpretation must rest on its verisimilitude.

Thus the One who sits upon the throne is declared to us. It is the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ," perfectly known and alone revealed in Him. The throne is *His* throne; the supreme will and power are His: and this is what makes us delight in that supremacy. Absolute in power and control, there is no mere arbitrary will in Him. Omnipotence never acts but with omniscient wisdom, perfect righteousness, holiness, and love. His pleasure is *good* pleasure: "*Worthy* art Thou, O Lord," is the adoring cry of the hosts of heaven.

The One who sits upon the throne is disclosed and characterized for our hearts before the throne is. And when we come now to the throne itself, we find as the first thing, what is addressed to our hearts no less, "a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." The natural and historical associations here are full of precious suggestions.

The bow we all know as the token of God's covenant with the earth, and with every creature in it. The flood had just passed over the earth and desolated it, and now the sun was shining out in the retreating storm of judgment. God declares He will no more destroy, as He had destroyed. If He bring a cloud, it shall be for purification and blessing, not any more "a flood to destroy all flesh."

Where we see it now, the bow is used symbolically, of course, and therefore with a wider, deeper meaning. It is still of the earth it speaks, where alone storms are purificatory and for blessing; but these are no longer merely natural. It is not limited to this or that divine act, but characterizes the throne in its general action. Blessing for men, and rest of which the emerald speaks, with the suggestion of the springing grass after the rain, are to be accomplished; even the judgment may be the necessary means of their accomplishment. And in this, too, God will manifest Himself in the glory of the light which He is, as the prismatic colors of the bow symbolically display it.

To those who realize the character of the period which follows the present one, nothing could be plainer than the language of this bow-encircled throne. God is *now* calling out for heaven the objects of His grace. And while He is doing this, the fulfillment of His promises as to the earth is suspended; the earthly people are set aside: it might seem as if He had forgotten that which fills the pages of the Old-Testament prophets. So much so, that as if in despair of their accomplishment, men would turn them all into figures of other things. The knowledge of dispensational truth, so little regarded even yet by most Christians, relieves the whole difficulty, and puts every thing into its own place. Ours is a heavenly calling; ours are "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. i. 3.) When we are, according to His promise, gathered up to Him, then the Old-Testament promises will be fulfilled to Israel, to whom they belong (Rom. ix. 4), and the predicted time will come when the

"earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Heb. ii. 14.)

For this the "sons of God," now in suffering and sorrow, must be revealed in glory when Christ our life shall appear, and we shall appear with Him in glory. "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation should itself also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." (Rom. viii. 19–21, *R. V.*)

The bow of promise for creation, girdling the throne of God in heaven, speaks, then, of God's covenant with the earth remembered in a way which goes far beyond the letter of it. He is going now to bring it into perpetuity of blessing through another judgment, in which His glory will be displayed in a peculiar way. It will soon be said among the nations that the Lord reigneth, and the world be established that it cannot be moved. "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field exult, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy before the Lord: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth." (Ps. xcvi. 10–13.)

*(To be continued.)*

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# PRIESTHOOD AND PROPITIATION.

## 2. PRIESTHOOD.

PROPITIATION we have seen, then, to be the immediate effect of the work here; the work itself *was* the propitiation. It would be certainly impossible, according to Scripture, to separate from the work any presentation of it as making this.

Quite as impossible to separate it from substitution, save as a different *aspect* only. The whole work was a substitution—Jesus standing in the sinner's place. The whole work was a propitiation—what satisfied God as to sin. Faith, in either case, is needed in order that it shall avail. If we be believers, Christ is a substitute for such. If there is not faith, there is no real propitiation. Christ, says the apostle (Rom. iii. 25), is "a propitiation *through faith*." That is the necessary condition either way, and there is no real difficulty in the matter. Substitution is as broad as propitiation; or, if you will, propitiation as narrow as substitution. Otherwise, if upon the "gospel basis" of propitiation one sinner should come to God for whom there had been no *substitution*, could he be saved? If he could, substitution were unneeded; if he could *not*, then propitiation is no more real basis of appeal to all than substitution.

There is no scripture for this separation of Christ's work into two different works for different classes. There is *no* work for unbelievers at all, but one equal precious work for all upon condition of faith. There is no propitiation for all or any apart from the value of a substitutionary work. There is no inefficacious work which does not avail for those for whom it is offered. The work is for *believers*, and *all men* are most truly invited and responsible to believe.

Propitiation and atonement are absolutely one. A substitutionary work is what atones or propitiates. Christ offered for men is the propitiation. The blood offered is the blood shed; and its sprinkling here or there is but propitiation applied to this or to that; not a part of the work, but an

application of it, *a propitiation for this or for that.*

It is the priest's part to make propitiation. Christ became "a merciful and faithful high-priest *to* make propitiation for the sins of the people." When, then, did this high-priesthood of Christ begin?

If Aaron be the typical high-priest, then, it is certain that he made propitiation not merely in the holiest. Upon one occasion only he did this: the regular offering of the blood was upon the altar. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it you upon the altar to make atonement (or propitiation) for your souls" (Lev. xvii. 11). If the type, then, thus emphasized as it is for us, is to speak to us in the matter, it would seem to say that propitiation,—and priestly work—might be done outside the holiest. And certainly the priest was that outside.

But it may be argued that in these things the law "was not the very image" of the things it spoke of. Then, I ask, when the darkness over the cross passed, and the Lord said "Father," was propitiation, satisfaction, thus far accomplished? Was the wrath gone? and how? If we take the truth affirmed in propitiation, *when* did the wrath pass? Will any one say, Only when He entered heaven,—that in fact He entered it with God yet unsatisfied, to satisfy Him there? Surely, none could believe that!

So the epistle to the Hebrews speaks of His entering *by* His blood, as we have seen; and, as to His priesthood, of "a great High-priest that is passed into"—or through—"the heavens" (chap. iv. 14), and of a "High-priest *made* higher than the heavens" (vii. 26): words which naturally speak of the exaltation of One who was high-priest before.

But it is urged that chap. viii. 4 distinctly states

that our Lord was not a priest on earth: "For if He were on earth, He should not be a priest." Let us, then, for a moment, suppose that He was not, and follow this out to its consequences.

When, then, did He become a priest?

He must have been a priest to make propitiation, clearly; of course, before this,—before propitiation had been made. But that means, in the mind of some, while atonement was *being* made, and before acceptance! This is, however, in complete contradiction to what we have seen as to the time of His entrance—that He entered upon ascension. But it is a contradiction also to what is urged from chap. v. 7–9, that not till after He was perfected He was saluted of God a high-priest. *Then* that perfecting was acknowledged, was it not? So that it would be, *not* He was saluted high-priest and made propitiation, but in the reverse order: He made propitiation, and was saluted high-priest. Every way, we stumble over Scripture.

It should be plain that if His high-priesthood be based upon His work, He could not obtain this till His work was acknowledged: which would mean, according to the general thought, till propitiation were made. This would set aside absolutely His being high-priest *to make* it. On the other hand, if He be high-priest to make it, then His priesthood must be based on something else than His work.

But does the passage produced say that Christ was not a high-priest upon earth? The answer must be, it does not. The apostle is not looking *back*, but looking *up*. "We have such a High-priest," he says, "who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the

Lord pitched, and not man." Now, then, "If He were upon earth"—if He were *now* there,—"He would not be a priest." And why? "Seeing that there *are* priests that offer gifts according to the law." He does not speak even of *sacrifices* now. The sacrifice is offered, and the Priest is in the sanctuary: for such a Priest there could be no room on earth, for the earthly sanctuary is in the hands of the priests ordained by law!

Surely this is no question of what He was on earth. But what of Heb. v. 7-9? Could He be priest before He was made perfect? Was it not as being made perfect He was "called (or saluted) of God a high-priest after the order of Melchisedek"?

Yes, that is plain. Only let us observe that the word "called" here is never used for calling to an office; whereas the word for that *is* used at the beginning of this chapter: "And no man taketh this honor unto himself but He that is called of God as was Aaron."

Mark, then: "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made a high-priest, but *He that said unto Him*, 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.'"

Is this, however, the actual call, or only the Person by whom He is called? No doubt we might understand at first sight the latter. We have exactly the same form of speech, however, in the seventh chapter: "But this with an oath by Him that said unto Him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever." Now here it is not only the majesty of the Speaker that is affirmed: we *find the oath* in what is quoted as His saying.

Not only so. For if His priesthood were not

founded upon His work, upon what, then, is it founded? Upon His person, surely. This is the glory of His person, then, which the epistle to the Hebrews dwells upon in its first chapter: "Unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?" Here is affirmed a personal glory higher than that of angels, yet of a Man, begotten upon earth in time.

Is it not just this wondrous manhood of His whereby indeed He becomes the high-priest of His people? able to take a place in their behalf in things pertaining to God, the Mediator by His twofold nature? The priest is the very fullest type of mediation, and in this Son of God in perfect manhood we have assuredly, then, the Priest.

But it is not even His blessed person that constitutes Him priest. He must be *called*, for His path is the path of obedience; and He must be anointed, for the high-priest has for his designation "The Anointed Priest." And if, again, through the Eternal Spirit He offer Himself without spot to God, here are three marks by which, if we find them together, we may find a threefold divine testimony to Him as consecrated by God for His propitiatory work.

The type of the passover-lamb will here assist us much. We may remember that it was taken on the tenth day of the first month, and kept up till the fourteenth day of the month at even. Then it was sacrificed.

Now 10 is the number of responsibility as seen in the ten commandments, and this time is allowed to pass, the lamb of sacrifice not yet being marked out as such. There was clearly such a period in the Lord's life—a time of *private life*, as we may

say; of which Scripture says little therefore, while the apocryphal gospels (one expressly called "The Gospel of the Infancy") fill it up with fabulous narrations. Thirty years of the Lord's life pass thus, in which He lives as a private person; then He comes forward for His appointed work. It was the age at which the Levites in the wilderness took office, and the priests, it is believed, similarly. This 30 has, again, the number 10 in it, and it evidently characterizes the Lord's time of retirement as that in which He is fulfilling as man in His own personal responsibility. Then He comes out *publicly* before the eye of God, and is owned of Him as the unblemished One—the Lamb designated for the sacrifice.

Notice, then, how it is He comes forth.

John has been calling the multitude to his baptism of repentance, baptizing them in *Jordan* for the remission of sins. Jordan is *death*, as we all know well; and John's baptism is a baptism to *death* (Rom. vi. 4). They (and we) have merited death: it is appointed unto men once to die: the wages of sin is death. They come out to him owning this place as theirs; they are all baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

Then the Lord comes also: having no personal need, as a baptism of repentance it has necessarily no significance for Him; but if death is the due of these sinners, and yet they are to have remission of sins, He must come into death for them, Jordan for Him the type of that greater baptism with which He was to be baptized. He offers Himself without spot to God.

And without spot is He owned. It is there the Father's voice breaks out in the words which

at once own the relationship of the Man Christ Jesus (which is, according to Heb. v., the call to priesthood), and the Lamb without blemish for the sacrifice, "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased."

Here is the Priest, then, to make propitiation, and at the same moment, with the call to the priesthood, the heavenly anointing comes upon Him for it: "the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him." It is the anointing without blood which is the special sign of the high-priest in Lev. viii. 12, an anointing which is not found again in the Lord's case until, gone up on high (ascended), He receives from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 33).

Here are the three signs, and *they meet nowhere else*. He is now the Lamb kept up, and the Priest to make propitiation; *not* yet, indeed, as it seems to me, after the order of Melchisedek, or in the power of an endless life. He *gives up* this life. There is a cloud for awhile over all, until perfected by suffering, and risen from the dead, He is greeted of God as priest after the order of Melchisedek, *priest upon the throne*. His priesthood is re-affirmed and exalted; by the oath of God He is "consecrated for evermore," and the Holy Ghost afresh anoints Him.

There He abides, and as such, blessed be God, we know Him, ever living to make intercession for us. Well may we, "seeing that we have a Great High-priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, . . . . come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need."

## CURRENT EVENTS.

# GLIMPSES OF DIVINE WORK IN THE MISSION-FIELD.

### I. FRANCE.

IN drawing attention briefly to the work of the Lord in the mission-field, it is hoped to interest those who know little as yet as to it to look further into what He is doing in the present day. It is not my thought to be able to add any thing to the knowledge of those who have been already aroused to inquiry, as the means of satisfying it are now so abundant. But with very many yet of the people of God, there is a lack of interest which is largely due to ignorance—an ignorance which should no longer any where exist. "The works of the Lord are great, *sought out* of all them that have pleasure therein." His work in the salvation of souls is what must have pre-eminent claim on all who are themselves the subjects of it. And His ways of carrying on this work are worthy of adoring observation.

In speaking of France as a mission-field at all, in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, we cannot but realize that the Church has not fulfilled the condition upon which alone the goodness of God is assured toward her: "Toward thee, goodness," says the apostle of the Gentiles to the Gentile profession, "*if thou continue in His goodness*, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." (Rom. xi. 22.) France has been a professedly Christian country (one brief terrible period excepted) for many centuries, and however gratifying it may be to hear of the success of missions in it at the present day, yet we cannot escape from the thought of what the need of them implies as to that long lapse of time in God's forbearance.

Since the Reformation, France has been in constant

struggle with the gospel. She has had her religious wars and days of savage persecution, her St. Bartholomew and her dragonnades. Again and again the cause of Protestantism seemed about to triumph, but its apparent victory which set Henry IV. upon the throne was its worst defeat. In the Edict of Nantes, it accepted toleration and compromise,—with these, retrogression and decay. Then followed the Revocation of the Edict, the slaughter and dispersion of the Protestants, and Rome reigned once more absolute over the desolated land.

But she had prepared the scourge for her own back. Allied with the most cruel and oppressive civil despotism, she nursed the spirit of revolt into a flame, and the reaction aroused in one frantic outburst overthrew Church and state together. Since the Revolution, Rome has never been able to recover her old supremacy. The hand that reinstated controlled her too, and Protestantism has been from that time tolerated. But it was no more in its old vigor; it too was controlled by the state, leavened by the infidelity that was now abroad, and with little life or hope in it. From this time, France became really a mission-field, her help from without rather than from within; and though this help was given to some extent, and workers of many sorts entered into the field, yet there was for long no very marked success. Of late, however, an encouraging change has taken place, and it can now be said, by one well qualified to speak,—

**"Never before has there been such liberty in France to spread the gospel. There is now freedom for meetings of all kinds. . . . Protestantism—rather let us say, the religion of Christ—is now, so to speak, in the air one breathes in France. A breath of revival has passed over our torpid population, and the gospel is every-where welcomed."**

It is my purpose to speak here of two special movements in which it is impossible not to recognize the power of God, sovereign in the instruments it employs, working in a way to give confident assurance of wide-spread blessing begun, which, if the Lord tarry but a

short time, may be expected to manifest itself much more abundantly. Both are already well known to those whose eyes are on the fields of God's eternal harvests; but there are many of the Lord's people whose eyes are not yet there, and who are thus deprived of so much fellowship with the Lord in His blessed work, and of matter both for thanksgiving and prayer, if not of more active sympathy. I can, of course, but briefly summarize what has been said by others.

The first of these movements is that of the McAll mission, of which a much better account than I can give will be found in Mr. Loomis' interesting volume on "Modern Cities."* My own is extracted principally from that of Mr. McAll himself, in his "Cry from the Land of Calvin and Voltaire."

Mr. McAll was a Congregational minister, the pastor of a church at Hadley, England. In 1871, he was with his wife for the first time in Paris, during a short summer vacation. It was just after the Franco-German war, and the horrors of the Commune were linked in vivid memory with the quarter, on a street in which they took their stand to distribute tracts to the passers-by. They stood alone there: such was the repute of the district that their friends, having warned, declined to accompany them.

"The 'blouses,'" says Mr. McAll, "were all around us. As yet, few evidences of Christian interest had reached these remote and dreaded 'citizens.' What had been done was chiefly in supplies of food, etc., sent from England. No sooner was a friendly purpose on our part recognized than large and eager groups gathered around us, desiring the tracts. . . . The 'man of Macedonia, awaited us. My wife having offered a tract to the waiter of the large corner wine-shop, he begged her to enter, 'for,' said he, each customer wished to possess one.' Just as she emerged from the door, a working-man, French, but marvelous

*"Modern Cities and their Religious Problems," by Samuel Lane Loomis. For those who would go more at length into the subject, there are "The White Fields of France," by Dr. Horatius Bonar; and "A Cry from the Land of Calvin and Voltaire;" "Records of the McAll Mission," London, Hodder & Stoughton; with "French Protestantism in the Nineteenth Century," by Louise S. Houghton; published by the American McAll Association, Philadelphia.

to say, speaking excellent English, stepped forward, and in the name of the bystanders, addressed to me the identical words with which this volume commences. I never saw him afterward so far as I know, but his earnest bearing, each word, his very countenance, were engraved indelibly in my memory."

The words were, "Sir, are you not a Christian minister? If so, I have something of importance to say to you. You are at this moment in the very midst of a district inhabited by thousands and tens of thousands of us working-men. To a man, we have done with an imposed religion—a religion of superstition and oppression; but if any one would come to teach us religion of another kind—a religion of freedom and earnestness,—many of us are ready to listen.'"

Five months later, Mr. and Mrs. McAll returned to devote themselves to the work in Paris. There were many difficulties to surmount. He was past fifty, quite ignorant of the French language, unacquainted with the people or their ways. He had but two sentences of French to begin with,—"God loves you," and "I love you." Their very meetings were illegal, as was the giving away of tracts, religious notices, etc.

"We chose for our residence," he says, "a humble lodging in the very midst of the workmen's habitations. The very day we had hired our rooms, a friend gave us the pleasing intelligence that it was a most dangerous quarter, and that nothing was more probable than our being assassinated in the streets."

The work began at once. From twenty-eight at the first meeting, the attendance grew to over a hundred at the second;—

"*and if to-day we were again brought face to face with that* Belleville workman, we could point him, as the direct fruit of his appeal, to nearly one hundred stations of our own mission, besides not a few others more or less connected in origin with the impulse then received. . . . And we should have to bid him look beyond the boundaries of France proper,—to Corsica, to the African colonies, to Switzerland, to the French-speaking people of America."

The means have been very simple.

"There was no novelty in the character of our meetings,

except for these poor neglected ones, unused to religious services of every kind before. We had hymns, reading the Bible, short, pointed gospel-addresses (usually two in an hour's reading,) prayers, with the added feature of free lending libraries, children's religious gatherings, etc. . . . And the same simplicity of organization and procedure characterizes the entire work to this day."

As to the meetings,—

"Ordinary shops fronting on frequented streets are usually rented and fitted up for this purpose. The halls are thus always comparatively small. . . . Great advantages are claimed for this system. In the first place, such rooms are easily secured in any part of the city where they are needed. . . . It is furthermore claimed that they are much more easily equipped with speakers than great ones. A large audience can only be effectively addressed by a man of extraordinary power; but a man of smaller calibre can do equally good work in a smaller meeting. Other things being equal, many little meetings are more useful than a few large ones. In the former, the speaker is brought into closer contact with the hearer, his influence is more forcible, his message more personal, and each auditor involuntarily takes a larger share of it to himself. In a small meeting, it is also possible, as it never is in a great assembly, to extend a cordial welcome to every one who enters, to observe the effect of the discourse upon all, and to follow up the preaching by personal effort.

"Shops have still another advantage for mission purposes: they are much more accessible to the throngs of the street. Made so as to be easily entered—but a single step from the sidewalk—they open their inviting doors to those who, fatigued with walking, desire a few moments rest; to those who are prompted by curiosity to enter, and to all who for any reason care to go in. An illumination, suspended over the sidewalk before the door, announces, in blazing letters, the name and character of the hall, and the time of the meetings, and extends to all a cordial invitation to attend them. . . . A gentleman stands on the sidewalk in front of the entrance, and distributes printed invitations to the passers-by, enforcing their message as often as possible by a kind word of welcome. Those who enter are received by the inner door-keeper—a lady, who politely welcomes each one as a guest, shows him a seat, and provides him with a hymn-book.

"All polemics are, by an inflexible rule, forbidden. Not one word derogatory to the Roman Catholic Church, or even to rationalism, must be spoken. The addresses are not to be learned, rhetorical, or philosophical; their single aim must be to present, simply, clearly, vividly, and positively, the great facts of our faith." The McAll mission "meets the questions of the papacy and of infidelity, not controversially, but by constant insistance upon gospel truths, so that thousands listen with sympathy whom controversy could never reach."

Mr. McAll speaks of two great hindrances to the spread of the gospel in France,—the deadness of conscience fostered by the long prevalence of Romanism, and the "actual and prevailing *oblivion* of" the Bible. Among those devotedly attached to popery, this is lamented by the intelligent. He gives an instance:—

"A gentleman high in the legal profession in Paris, on occasion of arranging recently the deed of a mission-hall, inquired from me our purpose in opening it. On receiving my reply, he said, with heart-felt emphasis, 'Sir, do all in your power to persuade my fellow-countrymen to READ THE BIBLE. If you can induce them to do that, you will bring to France the only power which can save us from decadence and ruin.' After attending the opening meeting in that hall, this notary sought me out, and grasping both my hands in the characteristic French manner, said, 'I, a Roman Catholic, desire to assure you of my entire sympathy,—my fervent wish for your success.'"

This was written in 1886, and it is striking that at the end of the same year another movement began, initiated by a Roman Catholic of the most devoted type, whose object was, to give the Bible to the people. The story, strange in itself, and with a stranger ending, if we can say it is yet ended, is told by Dr. Wright in a pamphlet from which I borrow all that I have to say.* Many have read it, reprinted and commented upon it more or less in different periodicals of late; but many are yet ignorant of it too, and the narrative needs must confirm our belief that God is working in a remarkable way in France at the present time,—our hope of blessing to numbers through it.

Henri Lasserre is a well-known name just now, and was indeed before the last and most truly notable part of his history. He is a lawyer, descended from an ancient family, and till lately connected specially with the fame of "Our Lady of Lourdes." She had cured, as he believed, his sore eyes. In gratitude, he wrote the history of the appearance of the virgin to the peasant-girl of Lourdes.

"The book created 'Notre Dame de Lourdes.' The Archbishop of Albi wrote this to M. Lasserre: 'Sir, our Lady of Lourdes owes you a recompense.' In fact, she owed him every thing.

*"The Power Behind the Pope: A Story of Blighted Hopes."

He may safely be considered the patentee of the whole business, for without his prismatic and potent pen, the wonders now so famous would scarcely have been heard of beyond the little Pyrennean village."

In five years, the book had run through eighty-seven editions.

But God had something better for him than this.

"On a happy day he discovered the four gospels. He felt the spell of the simple but profound narratives which reveal Jesus of Nazareth in all the tenderness and loveliness of perfect manhood, and in all the might and majesty of Godhead. He saw that the fourfold story of Jesus was the very book that the French people needed. He believed that the gospels would be received with joy by his countrymen, and he resolved to prepare for them a version worthy of their acceptance.

"Prompt and zealous, he began the work of translation; his aim being, not to render the gospels in the French as it ought to be, but in the French as it was. The result was, a living translation. . . . Every page said, 'Read me.' The arbitrary divisions of chapters and verses which trip up Frenchmen who attempt to read the Bible for the first time, had wholly disappeared. The narrative fell into natural clauses and paragraphs well spaced out, and the current of the Book of Life flowed on the page in abundant light."

It was, of course, a Roman Catholic translation. The perpetual virginity of Mary, the primacy of Peter, and other doctrines are maintained; but—

"in questions of larger importance, M. Lasserre breaks away from the traditional renderings of the papal church. With splendid courage, he translates the Greek word 'repent' by 'be converted, repent,' instead of by 'do penance;' and he declares in a note that the Latin rendering (*Pœnitentiam agite*) fails accurately to represent the Greek original, 'which means, change your sentiment, repent, be converted,' and does not like the Latin, bear the idea of voluntary austerities with the object of expiation. . . . The same fearlessness is manifest in the translation 'Adore the Lord thy God, and do not render worship to any but Him alone;' and 'We are servants without merit,' etc."

But the preface to the book is as remarkable. He deplores in it the notorious fact that the gospels are scarcely ever read by those who profess to be fervent Catholics, and never by the multitude of the faithful. He declares that the Bible was not always so neglected; that all the fathers of the Church urged the people to read both the Old and New Testaments; blames the Protestants

for their free handling of it, which led the Council of Trent to decree that every translation should have episcopal sanction and explanatory notes, and considers that in consequence, through the suspicion of heresy, the Bible ceased to be a household book. And he laments the substitution of other books of a different character for this, and declares "We must lead back the faithful to the great fountain of living water which flows from the inspired book. . . . We must put the earth again face to face with Jesus Christ."

The book was published with a dedication to "Notre Dame de Lourdes"! "But there was something still more strange. The book appeared with the *imprimatur* of the Archbishop of Paris, and the approval and benediction of the pope!" the latter in a letter from Cardinal Jacobini officially communicated through the Nuncio of France. "The imprimatur of the Archbishop of Paris placed Lasserre's version regularly in the hands of the French people. The pope's letter placed the stamp of authority, not only on the translation of the gospels, but on the terrible preface which is expressly mentioned in it."

The ages might seem to have returned upon themselves. The unchangeable Church of Rome was giving up her cherished traditions, and putting the Word of God in the hands of the people. Rather, it was God to whom man's bulwarks are as nothing, bringing down the wall which had shut out the light so long from millions, that many might receive, perhaps, His closing testimony to them. But infallibility had pronounced its benediction on the reading of the gospels, and the people read them. Within a year, twenty-five editions had issued from the press commended by priests and prelates far and wide, and welcomed into the homes of Frenchmen every where. What *must* have been the effect? Let him who knows the Word of God answer. Eternity will disclose it. Time may yet disclose it also.

The permanent acceptance of the work was secured, if

papal infallibility could secure it. It was God's will, however, to expose its pretensions, and after having allowed the power of His Word to be proved in the hearts and consciences of many, to show that Rome was still and ever in hostility to it. One morning, Frenchmen waked up to find the translation of the gospels, papal benediction and all, upon the Index! As a book of "degraded doctrine," it was proscribed and condemned, forbidden to be published, read, or retained by any one, under the penalties proclaimed in the Index of forbidden books.

Little more is known than this. It is said that M. Lasserre has bowed, called in all copies of his book, and suspended the translation of the whole Bible on which he was engaged. Upon the issue, we will not speculate; but it is clear that the Lord's design in all this will not be disappointed. God is moving. What are popes and "sacred congregations" before Him? But we can pray with a new hope—can we not?—for France, for Henri Lasserre, and for this missionary work which has been so owned of Him. Shall we be with God, and not awake to realize our sweet sanctuary responsibilities as to all this? The Lord enable us!

And shall we not take lesson and encouragement from the McAll mission? Have *we* not responsibility to bring the precious truth which God has given us in this earnest and familiar way before those to whom the Lord would send it? "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse." Ought not we?

Could we but have these missionary stores, with their fronts proclaiming the truth they know not to the gaze of those who would not go even a step to seek it,—tract-depots, reading-rooms, inquiry-rooms, preaching-rooms in one,—how might we trust God to bless this earnest, face-to-face dealing with the multitudes around? I do not hesitate to say, that I believe it would be a beginning of such new and wide blessing as now we have not faith even to imagine.