PRESENT TESTIMONY.

A NEW SERIES.

VOL. I.

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NOTICE.

THE enlarged sphere, both Continental and trans-Atlantic, into which He that once said to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia—"Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and *no one* (Gr. *oudeis*), can shut it" (Rev. iii. 8)—has, of late, led us [our own "little strength," and many adversaries under Satan, notwithstanding]—has suggested some change in the *form* of this serial.

With that change, a partially new name and new series has, for the convenience of others, been adopted.

I add the Title-page and the Address of the previously issued fifteen volumes on the next pages.

London, June, 1867.

G. V. W.,
EDITOR.

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THE

PRESENT TESTIMONY,

AND

Original Christian Witness Revived.

IN WHICH

THE CHURCH'S PORTION

AND

THE HOPE OF THE KINGDOM,

ETC.

ARE SOUGHT TO BE DEVELOPED FROM SCRIPTURE.

לא בחיל ולא בכח כי אם־ברוחי

Zechariah iv. 6.

VOLS. I.—XV.

LONDON:
GROOMBRIDGE & SONS,
5, PATERNOSTER ROW.
[1849 TO 1867.]

ADDRESS.

THAT the present moment is, in the last degree, critical for the Church of God, none scarcely would be found to deny.

The desire, under divine grace, of those who have undertaken the present publication, is to meet the need of the Church in the position in which it is *actually* placed, by the communication of that truth (according to the measure in which it is given them), which the grace of God has furnished in the word for this as for every time of His Church's need. They are ready to receive any communication which may minister to this (provided it be according to truth and godliness), though it should not be precisely according to their own thoughts in every point, leaving each writer responsible for his particular view: yet they would carefully watch that nothing may escape them contrary to the faith of God's elect, or lowering to the standard of holiness and separation from the world, which becomes the Church of God—the Bride of the Lamb. That standard it is their desire to maintain in the fullest way in all earnestness of purpose and grace. They can only trust God to be kept and helped in this case. On the same ground, without sanctioning every thing in the original "Christian Witness,"* and satisfied that God has brought out many things in a clearer light on several important points, yet they cannot doubt that God did by it afford to His Church much true light from Himself, to help it on its way. That grace they would own, and thus far receive, as the proof of God's goodness

* The *first* edition only is here referred to.

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to the Church. To own the goodness of God, is to receive the blessing of it. But they trust also to be enabled to afford a present testimony, according to the mind of God, towards His Church and Saints now. The rapidity of events, that is, of the development of principles—the principles of this world and of Satan—demand such a light and help to the Saints. Those who have undertaken this publication count upon the goodness of God, however feeble they may be, to supply it. Whatever really assists in the intelligence of Scripture will surely minister to this, and will find a ready place in "The Present Testimony." Their confidence is in the Lord, that He will help them in thus ministering to the need of His Church. Upon His grace they cast themselves, recommending themselves and their labour to the love and prayers of their brethren.

The Editor (for the time being) adds a word:—

He feels and desires to keep intact, *his own individuality of responsibility to the Lord Jesus, as Head—and to Him alone. As thus placed, he has, through grace, found* fellowship *with his brethren, partakers of one Spirit, children of one Father; their servant and fellow-helper, therefore, he would be; yet always under Christ.*

While availing himself of all brotherly counsel, as to the details of his duty, he does not feel free to alter anything whatsoever, in any paper, except by request of the writer. At the same time he will feel free to add a note, signed ED., *upon his own sole responsibility.* EDITOR.

*** As it does not seem to harmonise with the walk of faith to settle "how often such a Part or Number should appear"—let this be left where Faith casts all its burdens.

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PRESENT TESTIMONY.

N°. I.

PAUL'S GOSPEL. DO YOU PREACH IT?

INTRODUCTION.

Is the Gospel of "The grace of God" as now usually preached, a presenting of the truth *in the same form* in which it was shown to Saul of Tarsus,—the very same form as that in which Saul, when he was called Paul the Apostle, preached it?

I have raised this question on various occasions; with various results, perhaps, as to details; but generally, if among those who were both acquainted with Scripture and observers of what is passing around them, with the distinct answer, *No.*

I have put the question to some, whom I esteemed Evangelists and men of God too,—and I have been told, often modestly and humbly, "I do not see what sense of need that preaching could produce in man. You must know yourself a sinner, ere you can feel your need of a Saviour"; or again, "What is there in the heart of man down here which could respond to such a proclamation?" etc., etc.

The diffidence and modesty of those that have thus replied, and the felt need which they have expressed for fuller light upon the subject, with the confession made by several of them, of a suspicion of a defect in their light (which, perhaps, left them to use what they did know, instead of the Gospel in its fulness), induce me to endeavour, God helping me, to present a few remarks upon this subject.

[Commenced May 13, 1867.]

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Before considering *what* the form of the Gospel was which delivered Saul, which Paul preached, and which I conceive is the form delivered by him for the evangelists who were to follow after him—and the questions incidental thereto,—I would make a remark or two on the *two-fold* form in which grace may be presented, and on the reason *why*, of these two forms of grace, the one is better known now and has been more used in our day than the other.

In dealing with souls we may begin with what man was and is, and has done, and go on from that to the answer thereunto, which God has provided in Christ, the Lord of all. Such was the form in which Peter presented grace on the day of Pentecost. He began with what had been seen down here, and then showed God and His thoughts about Jesus as Lord and Christ seated in Heaven. On the other hand, we may begin with what Christ is in Heaven and let that produce its own effect on the sinner ; this was the form of grace in Paul's conversion and gospel.

Our first impressions naturally take the deepest and most lasting hold of our minds. Subjects are then *new* to us, and they form themselves within us according to our first thoughts of them. Often, too, there are at those first hours of our acquaintance with the truth of God, peculiar circumstances which have arrested a former course of life and become turning points through which the outward life got, then and there, a new direction ; often too dangers, needs, hopes of a new kind, have been then suddenly discovered, etc., etc. Account for it as we may, first impressions upon all subjects are, I think, in the very nature of things, the most likely to be the more lasting ; and, in connection with this, I have remarked that the form in which the truth of God is apprehended by a man at first, is the form in which the mind is most inclined, most disposed to retain it. This was the case with Peter, it was the case with Paul, it was the case with Timothy, etc., etc. But of this more anon. I have found one corrective to this, in some respects and in so far as it is merely a result of human infirmity in myself and others, to exist in the considera-

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tion of the history of the way in which *the truth* was brought out into the form in which God now presents it to us in His written word.

There are two things to be noticed here. Christ is *the truth.* By Him, where, and as He is, we believe in God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory ; that our faith and hope might be in God : that is the first grand lesson ; the Christ, Son of God and only begotten Son of the Father, is the medium by whom we believe in God, who raised Him out from among the dead and gave Him glory so as for our faith and hope to be in God. Himself, as He is, is our peace, our hope. But, secondly, there is the way in which God was pleased[a] gradually to bring out the truth until it could be presented as it now is presented by Him. This, rightly understood, gives the most abundant confirmation to the Gospel as it is—and is that to which I referred as the good corrective, in some respects, to any imperfect view of the Gospel which may result from an undue cleaving in us, either to the thoughts of our day, or to first impressions of our own. So far as I understand the Gospel, it is: Jesus Christ Himself, seated on the throne of God, from whose face shines the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

A. Now, the first intimation about Him was spoken[b] in the declaration to the serpent: "It (the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his

[a] God was pleased. In being and in nature, God was and is and will be. Being the source of all that has been or that is, He is necessarily above it all. Men speak of His *sovereignty* in this connection: on more accounts than one, I think the term an ill chosen one. I would prefer *absolutism—sovereignty* seems to imply *relationship.* As to good, and as to the disposal of what is bad, He, clearly, alone has the right to will. But He does so, I judge, always according to His own perfect character ; and His counsel is perfect in wisdom ; Himself the blessed centre of the universe being the object set before Him. Man would make man, and alas ! sinful man, to be the proper object of that counsel; but, thank God, such cannot be.

[b] We must remember that while this was the first *word* spoken about Him, the *first* Adam and his position, possession. family, etc., are declared in the New Testament to have pointed typically to the *last* Adam.

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heel" (Gen. iii. 15). "Himself, the head of a family or seed, the overcomer of the serpent and his seed; the Lord God pledging Himself thereto"—was the first announcement. In that declaration the Lord God put Himself forward, pledged Himself that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. This was God's first promulgated word or thought (and addressed to Satan) about the scene in which sin was ruling among men. Pass from that *first* word onward. Trace out, if you will, what *may* have instruction in it, but notice well as bearing the authority of God's stamp of *type* upon it (on New Testament authority too) the seed of Abraham (Gen. xii. 7; xv. 3, 5; xvii. 7, 8; compare Gal. iii. 16-29, etc.), including, as it does, a view of heaven and earth in connection with the seed, etc., etc. Patriarchs (Ps. cv.) grew into families; and families into a nation. The paschal-lamb, redemption out of Egypt, the feast of Pentecost and the great Day of Atonement; the mediator, High priest, prophet—the tabernacle, with its altars, etc., etc., all in the nation to whom Jehovah made Himself God and King, were, according to the New Testament, types of Him that was to come.

Samuel the prophet that judged, and David the king that sat on the throne, were types too. And there were declarations of Moses in the law and in the prophets about Him which aided a man like Philip (John i. 45) to recognise the Nazarene. The Lord God pointed *onward* to what *He* would do against the evil one. If any one hoped in Him he got faith in so doing and rest. In all this time, from Eden until Cæsar,—hope took the lead. Some one was to come,—the Lord God had declared it to the serpent,—some one was to come, the seed of the woman,—the son of a virgin (Isaiah vii. 14, and Matt. i. 23), the destroyer of the serpent and His seed. Hope, I say, took the lead, and where there was no hope, there was no faith and no rest. Promises to Messiah, promises in which Jehovah, God and King of Israel, would prove Himself to be with His anointed in blessings of deliverances on earth to Israel, fed the hopes of God's people upon earth. A person was looked for—the Hope of Israel. That was clear; and this was

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tne position in which a Mary, an Anna, a Simeon were found at the time of the birth[c] of Him who was the Hope. We wait, in hope; was faith's word.

B. But when the babe was born, this was, to some extent, changed. The One waited for—the One that was to be the Worker of deliverance—*there* He was! The second chapter of Luke's gospel tells us (ver. 7) of the birth of the child. "And she (Mary) brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." The angel of the Lord swiftly announced it to certain shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. Upon these, the angel came, and then the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and the shepherds were sore afraid. But the angel said, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (ver. 10), etc., etc. And a multitude of the heavenly host then joined the angel, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward [or in, among] men." The shepherds went in haste to see and found the child—and "returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" (ver. 20). Simeon is then an eye witness, one that embraces the babe, a rejoicer before God in Him. His word to Mary was of God—Behold this One is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (ver. 34, 35). As though he said, "Himself is the One who is our Hope!—but Him-

[c] God's delight in Him who was to be this Hope to Israel on earth, in time,—the only hope for heaven in eternity, was such that every detail and circumstance of His birth had been the subject of prophecy. The incarnation; His mother a virgin; the family of which she was to be, and he to whom she was betrothed; the birth-place; the persecution; the flight into Egypt, etc., all had been recorded.

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self has yet conflict before Him before victory." Anna, too, came and saw and gave thanks.

Note it, there is nothing said about the babe, such as mere human affection in nature would have said; but Himself, in all the attractiveness which He is to *faith* was there—*Himself* the stay of their faith, their hope.

C. Hidden in retirement for a season—He in due time goes to be baptised of John; gets there a recognition from God on high, "And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 16, 17).

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, stood thus confessed at His entering upon service.

His gathering unto Himself (John i. 29—51); His going about doing good; His zeal for God, His readiness to do any thing needed by any one in Israel, His miracles, His instructions, etc., etc., trying to reconcile the world unto God,—seeking to gather the children of Jerusalem as a hen doth gather her chickens. What, in all the variety of the three years' active service of His, did faith see in Him? what stay was there in Him? what hope to any save the few that loved Him? But He Himself was the great book that was open before man: all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily; Himself as a man, the presentation and declaration of the Father. Such was He *in life* here below.

D. But Israel would not be reconciled to God—would not take the promises under Him. He was there, willing and able to make good all the Messianic promises, all the Jehovah blessing to them,—in spite of all their ruin, if they would but have Him as the sent One of God. But they would not; and Pontius Pilate, the representative of the Gentile power, concurred with them. He then set His face toward death, the death of the cross; baptism, which He knew all along He would have to pass through *if* that part of the will of God was to stand that Messiah was to have a kingdom and a people upon earth, although that kingdom and that people might in themselves have no heart to have Himself as

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Messiah. Who can frustrate God? who can escape from the blessing which God thinks to give?

Him crucified! *His* blood shed! *Him* put to death. —Where were the promises, where the rest, where the object of faith?

E. All was safe in Himself — the resurrection and the life, according to the thoughts of God and the Father, —though none on earth, none could follow out the thought. What mind, what soul on earth could say "It is well," even as to the counsel of God. Affection to Himself was deeply tried; hope might be flickering; or, to human feeling, even extinct. Faith might be baffled; love, however deeply agonised, still clave to Himself. Yea! His very death revealed the thoughts of the hearts of a Joseph with his tomb, of a Nicodemus with his spices. And dead, as alive, He was to Mary's heart her *all*. What? Whom had she but Himself?

Her love met its reward. Awake from death when He spake to her and used her as His messenger, these were His words:—

"Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (John xx. 17.)

The Lord is risen! what a thrilling fact! but what a new position was it which He had now taken, which He now held before them! *Himself*, however, their all still. What the results to them of His new state, they knew not: nay, all such questions seemed foreign to the hearts that loved Him, in the fresh intercourse they had with Him. His intercourse through forty days with them (Acts i. 3), and all that passed then, showed that their past, present and future was *Himself*—unfruitful as their understanding might be.

F. But they saw Him ascend—were told to wait for the promise of the Father, and shortly after at Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down and the assembly of God was formed. Himself made Lord and Christ in heaven, shed abroad that which was seen and heard—the presence, power, and powers of the Holy Ghost,[d] which

[d] Here again, as in the first declaration in Eden, Divine pur-

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nor Satan nor man could deny, though men there were hardy enough to resist it. Stephen was stoned. His martyrdom was the expression of Jerusalem's rejection of Messiah in heaven, God-honoured, the Giver of the Holy Ghost; even as the Lord's own death had been the expression of Jerusalem's rejection of the Messiah when on earth.

Paul was converted, and began his labours—Apostle of the uncircumcision, as Peter was of the circumcision. Ere their living testimony closed,—

G.[e] Truth was embodied in books, in the which we find all that God was pleased to reveal in writing of His own thoughts about the life, and death, and resurrection and session in heaven, and coming again, of His Son, whether to fetch His Church home, or to take up a new position of government and of grace in Jerusalem; or after that, to wind all up in the eternal state—a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

Himself who has triumphed gloriously, and ourselves called by Him to enter into His joy and into all the fruits of His victory as the servant and champion of God,—worster of the serpent, open manifester of all this world's wickedness, — and of the poverty of man as a ruined creature, — Himself filling heaven and earth with those that can unselfishly rejoice in His joy and in His triumph, — that is what I wait for to see in the end.

There will be the two spheres, heaven and earth, just as there are now heavenly glories which are His in the presence of God and His Father,—and there were in Him Messianic and Jehovah glories, which though man rejected then, will surely be made good upon earth yet when He comes again. I do not lay stress here upon the difference of the apostleships and of the truths con-

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pose and power over evil were the leading characteristics (the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head). So, here, a man dishonoured, earth-rejected,—Jesus, is in heaven, Lord of all, and Christ, sender down of the Holy Ghost.

[e] These letters, A, B, C . . . G, mark the steps in bringing out to light of our subject.

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nected with the apostleships of Peter and of Paul. I believe them to be recognised and held by those for whom I write. The truth brought out by Peter goes not into the wide compass of that which it was given to Paul to minister; for Peter teaches not the mystery, nor the union of members down here with a glorified and ascended Lord as Head of a body,—the truth of the assembly of God. Paul teaches all that Peter does, but goes on beyond to a truth which is peculiarly his own. His line includes also (in principle fully, I think), John's line and measure. So that, while Petræan, Johannian, and Pauline[f] truth may be spoken of, as referring to the portions the most connected with each of these servants of the Lord respectively, Paul's measure of truth in a sense included, I judge, both Peter's and John's. Peter, as the Apostle of the circumcision, had a measure of truth measured to him which hardly went beyond conscience formed down here for God and heaven, by the knowledge of the Lordship and Christhood of Jesus seated in heaven, and the Holy Ghost sent to His

[f] The power given to a Peter, a John, and a Paul, had but one source,—and, in the main, but one object. God's delight in Christ, and the interests of Christ down here were common to them all. This, however, did not prevent Him, who distributes to every one severally as He will, from using Peter for the work for the which He had specially fitted him,—even to feed with heavenly stores the remnant flock of a risen but returning Lord. John had his calling too, and, having lain in the bosom of the Lord of life when down here, He was guided to trace the stream of eternal life flowing down here in and through the sons of God. Paul's grand subject was the anointed man in glory,—the head of a body down here: the One that should present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Each Apostle had his own place, his own work, his own service, and his own line;—and, thank God, all are ours, for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. May we profit from each, and be profited by the writings of each of them. Under Peter, I learn that every sorrow of the earth is a remembrance of a blessing in heaven. Under John, that eternal life in me so gives me fellowship with the Father and with the Son, that I must walk as He walked. Under Paul, I pass up into the vision of the glory of the servant of God now glorified in heaven, the man Christ Jesus, —Head of a body, the second Adam to whom the Church belongs.

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servants down here. The eternal life in man down here, is John's subject presented in his gospel in all its fulness, in Him who alone had eternal life in Himself, who was and is its source; in his epistles the stream of the river of life flowing in and through men down here, who are sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, is traced. The over-ruling governing hand of the Lord God Almighty in heaven, disposing of every thing on earth according to His thoughts of the glory of the Lamb upon the throne, both for the heavenly people down here now and the people that are to succeed us on earth hereafter, is John's subject in the Revelation. The mystery and its attendant truths is peculiar to Paul;—but his line includes, necessarily, in that "straightway he preached Christ (the anointed man) in the synagogues, that he is *Son of God*" (Acts ix. 20), all truth.

It does not suppose much light for me to give credit to the disciple that he sees that the conscience of a man needs being made for God as a Creator, and for God as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ,—if the man is to be at peace and happy.

The epistles of Paul are, some of them, as that to the Romans and the Hebrews, about the truth which can make the conscience of a man down here to be in peace before God. But Paul, in his own conversion, had another turning point, though he had to pass through that same truth in soul *afterwards*. The union of Jesus in Heaven, as Head of a body, with members down here, when revealed to Paul, led him to take the place of an enquirer both as to the Lord on high and as to what he was to show his subjection to Him in: "*Who art thou, Lord?*" and "*what wilt Thou have me to do?*" These were his first lessons, — viz. those, the answers to which he unfolds in his letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians (in which latter epistle, those to whom he wrote were in danger of letting slip the truth of the Head). If quickened together with Christ, raised up together with Him and made to sit together with Him in heavenly places according to the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, justification, separation to Christ, acceptance, etc., etc., were

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all settled according to *the Spirit* and *in the new nature* given, and as parts of the new creation of which the Lord is the Head. This, however,[g] did not prevent his needing to learn justification, separation, acceptance, etc., according to the *work* of Christ, as for man on earth and as according to what a human conscience down here, with thoughts of what man has been here, and what every man in nature is, would want. Paul goes systematically through the whole question of man in ruin down here in himself, and God's answer to all that ruin by Christ's work, in the epistle to the Romans, in a way addressed to Jew and Gentile; and in the epistle to the Hebrews, in a way more particularly addressed to the Jew; as in the letter to the Galatians in a way more addressed to converts from among the Gentiles when judaizing.

If any man can see no difference between the sufferings and works of Jesus Christ in redemption and His own person as the Redeemer,—I can only say: "if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant"[h] (1 Cor. xiv. 38). To one taught in the word there *is* a difference and the all-important one.

There is, as I said in commencing, a two-fold form in which grace is presented to us. The one is in the works and sufferings of Christ and in the position taken consequent thereon by Jesus in Heaven, as Lord of all and Christ, shedder abroad of power to the people of God down here. In a certain sense, this may be called the more human side of the truth, in that it is, while in itself divine, truth *for man as man*, a ruined creature;—truth which enables him to know the relationship once denied but now made good for every believing man, relationship in which he can say "My God," and say it heartily and with intelligence. The other form of truth is more connected with the person of the Lord—as second Adam, life-giving Spirit, the one whom the Father of

[g] Note this, because it shows out *pointedly* the difference I refer to.

[h] *Id est*, Plead that he is ignorant; take the place of being as men say, ignoramus.

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glory has exalted; according to which all that is true of Him as "first-born among many brethren" is in a way true of them that are such. All that is true of Him as —Head of a body, the Church—is in a sense true of them that are members of that body of which He is Head. This is the more divine side, if I may so say, of the grace—the revelation of the Father of an only begotten Son.

Now, when I look back from our day to Pentecost, and see how the human judaizing spirit which so opposed itself to Paul among men, so grieved his spirit, has wrought,—and how it completely transformed the house of God down here as set up at Pentecost into a Jewish worldly thing as it was in A.D. 1500, I can say that I believe it was the grace of God, God in His grace, which took up man, afresh, where man had sunk himself down to. As Paul became all things to all men: with the Jew took his ground according to the furniture of thought that, before God, belonged to the Jew; and with the Gentile, according to the furniture of thought which, before God, belonged to the Gentile, (not compromising ever, yet always self-denyingly meeting each man according to God's thoughts about the man at the time being,) so I think it was God in His grace who did meet the Roman Catholics, Luther, Boos, etc., just according to where they were: and that he meets men, often, now just according to where they are. The ten commandments painted on wood have reduced the moral conscience of professors to a *very* low condition; but grace has met many there and gently shown, or forcibly pressed home, the truth that God's description of what man, as a creature, should have been and should be towards His Creator, will neither give him *power* to be what he ought to be, nor meet and clear all the arrears of what man has been and done contrary to what he ought. If intelligence sees this, or if the cursing power of the Law has killed any man, he may find to his wants so felt a full answer in Christ in His sufferings and present place on high. In this view of the subject, man begins with himself and finds in the Lord's sufferings and work, the full answer to every need. This is

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to me the explanation of the prevalency of the lower form of truth and grace. To them that are learning of God, in this form, the blessed work of redemption, I wish God-speed.[i] And when they have learned the work of Redemption, yea! while they are learning it, may they learn not only what suits themselves in their needs, but also who the Redeemer is, and what sort of person He is.

Still Paul's gospel was given to him as the one called to be the apostle of the uncircumcision: and to this, the higher form of grace and truth, I now turn, and to the truths incidental to it.

Paul's Gospel. What is it?

THE portions of the word more especially to be studied in connection with this subject, are such as Acts, chap. vii. and viii. and ix., which contain the history of Saul's conversion. Then, chap. xxii. 1—23, which gives the account of how he, as Paul, put home upon the consciences of his *Jewish* brethren his own conversion; as in chap. xxvi. 1—23, he presents it to the king Agrippa. Also, 2 Cor. iv. 1—6, in which he connects his preaching and gospel with his own conversion: that which converted him he preached.

1. As to the first of these portions, I would remark that where he says of himself, "sinners of whom I am chief[k]" (1 Tim. i. 15), we must look for the explanation

[i] If any, having learnt the suitability of the work of redemption to themselves as having been in a state in which they could not do without it—now refuse to go on and to learn about the Lord Jesus, whose work redemption is, and whom they should learn in learning His work,—I would warn them that there is no standing still. If they will not go *onward*, they will find that they cannot retain even what they have learned. Where any have learned Christ and would turn *back* from Himself to His work, and there are such in our day (some who have learnt about Christ and would now turn back from Himself and occupy themselves only with His works), I can only say their conduct is a giving up of Christ Himself, and I say it sorrowfully, yet advisedly, and I foresee the results.

[k] *Chief*, prōtos, *first*.

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of what he means, in these chapters. Israel had rejected Messiah when upon earth, crucified Him. In the martyrdom of Stephen, they were resisting the Holy Ghost and the power which He in heaven had now shed abroad. Saul got a marked place in that sinful act: "the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul" (chap. vii. 58). "Saul was consenting unto his death" (chap. viii. 1); "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison" (ver. 3); "and Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem"[1] (ix. 1, 2).

In the blindness of his heart he thought he did God, Jehovah of Israel, service, for he was alive without the law once; yet at this, the time of his conversion, he had no sore conscience, no suspicion that he was wrong, for he tells us (1 Tim. i. 13), "I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." What! be a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious (ver. 13) *ignorantly?* Yes, easily enough, when the vail is over the heart, and the mind is set upon the law of God and Jehovah and not upon Christ Jesus. As Paul says, and it is an awful word in its bearing upon the professed Christianity of our own days; upon the many who are "desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (1 Tim. i. 7)—those who would, one way or the other, merge Christ in the law:—"Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail un-

[1] Let my reader bear in mind, while he studies Paul's gospel, the thoughts and sayings of many an evangelist, "you must know yourself to be a sinner, ere you can need a Saviour"; "the vision of Christ's glory in heaven can produce no sense of sin or of need in man"; "there is nothing in the heart of man down here, which can respond to the glory in heaven."

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taken away in the reading of the Old Testament: which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart" (2 Cor. iii. 12—15). This Scripture was not written in vain as *to this day* (1867) for those that have hearts to be warned. Saul knew it not, nor did he then know the next verse as he did afterwards: "Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away" (ver. 16). The Gospel was hid from him, hid as from one that was lost: in whom the God of this world had blinded the mind as of one who believed not (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4). Occupied with the temple and religion of Jehovah, God of Israel, and full of zeal for the law of Moses, etc., etc., his temper and tone were like one of old: "Come and see my zeal for the Lord." He had no sense of need of mercy, of grace, or of a Saviour. But if he did not feel the need of a Saviour, the Saviour felt yearning as to him, and made known to him His needs of showing mercy and grace, and the mind of God and of Heaven as in contrast with the mind of man and of earth. This is the proper and true order of grace always and at all times: "I am the first and the last." But besides this it is the *manifested order of grace now*, under the apostleship of the uncircumcision; as Paul said of himself, quoting Isaiah in all his very boldness: "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me" (lxv. 1, and compare Rom. ix. 30). Saul did not seek Christ, yet was Saul found of Christ; Saul did not ask after Christ, but Christ manifested Himself to Saul. This, emphatically true of Paul and his gospel, is the order really of grace; for the lost sheep sought not the shepherd; the piece of lost silver sought not the woman. But by the lost sheep and the piece of lost silver (in Luke xv.) the publicans and sinners who knew their lost estate, as saltless salt, were represented; in Saul's case, he had the conscience that he was all right, so far as confidence in himself and a ground for confidence in the flesh went: a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a pharisee; full of zeal; "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. iii. 5, 6); "I verily thought with myself

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that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxvi. 8, 9). But when Christ took up Saul to make a *model* man of him, "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, *for a pattern*[m] to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 16); when it "pleased God . . to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen" (Gal. i. 16); when God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness (Gen. i. 3) shined into his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. iv. 6), what discovery was then made to this Saul? Heaven and earth contrasted stood; Jesus, as He is, in His place on high, in His own character stood in contrast with Saul as he was in his place on earth and in the character natural to him. God and His ways stood in contrast with man in the world and his ways; Christ on one side, Satan on the other; the energy of Jesus working by the truth and through the Spirit upon a man whose energy was as peculiar as the man was great among and above his fellows,—and yet at this moment detected as identified with Satan in work and way and character, against man and against God, and against one of the dearest counsels of God—the Church. Shut up in his own set of circumstances, as much as the woman of Samaria was in hers, he had only a human mind, and that a fallen one and one under Satan's deluding power, to act by. He leaned to his own understanding and consulted his own wisdom —and his wisdom, perfect in his own eyes, had no standard by which he could measure it. He was nearing Damascus, his schemes well laid, his plan well prepared for, when suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. Fallen to the earth he hears a voice and has to converse with Him who spake.

[m] Some want to make this *pattern* to be of the Jewish people in the latter day. But will this stand? for *the* remnant get well ploughed up by sorrow and conviction, ere Christ appears to them; suddenly as to Saul in the end, I admit, but not to put them under the same doctrine, or into the same position as He did Saul. *Us* He has put there, yea, into everything that Paul had as a Christian—apostleship and service excepted.

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The Lord.—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Saul.—"Who art thou, Lord?"

The Lord.—"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

(*Then trembling and astounded.*)

Saul.—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

The Lord.—"Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do."

Three little sentences dropped from the Lord's lips in heaven,—what discovery did they make to Saul, think you, reader?

First. I must remark that when God, or the Son of God, speaks, it is the speaker who gives the word spoken its power. "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light," etc., etc. The word was God's and the power to accomplish its purport was God's. So was it as to the rainbow and the seasons (in Gen. ix. 12, and xi. 21, 22); so was it in government as to Israel set apart from the nations; so is it with the word, looked at as the word of the living God *always*. If I preached law with the view of awakening, or if I preached pardon for the guilty sinner, everybody knows it would be just the same as I have said. They that heard my words as if they were the words of a man merely, might gibe and mock;—they that heard them as the word of the living God, would be pricked to the heart by them,—would know the power of God's word,—the two-edged sword,—sword of the Spirit—but they only.

Secondly. Though it is not for me to give an account of what did pass through Saul's mind beyond what is written, I may be allowed to show what may have passed through that mind.

Himself, Saul, surrounded by a light from heaven,—called by his own name, "Saul, Saul,"—and the present purpose and occupation of his soul, his purpose, his plan, his present business called in question by the One above, whose voice spake to him,—as being about a business which told of a bitter zeal in Saul's heart against *Himself*.

"Why persecutest thou me?"[n]

[n] The connection of this with the mystery will be looked at afterwards.

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When opposite extremes seem to meet—the human mind feels it. One, an unknown One, in heaven, who had aroused Saul's attention by a flood of light from above; knowing him though Saul knew Him not, accosted him and repeated his name; and knowing what was in his heart, what his business, challenged him as to the reason of his bitter zeal against *Himself*. Challenged him as one man might speak to another. "Was there not here enough to arrest me?" Paul might surely say. And Saul asked Him *who* He was, for he knew not; and then the awful discovery, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The head of the Nazarenes, Jesus, the Lord of all glory! yet in all the gentleness possible, arguing and talking with this mad persecutor, this apostle of cutting off of all the innocent Nazarenes. To Saul, at least, it was as the word of the living God. His lot was chosen.

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" was his word:—and to the answer he gave a practical reply, by doing what he was bidden. And the Lord said, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And he went. The Nazarenes, whom as a lion ravening for its prey, he had sought in pride and fierceness, and bloodthirstiness, and in ignorant contempt of the Nazarene, now as a lamb he sought; he needed help from one of them; and had to be debtor to those that journeyed with him, and they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus (ver. 8), and he went. The light was the discoverer to Saul of darkness within and darkness around—that is clear.

Thirdly. Nor, if the acorn contains the oak-tree; if the moon that shone in paradise lightens *our* nights still, if the sun which hid its light at Calvary shines on us, is there any difficulty in seeing how the scene just reviewed suffices for every poor sinner now. First, how did heaven stand forth in contrast to earth, and how did the light of the contrast then shine out!

Heaven, the dwelling-place of God, had provided the Son of God, who came seeking fruit as the heir from His Father's vineyard. Heaven had received Him back

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again when earth rejected and cast Him out. Earth had given to Him a cross, and then had rejected heaven's recognition of Him, and the Holy Ghost sent down from Him who was Lord and Christ there. Light and darkness stood in contrast. Did not Saul know when in that light, the darkness which had been, which was still, in him? Set heaven and its thoughts and ways as to Jesus in contrast with earth's thoughts and ways as to Him:—and are the openings in the sieve too large to catch and arrest a sinner? If heaven is wholly occupied with Jesus, what was *I* to think of myself, who never had had one correct thought, one right affection toward Him; who lived as though He *were not*,—and whose purpose, plan and business, when He met me, were all about myself and the world.

Fourthly. And this unknown Jesus, Lord of all and Christ in heaven, what His character and what His ways? As Lord, or Master of all, He had all power in heaven and in earth; and now, got back again from among men, what sort of a person is He, and what does He do? First, before He went on high, He said that mercy should be preached, the whole earth over, "beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke xxiv. 47). For this, too, *He* gave power on the day of Pentecost; and not only so, but He gathered out from the Jerusalem-sinners 3000 and 2000 unto God. These He made to be a house of God, through the Spirit. But the aggressiveness, the craving of His love toward man was not content with this, and He raised up witnesses and testimony still in Jerusalem. Jerusalem would not have Him, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the bright promise of His return on their repentance; and they of Jerusalem stoned Stephen. Did this change the Lord's character, and stop the outflow of His love? His delight in blessing, and in making man blessed? No. The persecuted went everywhere "throughout the regions of Judæa, preaching the word." Philip is sent to the city of Samaria, and preaches Christ unto them; and then to draw the bow and wing the arrow that should go into distant lands, through the eunuch of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians; and then the Lord, that had looked

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down and sustained Stephen in his martyrdom, and had seen Saul there—Saul, a Goliath after Satan's own heart, whose mind was held as under Satan with a lie, so that he could not say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" and whose heart, in his blindness, felt called upon to carry out Satan's love of destroying and pulling everything to pieces—that Saul, who had had no pity for Stephen, no power to appreciate Stephen's character and conduct in contrast with his own—that Saul who breathed destruction—to him spake Jesus, from His own proper glory all divine, yet with a gentleness and a tenderness all worthy of Himself. [He wanted one to preach the gospel to every one under heaven, and Saul should be the one.]

Cannot this Person—Jesus, in His own place in heaven, acting according to His own character in contrast with us in our place on earth, and acting according to our own characters, be set forth in preaching? God manifest in flesh, in eternal glory in heaven, cares, and shows He cares, that we (who care nothing about Him or His glory) perish not under Satan. Is not this true? Is it not a reality? Has it no voice to sinful man, dead in trespasses and sins?

Fifthly. God and His ways stood in contrast with man in the world and his ways. His Son, the beginner of the new creation of God, was revealed; where and what now was the first Adam? where and what the world that had crucified Him? where and what the serpent that had wounded His heel? All the wisdom of God, and His righteousness and His power, and His majesty and His love, all stood out in contrast to the folly, unrighteousness, weakness, frivolity, and hatred of men—all showed that God's ways were not as man's ways, nor God's thoughts as man's thoughts.

Sixthly. And not only so, but in this scene He showed how His principles in redemption stood in contrast with His principles in creation, in providence, and in government—

> By weakness and defeat,
> He trod the victor down;
> Trod all our foes beneath His feet,
> By being trodden down.

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Seventhly. Christ on the one side—Satan on the other. The energy of Jesus, working by the truth and through the Spirit, upon a man—upon men, whose energy, whose plans, purposes, objects, and motives are all selfish and darkness. Man on earth and in time is looked down upon by Jesus in heaven, and from His own proper eternity.

Will man have that Lord Jesus?

To the remark, "You must know yourself to be a sinner, ere you can value a Saviour," I would only answer, "If you know Himself, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily—Him who is the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth—Him in heaven, according to the ways in which the heaven of heavens stands in contrast with earth—Him calling men down here to notice the light wherewith He has lighted up heaven's high throne—as the Lamb that was slain, but is alive again for evermore; I say, if you know Himself, you will know yourself too." Consciousness of things done down here, which are contrary to a man's duty to God and his neighbour, do give the sense of need of salvation from the just consequences thereof. But what is this compared to the discovery of the contrasts between Himself and myself? Himself, as a Man perfect and His will always, in times past, present, and to come, subject to God; and I, a wilful one by nature, glorying to be wilful, ere I knew Him, groaning ever since I did know Him, under this part of my fallen nature, though fully hoping to see Himself soon, and knowing that then there will remain no more will in me. But it is not Himself, as a perfect Man only, that is there; He is God manifest in flesh—He is the faithful servant (though Son) of God, and that which leads Him to reveal His light is the desire that man may become part of the new creation, one Spirit with the Lord.

And will any one tell me that if the curtain that did shut into heaven its light has been rent, and that the light now shines forth from the face of Jesus Christ—I say, will any one tell me that if that light can be brought to bear upon a human heart down here, that *its* vail will remain untaken away—that this light of the glory of

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God in the face of Jesus will produce no sense of light and blessing, no sense of sin and of need in man?[o]

And will any one who has a human heart, a human mind, say that he can set Christ Jesus' ways to Saul of Tarsus in contrast to Saul of Tarsus' ways towards Christ Jesus, and find nothing to which he can respond?

Besides the giving of a new nature, making us partakers of the Divine nature, creating us anew in Christ Jesus, born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God, that liveth and abideth for ever, one great result of the Spirit of God's presence with man is, that He enables man, and makes him, to see the things of God as he sees the things of man. They become real, have their eternal and their heavenly nature, as he looks upon them; and thus can a believer respond to the vision of the glory of God in the face of Christ most truly and truthfully in spirit and in truth.

And this One—Himself—in all that He is—Himself in heaven, revealed the love that was in Him to Saul of Tarsus. Saul knew Himself—knew the interest which He had in himself in all his littleness—took a living interest in Himself up there, ere ever he knew one office of Christ, or what his own need of offices and the fruits of them was. I cannot doubt but that, like Abraham of old, the knowledge of the Lord Himself decided every question at once summarily to Paul.[p] Nor can I

[o] Is the contrast greater or less between—

What I have done and left undone, and what Adam was in his innocency;

Or between—What Christ is as the last Adam, and what I was when He found me?

What I *am*, on the one hand, is the root of all that *I* have done and all that I have left undone—includes it and a great deal more. On the other hand, the last Adam, life-giving Spirit, what is He as to fulness and contrast to the first Adam, when he had become a perishing soul?

God demanding of me, a ruined creature, what, because of sin, I can never pay, is in contrast too with God, as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, showing to me what He has provided for Himself, in that last Adam—the fountain and channel of His grace and glory. What a contrast!

[p] He that has become the Rock on high, whence eternal life flows down to us, is the One who was smitten down here for our sins. In giving the new life to us, in putting a new nature into

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doubt, with Paul's writings in my hand, that the unsearchableness and the glory of the One that had revealed Himself to him, gave that vividness and that power to all Paul's thoughts about sin-bearing on the cross, atonement made in heaven, acceptance, etc., which is so peculiar to himself among the writers of the New Testament. Romans vi., Hebrews ix. and x., and Ephesians i. are proofs of this. But Saul knew *Who* was in heaven, and what was in *His* heart, and mind, and ways, ere he knew any one office of the Blessed One, either down here or up there—past, present, or to come.

I turn now to Acts xxii. 1—13, which gives the account of how he, as Paul, put home upon the consciences of his *Jewish* brethren his own conversion; for the facts which he had to record at once fully justified his own course and position, and, while they condemned their conduct and ways whom he loved, presented the only ground of escape, rest or hope for them.

In passing through the history of his conversion I (with, I think, but one exception which I marked off in brackets [ ]) avoided everything which (though he knew afterwards) Paul knew not at the time;—such things as Ananias must have told him and the Christians at Damascus; and perhaps some which were revealed to Luke when he wrote the Acts of the Apostles.

These things are now in our hands, and they enable us to set forth what the light is which shines now from Heaven upon a sinful earth. The Lord knew none could arrest Saul save Himself, but He will have His saints down here *in fellowship with Him* in His work. Himself prepares Ananias, and shows how watchful He had been over His praying yet timid flock. Ananias freely states his thoughts to the Lord. But he has to submit to have this honour put upon him and learns the Lord's own thoughts and intentions about Saul: "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," and the

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us, He does it in the full consciousness that He has met sin for us.

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Lord adds: "for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (chap. ix. 15, 16). It was a large sphere the Lord meant the light of His glory and love to be proclaimed in, and He chose a special vessel for the work. 'Tis a new form of truth which Saul preached. "And straightway he preached Christ . . . . that He is *Son of God*" (ver. 20). "All that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is very Christ" (ver. 22, 23). Whatever heedless man may think, the powers of darkness were in this beaten back and discomfited for a time, and angels in heaven owned the wondrousness of their Lord's unsearchable ways while they looked on, and learnt about Him in His dealings as to the Church. And what comfort of love and encouragement was there to the Damascene Christians in that day, in all this. The Lord was with Saul; and the hearts of Jerusalem converts got strength and comfort—"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (ver. 31), and cannot *we* see the brightness of Heaven's light and love as it thus shines out and down upon the earth where we still are?

In reading Acts xxi. we may well be struck with the unheeded admonitions which were given to Paul, at Tyre—certain disciples said to Paul through the Spirit, "that he should not go up to Jerusalem" (ver. 4). Again (ver. 10, 11), there was a certain prophet, named Agabus, "and when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said: Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." The apostle of the uncircumcision must live among the Gentiles,—God's free man, or God's bondsman. "And

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when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem" (ver. 12). Arrived there, he found first the state of James and all the elders there and of the Jerusalem brotherhood (ver. 18—25). The currents were too strong for him, and in the midst of the conflict, Paul[q] has to admit: "I saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me" (xxii. 18), and after Paul had argued[r] the point with the Lord—"Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (ver. 21).

It is to be noticed that the uproar commenced in the temple with certain Jews, which were of *Asia*. These appealed to the men of Israel against Paul, then in the temple about his vow:

"This is the man, that teacheth all everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place," that was his first offence; his second was—"and further brought Greeks (Grecians *not* Hellenistic Jews) also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place" (ver. 28).

Carried off by the chief captain and soldiers to the castle, he is there permitted to speak unto the people from the stairs.

What strikes one, first of all, in reading this his testimony, is the way in which on one side Paul is himself called in question,—his life threatened, for the truth's sake, as his Master's life had been taken. In life Paul was now one with that Master; yea Christ was his life, his life hid with Christ in God. If so be we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified together with Him. He

[q] All things working together for good, may be true even there where a man cannot say, That which I did was what Christ alone did. With the Lord both were true. All worked for good, but He also was perfect in His steps and work.

[r] Paul appears to me when he argued—(ver. 19 and 20) "and I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of thy martyr, Stephen, was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him"—to have trusted to the natural weight of the evidence he had to present to the Jewish mind in his own conversion; and to have in measure overlooked the counsel of God and the power of the Holy Ghost.

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had too passed through experiences in nature which fitted him to know and to understand *thoroughly* the position and feelings of the Jews to whom he had to speak. If Jesus spoke from heaven to Saul as seeing and divinely reading all the secrets of Saul's heart and life to him, Paul could speak to the Jews as one that knew by his own past experience (already judged by him), whereabouts they were to whom he spake. Peter could not have done this. Peter, after he knew the Lord, cursed and swore and denied that he knew Christ, ere he could be trusted to stand forward and charge on Israel that "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, ... ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 22, 23). The Lord upon earth, Peter, having known Him, had denied, whom they, not knowing, had slain. Paul, awakened to Jesus in heaven, got a thorn in the flesh, messenger of Satan to buffet him as his schooling as to himself. I cannot read Peter's life and not see his need of the lesson he learnt: perhaps Paul's need of his lesson may be seen too.

But again, Paul, one in life with Christ in glory, and as servant an ambassador for Christ, spake to his Hebrew brethren *just that which Jesus had shown and said to himself.* Mark this well. And mark too why his witness was that which he had seen and heard. Not a long argument and reasoning built upon it—but *the facts* formed his testimony. He had seen and heard something, and what he had seen and heard that was what he put forward.

First, he introduces himself: I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders[s]:

[s] What a magnificent opportunity of confessing Christ was his! The high priest, the elders who had been identified with

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from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished (ver. 3—6).

Then secondly, comes his report of what he saw and heard.

Ver. 6. That it was "at noon" that the light shined, is noticed for the first time here.

Ver. 8. Our text gives here, "I am Jesus of Nazareth," the words "of Nazareth" are not named in chap. ix.

It is written in chap. ix. 7, "The men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." And in

Chap. xxii. 9, "But they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." That is, they heard the sound of a voice; but not the words of Him that spake.

Chap. ix. 3, "Suddenly there shined about him a light from heaven."

Chap. xxii. 11, "And when I could not see *for the glory of that light,*" etc.

Paul then adds, that when Ananias (a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews) came to him, he said:

"The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, *and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth*" (ver. 15). "*For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard*" (ver. 16).

The revelation was made to him not only for his own salvation's sake, but also that he might witness unto all men—be His witness, who had shown Himself and who had spoken to him,—of what he had seen and heard.

And, thirdly, came that which to the earthly mind of the Jew spoilt all; that which, on the other hand, told out how the Lord knew Israel and would not close up His own bowels of mercies because Israel would reject, but contrariwise would take a larger and a wider range in which to make known His presence in glory, beauty, power and majesty in heaven; and how His voice there

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his mission to extirpate the Nazarenes, all (present or) at hand to be referred to, as, in the next chapter, to persecute him.

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would speak to poor sinners down here about Himself and make poor sinners to know how He was their Saviour, and to learn the contrasts too between God and man; Heaven and earth; righteousness and mercy; deserved reward and free grace; the life of God, eternal life, and the life of man, perishing and all spoiled. And mark it, too, His herald was to be a Jew. The Lord of heaven and earth would show His rights over all on earth. Had He not the right to send a Hebrew of the Hebrews, one of the straitest sect of the Pharisees as His messenger sent in the foolishness of God to the wise Gentile in all his liberty-loving contempt of the narrow-minded Jew. The Jews, looking at Paul in his testimony to them *according* to their own pride, doubtless saw in him nothing but a renegade to the national glory, an enemy to their proud claims: had they looked at him according to that which was *in God,* they would surely have said, What grace in Messiah, when we had rejected Himself, to send one of our own people, one of His people according to the flesh to the Gentiles! Thus still showing His thoughts of and love for Israel. Paul must become the off-scouring of all things, yet be that part of the channel of testimony which was nearest to the Lord. Taught too by the Lord Himself in heaven—thoroughly taught—in spirit and in truth he loved the Head of the Nazarenes, whom he had seen and heard in heaven.

"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and I saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (ver. 17—21).

Poor but most blessed Paul! Thy testimony is delivered to Israel. Thy Lord knew better than didst thou; His word, not thine, must stand as to the results also of the testimony.

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"And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live."

I doubt whether Paul's love to his kindred according to the flesh had not led him, and that too against the word of his Master, to Jerusalem this time. But how blessed is it to see a man thoroughly whole hearted in such cause. And if his being here and his conduct in the next chapter is not fully acceptable—the beauty and the grace of the Lord only shines forth the more brightly (chap. xxiii. 11), "and the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." The bondage that follows onward, may have been needful for his too fervent spirit and I am sure it threw out into relief the truth (when before kings and rulers he had to appear in bonds), of the Lord's grace, Paul, himself, the prisoner, was in spirit the free man,—the potentates before whom he appeared were to be pitied. Then all was in time, He was a pilgrim and prisoner down here, but the free man whom the Son had made free and for whom He had gone forward to prepare a mansion.

In dealing with the Jew, Paul put home first and foremost the ascended, glorified One, God manifest in flesh, who had been seen by himself and heard by himself. And there was certainly more to cut to the quick the heart and mind of the Jew in this than there would have been in any preaching of Moses or of law.

"There He is, whom I saw and heard for myself when I was as you are. Himself, God-manifest-in-flesh, now in heaven, is the turning point of every thing. I Paul saw, heard, obeyed Him, and am what I am. You, my Jewish brethren, are what you are, will you receive Himself and become as I am?" Where, at such an hour, in such a scene, are the questions of how far have I fulfilled my whole duty of life as a man down here? how far have I done all that man by nature ought to have done, left none of it undone? Where the question, What will God think and say of my omissions and com-

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missions as to law, when God's whole mind and heart and plan rolls around Jesus of Nazareth, a man glorified in heaven, owned there upon the throne, God manifest in flesh, Himself the answer to all that rebel man is. And will any one that pretends to common sense tell me that there is nothing in such a scene, nothing in such a testimony, calculated to turn man upside down, inside out, if you please. Stupified and stultified, altogether besotted the man that maintains such folly:—as ignorant, surely, of the things of man as of God.

Paul had to taste in his own soul as a man, what was that bitterness of man's heart against himself—as a member of Christ, which he had shown against Christ Jesus.

Forty Jews made a conspiracy and banded together, and bound themselves under a curse that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him: and they had the co-operation of the chief priests and elders (chap. xxiii. 12—14). He appears before Felix, Drusilla, Festus,—appeals to Cæsar—which leads to Festus and Agrippa seeing him: that, after examination had, they may know what to write about him.

Since Porcius Festus was seeking to learn what he should write to Cæsar about the prisoner Paul, whom he was about to send to Rome as having appealed to Cæsar's judgment (which a Roman citizen was free to do), I do not think that my taking Paul's confession before Festus and Agrippa as a specimen of his testimony to the Gentiles, is any forced notion of my own. We find the account of this in chap. xxvi. which is my third scripture.

Before Festus, Cæsar's representative, and before the king Agrippa, "expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews," Paul declares; First, That his manner of life from his youth, at first among his own nation at Jerusalem, was known to all the Jews; they could testify that after the most strictest sect of their religion, he lived a pharisee. He stood now to be judged about the hope of the promise made of God to the fathers—a hope recognised by the twelve tribes in

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their faithfulness—for the sake of which he was now accused by the Jews;—

Secondly, That God should raise dead men should not be thought incredible;

Thirdly, That he too had thought it his duty to oppose Jesus of Nazareth—at Jerusalem; he had imprisoned many saints and been authorized by the chief priests to do so; had punished them and compelled them to blaspheme; and, being exceedingly mad against them, persecuted them to strange cities. But when nearing Damascus, authorized and commissioned by the chief priests;

Fourthly, *He had seen* something wonderful, viz., at mid-day in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining about himself and those that journeyed with him (ver. 13);—

Fifthly, Fallen to the ground, *He heard* something astonishing, viz., a voice speaking to himself in the Hebrew tongue and saying: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (ver. 14).

Saul asked "Who art thou, Lord?" Taking thus, perhaps for the first time in his life, the place of being an enquirer, one that needed teaching about God at God's own hand,—though "they shall be all taught of God" was an old promise.

The answer was: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in me" (ver. 15—18.)

He saw a truly astonishing sight, and heard what was altogether new to him about the Son of God (whose Father was in heaven),—and of the mercy and grace, the long-suffering patience of that blessed One with

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sinners, of whom *he* was chief,—of plans too and purposes of mercy and grace in heaven to man on earth. And,

Sixthly, He was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, the Gentiles heard of what he had seen, and heard;—and therefore the Jews caught him and went about to kill him.—To all whom he met he had, through God's help, proclaimed that himself had seen and heard that which proved that all that the Prophets and Moses said should come to pass had stood firm, and was in the way of its accomplishment: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first to rise from the dead and that He should show light unto the people Israel and to the Gentiles (ver. 19—23.)

To Porcius Festus he seemed to be mad. To the better knowledge of King Agrippa, who knew what had of late occurred in the land and had read too the prophets,—the appeal of this whole-hearted man was searching. As he said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (ver. 24—28).

"Would to God (was Paul's reply) that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (ver. 29).

That which was seen and that which was heard from Jesus in heaven dwelt in the heart of Paul by faith, and was *his* and is *our* blessing for our own souls, and is that which we have to bear witness of to all around.—To Jew, to Gentile, to every creature under heaven, Jesus Christ, in the place which He holds on high, and the fact that He has let the light of His glory shine upon man down here and spoken to man, sinful man, down here is the all-important fact. It is a *fact* that He is on high,—and it is a *fact* too that men down here are living in the place on which has shined down the light of the glory of God in the face of that same Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, the fact that he had seen the Lord is used by Paul (1 Cor. ix.). Am I not an Apostle? am I not free? "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" He had, and he had seen Him in quite another position

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and place from where Peter, James and John had seen Him. To them He was still upon earth although risen from among the dead; to Paul he showed Himself after the day of Pentecost when the promise of the Father was made good, after that He had ascended up on high.

To this Paul refers in writing to the Galatians (chap. i.), the Gospel which was preached by me . . . I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, etc. . . . . But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, *to reveal His Son* in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, etc.; and again (in 2 Cor.) we read "we all beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit (iii. 18).

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake . . . For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, for (or unto) the radiancy of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (chap. iv. 5 and 6).

The bearing of this chapter has been gone into by other children of God, I think, in The Present Testimony, so that I leave it. May God guide His children into a full and perfect understanding and taste of what the fulness of the Gospel is.

G. V. W.

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I ADD A TABLE OF THE THREE PASSAGES—FROM A LITERAL TRANSLATION.

c. ix. 1 (et seqq.)

THE HISTORIC ACCOUNT OF SAUL'S CONVERSION.

But Saul, still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, came to the high priest and asked of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues, so that if he found any who were of the way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. But, as he was journeying, it came to pass that he drew near to Damascus, and suddenly there shone round about him a light from heaven, and falling on the earth, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me? And he said: Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said: I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. [T.R. adds, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And trembling and astonished he said: Lord, what wilt thou that I do? And the Lord [said] to [him'], But rise up and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. But the men who were travelling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but beholding no one. And Saul rose up from the earth and his eyes being opened he saw no one. But leading him by the hand they brought him into Damascus. And he was there three days without seeing, and neither ate nor drank. And there was a certain disciple in Damascus by name Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision: Ana-

c. xxii. 3 (et seqq.)

PAUL'S TESTIMONY TO ISRAEL—HIS CONVERSION.

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to [the] exactness of the law of [our] fathers, being zealous for God, as you are all this day, who have persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering up to prison both men and women; as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the presbytery, from whom, having received letters to the brethren, I went to Damascus to bring those also who were there, bound, to Jerusalem, to be punished. And it came to pass, as I was journeying and drawing near to Damascus, that, about midday, there suddenly shone out of heaven a great light round about me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered: Who art thou, Lord? And He said to me: I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom thou persecutest. But they that were with me beheld the light, and were filled with fear but heard not the voice of him that was speaking to me. And I said: What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me: Rise up and go to Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which it is appointed thee to do. And as I could not see, through the glory of that light, being led by the

c. xxvi. 4 (et seqq.)

HIS CONVERSION—HIS TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ROMAN FESTUS AND AGRIPPA.

My manner of life from my youth, which from its commencement was passed among my nation in Jerusalem, know all the Jews, who knew me before from the outset [of my life] if they would bear witness, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand to be judged because of the hope of the promise made by God to our [T.R. omits 'our'] fathers, to which our whole twelve tribes serving incessantly day and night hope to arrive; about which hope, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be judged a thing incredible in your sight if God raises the dead. I indeed myself thought that I ought to do much against the name of Jesus the Nazarean. Which also I did in Jerusalem, and myself shut up in prison many of the saints, having received the authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death I gave my vote. And often punishing them in all the synagogues I compelled them to blaspheme. And, being furious against them, I persecuted them even to cities out [of our own land]. And as I also was engaged in this, I was journeying to Damascus, with authority and power from the chief priests, at midday, on the way, I saw, O king, a light above the bright-

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nias. And he said: Behold [here am] I, Lord. And the Lord [said] to him: Rise up and go into the street which is called Straight, and seek in the house of Judas one by name Saul, [he is] of Tarsus; for he is praying, and has seen in a vision a man by name Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he should see. And Ananias answered: Lord, I have heard from many of this man how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. And the Lord said to him: Go, for this [man] is an elect vessel to me to bear my name before nations and kings and the sons of Israel; for *I* will show to him how much he must suffer for my name. And Ananias went and entered into the house: and laying his hands upon him, he said: Saul, brother, the Lord has sent me, Jesus that appeared to thee in the way in which thou camest, that thou mightest see, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he immediately saw, and rising up was baptised; and, having received food, got strength. And he [T.R. reads 'Saul'] was with the disciples who [were] in Damascus certain days. And straightway in the synagogues he preached Jesus [T.R. reads 'Christ'] that He is the Son of God.

hand by those who were with me, I came to Damascus, and a certain Ananias, a pious man according to the law, borne witness to by all the Jews who dwelt there, coming to me and standing by me, said: Brother Saul, receive thy sight, and I, in the same hour, received my sight and saw him. And he said: The God of our fathers hath chosen thee beforehand to know his will, and to see the Just One, and to hear a voice out of His mouth, that thou mayest be witness for him to all men of what thou hast seen and heard? And now why lingerest thou? Arise and get baptised, and have thy sins washed away calling on His name. [T.R. reads 'on the name of the Lord.'] And it came to pass when I had returned to Jerusalem and as I was praying in the temple, that I became in ecstacy, and saw Him saying to me: Make haste and go quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said: Lord, they themselves know that I was imprisoning and beating in every synagogue them that believed on thee; and when the blood of thy witness Stephen was shed, I also myself was standing by and consenting [T.R. adds 'to his being killed,'] and kept the clothes of them who killed him. And he said to me: Go; for I will send thee to the Gentiles afar off.

ness of the sun shining from heaven round about me and those who were journeying with me. And, when we were all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew tongue: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against goads. And I said: Who art thou, Lord? And He said: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; but rise up and stand on thy feet, for for this purpose have I appeared to thee, to appoint thee to be a servant and a witness of what thou hast seen, and of what I shall appear to thee in, having taken thee out from among the people, and the nations, to whom now I send thee, to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. Whereupon, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but have, first in Damascus and Jerusalem, and to all the region of Judæa, and to the Gentiles, announced [to men] to repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.

[This paper may be followed up hereafter by others on the same subject.]

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N⁰. II.

MERCY.

"God, who is rich in mercy."—Eph. ii. 4.

"BUT God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Such are the words of the Spirit of God by the pen of Paul the apostle.

The contrasts which led him to use the little word "but" are remarkable. I will notice them shortly. At present, let me call attention to the words themselves. But God *being* rich in mercy is a more literal rendering; and it is, I think, a happier one too, as tending to throw the mind upon *the character* of God—of whom mercy is so distinctly a mark,—rather than upon His resources,—the resources by which mercy told out its own tale; it acted toward us in a truly astonishing way, according to an almighty love which found us even when we were dead in sins. We were parts of the first creation, as descended from Adam, the man who was made a living soul but who fell away from God his Maker; we were, as to nature in our original state, without life as to any understanding of, or power to understand, the things which pertain to Him who is the One that *creates anew;* and as to our own actual state when He found us, sins and not obedience characterised it. But God made us parts of that new creation which is yet to be fully displayed in the future new heavens and new earth wherein is to dwell righteousness. The Father works hitherto and the Son works, in redemption for the bringing out from amid the rubbish of the fall, whatsoever divine wisdom sees it good to bring and to make fit to be displayed in redemption-glory. And not only so; for the place in which the mercy here spoken of sets *us*, is a most peculiar one. It is peculiar in being in the heavens

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where Christ Himself is; and it is still more peculiar in that it is such a portion in the heavens as, unlike some other portions, cannot be separated either from the Lord Himself, or from Him in His life and the honour wherewith He has been honoured in heaven. Quickened together with Christ; raised up together with Him, and made sit together with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! The words "quickened together with Christ" show that we have the same life as He has; yea, He Himself is our life; our life is hid with Christ in God. He died and His body was laid in the grave,—He suffered in our stead; but He left the grave and afterwards left the earth—(the one, the place opened for the sinner; the other, the place prepared at first for Adam, and) He ascended up on high; and we that believe are one spirit with the Lord Jesus, and are looked upon by God, and by the faith that is in us (which always sees things as God sees them) as one with Him. To faith and to the Spirit the grave and the earth are passed; we are gone up in Him. And not only so but we have a stable and abiding resting place *in Him* in heaven; in spirit in Him, who sits there in His own peculiar place,—first-born among many brethren,—Head of His body the Church. Who can separate between the only begotten Son of the Father and the children by adoption, whom the Father has entrusted Him to bring to Himself at His own proper cost and as His own proper workmanship? Who can separate Him from the members as to whom God says that this Christ Jesus at His own right hand is now the glorified Head?

When we were *dead* and *in sins*, there was nothing in us to commend us to God as Creator; nor can any right or title be found in Saul, or in the Ephesians, or in ourselves, as ground *why* God should have taken us up as individuals and left so many other pharisees, so many other heathens, so many others who like us had the form of godliness without the power of it behind. All that we can say is: "But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us": this was, is, and ever will be, to faith, the starting point of the blessing:—

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"How shall I meet His eyes?
Mine on Himself I cast,—
And own myself the Saviour's prize;
Mercy from first to last."

But mercy!—*What* is mercy? And where is mercy? Mercy clearly is not the same thing as grace. Grace is *free gift,* and does not necessarily raise the question of the agreement or disagreement of the characters of the giver and of the party given to. Free gift, gift without any remuneration paid for it to the giver, seems to me to be the meaning of the word *grace.* But there is more in mercy than that; the term itself marks *de*-merit in the receiver, consciousness too in the giver or show-er of mercy that the party to whom he shows it deserves a contrary kind of treatment: as to merit harsh treatment was due, not kindly. Thus the two words are carefully distinguished in the use of them in Scripture. "Grace and peace to you," etc., are constantly (as has oft been noticed) wished to the Church by the apostolic writers: mercy is never so introduced. "Grace, mercy and peace" are the expressed desires of the apostles when writing to individual believers, who in their individual conflicts and walk down here, are looked at as men in the body; while the assembly once taken up is looked at as being in the Spirit. Again the Son of God as Son of man was never the object of divine mercy. That could not be. He was the channel of it; and a perfect, competent and worthy channel too. But love divine does delight to trace out all the rich free gifts of God which cluster around Him who led captivity captive and took His seat on high. Poor sinners and feeble saints need mercy, and so does he who through faith would overcome and share with Him, THE Overcomer, all that He has. And this brings not with it to faith, any question. For He who in love has claimed me for Himself and given Himself, His own self, to me, will with Himself make, one way or another, all that He has mine. If I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, surely His sheep, His vineyard, His kingdom, His all is mine; and mine for ever all that is His: and He too will provide me with mercy and grace to help in every time of need till I come to see Himself.

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But *whence* is mercy? Whence could it be but from God? He giveth liberally and does not upbraid. He is good and doeth good, and loves to construct and form scenes of enjoyment for His creatures,—these very scenes are witnesses of and for Himself. "The Lord is merciful and gracious." Mercy is part of His *character*. "His mercy is from everlasting (eternity without beginning, before time) to everlasting (past time)": it is the blessed cord which hangs from eternity, across the dark vale we are now in, right across to eternity beyond. So His word, who cannot lie, declares. He who was the enemy of God and became the enemy of man, loves to destroy and pull to pieces all that he can, and he is a liar from the beginning. But God had and has in Himself a character which enables Him to look upon that which is out of the way, which has a character of its own which is diametrically opposed to the character of that One man whom God delights to honour (the Lord Jesus Christ) and to look in mercy and to propose to His Son to bring the self-willed rebel from under Satan and from out of this world and its judgment and to make of him a vessel of mercy.

If we turn now to Paul's epistle to the Romans, we shall find some profitable and some soul-humbling, but rest-giving instruction about this subject of mercy. In the course of the epistle he takes up the argument in three ways. First, as to the whole race of man in its present state: there is no possible ground for there to be blessing to any single individual of that race other than the pure mercy of God.

Secondly, that for a person saved by mercy, mercies are reserved in store by God for his portion.

Thirdly, dispensationally, nor Jew nor Gentile—the two classes into which God's ways, while governing the earth, and while waiting in mercy on sinful man, had divided the race—had any ground of blessing save mercy.

These are the first three parts of the epistle. After the introduction, chap. i. 1—15, we have, first, chap. i. 16 to iii. 20, man's utterly lost and ruined condition shown—a state so far as he himself, with all his resources

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of power, is concerned, utterly hopeless ; then, secondly, chap. iii. 21 to vii., the provision which God, who is rich in mercy, had made for this state of things, and chap. viii. the portion provided for those who should own this mercy as their only ground ; thirdly, chap. ix., x., xi., nor Jew nor Gentile had any ground to rest upon save mercy ; and, fourthly, the character of walk consistent with the profession of having found mercy, been found in mercy.

The *introduction*, chap. i. 1—15, naturally enough also contains the whole outline of the truth which, at the moment of his writing, was pressing upon the mind of the writer whom mercy had found—as he writes of himself (1 Tim. i. 11—17), "according to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry ; who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious ; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

Such an one was made a servant of Jesus Christ, an apostle by calling, and set apart for the proclamation of God's good news : subject which told out what was the ground of that peace which is God's own peace, spite of all that Satan, or the world, or man can do to counterwork Him ; subject on which He loved to occupy Himself and His prophets of old—His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And this Jesus was seed of David according to the flesh, but marked off from every other as the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.

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A man, and He the Son of God—set off with this distinctive peculiarity, He is the Raiser from death, the Raiser out from among the dead;—death being the wages of sin, and the end of man's natural course here—is plainly enough God's mercy. It is His putting forth—out of His own resources and to counterwork Satan, whom man has put in the place of power as to every thing that man could dispose of—the Son of God. In result to man it is mercy or judgment to every individual according to his own conduct and state now with regard to this blessed announcement. And a worthy subject this to be that which was entrusted to Paul for the obedience of faith among all nations.

When Paul begins his letter itself, as in chap. i. 16, he presents man as needing salvation and righteousness (ver. 17), and deliverance from the wrath of God revealed from heaven (ver. 18). And all this was contained in the glad tidings of Christ. That man's state and condition needed such a deliverance, he then proves in various ways. Firstly, creation has a voice and proclaims that there is power which has a spring in itself and that power is God's. But man kept not in his place, remained not subject to that eternal power and God. Every part of creation around us still has this voice, a voice in direct contrast with that which man's ways and walk proclaims; for man's ways and walk do not declare man's owning that God is the source and end of his life and being (19—21); secondly, idolatry followed and man degraded himself, as to God and his fellows, below the brutes of the earth (22—32); thirdly, men on whom God forced the light of right and wrong, used this knowledge not for self-humiliation and correction, but for self-exaltation above their fellows. "We know and are able to condemn you" is a fearful word from one who is a hearer but not also a doer of God's righteous will, while on his way up to the judgment of the great white throne. To teach another and set at nought one's own teaching; to prohibit theft and be a thief; for the adulterer to prohibit adultery; the sacrilegious man, idolatry, etc., etc., is what, but hypocrisy. And how distinctly does the apostle's *resumé* of the state inward

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and outward of man, prove that *he* knew of no foundation in man for acceptance before God, as he writes chap. iii. 9, "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongue they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

If by the law is the knowledge of sin, what remains for man, in himself, to trust to? Creation, in its origin and the order it observes, points to One whom man honours not, and it condemns him. History, the expression of man's conduct toward God in His patience and providence and government of man, of man on the earth, condemns him. Can man bring out of *himself* an obedience if God give him a standard of right and wrong? No—the great thing which such standard can do for him is to give him the knowledge of sin; knowledge of his need, as a ruined creature, of something clean outside and above that which is found in the fields of creation, Providence and government of God around him, and of what is within himself too.

Secondly, the only remedy for man under these circumstances is in God, God's righteousness without man's works, even that which is by faith of Jesus Christ, which is towards all, and is upon all them that believe. Note how these words "all have sinned" (ver. 23); "justified freely by His grace, through redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (ver. 24); "for the remission of sins that are

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past through the forbearance of God" (ver. 25); "to declare his righteousness that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth" (ver. 26), each and all of them proclaim mercy on God's part. Just so (chap. iv. 3) "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness," followed by that fine statement of Paul, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is *counted* for righteousness" (ver. 4 and 5). And not only so, but David after his failure rejoiced "in the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without* works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." And this way was according to God as *a promise-maker*, through faith (ver. 13), by grace that it might be sure (ver. 16): of God who quickens the dead, and speaks of things which are not as though they were (ver. 17). "Now, what he has promised, He is able also to perform" (ver. 21). And faith knows this and stays upon it. Now, if any man say "Amen" to God's promises, God will say "Amen" to the establishment of that man in them. For "these things were written about not for Abraham's sake only, but for us also, to whom it shall be reckoned, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

The fifth chapter shows how we have peace with God consequent upon justification by faith, and rejoice in hope of sharing God's glory; how all of this life's troubles too are made to pay tribute to us; how the Spirit, which is given to us, fills our hearts with God's love. We were without strength, ungodly, sinners, enemies — when Christ died for us; but now, reconciled by His death, we count upon being saved by His life, and we rejoice in God through Jesus Christ; and gladly do we own the contrast between the first Adam, who lost every thing through disobedience, and the last Adam who won every thing through obedience: "Grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ."

The sixth chapter gives us the divine way by which

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God welds into one the fortunes of the sinner that believes and of the Saviour that died and rose again from the dead; and how, if God reckons that the Saviour died in my stead and that thus I am clear of guilt and dead to sin, I am to reckon it so too and am to cease from sinning and to live unto God. Dead to the penalty, I am to be dead to the power,—of sin.

The seventh chapter takes up afresh the question of law and shows how Paul judged that the only thing it could do for a man who was under it, was to convince him of his own utter helplessness. In the case which he pourtrays as under it, what was reaped from it? Great gleanings, (ver. 5) the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death: that was one lesson. A second was, "That I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet (or lust)" (ver. 7). Then came a third benefit, the discovery that "sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence (or lust). For without the law sin was dead" (ver. 8). Another discovery was, that "when the commandment came, sin revived and I died" (ver. 9). Then again (ver. 10), "the commandment which was to life, I found to be unto death." This taught him the deceivableness of his sinful self: "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." And poor comfort was it to find that, all the while, "the law was holy and the commandment holy and just and good." But the application of this good thing to him made the sin that was in him to be exceeding sinful; and laid home upon him the truth that he was carnal, sold under sin. And what a picture of man's powerlessness is then given! Doing what I allow not. What I would that do I not. What I hate that do I. The law thus proved that sin was in the man that it was over. Sin; though there might be a good will, yet no power to perform. "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do." Sin my tyrant, despising all my wishes and all my dreads, and leading me captive! What a picture of the medicinal effects of the law when placed

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upon a man! Well might He cry out: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Now note it, here the law takes notice of what a man should be before God. Quite right that: but if applied to a sinner, it brings out sin and self to light in every varied way.[a] The I, a mountainous I (of the party under the law in that seventh chapter of Romans), is upwards of forty times heard to groan and cry out. But not till brought to the sense of wretchedness, and to cry out in despair, Who can save me from myself!—can it say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Yes; and there is balm in that Jesus Christ our Lord, to answer and set aside for ever all the wretched experience of self-writhing under law and its requirements.

The eighth chapter gives us the charter of privileges provided for those who own God's mercy as their only wellspring of blessing. Beginning with "no condemnation," it ends with "no separation." No condemnation in Christ, though we be still in the body down here; for He who loves us, died for us; no feeling of condemnation, if our obedience is after the spirit and not after the flesh, for we have the Spirit of God and of Christ: our life is there, and we know it, and that all about *us* is death. Obedience to our God and Father we render, knowing that we are His sons and heirs, co-heirs together with Christ,—therefore, we suffer now and look to be glorified hereafter. Our blessing is now by faith and in the Spirit. But our external bodies too will be glorified. Now, till then, the Spirit helps our infirmities, our ignorance—is a Spirit of intercession in us; One, as to whom we know that He who on high searches our hearts, thoroughly understands them. And we know too that

[a] This is quite natural. The law describes what I ought to be, according to the nature of myself as a creature, to God. If I am a sinner, I love myself more than God. This very sin may incline my heart to take up the law, to boast in the law. It may at first sight be commendable to me as being about *myself*, and yet about God. But when I come to stand under it, I find that God is everything in it and has claims over me which I cannot meet; and that those claims are, according to His nature, spiritual —while I am carnal.

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all things work together for good to us. Called of God according to His purpose, His foreknowledge of us and predestination to be conformed to the image of His Son (that He might be the firstborn among many brethren), is our comfort. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (ver. 30). So we can say, "God for us, who against us?" The free gift of His own Son for us secures His giving us all things. Who shall lay charge against the choice ones of God? God is the justifier. Who the condemner? Christ died; yea, risen, is at God's right hand in heaven, interceding for us. If Christ who is above loves us, shall any circumstance down here—whether arising from a physical world out of order or from men that hate Christ—separate us from the love which He has to us? No: we voluntarily have taken up all that He had to bear. If sheep for the slaughter on the one hand, on the other we are in all such things more than conquerors through Him that loved us. And this the rather because we know, the world of eternity being opened to us (a larger sphere than what this earth presents to us) (ver. 37 and 38), no creature is able to separate us from God's love to us which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. There is no separation.

Thirdly, chaps. ix., x., xi. give us the instruction that the mercy presented as the only portion for any *individual* in the earlier chapters is the root of all God's past, present, or future dealings in blessing with man, when dealt with and blessed in *the mass* upon the earth. Gathered now as individuals upon the earth, our massing in company is by faith, to the person of Christ in heaven. Christ, the head of the new creation, is now in heaven; we, as parts of it now, will all shortly be there too. In spirit we are there, now already. But Israel was as a nation blessed upon earth, and will be blessed upon earth hereafter; and, besides our individual heavenly calling and faith in an ascended, glorified Lord, Gentiles now hear of mercy and are of the house of God down here upon earth; and when the nation Israel is finally blessed, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the

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earth as the waters cover the sea. We find these massed companies, blessed on earth, to be looked at in these three chapters.

Why was Israel made the channel of God's testimony here upon earth?

Why were the oracles of God committed unto them? (chap. iii. 2).

Why were they Israelites; why had they the adoption and the glory and the covenant and the giving of the law and the service and the promises? How came they to be connected with the family of which as concerning the flesh Christ came? They were not all the children of Abraham because they were his descendants? All had the promises in their hands, though all were not the children of the promise. "God was so pleased to bless them," is the only answer which I can give. And "mercy—His only plea." But mercy for time is not always among men mercy for eternity, and so He who would have a seed for eternity had to act, in His own right and title, and to secure an eternally blessed people in Isaac and in Jacob. "For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (chap. ix. 15). Yes, that is it: there is a God who has a right to do as He wills, and will do as He likes, Satan and a wicked world and sinful man, notwithstanding. Or is God the only Being that may not act? Is He the only one that has no right to please Himself,—to do His own pleasure, to act according to His own thoughts? Let man now approve, or let man now disapprove, He chose to create this world and to make and set man on it. And He has chosen through nigh six thousand years to bear, with a patience altogether divine, man's incessant, unmendably bad manners; and He chose Himself to come as Son of man into the world, and He means in the end to reckon with man and to judge him for all his high thoughts and his ungodliness. The verse I have cited sets His dealings with the nation Israel of old in a peculiarly striking light. "He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have com-

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passion." Israel had just cast God off — and made a calf (with Aaron's help) out of the trumpery and finery of the women, their ear-rings, etc., — a calf of gold; had declared "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord" (Ex. xxxii. 4, 5). This was the occasion, when on Moses's intercession with the Lord, the Lord says, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Ex. xxxiii. 19).

Why did the Lord not act upon what He had said to Moses (chap. xxxii. 9) "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation?" why this change? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? "I will," if He says it, who can say unto Him, What doest Thou? "I will . . . . to whom I will,— and I will . . . . on whom I will." 'Tis blessed to know there is One that can and will and does say "I will," and His "I will" stands firm and sure. He knew what His own grace and mercy and compassion prompted Him to do, and He here chose to let it flow out. But mark how Israel, about whom He chose in His absolutism and uncontrollable will so to speak, had lost itself everything, made shipwreck of all that had been entrusted to them, were a wreck themselves;—they had made other gods and danced and feasted before them. Jehovah had a right to act as He pleased, notwithstanding their sin, and He chose to act according to His own nature and to take care of His own character; so He said, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion"; consequently, Israel was not cut off, and He did not make a nation out of Moses.

Satan is not almighty; he cannot say, "I will," and his word stand fast. Otherwise universal destruction and universal delusion would be our portion. But God is

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almighty, and mercy and compassion are in His character, and He says "I will," and mercy and compassion are ours; and if made ours *in Christ* Jesus, then ours for eternity; for in Him is no variableness, nor the shadow of a turn. I do see and feel that all my blessing hinges upon this absolutism of God and His having a character of His own on which He, naturally enough, chooses to act and in which He has been pleased to act to me-ward, and upon which He has made me to trust and think and hope that He is acting as to myself. And mark it, too, if His mercy and His compassion are the ground of the soul's peace, the soul owns to *de*-merit in itself.[b]

And Paul stops not with the broad statement of the principle, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion"; but makes the wholesome deduction an application to individuals: "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (chap. ix. 16). What fountain in itself can a creature finite and ruined have? Is not God the only spring of every good gift? Did He not do the work of Christ according to His own plan and wisdom and in spite of man? Has not Christ been sitting eighteen hundred years in heaven before I was born? Was there not mercy in Him when I thought only of what I could do to please (not God but) myself? Was He not determined to break down all my thoughts of my power and of my might, and make me a debtor to mercy? And did He not do this, ere ever I was willing or running at all. It is not that *willing* and *running* are

[b] I remember once one who had not peace, but was sore buffetted, reasoning with me, and on my finding the word to be without effect, I proposed prayer, and in prayer took just that ground,—that there was no plea that we could present as connected with ourselves, why judgment should not take its course, but that God was absolute and had a character of His own, and we cast ourselves on that: and the dismay of my friend who said, "I will not pray with you again; I dare not cast myself as a sinner upon God and what he may like to do with me." Through mercy he did learn that there there was rest for him and none elsewhere, and he found it and rejoiced.

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bad things they are Christ's gifts to all his people; but the question is Do they come out of the old Adam nature or from Christ Himself? An absolute God, full of mercy is the refuge of a poor sinner. He that has fled to Him will never find fault with His absolute "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion." If on the contrary men stand upon their rights and their own power, let them tremble. God is not mocked. Paul shows us that the absolutism of God, when resisted by proud man, is irresistible in judgment. If men will not have God and mercy,—they may find like Pharaoh that they have absolute judgment (read Rom. ix. 17—22). It is what man's "I will" when it comes into collision with a despised God's "I will" leads too. Better, surely, for a rebel creature that God should be occupied and guided by His own goodness, and not be guided with the badness of the creature, than that the rebellion of the creature should be the turning point, as the sinner wishes of the conduct of the Creator.

But if Paul accounts for Israel's having been spared of God, through His mercy, the nation stood down here upon earth, as all does that is on earth, on trial; and when it had failed down here, mercy took a larger sphere.

"And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (ver. 23, 24). "That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith" (ver. 30).

In chapter x. He shows how all is of mercy,—the door open to "whosoever believeth" (ver. 11),—to "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord" (ver. 13); there is no difference when all turns upon this, "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (ver. 12). Yet, thus, the *Gentile* comes in, upon this no difference ground; but comes in not so as to exclude the *Jew* on the one hand, for there is no difference, nor on the other hand necessarily into a

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company whose blessing will be more permanent than was the blessing of Israel as a nation; for there is, in this also, no difference. God takes up a position of showing mercy, of delighting in mercy in both cases; and His taking that position toward men on earth forms a company. But then in both cases *He*, at least, is truthful and means what He says; in this too there is no difference. He will have mercy. And this means not only that *He* will be upon the ground of mercy, but that He will have man also to be upon the ground of mercy. If He will give, man must receive; if He take mercy as the ground of His action towards man, man that comes to rejoice in the door opened to him of association with God, must know himself also to be upon the ground of mercy. God's position of being upon the ground of mercy towards Israel, was taken; and they were a people who had the oracles of God and the privileges of being His nation. When they would not be upon the ground of mercy themselves, and would not have the God of mercy (whom they crucified in Christ Jesus) among them upon earth, nor own Him afterwards in heaven, when on Pentecost He proclaimed mercy "beginning at Jerusalem," they were set aside; and Himself in heaven (made Lord and Christ, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven) became a new position taken by God for showing mercy to "*whosoever* should call upon the name of the Lord." But with this new position a new company was formed, and to it the oracles of God were committed, a house of God upon earth. What lay at the bottom of all this was mercy on God's part. But as before this, if the blessing is to be permanent it supposes that he that is blessed takes the ground of being upon and living upon mercy. If God is showing from heaven mercy now, I, to be really blessed must also, my own self, stand upon and act upon mercy. For God here too is *real*. He means not only to make a show of mercy but to give it; and if He gives there must be (His name be praised—His own glory needs it and He will secure it and make it good) a receiver too of mercy. To see that God has taken a new position, that it is one open to the sinner, to every

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sinner that believes, for there is no difference whatsoever, is good news indeed; to be able to say "And I stand connected with that God and with that salvation" is blessed. But we must receive into our own souls and for our own selves that mercy, stand upon it, live under it and from it, if there is to be lasting blessing. Reader, can you say, "God, thou knowest that Thy mercy by Christ Jesus dwells in my mind and that I love it and glory in it and try to live as one that has found it. Mercy is behind me as to my past; mercy is with me and *in* me as to my present; mercy is my hope as to all that is before me." These are solemn truths: for chap. xi. shows us *why* the nation Israel was cut off. They walked not in mercy's path. "Elias had to make intercession to God *against* Israel (*for* whom Moses had interceded!) saying, Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life" (ver. 3). The restraining power of God's hand had however, unknown to the prophet, been acting. "But what said the answer of God to him?" "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal." What a blessed thing it is that the same One who said to Moses, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion," (at a time when Moses stood all alone for God) should have reserved, at a time when Elias thought he was left alone, seven thousand men. And why? It was the proof at once of His power and of His love of mercy. But the self-confident mass who gave the character and stamp of things even to the eye and mind of an Elias,—they stood for themselves and for their competency and their ability to obtain righteousness by their own works. And where, I pray you, is the conscience and mind and heart of a ruined sinner who is occupied with what "*I* can, and *I* will, and *I* mean to do"? Is such an one set in mercy, a receiver of it, glorying in it and living in and from it? "I and my works among men and my difference from other men"—is it the same thing as "God's mercy to me the chiefest of sinners." And what if God really does delight in mercy—has

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set Himself for a display of mercy, and that a stream of mercy flows forth and they who profess to be connected with God and His throne and possessors of the privileges of being associated with Him,—what I say, if such lie and do not the truth; will not stand for mercy in and from God to man a ruined sinner, but claim and wait for the righteous judgment of God upon human works"? This was the case with Israel of old, in Elias's, in David's, in the Lord's, in Paul's days. Must God give up His mercy, or take a new position for Himself, and while carrying to it all that *would have mercy*, leave behind to providential judgments all that despised His mercy? That is: Is God, or is sinful man to take the lead, to have the upper hand, to rule? Blessed be God! though man tried, instigated by Satan, to put God out of the way, and killed the Son lest the Romans "should come and take us away," they in their blindness and dark sightedness were but putting forward God's mercy. They were giving the proof that mercy had no place in them, when they killed the Prince of life; and so they were justifying God's departure from themselves, yea, provoking Him to judge them according to their boasted measure of self-righteousness; and, so far as in them lay, too, they were thrusting Him whom they murdered into the new place, the new position which God would take; for Christ on earth was Messiah to Israel. Christ earth-rejected, heaven-welcomed, is Lord and Christ for "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord." The sphere of Israel a nation on earth had rejected, renounced and denounced mercy: Alas! for it, then and there. But, blessed be God, mercy was as dear to Him as ever. —He felt that Israel's sphere was not large enough for Him for the display of His mercy. Little was the mountain from which and small the sphere to which, through Moses' intercession, He had proclaimed mercy. Great the height of His throne in heaven and wide the range of the sphere to every human being under heaven, to whom mercy was now to be proclaimed, beginning at Jerusalem. And, not only so, but in the out-sounding of mercy in this larger sphere, He thought to provoke Israel, that cared not for mercy, to emulation. What a

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love of mercy is His! "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness (ver. 11, 12)?" "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead (ver. 13)?" Their fall was not of God that the nation should be lost; but that, they removed for a time, salvation might be proclaimed to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. If their removal from the place of honour for a time be for the enriching of a larger circle, what blessing will pertain to that larger circle when all the fulness of Israel's blessing is set forth? God's delight in mercy led Him to take a new position with such thoughts in His mind. How everything as to the revelation of mercy and the making of it good to any and in any, in every position which the God of mercy has taken, all depends upon Himself, His absolute power and His delight in mercy! And this as surely for eternity as for time!

But what as to this new position taken by God, and what as to the position of those that gather down here under the preaching of it? are either of them *permanent?* God's mercy is permanent: that is clear. The position of God bidding His Son sit in heaven *until* He makes His foes to be His footstool, is not to those who count the long suffering of God to be salvation His permanent one; it is *until.* Until *what?* Until He make His foes to be His footstool. Until the Father bids the Son to rise up and fetch the adopted children to His house on high (John xiv.), to fetch the Church which is to be the Bride, the Lamb's wife, in heaven,—to claim the land of Israel that it may be Beulah, married to Jehovah, and that from the City Jehovah-Shammah, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord may flow out to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. And Paul puts before us the other side of this truth, viz., Gentiles grafted into the channel of testimony and fruit-bearing down here on earth *for a time* (see Rom. xii. 17—25).

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The Gentiles had been of a wild olive tree, but were made to partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree (ver. 17). What brought them there? God's delight in mercy. In mercy they might boast then, but not against the branches, when upon a root which was not theirs by nature. Fear, surely, becomes one who is brought into a place of responsibility out of which, for failure, another has been removed; and not high-mindedness. It is a place of responsibility and in time, and God is a righteous judge. If He spared not the natural branches, will He spare those who were made, because of the failure of these to be their supplanters? No: He is good, for He stands for mercy. But He does stand for mercy, and therefore He is determined and cuts off whatever receives not, abides not in, mercy. If He cut them off and graffed us in, why should He not cut us off and graff them in again if we stand not for mercy? They have the birthright in their favour, and the root is called by their name. If the Church, as the house of God down here, had received and stood, and walked and hoped in mercy, it would never be removed, shaken, cut off; but God's righteous judgment would find another way of fulfilling His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Israel. But Roman and Greek churches, and all Protestant churches too, have failed, utterly failed in responsibility as to holding and living in and hoping in mercy, and nothing but mercy. Is this *my* hard-hearted thought—or God's? God's it is most surely, who also gave it to Paul that he and all other true servants of God, might not be overwhelmed in seeing that as man had failed upon earth from Eden down to Pentecost, in every responsibility put into his own hands to keep,—so would it be again from Pentecost onward. God has no faith in man's competency, or wisdom, or energy or faithfulness. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Then shall Israel, as a whole nation, be saved: "as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness

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from Jacob" (ver. 26). For there is a covenant with them to this effect, when He shall take away their sins. Enemies they were to the gospel in its present form—and allowed to be so, that mercy's voice might sound out in the wider circuit of "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord." But the promises to the fathers remain unfulfilled as yet, and God is true and knows not the shadow of a turn. Israel was chosen to be the earth's centre of blessing, and endowed and called thereto. And though generations of them have refused to have this place upon the ground of mercy, this will not hinder the nation as a nation having it hereafter, "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (ver. 29). God is absolute, and He stands for mercy to the nation Israel. The Gentiles once did not know God so as to be able to believe in Him; when Israel disbelieved in mercy, the Gentiles obtained mercy; Israel disbelieved and rebelled against mercy to the Gentiles; God left them to their unbelief and to the judgments consequent thereon, that they might learn that they could not do without mercy (ver. 30, 31). For God has shut them up in their unbelief, left them to their own way, that so when He comes to bless them it may be clear to all that the blessing flows upon the ground, is received too upon the ground of mercy—pure, free, unmixed mercy.

The present house of God upon earth has been the birth-place of many a soul for heaven, part of the family of God the Father, part of that body of which Christ is the head: they shall all be removed to heaven. But the house on earth committed to man's building and care, man has defiled and it will come into judgment. And the eternal lover of mercy will return to Israel and mercy's streams shall flow forth thence to the uttermost parts of the earth, even to the extern nations—those beyond the four Gentile dynasties, and be among them in power too. The language of Paul, when he wrote on these things, well becomes us. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (ver. 33). And then he goes on with thoughts

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expressive of his own sense of the littleness of man; thoughts well calculated to make *us* see *our* own littleness. What searching questions these: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord?

"Or who hath been His counsellor?

"Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" Not I, surely each one must say,—

"For OF *Him*, and THROUGH *Him*, and TO *Him*, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (ver. 33—36).

Into the fourth division of the Epistle to the Romans, it is not my intention at present to enter: I merely give the opening of it as confirming what I have said about the place that mercy holds in God's dealings, as set forth *now*, and as presented in this epistle.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (chap. xii. 1). But the whole of this portion (from chap. xii. ver. 1, to the end of the epistle) is but the deduction of the fruits natural to the reception of the mercy and mercies referred to in the preceding parts of the epistle. And, surely, the close of this part ought ever to be remembered by us:

"*Now to him that is of power to stablish you,*" let us mark it well, "Now to him that is of power to *stablish you according to my gospel* and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but is manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets [or by prophetic scripture], according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations FOR THE OBEDIENCE of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (xvi. 25—27).

And can any man who has rejoiced in mercy himself and known its suitability to man's ruined and lost condition, for a moment think that the practical life of persons professing Christianity now-a-days, is the fruit of their having tasted mercy? Can he whose heart has had to challenge itself in the fear of the Lord, not know what

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the result of all the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life which now characterise Christianity (so called) must be? Or could any one that counts mercy to be a priceless treasure wish the present state of things to continue, or mercy to be limited to its present bounds and not to be, even through judgment, presented in a more boundlessly extensive way, and that too in man's day?

To return now to my thesis, "*But* God who is rich in mercy," I would call attention to the contrasts in the context which led to the introduction of the little word, "But."

In the middle of the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians (ver. 15), Paul turns to the blessings which grace had provided for the saints in Christ Jesus, and, as it were, draws aside the curtain and shows us the Son of man, the faithful servant of God, seated in heaven in all His present glory. Raised from the dead and set at God's right hand in heavenly places,—exalted above every power and name named in this age or that which is to come,—every thing put under His feet and Himself made head of a body, for which He not only uses His power over all things, but which He himself fills in every part! What glory like that, all the excellency of God's ways set forth by Him. All the beauty of God seen in Him. In contrast to this come the place and the state in which those, now the members of His all glorious body, were found, dead in trespasses and sins; their movement then, according to the routine of a place,[c] set up for sinners to be happy in without God, out of His presence, the energy then working in them, that of the prince of the power of the air, spirit that energises in the children of disobedience. Such *had been* these Ephesians to whom he wrote. Had he been better? no: lusts of the flesh, lusts of the flesh and of the mind, had characterised the Jews—children of wrath even as others (chap. ii. 1—3); what a contrast! Well might he introduce here the word "But." "But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.——"And

[c] The world: see its origin in Cain and his family. Genesis, chap. iv.

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mark well here, the height of blessedness and glory to which we were raised and in which set, — "hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised up together, and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." If any thing could add to this blessing so freely given, bestowed in so divine a way, *in* Christ Jesus,—it would be the explanation which follows of an object which was accomplished, to say the least, by God in so doing. For I like not to speak of it as His motive; that I suppose was higher still. But one object which was given was, "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus" (ver. 7).

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained (or prepared,—works worthy of our being, each one, members of that body, of which Christ is the glorified head) that we should walk in them" (ver. 10).

Thus our creature-working, to get into the place of acceptance and blessing, is excluded:—"We are *His* workmanship, *created* in Christ Jesus," that on the one hand; and on the other, the abuse of mercy and grace is guarded against, for our creation in Christ Jesus, is "unto good works," of a kind prepared by God that we should walk in them.

G. V. W.

No. III.

"MY GOSPEL."

In order to be able clearly to apprehend what the Apostle Paul calls "My Gospel," it is necessary for us to understand what preceded it. Judgment, which is so great a quality of the spiritual mind, is the power of nicely distinguishing between two points in which there is the least difference; and where there is a spiritual mind, its aim is ever to distinguish things that differ;

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N°. IV.

SHECHEM AND SYCHAR.

IT may not be without interest to compare the historical notices of Shechem with that one visit of two days spent by the Lord Jesus at Sychar, so many of the events of which Shechem was the theatre in Old Testament times appearing, when we read John iv. as foreshadows of what should take place when the Messiah Himself should visit it.

Very early in the world's history after the flood, we have mention made of the land of Canaan, destined to be the scene of the pilgrimages of the patriarchs, the victories of their descendants, the blessings of the people and glory of the kingdom under David and Solomon, the nativity of the Lord, the sphere of His labours, the place of His crucifixion; within whose confines is that mountain from which He ascended to heaven, and on which He will stand when He comes back to earth. How soon after the flood the children of Canaan settled in it is not recorded, but we do learn that about three hundred and sixty seven years after the deluge Abraham first set foot in it. He was "seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran" (Gen. xii. 4); and the *first* place in the land at which he rested, the name of which is recorded, is Shechem. There the Lord first appeared to him; and there he built an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him, the *first* witness for Jehovah which he set up in that land.

Many years elapse ere we read of Shechem again. Then it comes before us as the first named resting place of Jacob on this side Jordan, as he journeyed homewards to Bethel and Hebron. Returning from the country of his exile he pitched his tent at Shechem, and "bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money," and he erected there an altar, his *first* altar after his return, to not simply Jehovah, as Abraham

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had done, expressive of God as the self-existing one, but to God the God of Israel. The treacherous conduct of Simeon and Levi forced him to leave it; but, before he departed for Bethel, he collected the false gods of his family and their ear-rings, and buried them under the oak which was by Shechem, perhaps the very same tree under which Abraham between 180 or 190 years before had spread his tent. See Gen. xii. 6, where for the *plain* of Moreh we should read *oak* of Moreh. Sometime during his sojourn here he dug that well, mentioned in the gospel of John, and visited to this day by travellers. Owning no other spot in the country besides the cave of Machpelah, which came to him, as we should say, by the right of inheritance, though the reversion of the whole land belonged to him and to his descendants, he went down into Egypt, and there died, bequeathing as the birthright "the parcel of the field" to his son Joseph. Before his descent into Egypt his children revisited Shechem from time to time with their flocks (Gen. xxxvii. 12). But Joseph only entered on the possession of it as his place of sepulture and that, when the children of Israel fulfilled his command in laying his bones in that "parcel of a field," after they had crossed the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua (Joshua xxiv. 32). Before that took place, whilst they lay encamped in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, Moses gave commandment respecting the solemn ceremony, which all Israel under Joshua and Eleazar were to be engaged in, on the slopes of both Ebal and Gerizim, and in the valley which lies between them. Situated on a shoulder[a] of Mount Gerizim (hence probably the name of Shechem), it must have been within the limits where the Amen of all the people could be heard; and that shoulder of the mountain on which their forefathers had trodden, was now the ground which part of the six tribes appointed to stand on Gerizim must have occupied, not to pronounce the blessings as the others had the curses, but, to hear recited how, if obedient, God would bless His redeemed people (Deut. xi. xxvii., Josh. viii.).

The next notice of Shechem which calls for remark is

[a] Shechem may mean "a shoulder."—Ed.

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its appointment to be one of the six cities of refuge, to which the manslayer could repair, and, if subsequently acquitted of murder, where he could remain sheltered from the wrath of the avenger of blood, till the death of the high priest permitted his return to his own place without fear of molestation. To this same spot, rich in patriarchal associations, and where the whole congregation had once assembled, did Joshua assemble them all again to remind Israel of God's great goodness to them in all that he had done, and to exhort them to put away the strange gods from their midst, and to serve the Lord only. The people promised obedience. How long they adhered to their promise is known. "They served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that He did for Israel." Very little progress in the reading of the book of Judges brings us to a passage (ii. 12) which speaks of idolatry as rife in their midst. And Shechem, one of the cities of the Levites though it was, where the knowledge of God and obedience to Him should have been diligently fostered and enforced, chooses a god for itself, and builds a house for Baalberith, in the hold of which about a thousand inhabitants of the city subsequently lost their lives.

In connection with this sad history another chapter in the annals of the city commences. It was the *first* place where a kingdom was attempted to be set up in Israel; it was also the place where the kingdom established by David and carried on by Solomon was divided never again to be united under one sceptre, till David's *son* shall sit on his father's throne. Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal was made king by the plain (rather oak) of the pillar that was in Shechem. Rehoboam went down thither to be crowned king as successor to his father Solomon. After his flight, and the revolt of the ten tribes, it became the first capital of the newly appointed kingdom of Israel. Abraham's first halting-place in the land, the site of Abraham's and Jacob's first altars, the scene of the first attempt at a kingdom in Israel, and the first capital of the tribes who had revolted from the house of David, it subsequently was famous as the first

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place where a temple was built professedly for God besides His house at Jerusalem. The first because there was another built in Egypt by Onias in the time of Ptolemy Philometer. The temple at Gerizim was a rival to that at Jerusalem.

Turning to Sychar the notice of it is brief; all that is recorded in the Bible concerning it being found in the gospel of St. John chap. iv., yet, though brief, full of deep interest. As Shechem was the *first* place on record where the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob showed whom they worshipped, so Sychar was the *first* place where the Lord unfolded the principles of true worship, such as God can now accept (iv. 21—24). And as Shechem was the place where Jacob first erected the altar to God the God of Israel, expressive of the position in which Jehovah had consented to stand to him and his descendants, (for hitherto He had been described by Jacob as "the God of my fathers"), so here it was that the Son of man made known the relationship in which God was pleased to stand to all who should believe on His Son. That God was His Father He had declared at Jerusalem (John ii. 16); that He was God's Son John had borne witness (iii. 35); now the Lord goes further, and speaks of the Father whom men should worship. In that relationship God would now stand to them, and they should know it. In the midst of the Hivites both Abraham and Jacob erected their altars; in the midst of a people worshipping they knew not what did the Lord first unfold what true worship now is. And as Jacob buried the idols of his family under the oak of Shechem, and Joshua had recalled Israel at the same place to the worship of the Lord Jehovah once more; so the Lord Jesus carried on a similar work in separating hearts from the worship of what they knew not, to know, and surely to worship, the Father in spirit and in truth.

There too was the well; and sitting by its side Jesus proved Himself to be greater than their father Jacob. Jacob gave them the well to which they had often to go, not once for all; the Lord revealed, what had hitherto been to them as a fountain sealed, God's precious gift,—living water, which should be in each believer as the well

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of water springing up unto everlasting life. And this water once partaken of, the thirst of the drinker would be for ever satisfied. How fully He responded to the challenge of the woman! How surprised must she have been, if the truth ever dawned on her, and surely it must have done so when she knew who He was, that He had wrestled with Jacob, thus conclusively in a different manner showing His superiority, for "he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him;" and Jacob went on his way with the marks of that conflict. *We* can trace, perhaps she did afterwards, the same hand in His dealing with her. Both the one and the other had to be brought down ere they could have the blessing the Lord was willing to impart. In both cases he brought them down Himself, and then bestowed it. Jacob asked for His blessing after He had touched the hollow of his thigh; she got the blessing after He had put His finger on her conscience. He could bless, what the six tribes standing on Mount Gerizim could not do, because all who were under law, standing on the ground of creature responsibility, were under a curse; He, who was shortly to stand on another mount to bless (Matt. v.), allowed her and the Samaritans, who flocked to Him, to taste of blessings rich, free, unfading. Moses had said, and Joshua repeated "If thou shalt diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, ... the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God" (Deut. xxviii. 1, 2; Joshua viii. 34). Who of all the children of Israel had done this? Which of the Samaritans had observed this? Most certainly that woman could not claim the blessings on that ground. To her however, and to all who received Him was that living fountain imparted which would for ever quench the thirst of the soul.

With blessing to the soul was linked deliverance from judgment. The Samaritans owned Him as the Saviour of the world. This was just what they wanted—a refuge

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from the wrath of an offended God. However glad the manslayer in former days might have been to gain that city, and to know he was safe from the avenger of blood who followed him in hot pursuit, far greater was the relief of soul those enjoyed, who believed on the Lord Jesus whilst He dwelt for those two days in their midst. It was not with them deliverance from death with restriction as to their movements till the death of the high priest, but deliverance from the second death with the liberty which belongs to the children of God. The conviction grew on their minds, as they heard Him, who He was; and they own His title to the affections of their heart to be this—the *Saviour of the world.*

Another truth remains to be touched on as unfolded at Sychar in perfect keeping with the previous history of the place. Where Abimelech had endeavoured by unlawful means to set up a kingdom in Israel, and Rehoboam, by following the foolish advice of the young men, gave the ten tribes an ostensible reason for revolt, in that same place centuries afterwards the Son of David announces Himself to be the Christ, the king who was to come. And what Rehoboam could not do, gain the hearts of those outside Judah, and the rent which none of his successors had been able to that date to heal, the Lord did accomplish by drawing hearts to Himself. In Him the Samaritans and His disciples then found a common centre. Those who had often maltreated the Jews, and some of whose kindred at a later date refused to "receive Him because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 53), now submit themselves to this stranger, as He appeared at first sight, who had come from Jerusalem. Had Rehoboam hearkened to the advice of the old men, "that stood before Solomon his father," all might have been well. "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever" 1 Kings xii. 7. Observe the order here. If you serve them, they will serve you. Sagacious counsel! He rejected it. The opportunity was lost, the kingdom was divided and the heir to David's throne had to fly from Shechem to

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Jerusalem. How differently did the Lord act. Just what Rehoboam should have done, He did. Though far higher than Rehoboam, His ancestor according to the flesh, He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and in that character presented Himself to Israel and the Samaritans. In Israel He went about doing good, ministering to the need of those who came to Him. In Sychar He offers the woman the gift of God, and ministers to the souls of the people of the city. He became their servant, and they owned Him as the Saviour. He spent His life in service for sinners and even died to serve them. He also spake good words to them. Rehoboam at Shechem showed himself to be unfit to reign over Israel. The Lord at Sychar shows how competent He is to make all hearts bow to Him. He had been in Galilee, and He had visited in Jerusalem; in neither had He announced Himself as the Christ. That was reserved for Sychar. There in the first capital of the ten tribes did He first announce this. Where the link between Judah and Israel had been broken, does He forge a new one to unite Samaritans and Jews, and gathers up as it were, by a secret which He alone possessed, the two ends of the thread, which had been severed after the death of Solomon.

What interesting associations are connected with that spot! Various reasons may have led Abraham and Jacob to select it as the site of their first altars in the land. The lie of the ground many might affirm as the reason for its selection by God for the solemn ceremony under Joshua. Reasons of state craft may have induced Rehoboam to go thither to be made king. But with the narrative of Sychar before us such reasons will surely be deemed insufficient. Why was it that in the days of the patriarchs, at the first entrance of the land, in the time of the judges, and under the kings this place should be the scene of events worthy of note, and of sufficient importance never to be forgotten? Was there not a cause for this, depending not on the judgment of Abraham, the sagacity of Jacob, the conformation of the valley, or political designs? God had an end in view, and we see it since the Lord visited Sychar, because there Jehovah should

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be found to show by His intercourse with the woman at the well, and His subsequent sojourn in the city, that what had taken place there before, however to be explained at the time of its occurrence, was a kind of earnest of what should be, when Messiah should appear to "tell them all things."

C. E. S.

No. V.

THE HOPE OF ABRAHAM; HEAVEN OR CANAAN?

FAITH, that divinely given principle by which the testimony of God is livingly received into the soul, is one and the same principle in every individual believer, in every age; and *life*, through faith, is one and the same divine life, no matter in whom, or in what dispensation it is found. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abram, Moses, Paul, and ourselves, are on common ground as to this; but the *unity of faith*, and the *unity of life*, do not, by any means, involve *identity in the blessings* presented to faith, nor, what is the same thing, *identity* in the *hopes* unto which believers of different dispensations have been quickened. The blessing presented to the faith of Noah, for example, was not the same as that presented to the faith of Abram. Noah's blessing was in connection with the whole earth, as the sphere, and the whole family of man as the subject of his rule. Universal government was committed to him, and responsibilities put upon him in connection therewith, for the suppression of violence, and for the maintenance of the principles on which the due relation of man (on earth) to God depended.

The failure of mankind under the Noahic calling, the sad progress of which failure resulted in universal idolatry, led to the calling out of Abram whose promised blessing was connected with a *given land*, and with his own seed in particular as part only of the human family.

This earth was from the beginning, so far as reve-

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lation teaches, the destined sphere of man's existence and blessing. Neither the sin of our first parents, nor of man in any subsequent age, has led God to abandon His purpose as to this, though He has from time to time in the riches of His grace materially changed His ways, and brought to light more and more of the wisdom and perfection of His goodness. The calling of Abram was accordingly no abandonment of the larger purpose of God as set forth in the calling of Noah; on the contrary, it was a "witty invention" of God, to secure to Himself a channel through which He would fulfil all His purposes of goodness and of glory in connection with man on the earth *in spite of man's sin.*

The promise made to Abram was that he should possess the land of Canaan (Gen. xiii. 15, 17); "the land which thou seest *to thee* will I give it, and to thy seed for ever . . . . . Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto *thee.*" Also chap. xv. 7, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of the land of Ur of the Chaldees, *to give thee this land* to inherit it;" and again, xvii. 7, 8, "And I will establish my covenant between *me* and *thee* and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto *thee* and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto *thee* and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

Nothing I apprehend could be plainer than the difference thus pointed out between the specific objects presented to the faith of these patriarchs, and nothing surely could be more plainly defined than the earthly character and sphere of their respective callings.

The mission of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ to this earth, viewed in connection with the position and responsibilities of Israel, was for the ostensible purpose of fulfilling to them the promises made to the fathers. The history of His life and ministry furnished in the gospels is not the history of the abrupt and formal setting aside of Judaism, and the equally abrupt and formal introduction of what we understand by the Christian dispen-

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sation, but the history of the last trial of Israel, whether having failed from age to age and forfeited their blessing, they would then judge themselves by the light of Him who was the light, and accept their blessing at His gracious hands. They hated and crucified their Deliverer and King; and after He had been raised from the dead, and received back into the heavens, taking manhood in His own blessed person thither, they rejected the offer of His return made by the Holy Ghost through Peter (Acts iii. 19—21), and finally, by the stoning of Stephen, they sealed their own doom for a season.

At this juncture a mighty change in the relation of Christ and of His people to this present world took place. It became no longer an earthly people awaiting the return of the Lord to establish the kingdom and the glory here; this He will do when the proper time arrives in spite of everything; but a people called out from the world, from its hopes and interests alike, as well as from its judgment, to be associated with Christ in heaven, not to be reigned over by Him as Israel will be, but to reign with Him—the Church, which is His body—the bride, the Lamb's wife. This is our present calling, and of this the Old Testament Scriptures taught nothing. It is the mystery of Eph. iii. 3 that was made known to Paul, not by the Scriptures, but by special revelation. It had, as the Apostle says, "been hid in God from the beginning of the world . . . . to the intent that *now* [in this time of the Lord's rejection and the consequent postponement of Israel's blessing] unto principalities and powers in the heavenly places, might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God." This is the blessing presented to faith *now*, as distinct from that which pertained to any previous age.

The atonement wrought by the death of Christ on Calvary is the one common basis of ALL blessing to man, whether in heaven or on earth; but the blessing of man on earth under the reign of Christ, and the blessing of the Church in association with Himself *in heaven*, are essentially different things, and cannot be confounded without serious damage to the present testimony; both must have their fulfilment. To have a portion in the

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heavens, where all will admit he now is awaiting the resurrection, will be to Abraham far better than the fulfilment of the promises respecting Canaan, *but it will not be in itself* THEIR FULFILMENT, nor is it what was revealed and promised to him, and if through the want of a better understanding of the testimonies of God we attribute to Abram as the object of his faith, a calling and a hope identical with that of the Church of God in the present dispensation, we falsify the Scriptures, and the effect must be to lower the tone of our own walk. The relationship of God with Abram was marked by special *outward providences*, and the possession of worldly riches, posterity, etc., were marks of the favour of God, but it is not so now, and if we overlook or forget this difference, we shall be quickly betrayed into the pursuit of earthly things, and shall measure God's love to us by the providential bounties of His hand instead of by the gift of His Son, and the revelation He has given to us in His word of the counsels and interests of His heart concerning us. It has an attractive appearance of humility to refuse to accept a higher order of blessing than the worthies of old were called to know as theirs ; but what we have to do with is the testimonies of God. It is impossible to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, unless we know of a surety what that vocation is, and if the enemy of God and of His Christ can betray us by a " voluntary humility " from the sense of our high and holy calling to a common level in this respect with the calling of any in by-gone dispensations, the power of a true and effective testimony is gone. Let us see to this with all fear in the presence of God. Before entering briefly into the consideration of Heb. xi. 8, which is the stronghold of those who assume Abram to have been actuated by a spiritual and not a literal understanding of the promises, I would remark upon two passages in particular which are also used as if they taught that these the blessing of believers of every age was one and the same thing, and that all were merged into *one* great family. First, in Gal. iii., Abram is called the father of the faithful, and it is said that we that are of faith are *blessed* with faithful Abram.

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"Blessed *with*" does not here signify identity of blessing, but identity of the principle, *i.e.*, *faith*, upon which we are blessed in opposition to works. The other passage is Ephes. iii. where the expression *every* family is rendered the *whole* family, as if, as we have just said, all distinctions between the heavenly and the earthly people of God were merged. That Abram will have a place and a portion in the heavens in the day of glory, cannot, I think, be denied; several scriptures seem to indicate this; but that that place and portion will be *in the church* of God as now called out, and that this was the object presented to his faith when upon earth, and what he looked for as that which was signified by the promises made to him concerning Canaan are what the Scriptures nowhere teach, as we have already intimated. In Matthew viii. 10—12, the Lord said, in connection with the faith of the Gentile centurion, which contrasted so strikingly and so sadly with the unbelief of the Jews, "Verily I say unto you I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel; and I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west [i. e., *Gentiles*] and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the *kingdom of heaven*, but the children of the kingdom [i. e., Jews] shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This passage directly connects Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with the kingdom of heaven, which is certainly not heaven, much less is it "the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephes. i. 23).

We will now turn to Heb. xi. 8—16, etc.

Ver. 8. "By faith, Abram, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after *receive for an inheritance*, obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

None have a doubt I suppose but that the place Abraham was called to go out into, and which he should after receive for an inheritance, is the land of Canaan.

Ver. 9, 10. "By faith he sojourned in the *land of promise* as in a *strange* country, *dwelling* in TABERNACLES with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath founda-

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tions, whose builder and maker is God." That which is to be particularly noticed here, is, that Abraham's faith did not suffer him to *go before God*, in taking possession of any part of the land of promise. In patience he possessed his soul; and until God should be pleased to *give* as well as to promise him an inheritance therein, he was content to be a stranger though in it. He did not build himself a city, nor anything of the nature of a settled habitation; but dwelt in *tabernacles*. Nor was this a passing effort of faith, much less was it a mere excitement of the energy of the flesh which passed away with the novelty of his position: it was an *enduring* confidence in the word of Him that had promised; and therefore it is said, not only that he dwelt in tabernacles, but that he did so with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promises. A hundred years did he thus wait upon God, WAITING[a] indeed for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. "A city which hath foundations" is here in contrast with tabernacles which have none, being movable; and its builder and maker being God, is in contrast with anything he might have built for himself. There is not a syllable in these verses to make it necessary to assume that the city the patriarch waited for was to be in heaven, or anywhere in fact but in Canaan. It was moreover to be Abraham's habitation, whereas the Holy City, the new Jerusalem to which this passage is said to refer, is not *the habitation of the risen saints*, but the risen saints themselves the habitation of God.

Verses 11 and 12 may be looked upon in connection with the present subject as parenthetical.

Verse 13. "These all *died* in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." It seems to me that to attribute to these worthies a hope IN *heaven* as distinct from a heavenly order and condition of earthly things in Canaan with God for their God, nulli-

[a] In the new translation this expression is rendered *waited for*, which certainly is in stricter keeping with the view here presented, than looked for.

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fies entirely the special and peculiar excellence of their faith, as set forth in these verses, and robs the passage of its proper force and beauty as an illustration and example to us.

Had heaven been the object of their hopes, there would have been nothing so particularly remarkable in their DYING in *faith;* death would have been to them, in that case, a step in the direction of their hopes, as it is with us; it would have brought them so much nearer the consummation of their desires: but if, instead of this, death were according to the nature of things the cutting of them off from the very place which God had promised to give them for an inheritance; if it were the natural severance of them from the place of the fulfilment of the promises, it was marvellous faith that could enable them thus to *die out of the scene* and yet to believe that God would give it to them. This is, I take it, what gives its especial value to their faith; it was faith in the living God that raiseth the dead. The expression "*on the earth,*" at the close of this verse, very naturally suggests the idea of a contrast between earth and heaven; it is, however, the same word in the original as that rendered in verse 9, "*the land* of promise." It was in "the land" that they confessed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims.

Verses 14, 15. "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a *country.* And truly if they had been mindful of *that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned:* but now they desire a *better,* that is a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city."

These verses show conclusively that in God's view the question that might possibly have exercised the minds of these worthies (Abram, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah), would not have been between the relative attractiveness of *heaven* and *earth,* but of CANAAN and MESOPOTAMIA. Had heaven been the place of their hopes as contrasted with the earth, the land from whence they came out would have had no more attractions for them than Canaan, and the Holy Ghost's argument would have been of little

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force. The better country which they desired was not heaven as better than earth, but *Canaan* as better than *Mesopotamia*. A *heavenly* country indeed, that chosen land will be, that is, ordered and arranged in a heavenly and divine way, and in it there shall be nothing contrary to God; the heavens ruling and the days of heaven realised upon earth. One thing is certain, viz., that a heavenly country is not heaven.

Furthermore, the declaration that God was not ashamed to be called their God, is, I take it, another proof of the earthly character of the hope that actuated these worthies: for on reference to Gen. xvii. 8, it will be seen that it was in direct connection with the promise to give Abram and his seed this very land, Canaan, wherein he was then a stranger, that God said He would be their God. By faith they looked forward to the possession of that land, and God owned their faith by calling Himself their God. The words of Gen. xvii. 8, are, "And I will give unto *thee*, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

If anything further be needed to satisfy any one of the essential difference between the blessing promised to the saints in the past dispensations from Abram downwards, and the proper hope and calling of the Church in this, it is found, I think, in the last verse of the chapter before us (Heb. xi.), where it is declared that they have not yet received the fulfilment of their hopes, because it is the good pleasure of God to have provided some BETTER THING for US; and that they should not enter upon the fulfilment of theirs until we, believers in this dispensation, shall enter upon the consummation of OURS. "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some *better* thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Compare Rom. viii. 19—23, where the whole creation is said to groan, *waiting* for the same thing, viz., *our* perfection in redeemed risen bodies, before it can be delivered into the glorious liberty that awaits it. The fulfilment of earthly blessing in connection with even church blessing is seen in the fact that the

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twelve apostles are to possess earthly glory as well as heavenly, for they are to sit upon *twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

G. O.

No. VI.

THOUGHTS ON FAITH.

"It is the gift of God."—Eph. ii. 8.
"Without faith it is impossible to please Him."—Heb. xi. 6.

It is generally admitted that at the present time, reasoning and credulity are making rapid strides, and are dividing between them the great masses in Christendom.

It is not then out of season, to consider what is the nature of that faith which God gives, by which the sinner is justified, and without which it is impossible for the saint to please Him.

It is a solemn fact, and the world cannot get rid of it, and of the consequent responsibility, that the word of God has been given, and that it is before the eyes, and even in the hands of men. In Christendom God's word is acknowledged, more or less, as the basis of every form of religious belief; but as man by nature and in the flesh cannot be subject to God, and to His word, he does with it (as with everything else with which God has entrusted him) that which seemeth good in his own eyes, and wrests the expressions and words of Scripture to his own meaning. Thus, for instance, such words as "Faith," "Religion," "Church," "Regeneration," "Eternal Life or Death," etc., are taken up and interpreted according to the peculiar views of schools or of individuals, and are made to mean just what each one pleases.

It is written that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the *Spirit* of God," but experience shows us that the natural man is exceedingly ready to take up the *letter* of God's word, and this is very markedly the case in our time.

Men will not let God and His revelation alone. Reli-

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gion is the order of the day. There is a sort of itching after religiousness. Men do not and dare not believe nothing. They must have what they call "a faith" of some sort. Natural conscience appears to be aroused, and men of every degree, and character of mind, the most worldly, and the most intellectual, make time and opportunity for religious profession, and many even seek to flavour their very worldliness by their religiousness.

And Satan is busy in the midst of this scene presenting this and that error to men's minds for them to rest on. Every shade of superstition and infidelity may be traced within a very limited sphere in Christendom, and the assent given to each of these is called by men *their* "faith." Thus that which man calls faith, is his assent to, and belief in such doctrine, creed, or system as he has received either on the evidence of his own reason or senses, or on such external authority as he may please to submit his mind to:—and under these two heads may be ranged every form of rationalism wherein man by searching thinks to find out God; and of superstition, in which he rests his soul for its eternal salvation on the traditions and doctrines of men.

Now in such a world, such a scene of unbounded confusion, how important for the soul to examine itself, whether it be in *the* faith, and prove the reality and virtue of that which it possesses; and it need not go astray, for the faith which is of God has its own characteristics, in which it differs from all that reason, sense, or flesh in its best and fairest forms can show.

Divine faith is, in a special sense, "the gift of God." It is imparted by Him, the work of His own Spirit. It is something in addition to nature, and it is not one of what men call "nature's gifts." Its possession is evidenced in crediting God rather than man. The natural mind credits natural facts, but by divine faith the mind of man credits God. Whenever the word of man, or the judgment of sight and sense come into collision with the word and revelation of God, divine faith sides with God, and says, "Let GOD be true" (Rom. iii. 4).

"All men have not faith." Faith is not the mere

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natural belief of the mind of man, though faith acts through the mind. It is not the same thing to believe man or the evidence of my senses, as to believe God.

It is sometimes said by teachers of the gospel and others that God and His word are to be believed just as men believe one another, or the facts of nature and of history. But this is not so. The *action* of the natural mind is, no doubt, the same; but the *power* is totally different: in one case it is a natural, in the other it is a spiritual power, and this is proved not only by the word of God (1 Cor. ii. 14), but in the experience of all true believers. For instance, they know that no mere effort of their minds could have enabled them to receive the simple statements of the gospel as to the value of the work of Christ, until "faith came." Though the *facts* were not disputed; the *value* of His atoning work, though equally set forth in the Scriptures, was not apprehended, and never can be except "by faith."

But the question arises, how is the action of the natural mind to be distinguished from divine faith, as up to a certain point both acknowledge and agree to the same truths? This may be explained if it be remembered that the *letter* of the Scriptures of God being historically true, and better attested than any other facts, the natural mind receives and assents to that which is thus presented to it on unquestionable evidence, altogether apart from divine faith.

Men do not and cannot deny the leading facts and doctrines of Scripture, but giving to them a mental assent, form upon them systems of religious belief.

Faith, however, acts differently, and on another principle. It is indeed the "gift of God." It is a power of which nature knows nothing. When "faith is come" a new and living link is formed between the soul and God, by which God is apprehended as the "living God," and as the One from whom everything is to be expected (Heb. xi. 6; Ps. lxii.).

God becomes the object of the soul by faith, and His word has the first and highest authority over it. Faith neither staggers at the word of God, nor seeks to qualify it. We read "Abraham believed *God*," and this is the

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action of faith. It is not only that he believed God's word, but firstly, he believed God *Himself*, and thus His word of course.

I *may* believe the word of one, because the word itself is worthy of credit, and either meets my need, or commends itself to my mind as true, and this without a due apprehension of, or respect for, the one who speaks. It is the apprehension of the *person*, however, which is the essential point, and then His word derives its authority, not merely from *my* sense of its truth, or its suitability to my own or others' needs, but from *Himself*, and this is especially the character of Divine faith. It apprehends and believes *God*.

Faith in every age and dispensation has thus acted. God being its object, His word or revelation has always by it been received. What He has spoken, faith has bowed to and believed, and the justification which is by faith has followed. God's mind too has been apprehended and His will done by those to whom this gift has been vouchsafed, in a way which nothing but faith could accomplish. The eleventh of Hebrews tells us somewhat of this in its wonderful summary of the saints of old.

That men *naturally* know and believe both in God and His revelation up to a certain point is unquestionable, and even "the devils believe and tremble." That it was so from the beginning we learn from God's own Word, as also that ignorance of God has followed because men "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. i.).

In Israel, as a people, we know that God and His Word were acknowledged and believed apart from divine faith. Their character, indeed, is recorded as that of "children in whom is no faith" (Deut. xxxii. 20), and a people who sought *not* righteousness by faith (Rom. ix. 32). God revealed Himself to them in such a way as to leave no possibility of question as to His being or His will, but apart from faith He was neither known, trusted, or enjoyed, and at last, as we know, He was rejected by them. But all through God was owned and believed in by a remnant on the ground of faith. Before law,

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and under law, we find the record of their faith, and if we trace their histories shall see that it is evidenced by actions and works very contrary in their character to what nature or sense would dictate. Again, in this dispensation, men have mentally assented to the unquestionable facts connected with the manifestation of God in the flesh. "The thing was not done in a corner." Christ most surely came, lived in the flesh, died and rose again, and men know it, cannot deny it. They own it, presented to them as it is on evidence which cannot be disputed, and then, by their natural assent to the leading facts and doctrines of Christianity, they form the outward mass of profession, called "Christendom."

Here again, however, nature is at fault, and while adopting the letter, fails to apprehend the very life and essence of Christianity. It is by faith alone that the Christ of God is known and apprehended, and His finished work for sinners valued in the soul. By natural assent to facts and doctrines Christendom[a] is formed as we have said, but by *divine faith* in God and in His revelation in Christ, the sinner is justified, peace is obtained, the heart of man is satisfied, and the believer is separated for ever from the world and from the power of him who rules it. Nature can apprehend facts and doctrines and form upon them a variety of religious systems and beliefs according to the character of the mind that deals with them. It is reserved for faith "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," to enter into and appropriate the mind and purpose of God in Christ, and find its *rest* in Him.

Faith, then, is not "religion" so called. It is a

[a] We do not here enter into that which is the peculiar characteristic of apostate Christianity, namely, the substitution of ordinances for the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul and of Christ in faith, and the setting aside thereby of divine faith. Christendom as we know is outwardly formed by baptism apart from the regeneration of the Spirit,—here, however, we allude only to the mental assent to doctrines as embodied in creeds and catechisms, which is required after baptism, and the reception of which is not necessarily or ordinarily the result of a divine faith.

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divine gift, a new and living power to lay hold on God, —His Word, His mind, His purpose, and His will. "Pure religion and undefiled" must follow faith, for "faith without works is dead, being alone," but, according to God, religion is not a system of belief or practice by which the soul is saved, but the fruits of His own grace in a soul saved and satisfied by the knowledge of His love through faith — "faith which worketh by love."

There is one point in connection with the reception of God's word which is important in our day. Faith needs no testimony from *man* as to the truth of God and of His word. There are those who will assert that the very existence of the Word, as well as the evidence of its divinity, depends on human instrumentality, as for instance on what they call "the Church," on whose authority they say it has been defined, and is accepted as of God. Now, this is true no doubt as to man, apart from faith. Man requires testimony to that which he is asked to believe, and will take it from his fellow man, even in the things of God. But divine faith needs no such evidence. It believes *God*, and bows to His word, because it is *His* word. The soul which possesses faith believes the message of God's grace and finds its peace and joy, not because *man* says it is God's message, but because it *is God's* message to it. "My sheep," says the Lord Jesus, "know my voice." "He that knoweth God heareth us," says John. This does not touch the fact that God, as a rule, uses man in testimony for Himself, as in the preaching of the Gospel, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," but the word of God it is that faith receives and not man's testimony of it (1 Thess. ii. 13).

Now, we have before alluded to the fact that it is by faith that God justifies the sinner (not holding the doctrine of "justification by faith," but having the thing itself), and every true believer in the Lord Jesus is thus justified. What is needed, however, in our souls is continuance in the exercise of the faith by which, as sinners, we first found peace with God. It is here that so many of God's children fail. Having been justified

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by faith they cease to exercise the power on which their every blessing hangs, and yet of them it is said as looked at in grace that they "walk by faith and not by sight."

The failure of God's people now-a-days in this respect may be more clearly seen if we compare the present with the past dispensation.

Under the law faith was not called for, but obedience. Man was under probation in the nation of Israel. The question was, could man *obey* and *live?* Israel's failure, rejection, and judgment, is the answer. Man as man could not obey or keep the holy law of a holy God, and even under law, faith alone could apprehend its claims, or the inability of the flesh to meet them, as we read, "the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. ii. 4). As we have said before, faith in every age apprehended God, and before or under law, in individuals it owned man's sin and failure, and "trusted in God," not on the ground of obedience, but of faith. Such for instance as Abel, Job, Moses, Jeremiah, Daniel, etc. Before Christ the character of God's dispensational dealings was however distinctly on the ground of a carnal obedience and faith so entirely exceptional that the very word occurs but twice in the Old Testament, yet on the other hand obedience was so unattainable by man in the flesh that Israel's very failure is attributed to their seeking righteousness on the ground of law, and not of faith. (Rom. ix. 31, 32.)

But now all is changed. Man is no longer under trial; he has been proved, and proved to be unequal to the claims and requirements of God. Of Israel, with the light of the law of God in their midst, it is written "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Christ, *the* light has come, and "his own received him not"; and, as to the world, "he was in the world, and the world knew him not" (John i. 10, 11). The mission of the Son of God manifested in the fullest manner the character of man, and man's rejection of Him brought to a close the period of his probation.

With the "judgment of this world," however, and its conviction of sin by the testimony of the Holy

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Ghost, to the death and resurrection of Christ, another state of things has been introduced. Whereas God *did* call for obedience, He *now* calls for faith. Man having been proved to be incapable of obedience, he is now in the Gospel called upon for faith—*i.e.* belief in God, and in God's ability (upon the ground of a perfect atonement for sin, made upon that cross, at which the sin of man and grace of God met, and the lesser was swallowed up in the greater) to be "just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).[b] Men, sinners, are besought to be reconciled to God, not on the ground of any work, religious system, or creed, of their own, but on the ground of God's own actings towards them in having sent his Son into the world to save the world;—on the ground that Christ *has been* "made sin," that sin *has been* laid on Him, that He *has* "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." In all this God will have it to be seen that He is the actor, and He alone. Man having been proved a sinner every mouth is stopped, and all the world has become guilty *before God*. *Faith* then is that by which alone man can now respond to the grace of God, or to the call of God upon him. It is a dispensation of faith; not as it once was when faith here and there in individuals trusted a God who yet dwelt in "thick darkness," but still trusted Him, though only able perhaps to say "though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"; but a dispensation in which faith is called for towards a God who has come out to sinners in all the fulness of His grace; in which "the darkness has passed and the true light now shineth."

If one may say it, What could God do more than He has done, and declares in His gospel, to display the riches of His grace and of His glory, and to speak to the necessities of men. He has indeed spoken by His Son —the Word, the incarnate Word, "the daysman," who

[b] Not but that faith, being as it is the hearkening to,—the submission of the soul to God, is obedience, and of the most absolute kind. But it is not the obedience of, nor of the will of, the flesh. Faith bows, submits, believes, obeys in that which is to nature either a stumbling-block or folly, or is altogether out of nature's grasp.

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can lay His hand upon God and man, and bring them both together.

This then is Christianity according to God. How different from that which the world presents to us. The world has indeed adopted Christianity, but has made of it a religion for the flesh. That which God jealously guarded, leaving really no place for flesh to act in, man has nevertheless wrested from the Spirit, and calling Christ the "Divine Founder of our religion," has sought to follow His teaching and instructions apart from faith. And God's own people, "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," are carried with the stream.

Now we before have said that God, looking at His people in grace, can say of them that they "walk by faith not by sight"; and this is indeed what they are called to. That faith by which they once looked to Christ as their Saviour, and learned that God had justified them, should never cease its operation in their souls. If God has been trusted for salvation, is He not worthy to be trusted for the smallest matter. If, however, we are honest we must admit that this is not so with us, and that so far from the walk of faith characterising the people of God, their walk is often as much like men as the rest of the world. The saints of God do not stand out now as of old, as those of whom it was said the "world was not worthy," but mingled in the mass of profession they cannot be distinguished (except in rare instances) from that world which with all its outward form of godliness yet "lieth in wickedness."

Faith is the last thing which Christians often think of exercising, except in the one act by which they seek to get peace to their souls, and to escape from hell; and thus blessing to the soul and power against sin and the world are forfeited, and the name of Christ is dishonoured. The portion of the saint of God now is only to be known and enjoyed by faith. Faith is God's gift to him for the present season, for the "little while," during which he is neither *of* the world, nor *in* the glory. God has given him nothing here below to rest in or to wait for. His every blessing, joy, and hope are linked with One who was rejected in the world and is now at the right

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hand of God, *because* rejected here. The assertion of a place or authority in the world, either by the saint or the Church, is therefore completely contrary to the mind of God as revealed in His word. Christ is the measure and pattern of His people, what His portion was here, theirs is here; what He is above they are even now in spirit, and are destined to be in body also. When He comes to the world again to judge, and to reign, they will be with Him sharers of His throne.

May the Lord awaken our hearts more to the exercise of faith, and having the "mind of Christ," to know more of practical fellowship with Him — to be able in our measure to say as one of old, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). God has indeed given to us His Son wholly, and without reserve, not to be looked at *once* for life, and that attained, the eyes then turned to the world for present enjoyment. No, it is to be Christ all the way along, the heavenly manna: the "bread of God," as He said, "he that eateth me shall live by me." God has redeemed His people from an evil world to give them *to* another, and to give to them another object for their hearts, even the Son of His love; and true faith finds in the Son of God a better and a dearer object than all that this poor world can offer. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John v. 5). Who indeed? And what can give the victory over a world which presents such attractions to the heart of man, but faith which makes so present and so real the love stronger than death, and the abundance and power of that life out of death, which is in Jesus, the crucified and risen, and in Him alone.

Nothing can take the place of faith, knowledge in the things of God will not alone carry us along. Many of God's children now-a-days start on their course with knowledge, but whatever nature may say, in the things of God knowledge is not power apart from the exercise of faith. They thus fail to follow in the thoughts and ways of God, and make shipwreck of their testimony. Solemn is the word to such, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

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"There *is* a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen." Nature's highest flight, and keenest vision, discerns not the way of faith. God has a path for every one of His people, and faith rests in the certainty that that which *He* has laid out must be the surest and most blessed way to walk in. The end of it is the same for all; His presence for evermore,—and faith waits on Him to make plain every step, and even in the darkest passages can say "when my spirit was overwhelmed within me, *then* THOU knewest my path." B.

N$^{o.}$ VII.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

I.

SOMETIMES I look at the Bible in one way and sometimes in another. Looking at it, as it were from outside, I would ask your attention to the remarkable division of time which it gives.

1. The first period is of man, a living soul, in Eden. Whether he dwelt there a whole week, so as to see a sabbath there, or only a morning or so, we are not told. He sinned and soon found himself on the outside of Eden.

2. Ere he was turned out, however, the Lord God spoke to the serpent about "*One that was to come*," the seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head. "*One that is to come*" was God's mark for a period of 4,000 years, though He might vary the descriptions of Him to the end of that period.

3. He came—who was born of the woman and she a virgin. His life here below was spent, thirty years in retirement, and three and-a-half years in service. This period—*the hinge* of all that went before on the one side and of all that follows after on the other, lasted but thirty-three and-a-half years and closed with his death on the cross; which on Satan's, the world's, and man's side was his rejection; on God's side was the corn of

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wheat falling into the ground and dying that it might not abide alone.

4. With Himself in heaven and *about to come back* commenced the present period which has lasted now 1834 years.

5. Prophecy tells us that He in heaven will reign over the earth 1,000 years, and that

6. There shall be new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. These are God's marks as to the past, the present, and the future.

II.

Rev. xxii. 6—21, presents us with lessons to three classes of persons.

First. Ver. 6—9 is a word to servants of God: *a*, their attention challenged; and *b*, the importance of one duty pressed—

a, "Behold I come quickly;"

b, "blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

Secondly. Ver. 10—15 is a word about the mixture of good and bad, as is now seen all round about us. *a*, Attention is called to the evil; and *b*, what should guide people to get out of it is presented.

a, the unjust and the filthy; the righteous and the holy, upon earth mixed up;—but each man having *his own* character:

b, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me;" man to be dealt with as he has lived here.

Then ver. 16 Jesus is introduced—the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star—two personal glories in which He announced Himself to the churches.

Thirdly. Ver. 17—21. *a*, The Spirit and the Bride invite Him to come; and any one that hears, to join in the invitation; and any one that thirsts, or wills, to come to Him,—to come and take the water of life freely.

b, To this *He* replies—guarding the book—but replying to the invitation; "Surely I come quickly." To which John and the believer answer:

c, "Amen. Surely come Thou, Lord Jesus."

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III.—The World.—What is it?

"I AM as to religion as other people down here," is a common but very alarming statement.

For what is the "*down here*"—this world?

First. This world got its present character in the family of Cain the murderer. He would come to God in his own way and not through blood. Was angry with God; slew Abel; was driven out of God's presence upon earth, and set up a system for himself outside of God's presence; and the system was, after his own name, one of present *possession*. The first founder of a city, polygamy, tents, harp, organ, works in brass and iron, etc., were found in his family,—everything to make man happy *out of God's presence*.

Secondly. God tried what the world was. He had a kingdom and a temple down here in Israel. But they refused His Son the throne; and the temple bought His blood for thirty pieces of silver. God tried, too, another part of the world, viz.

Thirdly. The Gentiles, — as the great statue of Daniel shows us. When Israel rebelled against God, the sword of power was taken out of their hands and put into the hands of

Nebuchadnezzar,	King of Babylon;	then of
Darius,	the Median;	then of
Alexander,	the Greek;	and lastly of
Cæsar,	the Roman;	under whose

reign, and with consent of whose government, Jesus was put to death, *and we live*.

God's thought about this part of the world is plain. Christ the stone will come and destroy the whole image and it will become as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor.

The great image is now existing, and England is thought to be one of the toes.

Fourthly. See what Paul, the apostle of the uncircumcision, the one who had to preach where the image stood, says of this world. All that he would glory in of it were the crossed bits of wood on which Jesus Christ was put to death!

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Such was this world's conduct; an act which crucified the world to him and him to the world (Gal. vi. 14).

Fifthly. Every thing down here is reserved to be burnt with fire,[c] to make way for new heavens and a new earth.

Sixthly. Read now John xvii. Jesus, just before He went, let out (His disciples being present as He spake to His Father) how He considered Himself and the Father in heaven and His disciples down here to be in *direct contrast* and in the most positive separation in nature, motives, objects, ways with this world. That is what the chapter teaches.

And what if the first and then the second great acts on His return should show that the very thoughts which He had when He went, are the very thoughts which He will have when He comes back; as 1 Thes. iv. (the catching up of His own), and 2 Thes. ii. (the destruction of the wicked one) prove! Such is this world!

IV.

The Son of man did everything (not only which man ought to have done, but) which God under the circumstances felt that He ought to do.

'Tis a new revelation of God altogether; above creation, providence, or government,—"God manifest in flesh," with all its attendant consequences, and He, now gone on high, in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

V.

Job xxviii. 20. "Whence cometh wisdom? And where is the place of understanding?"

Ver. 22, 23. "Destruction and death say, We have

[c] One word as to ritualism—and the beggarly poverty of all outside worship. Compare St. Peter's at Rome, St. Paul's, London, Notre Dame, Paris, etc., with the Temple of Solomon; how pitiful they appear! But God made Solomon's temple for the earth, glorious; and He gave to us another thing at Pentecost—worship in spirit and in truth, Christ being gone up to heaven and the Holy Ghost sent down.

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heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof."

Ver 28. "And unto man he saith, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom: and to depart from evil is understanding."

The life and the fate of Judas is an awful illustration of these verses, as the life and fate of the thief repentant upon his death-cross, is a blessed one too. The contrast of the two is also most instructive.

First,—See this in summary estimates of each of the two, made by another and for another purpose, and so, surely, not dressed by myself to serve my purposes.

1. "Jesus pointed out Judas by the sop, which would have checked any other, but which to him was only the seal of his ruin. It is indeed thus, in degree, with every favour of God that falls upon a heart that rejects it. After the sop Satan enters into Judas. Wicked already through covetousness, and yielding habitually to ordinary temptations; although he was with Jesus, hardening his heart against the effect of that grace which was ever before his eyes and at his side, and which, in a certain way, was exercised towards him; he had yielded to the suggestion of the enemy, and made himself the tool of the high priest to betray the Lord. He knew what they desired, and goes and offers himself. And when by his long familiarity with the grace and presence of Jesus while addicting himself to sin, that grace and the thought of the person of Christ had entirely lost their influence, he was in a state to feel nothing at betraying Him. The knowledge he had of the Lord's power helped him to give himself up to the evil, and strengthened the temptation of Satan, for evidently he made sure that Jesus would always succeed in delivering Himself from his enemies; and, as far as power was concerned, Judas was right in thinking that the Lord could have done so. But what knew he of the thoughts of God? All was darkness, morally, in his soul. And now, after this last testimony, which was a token of grace and a witness to the true state of his heart that was insensible to it, (as expressed in the Psalm here fulfilled,) Satan enters into him, takes possession of him so as to harden him

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against all that might have made him feel, even as a man, the horrid nature of what he was doing, and thus enfeeble him in accomplishing the evil; so that neither his conscience nor his heart should be awakened in committing it. Dreadful condition! Satan possesses him, until forced to leave him to the judgment from which he cannot shelter him, and which will be his own at the time appointed of God. Judgment that manifests itself to the conscience of Judas when the evil was done, when too late; and the sense of which is shown by a despair that his links with Satan did but augment; but which is forced to bear testimony to Jesus before those who had profited by his sin and who mocked at his distress.

For despair speaks the truth, the veil is torn away, there is no longer self-deception, the conscience is laid bare before God, but it is before His judgment. Satan does not deceive there—and not the grace but the perfection of Christ is known. Judas bore witness to the innocence of Jesus, as did the thief on the cross. It is thus that death and destruction heard the fame of His wisdom: only God knows it (Job xxviii. 22, 23).

Jesus knew his condition. It was but the accomplishing that which He was going to do, by means of one, for whom there was no longer any hope. 'That which thou doest,' said Jesus, 'do quickly.' But what words, when we hear them from the lips of Him who was love itself!"

2. "It was the king of the Jews who hung there. Abased, indeed,—for a thief, being by His side, could rail on Him, but in the place to which love had brought Him, for the everlasting and present salvation of souls. This was manifested at the very moment. The insults that reproached Him for not saving *Himself* from the cross, had His answer in the fate of the converted thief, who rejoined Him the same day in Paradise.

This history is a striking demonstration of the change to which His Gospel leads us. The King of the Jews, by their own confession, is not delivered—He is crucified. What an end to the hopes of this people! but at the same time, a gross sinner, converted by grace on the very

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gibbet, goes straight to Paradise. A soul is eternally saved. It is not the kingdom, but a soul—out of the body—in happiness with Christ.

I would say a few words on the condition of this soul, and on the reply of Christ. We see every mark of conversion, and of the most remarkable faith. Conscience upright and vigorous, knowledge of the perfect sinless righteousness of Christ, whom this poor sinner acknowledges to be the Lord, when His own disciples had forsaken and denied Him, and when there was no sign of His glory or of the dignity of His person. He was accounted by man as one like himself. His kingdom was but a subject of scorn to all. But the poor thief is *taught of God*, and all is plain. He is a comfort to Jesus upon the cross, and makes Him think (in answering his faith) of the Paradise that awaited Him when He should have finished the work that His Father had given Him to do. Observe the state of sanctification this poor man was in by faith. In all the agonies of the cross, and while believing Jesus to be the Lord, he seeks no relief at His hands, but asks that He will remember him in His kingdom. He is filled with one thought—to have his portion with Jesus. He believes that the Lord will return; he believes in the resurrection; he believes in the kingdom, while the King is rejected and crucified, and when, as to man, there is no longer any hope. Now the reply of Jesus adds that which brings in, not the kingdom, but everlasting life, the happiness of the soul. The thief had asked Jesus to remember him when He returned in His kingdom. The Lord replies that he shall not wait for that day of manifested glory which would be visible to the world, but that that very day he should be with Him in Paradise. Precious testimony, and perfect grace! Jesus crucified was more than king —He was Saviour. The poor malefactor was a testimony to it, and the joy and the consolation of the Lord's heart, the first fruits of the love which had placed them side by side, the Lord of glory and the malefactor in the same condemnation, and the sins of the latter for ever put away, they no longer existed, their remembrance was only that of the grace which had taken them away and

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which had for ever cleansed his soul from them, making him that moment as fit to enter Paradise as Christ Himself!"

Secondly,—I would make a few remarks on the Scriptures quoted. 1st. God knows the way of wisdom and the place thereof. And to man He says: "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom: and to depart from evil is understanding." Here we have presented to us an inside feeling—"fear;" and an outside action—"departure from evil," as the way of wisdom for man.

There was no fear of the Lord in Judas through his professed discipleship: there was fear of the Lord, in the thief, in the close of his life upon the Cross. Had Judas feared the Lord, he never would have been a thief, and, carrying the bag, taken that which was put therein; he would have departed from evil and have avoided all occasions in which his propensities could have found their opportunity; the fear of the Lord who was as near to him as He could be, would have laid all within bare, and led to his judging the contrast between himself and that Lord. Himself so lustful and avariciously covetous that even his Master's person he could set to a price. The word of the Lord in John (chap. viii.) may be quoted here, and Judas had heard it, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (ver. 31, 32). Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin, and the servant abideth not for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (34—36). That Master so obedient in all things to His Father who was in heaven, that He never sanctioned any thing that He had not sanctioned, never would seek to save Himself, except when to do so was direct obedience. The wretched man, too, had a wisdom which was foolish madness,—he thoughtlessly trifled with Divine things and even with the person of Jehovah Himself. Scripture was not his chart, nor was the light of God's eye and presence his guide. Subjection to God there was none in principle, theory, or practice. And of all awful phases of evil,

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what phase so awful as that which he exhibited? The chosen body-attendant of the Lord; adopted for a mission which he knew not, nor cared to consider; partaker of all the privileges of light and love, grace and kindness which his position of nearness to Christ, gave him,—a user of the supernatural power put into his hand in common with others, the messenger of his master's message,—partaker of every privilege which it was possible for a mere man, while the Lord was upon earth, to partake of,—used by the Lord for God and Himself,—gifted with power from the Spirit,—used against the world, the flesh and Satan—and he, all the while, without the fear of the Lord and never departing from evil. The picture is of all pictures most solemn. If a man fear the Lord, the question of what he himself is, purposes, thinks, loves, desires, does—and how far it all tallies with the Lord whom we fear, must arise and arise as a practical question. Not one step outwardly will the Lord-fearer take in seen, known evil. Christ had no selfish "I" within Him and He was holy, harmless, separate from sin. Judas had a selfish "I" within him which was never through grace supplanted by Christ, and all his service was but the ripening of the poisonous weed for the burning. A thick black mist, with, perhaps, a light from beneath (like that which rises from decomposing matter) dancing before him, characterized him of whom we speak.

Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame of wisdom with our ears. Surely this was awfully true in Judas's case as to what he purposed and did in connection with wisdom's ways. Lying and destruction are the two marks of Satan. He was a liar from the beginning, and to destroy is the very meaning of the names Apollyon and Abaddon. But who can turn aside God, in His ways of wisdom. John shows us, and so does Luke in the Acts, how, in the wisdom of God, death lay before the Lord Jesus, and how man, unwittingly, in spite against Him, made good the counsels of God: "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone,

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all will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spake not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." The counsel of wisdom was the Lord's—the accomplishment of it was out of man's spite. (John xi. 47—53); "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 22—24). And Judas had his full part in the delivering up and death of Messiah. The setting aside of Israel's hopes and the betrayal of the Prince of Life rested at Judas's door.

His conduct too, in another way, savoured of destruction and death. Wrung in conscience, he "when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." (Matt. xxvii. 3—5). He went to his own place.

It is solemn to think that Judas's nature is the same as what one's own was as a man. And that if God has led one to see one's own nature and character in the light of Christ — fear leads to self judgment and to putting away of all evil and to the adoption of all good. But with every external privilege which Judas had, the fear of the Lord had not wrought that change of life inwardly and outwardly which would have kept him as Christ's servant to the end.

What a contrast in all this is the thief! Every way of wickedness had been his—and his soul within and

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life without, were utterly reprobate. He cast in Christ's teeth (Matthew tells us) the same reproaches as did the other. He thought of outward things. But when the light of God dawned in upon his soul he took another position and rebuked his companion. (Luke xxiii. 39—49). "Dost not thou fear God?" He owned the justice of the sentence now already under execution. We are in the same condemnation: "we indeed justly." He confessed to his bad deeds: "for we receive the due reward of our deeds." He saw the contrast between Christ and Himself, yea all men: "but this man hath done nothing amiss." The fear of the Lord broke the hardness of a life of sin;—it led, so far as in him lay, to separate from evil. It did more; his soul became, through faith, the receptacle of the attractive beauty and the glory, kingly and divine, of the Lord. Poor sinner as he confessedly was, he saw enough in the Lord to attract his confidence and to lead him to heave his soul upon Him, when, possessed of a kingdom, His word would have all power: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." None but one who has tasted for himself that attractive power of Christ, can understand this; none but he that has faith himself can accredit the thief's discovery of a king in one that hung upon the cross beside him, —or the glory of that kingdom which the thief saw lay beyond the cross. And what grace in the reply; "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be *with me* in Paradise." What an answer of blessedness did those two words contain for the thief, "*with me*." He had found in his own circumstances, one more despised and contemned than himself: he had found attractiveness in Him, Lordship, a kingdom, glory—companionship as he never knew of. And now this wondrous one was going to take him away *with Himself* into Paradise. Destruction and death had for the poor thief been quenched and changed to salvation and life by Christ. But what a tale it all tells of what sin is and of what man, too, is.

Destruction and death in Judas's case reigned triumphant. His heart barred to Christ, no inward change

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had taken place: destruction and death were in the end. Destruction and death in the thief's case had yielded within when the light of who Christ was shined into his soul, and his ways told it, for the light shined out; and salvation and life and departure to be with Christ was his portion.

Ver. 20. Christ . . . the Wisdom of God. Whence cometh He? and where is the place of Him, understanding (ver. 22, 23). The fame of Him has reached the ears of Destruction and Death,—both of them children of disobedience; and, as among men, offspring of the Destroyer, Satan. But God alone knows and can trace Wisdom's way; He only knows its place. Christ received into a man brings thither the fear of the Lord and departure from evil. Scripture tells us there was a counsel in the death of Christ, as well as the death accomplished by man's means, through Satan's instigation. Judas took not Christ into his soul; but, occupied with his own views of circumstances, took a lead in the death of Christ, in putting Wisdom out of the world. Judas judged not himself, ceased not from himself, and he perished. The thief saw the counsel, judged himself, and ceased from himself; and he found a Saviour and Life-giver in Him who is the Wisdom and Intelligence of God.

VI.

"Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

1. It was the sight of the Person, Jesus Christ Himself which here set the heart of the beloved disciple thus in movement. Himself, even though presented in a somewhat peculiar and less known aspect (viz. the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth)—Himself seen—ever moves the renewed heart where He is known!

2. Faithful Witness, first begotten out from among the dead, prince of the kings of the earth—yes He is all that and a thousand other things too: *but* "He has

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loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

This points to His *present* use, for us, of the blood which (having shed on the cross at His *first coming*) He afterwards used as that by means of which the throne of God on high became the mercy seat, and the way from it to us a way of mercy as marked by the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost: seal of God's thoughts and estimate of the Lamb that had been slain, but was alive again for evermore. Having taken us up as the gift of His Father to Himself, ("thine they were and Thou gavest them me"), He loved us; saw in and on us that which He (familiar with God and His Father) knew must for ever have shut us out from His presence; He had given His blood, that God might be able to be just while justifying the chief of sinners who believed in Jesus; He now brought that blood to bear on us—His own life-blood—and our sins were gone. The conscience was clean. Blood *upon* the mercy seat, blood *before* the mercy-seat—had in the types and have in the antitypes, a voice from God *outward.* Blood to cleanse the conscience, and blood to cleanse the robes are not exactly the same applications: here it is *us* who were washed:—in conscience we are *personally* clean every whit from our sins through His blood; and therefore we are now able to use the new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say His flesh and we can boldly enter into the holiest. Why did He do this? He loved us—is the only answer I can give.

3. But having, with divine perception, met that in us which He saw would have hindered peace with God—His love ceased not. His Father had given to Him to be Ruler in a kingdom and Conductor of worship for God,—king and priest. What love (to show His consciousness of His Father's oneness with Himself).—He shares to us what He has received,—makes us parts of the Royal Priesthood. The title He gives us *now;* we are such already in title. When He comes *a second time,* we shall be displayed as such. The wrath of a Nero could not take away the consciousness of the reality of this truth.

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4. "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Himself, — whose presence stirs our hearts with thoughts of what He has done, is doing, and will do for us,—is the One to whom we give back the tribute of the love shed abroad in our hearts.

And what wondrous power His, to usward who believe. "Glory and dominion for ever and ever be to Him" :—the expression at once and equally of the renewed affections of a loving heart in a poor exile in Patmos,—and of God the Holy Ghost's estimate of the eternal counsel about this same Jesus!

G. V. W.

VII.—A WOUNDED CONSCIENCE AND ITS REMEDY.

CONSCIENCE.

(Prov. xviii. 14.)

Go gather the down which floats on the wind,
And the leaves from ev'ry tree;
Can ye find a couch for a troubled mind?
Can ye find a rest for me?

Go gather the honey-dew from the leaf,
And the labour sweet of the bee;
Can ye 'suage the bitter tongue of grief?
Give a drop of sweet to me?

Let the cold wind blow through the midnight rain,
And the breeze flutter over the sea;
Can it breathe one chill on a burning brain?
Can it cool my brain for me?

Let the gale which springs in the morning cloud,
Give life to all that be;
Can it quicken again my murdered mind?
Give back my mind to me?

Let the spring-time shine, with its sunny hours,
And the merry birds all in glee;
Can ye gather amidst ten thousand flowers,
One bud that blooms for me?

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ATONEMENT.

AH! there is a bed that was hewn in stone,
Where He lay that was nail'd to the tree!
'Twas there my Lord lay all alone,
And there's the rest for me.

And there was a dew all silvery bright,
It fell on plain and lee;
They gathered it fresh at the morning light;
And sweet its taste to me!

And there was a rushing mighty wind,
It blew o'er a *bloody sea*,
It breathes a calm for my troubled mind,
A Comforter for me.

And there was a gale when the day-star rose;
Its shining clear I see;
My mind, in His beams, revives and glows,
And all is life with me.

And there was a flower, which sprung from the tomb,
When the days had number'd three;
Upon my heart that flower shall bloom,
Eternal joy for me.

(BULL.)

VIII.—FROM THE GREEK LITURGY.

"By all Thy sufferings known and unknown,
Good Lord, deliver us."

"I consider that prayer to be one of the most touching ever uttered—the UNKNOWN *sufferings of Christ.*—*Rowland Hill.*

IX.—THE SEA OF GLASS.

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal." Revelation iv. 6.

THE laver in the tabernacle was a large vase or vessel of brass, filled with water, wherewith the priests used to wash their hands and feet on entering the sanctuary

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(Ex. xxx. 17—21). This, afterwards, when Solomon's temple was built, was exchanged for the molten sea (1 Kings vii. 23), or, as it is otherwise termed, "the brasen sea, that was in the house of the Lord." (2 Kings xxv. 13). Now observe, this vessel, without water in it, could not be termed a *sea;* and again, the water of course needed a vessel to hold it: these two, the vessel and the water, were indispensable one to the other; and when taken together they constituted what we read of as the MOLTEN OR BRASEN SEA. Now this helps us to understand the symbol of "THE SEA OF GLASS LIKE UNTO CRYSTAL" before the throne of God in the heavenly vision in Revelation iv. This was not, we believe, as is commonly thought, *a solid surface of crystal* or *glass*, but, just as the BRASEN SEA was simply *a vessel of brass filled with water*, so by analogy this SEA OF GLASS was a *reservoir* or *vessel of glass, with water therein*, which we are to conceive as outspread like a lake before the throne of God in the heavens. Observe, if this sea be thought of as *solid*, then the idea of the HOLY GHOST, THE SPIRIT OF GOD, which living water so expressively shows, is entirely lost (see John vii. 37—39). The "pure river of water of life" in the New Jerusalem, we are to conceive as a river in its natural state; not petrified water, but as liquid, living, and flowing. There it is the symbol of the HOLY GHOST IN THE CHURCH, which the golden city expresses; here it shows forth the same blessed Spirit in connection with THE MARTYRED REMNANT OF ISRAEL, after they have been translated to heaven; as it is written, "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb," etc. (Rev. xv. 2, 3). What a symbol, what a picture this is! here, like the priests of old in the temple, having passed through the water, having washed their hands and feet in this heavenly laver; having done with sin and defilement for ever; these blessed ones stand on this sea, whether on its edge or its surface, with

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their harps and their songs, unblemished and perfect, in the presence of Him whom they love, or rather who loves them with a love which He Himself, and He only, can fathom. The water, and at the same time the fire mingled therewith, have both done their work. The water has cleansed them; the fire (another symbol of the Spirit) has consumed all that was of the old nature within them. These are they, as we have seen, who have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name; and hence, like the host of Israel by the Red Sea after having been delivered from Pharaoh, they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and with it they mingle the song of the Lamb; one showing that they are among the elect seed of Abraham; the other, that they are such as through faith in the Lamb, who previous to this, in chap. vi., had opened the seven-sealed book, have stood in the trial, have laid down their lives for the faith; thereby gaining a nobler victory by far than if they had been rescued from martyrdom.

And here let me add another thought on this subject. It is this—that while a LAVER OF BRASS may have suited the sanctuary *on earth,* it would be out of place altogether in a *heavenly scene* such as this vision presents. Hence, the laver here shown is of "GLASS LIKE UNTO CRYSTAL," of a material so exquisitely clear and pellucid that the eye cannot distinguish the vessel from the pure lymph within it. Transparent they both of them are; and equally so—they seem but as one. So it is with the blessed Lord, whom we believe the crystal-like laver shows forth; and the Holy Ghost, which the living water expresses, seeing that the Spirit is given to Him for the use of His people—He being the receptacle and depository thereof.

In a word, what we here see, as we take it, is Christ and the Spirit of God; who, though personally and individually distinct from each other, at the same time are ONE, one both in nature and in the blessed Godhead; one also in wisdom, in counsel, in action, in the ministration of blessing to those to whom, as we here see, it has been given to celebrate with their harps and

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their songs the victory which has been gained for them over the enemy.

And here let me add that it is, I believe, a mistake to suppose that there is any resemblance between the sea of glass and the Red Sea, which opened at the bidding of Moses to let Israel through. The triumphant songs of these harpers, like those of their fathers of old after their deliverance from Egypt, as well as the allusion to Moses, has, it is likely, suggested this thought: but if what I have said at the outset, as to the analogy between the *sea of glass* in this vision and the *brasen sea* in the house of the Lord, be correct, there is no foundation for such an idea.

Again, I would say in conclusion that the idea of fire here referring to affliction seems equally groundless. The word of the Psalmist: "We went through fire and through water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Ps. lxvi. 12), has perhaps led to this thought. But if the sea is to be viewed as a *laver*, it is surely more consistent to regard the fire, equally with the water mingled therewith, as expressing the Spirit of God; and those who stand on the sea as saints who have been finally cleansed, who have been "*baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*" E. D.

X.—A LOT'S THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR DISAPPOINTMENTS.

GOD of my life, how good, how wise,
Thy judgments to my soul have been!
They were but mercies in disguise—
The painful remedies of sin:
How diff'rent now thy ways appear—
Most merciful when most severe!

Since first the maze of life I trod,
Hast Thou not hedged about my way—
My worldly vain designs withstood,
And robb'd my passions of their prey—
Withheld the fuel from the fire,
And cross'd my every fond desire?

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Trouble and loss, and grief, and pain,
  Have crowded all my forty years;
I never could my wish obtain,
  And own at last, with joyful tears,
The man whom God delights to bless,
He never curses with success.

How oft didst Thou my soul withhold,
  And baffle my pursuit of fame,
And mortify my lust of gold,
  And blast me in my surest aim—
Withdraw my animal delight,
And starve my grovelling appetite ?

Thy goodness, obstinate to save,
  Hath all my airy schemes o'erthrown—
My will Thou would'st not let me have :
  With blushing thankfulness I own
I envied oft the swine their meat,
But could not gain the husks to eat.

Thou would'st not let Thy captive go,
  Or leave me to my carnal will;
Thy love forbade my rest below—
  Thy patient love pursued me still,
And forced me from my sin to part,
And tore the idol from my heart.

Joy of mine eyes, and more beloved
  (Forgive me, gracious God!) than Thee;
Thy sudden stroke far off removed,
  And stopt my vile idolatry,
And drove me from the idol's shrine,
And cast me at the feet Divine.

But can I now the loss lament,
  Or murmur at Thy friendly blow?
Thy friendly blow my soul hath rent,
  From every *seeming* good below:
Thrice happy loss! which makes me see
My happiness is all in Thee.

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How shall I bless Thy thwarting love,
So near in my temptation's hour!
It flew my ruin to remove—
It snatch'd me from my nature's power—
Broke off my grasp of creature-good,
And plunged me in th' atoning blood.

See then at last I all resign—
I yield me up Thy lawful prey:
Take this poor, long-sought soul of mine,
And bear me in Thine arms away,
Whence I may never more remove—
Secure in Thine eternal love.

Wesley.

XI.

1. WHOM WILL YE SERVE?

"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth" * * *
John xix. 12, 13.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."
John xv. 14.

Cæsar's friends? or friends of Jesus?
Solemn question for to-day!
Friends of Cæsar! Friends of Jesus!
Take your sides, without delay.
If ye pause for man's forbidding,
Cæsar's friendship ye secure;
If ye do the Father's bidding,
Scorn, reproach ye shall endure.

Friends of Cæsar! Friends of Jesus!
Stand revealed! your choice declare!
Who in truth two masters pleases?
Who may rival banners bear?
Jesus' friends account Him precious,
Lose for Him all other gain;
Dearer far the smile of Jesus
Than the praise of sinful men.

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Cæsar's friends! Ye foes of Jesus!
Mingling in a motley throng,—
Shall your sheepskin garb deceive us?
Wolves to Christ's fair flock belong?
Mighty is Jehovah's fellow,
Though on earth in weakness seen;
Righteous is our Royal Shepherd!
He will sweep you from the scene!

Free from Cæsar, friends of Jesus!
Stand in phalanx! never fear!
Love, severely tried, increases,
Courage yet! the Lord is near!
Onward still, His Name confessing,
Weaving crowns to grace His brow;
Lo! His hands are full of blessing,
Lifted for your succour now.

Cæsar's friends were we, but Jesus
Owns us for His friends to-day!
What! *shall rival friendship please us,*
While the Bridegroom is away?
No! through grace would we surrender
Cæsar's things to Cæsar's care,
Whilst to God, our God, we render,
Filial homage, praise and prayer.

2. AFTER "THE NOVEMBER METEORS," 1866.

Thus, blessed Lord, at intervals of time,
Thy distant handiwork gleams forth to *sight*;
Thy hidden glories o'er our pathway shine,
Diffusing lustre through the wintry night.
Too soon, we deem, the blissful vision dies,
Like torches fading ere the marriage feast;
But *faith* keeps vigil with unwearied eyes,
Until the dawn spreads upward from the east.
Thy cloudless morning! fairer and more sweet
Than starry splendour seen amid the night;
Thy promised day! when all Thy watchers meet,
To chorus forth the praises of the light.
Creation tells not half her Lord hath done;
Thou art the morning star: the rising sun!

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3. "HIS NAME, JESUS."

Yes, Jesus only, none beside
  Can do the sinner good.
Far off was I, but Jesus died
  And I have peace with God.
His name is dearer to me now,
  Than every name beside,
All glories beam around the brow
  Of Jesus crucified.

The Holy One who knew no sin,
  God made Him sin for me:
The Saviour died, my soul to win,
  He lives, and I am free!
His precious blood alone availed
  To wash my sins away;
Through weakness He o'er hell prevailed,
  Through death He won the day!

His beauty shineth far above
  A seraph's power of praise;
And I shall live and learn His love
  Through everlasting days.
The knowing that He loveth me
  Hath made my cup run o'er,
Yes, JESUS all my song shall be,
  To-day and evermore!

4. "FAR BETTER."

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him."

2 Cor. v. 6—9.

To be with Thee, Lord Jesus!
  At home with Thee, on high,
That were a joy more precious
  Than aught beneath the sky;

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Oh were I with Thee yonder,
'Twere well indeed with me;
Yet never need I wander,
Whilst looking off, to Thee.

In service never tiring
Thy word would I obey,
More fervently desiring
Thy summons, every day.
I only wait Thy pleasure,
A stranger here below;
Thou art Thyself my treasure,
The All I have to know.

'Tis good to wear the fetter
That holds me here awhile;
But better, Lord, far better,
Thy blissful presence-smile;
As Thou didst serve the Father,
Thy bondslave I would be,
In chains, but willing rather,
That Thou shouldst set me free.

We see Thee now, Lord Jesus!
With glory, honour, crowned.
Thy work, completed, frees us
To stand on holy ground.
And as we thus adore Thee,
Thy footsteps would we trace
Till called to share Thy glory,
Through Thy surpassing grace.

5. WE WILL BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN THEE.

Ach mein Herr Jesu, dein Nahesein,
Bringt grossen Frieden ins Herz hinein.

AH, Jesus, Lord, Thou art near to me,
Great peace flows into my heart from Thee,
And Thy smile of love fills me so with gladness,
This weary body forgets its sadness,
For thankful joy.

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We see Thy countenance, beaming bright,
Thy grace, Thy beauty, by faith, not sight ;
But Thou art Thyself to our souls revealing,
We love Thee, Thy presence and favour feeling,
Although unseen.

Oh, who would only, by night and day,
Be set on joying in Thee alway,
He could but tell of delight abounding,
Through body and soul one song resounding,
"Who is like Thee ?"

To be compassionate, patient, kind,
Thy pardon leaving our sins behind—
To heal us, calm us, our faint hearts cheering,
Thyself to us as a Friend endearing,
Is Thy delight.

Ah, give us to find our all of joy
In Thee, Thy service our sweet employ.
And let our souls with a constant yearning
In need and love, to Thyself be turning,
Without a pause.

And when we are weeping, console us soon,
Thy grace and power for Thy peace make room ;
Thy mirror'd likeness Thy praises telling,
Thine own true life, in our bosoms dwelling,
In love be seen.

Truthful in childlike simplicity,
Guileless, arrayed in humility,
Be the holy wounds of Thy tribulation,
The fount of our peace and our consolation
In joy and woe.

Thus happy in Thee till we enter heaven,
The children's gladness to us be given ;
And if, peradventure, our eyes are weeping,
Our hearts on Thy bosom shall hush their beating
In full repose.

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Thou reachest us, Jesus, Thy piercèd hand,
Thy faithfulness, gazing, we understand ;
And shamed into tears by Thy love so tender,
Our eyes flow over, our hearts surrender
And give Thee praise!

CHRISTIAN GREGOR,
1742—1801.
"*The Asaph of the Moravians.*"

No. VIII.

HOW TO GET PEACE.*

How can I get peace with God?

He has "made peace by the blood of the cross."

I do not deny that; I believe it; but I have not peace; and how can I have that peace myself?

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

Well, I know it is so written, but I have not peace; *that* I know: I wish I had, and I sometimes think I do not believe at all. I see *you* happy; and how is that happiness of soul to be had?

You do not, then, think it presumptuous to be at peace with God in the assurance of His favour, and thus of our own salvation?

I think it would be in *me;* but I see it in Scripture, and therefore it must be right; and I see a few who enjoy the Divine favour, in whom one sees it is real. But I do not know how to get this. It leaves me distressed if I think of it, though I get on from day to day as other Christians do; but when this question is raised, I know I am not at peace, nor assured of Divine favour resting upon me, as I see you and others enjoying it. And it is a serious thing, because if "being justified by

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* I have had some little difficulty in putting this in the form of a dialogue, as being fictitious, which I dislike in divine things; but it is a real summing up of many conversations, so that I have given it in this form, as presenting more clearly the common difficulties of a soul.

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plished fact, and we must believe it as such. And so Scripture speaks. He believed that that which God had promised He was able also to perform. But we believe that what by its efficacy saves us, He *has* performed. It would be unbelief to treat it yet as a promise; and so it is written—"You to whom it shall be imputed, believing on Him who hath raised up Jesus Christ from the dead." You will find both passages together, speaking of this very point, at the end of Romans iv. As to help on our journey onwards, there are many and cherished promises. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear." "No man shall pluck His sheep out of His hand." "Who will also confirm you to the end that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." I might cite many others of the greatest comfort and value to us in our difficulties on the way. But the work in which I have to believe as justifying me and reconciling me to God, as alone and perfectly putting away my sins and redeeming me to God, is not a promise: nor can be looked at as such. It is an accomplished fact, a work already accepted of God.

I see it clearly; indeed, nothing can be simpler and plainer the moment it is before you. What justifies before God is not a promise at all but an accomplished fact. I had never noticed that passage in Romans iv. It is very plain. How carelessly one reads Scripture! But indeed, the truth of what you say is evident on the face of it.

Allow me as we have touched this point to draw your attention to another thing in the form in which the work and testimony of grace is put. You may remark that in the passage in Romans iv. it is said, not "believe on Christ," however true that remains, but "on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." So Peter, "who by him do believe in God who raised him up from the dead and gave him glory." So the Lord Himself as to His coming into the world, "He that heareth my words and believeth on him that sent me." We know God Himself only really, by knowing Him through Christ. If I know Him thus, I know Him as God our

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Saviour; as one who has not spared His Son for me; as one who, when Christ was dead as having taken our sins, raised Him from the dead. In a word, I not only believe in Christ but in Him who has given Christ and owned His work; who has given glory to man in Him; as a God who has come to save, not as one who is waiting to judge me. I believe in Him by Christ. When Israel had passed the Red Sea they believed in a God who had delivered them and brought them to Himself; and so do I. I know no other God but that. If I believe in Him by Christ I do wait for a promise, for the redemption of the body, for the full results of His work. Thus Christianity gives us present affections, in peace, in a known relationship, and the energising power of hope; the two things that give blessing and energy to man as to his position; for love is the spring of all. Love, because He first loved us; and finding our joy in Him, love to others, as partaking of His nature, and Christ's dwelling in our hearts, so that love constrains us.

You make a Christian a wonderful person in the world; but we are very weak for such a place.

I could never make him in my words what God has made him in His. As to weakness the more we feel it the better. Christ's strength is made perfect in our weakness.

B. M.

N°. IX.

IMMANUEL, HIS RULE AND HIS SERVICE.

ISAIAH i.—lxiv.

STANDING on the top of Pisgah, in the field of Zophim, Balaam, gifted with the spirit of prophecy, peered through the long vista of ages not yet ended, and announced to Balak, awaiting the prophet's curse on Israel, that God had blessed them and he could not reverse it. Hopeless was it to expect he could prevail by any incantation against this people; for "the Lord

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his God" is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. "Surely," he adds, "there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to (*or* at) this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?" (Numb. xxiii. 20—23.) Years, centuries pass away, when another prophet appears, not to use enchantments against Israel, for he warns them against resorting to such iniquitous practices (Isa. viii. 19), but to announce in language clear, forcible, and beautiful, that what Balaam had predicted would surely come to pass, God would work for the deliverance of His people, but in a way which should astonish all. So he traces out the path of the Lord Jesus from His birth to His kingdom, as is attempted to be pointed out in the following pages. God had brought Israel out of Egypt and into Canaan; had given to David, and Solomon after him, the land promised to Abraham and his descendants, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates. He had shown their fathers in the days of Joshua what it was to have the captain of the Lord's host in their midst. He had proved many times how, when minished and brought low by the incursions of enemies from without, or the uprisings of enemies within the land, He could raise up deliverers to set them free. But as yet the perfect deliverance which He would effect, so that men might say "What hath God wrought," had not been manifested. It is of this Isaiah sings at an eventful period of the history of the kingdom of Judah. Commencing with the year that King Uzziah died, the first prophecy in the book with a date prefixed, and going on to the time when the King of Babylon sent messengers to King Hezekiah after he was recovered of his sickness, the last date given in the book, we get unfolded the condition of the people in the latter days, and the appearance and work of the One by whom their deliverance will be effected.

Some of those by whom the Lord had wrought for His people to rescue them from their enemies were called from a humble sphere. Gideon, the least in his father's house, of a poor family of the tribe of Manasseh,

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was called from the threshing-floor to subdue the Midianites, "so that they lifted up their heads no more" (Judges viii. 28). Jephthah, the outcast and exile from his family, was recalled from the land of Tob to confront the armies of the Ammonites, whom he smote, "from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel" (Judges xi. 33). David was taken from the sheepfold to do battle with Goliath of Gath. So He by whom God's people shall be finally set free was once in this world in lowliness the reputed son of a carpenter. But how great is the difference in this between Gideon, Jephthah, David, and the Lord! They were of low estate, and God exalted them. He had to humble Himself, for He is God over all. Accordingly we have in this prophet the Lord presented as God and as man, filling various offices, and appearing in different characters. He is the mighty God, yet a helpless infant; King, yet servant; overcomer, yet overcome; intercessor and avenger; the Holy One of Israel, yet the bearer of His people's iniquities.

Beginning with the moral condition of the people, with which both heaven and earth are made acquainted, the prophet speedily passes on to the day of the Lord, the commencement of the millennium, when the nation of Israel should enter on the enjoyment of permanent blessing on earth. Much, however, had to take place before that era could dawn on the people of God. Unfitted by their moral condition for God's presence, judgment must do its work. So the vision of chap. vi. is recorded. Its date is significant, the close of Uzziah's life. During his reign prosperity attended Judah; for he warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-Baal, and the Mehunims. And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt. . . . . for he was marvellously helped till he was strong" (2 Chron. xxvi. 6—15). This

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prosperity continued under his son Jotham, who "fought with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them" (2 Chron. xxvii. 5, 6). But though outwardly prosperous Judah was not obedient to God, and no more morally fit for the presence of God in their midst than Israel, whose condition at this time was one of anarchy, confusion, and lawlessness; for during the fifty-two years of Uzziah's reign he had seen six different monarchs in Israel, three of whom were murdered. At this juncture it was then that Isaiah received his commission from Jehovah, seated on a throne, to announce judgment on the whole nation. Yet a remnant should be preserved. He saw Jehovah of hosts, but John xii. tells us it was the Lord Jesus Christ who then gave judgment against His people, a judgment the righteousness of which none could question after the glory of the only begotten of the Father had been displayed, and His own had refused to receive Him (John xii. 37—41; Acts xxviii. 25—27). But this judgment is not final. It carries on "until," etc. (see ver. 11—13).

Since Israel became a nation, God has raised up instruments to deliver His people, or lead them to victory. Moses, Joshua, the Judges, David, are instances of this. In the days yet to dawn on that afflicted nation we learn He will act in a similar manner. But, "by whom," one may ask in the words of Amos, "shall Jacob arise? for he is small" (Amos vii. 2). We get the answer in our prophet, chap. vii.—xii., accompanied with an account of the inroad and success of the Assyrian of the prophet's day, typical of the king of the north in a future day. The virgin's son, Immanuel, is the man of God's choice, and the time selected for the prophetic announcement of the manner of His birth was during the reign of Ahaz, when Judah had been brought low, and Ahaz was dispirited, threatened with a confederacy, organised against him and his kingdom, of Israel and Syria. "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." To Him the land shall belong. The Assyrian might invade Judah, and overspread the country, as he did subsequently in the reign of Hezekiah; he might reach to the neck, but should never overwhelm it. The stretching out of his

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wings might fill the breadth of the land, but there he must stop ; for the land belongs to Immanuel, which is 'God with us.' The waters may burst their banks, but they cannot rise beyond the permitted level, for no counsel, no might can withstand God. This prophecy, partially fulfilled in the reign of Hezekiah, awaits its complete accomplishment in the latter day (see x. 12, 24, 25). The land being Immanuel's (viii. 8), the people need not fear the threatened attack, nor need the faithful join with the others in desiring a confederacy to ward off the impending calamity ; for Immanuel (as we learn from Heb. ii. 13) speaks words of encouragement ; "I will wait upon the Lord that hideth His face from the house of Israel, and I will look for Him ;" and the remnant, who obey God's voice, He owns as children given Him for signs and wonders in Israel from the "Lord of hosts which dwelleth in Mount Zion." Nor can the faithful be disappointed. For He, who owns them as the children given Him, owns the land, and will sit on David's throne. The great ones of the earth have titles and dignities suited to their high positions. He likewise has His. Immanuel speaks of God's presence with His people. His names in ix. 6 show how fitted is this child to get the victory, and to fill that throne vacant for ages, but just previous to all this seized on by the usurper Antichrist. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." A new era must then dawn on this world, for the stability and duration of His rule is next declared. "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

In chapter xi. we get something more about the kingdom, viz., that which characterises His rule. His title is indisputable, for He is the rod out of the stem of Jesse, a branch that grows out of his roots. His perfect fitness for the duties which, as King, He must perform is secured, for "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon

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him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord ; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." Faithfulness and righteousness will characterise Him, for "he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears ; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." He will be armed with almighty power, or "will smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips will he slay the wicked, righteousness being the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." The enmity between Judah and Ephraim removed, their land shall again receive them, and the adversaries of Judah and Israel be cut off. From Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, and the isles of the sea shall His people be brought back to God's land. Borne "on the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west, spoiling them of the east together, they shall lay their hands on Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them." To Him, the hope and head of Israel, shall the Gentiles seek. Once were the Jews the object of scorn, when Pilate said, Shall I crucify your King? Now, to that King, first crucified, shall the Gentiles come. Nor will the beneficial effect of His reign end there. The enmity between Judah and Ephraim removed, the scorn of the Gentile for the Jew made to cease, there will cease likewise the enmity between man and beast. For He who then shall reign is Prince of peace, as well as the mighty God. As the latter He has power over creation; as the former all parts of the universe shall share in the blessing of peace, "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Seated on the throne as Jehovah in chap. vi., decreeing judicial blindness on the nation, till a certain epoch should arrive—now that epoch has come, He is seen seated on David's throne as man and conqueror (ix.) ; rightly there because He is David's heir (xi.), and the only one who can wield supreme power in righteousness over Israel and the earth, because He is the Holy One

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of Israel (xii. 6); and the descendants of those who heard and read Isaiah's prophecies in the land before the Babylonish captivity, will, when enjoying peace under His righteous rule, see how literally all has come to pass. Ruling in righteousness (xxxii.); all enemies cut off, Babylon (xxi.), Antichrist (xxx. 33), the nations who besiege Jerusalem (xxix. 7), the Assyrian (x.), the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth (xxiv.), Leviathan, the piercing crooked serpent, punished (xxvii.); fear which kept the remnant in their stronghold will be dispelled, and they, beholding the land that is very far off, shall also see the King in His beauty. Such is the manner in which the Lord Jesus is brought before us in the first thirty-nine chapters of this prophecy.

A cursory glance at the book discloses a marked difference between these chapters and those that follow. These tell us of the circumstances in which the people then were, and will be in the latter days; whereas chapters xl. to lxvi. treat more especially of their moral condition; so the prophecies of the Lord in the latter part of the book present Him, not so much in His official character as King, but in His servant character, not effecting the deliverance of an oppressed people so much as calling out a faithful remnant from the midst of an apostate nation, a preparation for that time when the widowed condition of Jerusalem should cease for ever. And this is in perfect harmony with God's ways in times of old; He sent deliverers to His people to rescue them out of the hand of their enemies, as Othniel, Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, David. He also sent prophets to recall them to their allegiance, and to awake in their hearts a sense of contrition for their grievous declension from the right way; so He by whom the final deliverance of Israel shall be effected first appeared as a prophet or teacher. For what duty is there which any of the sons of men have been fitted by God to discharge towards His rebellious people, which He in His goodness and condescension will not Himself stoop to perform?

Turning to the prophet we find chap. xl. opening with

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a proclamation of comfort to God's people and to God's city. "Her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Jeremiah predicted that God would recompense their iniquity and their sin double (xvi. 18). Isaiah speaks of it as accomplished, and so the time of Jerusalem's consolation approaches. Closely following this announcement we have the commencement of these events stated which will end in that happy consummation. The voice of John the Baptist is heard crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Jehovah, the God of Israel, is coming to His people. And as the Lord appeared on the throne as Jehovah before the announcement of His incarnation and descent from David after the flesh was made known, so here, before the character of His service is set forth, His divinity is proclaimed. Isaiah was charged with a message from God of governmental dealing for a time; John is found in the wilderness of Judea speaking to his countrymen of grace as he preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Ages have passed away since John's voice was heard in the wilderness of Judea, but the word must surely be made good; for, though "all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field," the grass may wither and the flower thereof may fade, "but the word of our God shall stand for ever"—so "the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him;" and to the cities of Judah it shall yet be said, "Behold your God." Now, then, there begins to be unfolded the character of the service He must perform ere Jerusalem can rejoice.

He takes the place of Jehovah's servant. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles" (xlii. 1). God's servant, God's chosen one, He takes the place of man, of Israel, on earth; endures the contradiction of sinners against Himself without taking vengeance on them (xlii. 3, 4; Matt. xii. 14—21); is dependant on

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God for everything, though by Himself the worlds were made, and He upholds all things by the word of His power; and all this that He might "open the blind eyes, bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house;" for Jew and Gentile shall receive blessing through His humiliation. Surely such grace, it might have been supposed, would have won all hearts. Chap. xlix. tells us how the Jews as a nation were affected by it. Fitted for His work by God Himself, He here calls (xlix.) to the isles and peoples afar off to hear, but what? the submission of Israel to their God incarnate? something very different,—the present failure of His mission to Israel. Yet blessed be God we stop not here. Because of that failure grace now flows out to Gentiles (xlix. 8, compared with 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2), and by-and-bye a faithful remnant shall be gathered to Zion. What a place has He consented to fill, what treatment has He stooped to receive! Laboured in vain, His strength spent for nought and in vain, despised of men, abhorred of the nation, a servant of rulers, such was His condition when on earth, by whom alone Israel, the Gentiles, the world can be fully blessed.

"To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel" is nevertheless, great as such a work will be and important as regards Israel, too small a sphere for Him to be restricted to. "I will also," says the word of God, "give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth." As far then as the confines of earth may reach, so far will the benefits of His work extend. Israel's king "shall be great to the ends of the earth" (Micah v. 4). Thus prepared beforehand for the coming of their Messiah, if that substratum of good really exists in man, which so many fondly imagine, His advent would have been gladly hailed, and His rule cordially welcomed. Such however we know was not the case. His appearance in the midst of the people gave occasion for the display of what man really is, and how utterly corrupt and alienated is his heart from God. Nothing which under ordinary circumstances would have acted as a determent stopped the Jews in their headlong course of

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bitter enmity against the Lord. Men are wont sometimes to be lenient in their judgment of the one who can be of use to them, or has added glory to their nation. But though apprised of His future greatness, and reaping benefits from His presence among them when on earth, witnessing "the powers of the world to come," they yet openly rejected Him, and heaped indignities upon Him. This too was predicted. Chap. l. speaks of it. Able to deliver, acting with divine power in creation, able to dry up the sea by His rebuke, to make rivers a wilderness, to clothe the heavens with blackness, and to make sackcloth their covering, He yet learnt how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. What service was this! He suffered, too, from His creatures because obedient to God. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." With full power as God to crush His enemies, He yet kept the place of dependance, and waited for God to justify Him. And wherefore this? That others should know how to act, and learn how to trust; that when walking in darkness and having no light they might trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon their God. Then follow three appeals to the faithful remnant to hearken to Him (li. 1—8). They need not be discouraged if few in number; they need not fear if men are against them. He who addressed them shall judge nations, the isles shall wait on Him, and on His arm shall they trust. How beautiful the alternation of complete dependence and supreme power! For He is the arm of the Lord, and so the remnant now call on Him to awake and act as of old (li. 9).

Further on we get something more about the arm of the Lord. He is the One by whom God's purposes on earth shall yet be carried out (li. 16). Next we get what the great ones will think of Him when they see Him delivering Israel. His last appearance to the world was on the cross, and when taken down from it to be laid in the grave; now they behold Him in glory arrayed with strength (lii. 13—15). Chap. liii. is wholly occupied with the arm of the Lord, but as filling a different posi-

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tion to that spoken of at the end of the previous chapter, and occupied with a very different work. It speaks of what He was, and what he suffered for Israel, for men, the foundation of all blessing, the source of all hope,—His death on the cross and His portion in resurrection. Jehovah of hosts, the Son of God, the arm of the Lord, He was also the sinner's substitute. He died, cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of God's people. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and on Him our sins were laid. And now, atonement effected, "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." What a passage from the throne to the cross, from the manifested glory of Jehovah to the insults and rejection of sinners! And as lii. states what effect His future appearance will have on the kings when they see Him, this chapter tells us what was thought of Him by the remnant when on earth before. "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." He died: but death, to man the extinction of all hopes for this world, death, which separates him from all that concerns the things of earth, was the appointed path for Him to tread that He should take His kingdom and reign; for us having died and risen He will sit on David's throne, see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, when surrounded by the countless myriads of the heavenly saints, and make secure to Israel then on earth the sure mercies of David (lv. 3 compared with Acts xiii. 34).

A sketch of His life on earth as the servant of God would be incomplete without a summary of what He taught. This we get in lxi., in a passage He quoted, applying it to Himself as the fulfiller of it, when He sat down with the eyes of all on Him in the synagogue at Nazareth. But then He stopped in the middle of the second verse. He preached the acceptable year of the Lord, but not then the day of vengeance of our God. Yet

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that He was to speak of. The prophets have predicted it; the Revelation is full of it; and this last, be it remembered, is the "Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John." There we get described the day of vengeance which will come, and the signs which shall precede it, with the judgments to be poured out previously, and the messengers to be sent (Rev. vi.—xviii., xi. 3, xiv. 6). Then shall be comforted all that mourn, the signs of sorrow be removed, and Israel take her place as head of the nations, and everlasting joy be her portion (lxi. 2—7). His birth, His lowliness, the treatment He received, His devoted service, the good news He declared, His rejection and death having been brought forward, and His resurrection intimated (liii. 11, 12), what remains, it might be thought, but to take vengeance on His enemies. He will surely in God's own time; but first He has another work to perform, which He is now carrying on, He intercedes for Jerusalem. Absent from earth where He was crucified, He does not forget the place where God dwelt, and where He will dwell for ever. He intercedes for Zion. "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof shall go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (lxii. 1). Nor does He rest with this. He raises up intercessors on earth to pray for this (ver. 6, 7). How He intercedes above is not revealed, but what they say is (see lxiii. 7 ; lxiv. 12). He is asked to return from heaven (lxiv. 1). He will. And in lxiii. 1—6, we have a description of Him having returned and having executed judgment on Edom. From the throne to the manger, from the manger to the cross, from the cross to heaven, from heaven to earth as conqueror and vindicator of God, and deliverer of His people, such is the path of the Lord as set before us in Isaiah. "What hath God wrought," we may well exclaim. Many have been the instruments God has used to carry out His purposes on earth, feeble oftentimes have they been, that the power of God should be more

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fully displayed in them. But here we see something else. We see an instrument, a mighty instrument in the Lord's hand accomplishing His purposes, filling every position His servants could fill, and some they never could—Jehovah's throne and the cross on Calvary; and that instrument is Jehovah Himself. God has often wrought by others. Here He works by His Son. He has accomplished redemption from everlasting death for all who will accept it; He will effect the final deliverance of His people Israel on earth. He stooped to death, and Satan appeared to have gained the victory. He rose from the dead, and went to heaven, where He intercedes for Jerusalem. Satan's conqueror, the sinner's Saviour, the faithful witness, the suffering servant, these are the characters which He appears in, these are the works he performs. He does them all Himself, for by Him and Him alone can all these be effectually accomplished.

C. E. S.

HOME.

Oh! bright and blessed scenes,
Where sin shall never come,
Whose sight my longing spirit weans
From earth, where yet I roam!

And can I call my home
My Father's house on high;
The rest of God my rest, to come,
My place of liberty?

Yes, in that light unstained,
My stainless soul shall live;
My heart's deep longings more than gained,
When God His rest shall give.

His presence—there my soul,
Its rest, its joy untold,
Shall find, when endless ages roll,
And time shall ne'er grow old.

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My God the centre is,
His presence fills that land;
And countless myriads own'd as His,
Round Him adoring stand.

My God, whom I have known,
Well known in Jesus' love;
Rests in the blessing of His own,
Before Himself above.

Glory supreme is there,
Glory that shines through all,
More precious still that love to share,
As those that love did call.

Like Jesus in that place
Of light and love supreme,
Once man of sorrows full of grace,
Heaven's blest and endless theme.

Like Him, O grace supreme!
Like Him, before Thy face,
Like Him, to know that glory beam,
Unhindered face to face.

Oh! love supreme and bright,
Good to the fullest heart,
That gives me now as heavenly light
What soon shall be my part.

Be not to me, my God,
As one that turned aside
To tarry for a night, and trod
His onward way. Abide

With me as light divine,
That brings into my breast
Those glad'ning scenes e'en now as mine,—
Soon my eternal rest.

The above lines on "Home" are borrowed, with permission of the Editor, from "A Voice to the Faithful," No. 5. May, 1867. 24, Warwick-lane, E.C., London.

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N°. X.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

THERE is nothing new under the sun. The Jewish Mystics and Cabbalists, and the Gnostics of the second and third centuries (against which last Paul warns us, and who, though beginning earlier, were in those centuries fully developed) held the doctrine of the non-immortality of the soul and its end, just as heretics on these points do now. They were divided even into the same two classes as now, i. e., some held the soul died with the body, others that it would be cast into the fire afterwards, on being judged, and then consumed. Not only so, but they founded their teaching on the same reasonings as to *nephesh, psuche, chaia,* and *ruach,* etc. It may be well, therefore, after showing the facts to be so, to examine the various words and ascertain their use in Scripture, as well as that of some others sought to be employed to the same end. The doctrine of Jewish Rabbis was not, as is evident, that of Jesus Christ being eternal life, or they would not have been Jewish Rabbis. But, wherever they found it, basing it on the merit of works and keeping the law, as we may suppose, they taught that the higher spiritual life was a distinct thing from the animal life, and received at a distinct time. Their system is not uniform ; more scriptural, but in many parts the same as our modern doctors, and the Gnostics completely so. The records of Jewish mysticism are comparatively of late date, but they record early opinions, many of which are found in early Christian fathers, such as Origen, Jerome, and others, and in Philo, and even Josephus. The Gnostics formed their systems in the same countries, Syria, and particularly Alexandria, the great seat of all

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these opinions. My impression is that all these views came from the East. But I have not used research enough to verify this, nor is it necessary for the reader. My object is to meet from Scripture the assertions of ancient and modern error. In the present case by enquiry into the use of words.

The Jewish doctors distinguished three souls: the *nephesh*, the *ruach*, and the *neshama*. The *nephesh* they held, as our moderns also tell us, to be the animal soul, the soul by which the body lives; *ruach* is the spirit suited to the middle world; *neshama* that suited to the upper, and in which was the image of and union with God. Thus in the book Sohar* we have: "Let a man sanctify himself and they shall sanctify him more, and when a man is sanctified with the holiness of his Lord, he is then clothed with a holy mind, which is the inheritance of the holy one, and then he becomes heir of all things, and such are called the sons of the holy blessed God, as is written in Deut. xiv. i., 'Ye are the sons of Jehovah your God.'" This doctrine of the three souls or parts of man pervades the Sohar. "*Nephesh*, the animal soul, is annexed to the body; the spirit to the soul (*ruach* to *nephesh*); and mind, the *neshama* or superior spirit, to the *ruach*. Some of them held that, if the child at least behaved well, having only the *nephesh*, he got the *ruach* at thirteen and a day old, and the *neshama* at twenty or twenty-one. Otherwise not. Some held there are those who never had any soul but the *nephesh*; others, that and the *ruach*; and others, again, the *neshama* also,—and they would be with God. If they had only the *nephesh* it remained in the grave with the body,—ended with it.

There was another system, which Origen applied even to Christ, that the higher soul could not come into this world without taking a secondary soul, and so, consequently, the body.† Indeed, according to him, they are

* I make use of Gfrörer in all the Jewish part of my subject, the only book I can at this moment refer to.

† He held this, which the Alexandrian fathers considered to be the fall (not, of course, in the case of Christ), from Philo and the Alexandrian Jews. It was also Platonism.

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born here according to their conduct in a previous existence. Josephus says the Pharisees held the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls. It would seem that this trinity of the soul was some way connected with their speculations about the Godhead, the *Memra*, *Shechinah*, and a tissue of irreverent absurdities, which I need not enter into here.

In all ancient mythology and tradition, heathen and Jewish, will be found the craving of the human mind after truths which revelation gives us in their perfection. Infidels have, consequently, alleged these truths were borrowed from the traditions; than which nothing can be more false. They were the source of Arianism, and Gnosticism, Universalism, and Annihilationism. Thus Rationalists tell us that the doctrine of the *Logos*, or Word, was derived from the Alexandrian, or even Palestinian, Jews. These had their *Memra*, those their *Logos*, and Philo speaks largely of it, and makes the visible world itself an expression, so to speak, of the *Logos*, a living expression of it. But mark the real bearing of this. The reason was, that the supreme God could not by any possibility be in connection with matter. The mystic Rabbis held God for a kind of non-existence, because there was no such connection with what we hold to exist.* Hence there was a secondary God, the *Logos*, or Word, which partook of his nature but was not the Supreme, and he then revealed himself and was in communication with the creature. Yet in general, matter (*Hule*) was a thing evil in itself, a bond to the soul, and eternal, too.

Now Christianity teaches the exact contrary of this doctrine of the *Logos*. The *Logos* is God,—created everything,—and the very essence of Christianity is the

* All this is wonderfully like Brahminism, modified by going West, and was connected with theories of male and female being the moment anything was to exist; which was equally Brahminical. But this is not the place to pursue this. The Brahmins were really more philosophical. But they and the Buddhists held *nirwana*, entering into non-existence, as supreme bliss: or, as some would say, into the abstract Deity, who never feels nor thinks; which, to me, is tantamount. All the rest is *maia*, or illusion.

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immediate personal connection, in incarnation, between God and the creature—God and man in one person. All the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him *bodily*. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," that Word which, in the beginning, *was*, when all began. In eternity He was God, and personally, too, with God. By Him was everything made, and the Father dwelt in Him, and He was in the Father. "We know Him that is true, and are in Him that is true, even in His Son. He is the true God and eternal life." One of the striking facts of the 1st Epistle of John is that it is impossible to separate Christ and God. It is one Person, one Being. Thus: "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (ii. 28). Whose coming? Clearly, Christ's. Continue: "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." Of whom? Of God: and so it follows: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God . . . . . Beloved, now are we the sons of God." Here, clearly, the Person or Being of whom he speaks is God. But continue: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." Here it is, again, Christ; for it is: "Christ our life shall appear." And "He was manifested to take away our sins," continues John himself. That is, the apostle, the Spirit of God, does take up, and, in a great measure, anticipatingly, the question of the *Logos*, and gives us the exact opposite to the Platonic and Alexandrian doctrines, — the full divine truth in answer to all the wanderings and speculations which the cravings of need and the glimmerings of tradition had led men's hearts to suggest to themselves and to systematise.

The other form these speculations took was wilder, if not worse. There was a fulness, a *plerōma*, of Godhead, which, in spiritual abstractions, of which depth — man, church, wisdom, and other scriptural subjects formed part in male and female characters; an idea

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which entered into all Brahminical, Rabbinical, Egyptian, and Gnostic theology, the Egyptian being nearest to the Rabbinical. This *plerōma* was limited by *horos* (boundary). The *plerōma* was within; outside was *hule*, or matter. The male and female of each pair were called *suzugies*, or yoked pairs. *Sophia* (wisdom), one of the lower members of the *plerōma*, wanted to unite herself with, penetrate into by research, *bathos*, or depth, the first origin of the whole *plerōma*. She got outside the limit (*horos*), and hence this world, a mixture of matter and spirit. Christ, a new member of the *plerōma*, came out to disengage what was spiritual from what was material, and bring it back within the limit, or *horos*. This branched out into a thousand forms and speculations, useless to follow here. It connected itself with Manicheeism in Persia, and reached on to the Bulgarians and Albigenses in France and Italy. But for a long time it was the great plague of the church. They forbade to marry; commanded to abstain from meats; Christ had no real body; (there was no atonement, could not be if He was not a man;) abstinence, and disengaging spirit from matter, *that* was really saving. This error, also, the Spirit anticipated. The apostle John carefully tells us that confessing Jesus Christ *come in flesh* was essential to Christianity; that the Word was made flesh; that they had touched Him with their hands; and Paul, that all the fulness (*plerōma*) was pleased to dwell in Him; that He was not an *aeon*, as they were called, but that all the fulness (*plerōma*) of the Godhead dwelt in Him *bodily;* that every creature of God is good and to be used with thanksgiving; marriage honourable in all.

It may be asked why I refer to all this. First, the divine perfection of Scripture is interesting. It anticipated and met all the wandering speculations of the human mind. But there is another reason. The doctrines of the soul's mortality and of annihilation have their origin in these speculations; they were the doctrines of the Rabbis and Gnostics also, of whom we have been speaking, and are met by the Scriptures. Some of the Rabbis, holding a little more to Scripture, were not so

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far gone in their speculations as their fellow doctors and modern Annihilationists. They held that it was by the communication of the *neshama*, the highest kind of life, that man became a living soul; but that if he was not faithful, denied this life, he lost it.

I shall now give the passages from Rabbis and Gnostics which confirm what I have just said. First, the general idea from the Rabbis. Rabbi Abr. Seba says: "God has created three parts (souls) of men, the *nephesh*, the *ruach*, the *neshama*." In another mystic book; "Three forms of souls are in men: the first the *neshama*, the intelligent soul; the second the *ruach*, the speaking soul; the third the *nephesh*, the animal soul, which always lusts." There are other passages to which I have already alluded, but these will suffice to give the idea. The doctrine was, as I have already remarked, largely developed in the mystic Jewish writers. There were rewards suited to each. The Gnostics added their notions as to the evil of matter. The fleshly (*sarkikos*) connected itself with the soul life (*psuchikos*); translated "natural man," in Scripture, and "flesh." For Scripture, as I have said, meets all these questions, and gives the divine answer to them. Truth is one, but it meets, consequently, all error,—all that is not truth. The simple soul has only need of the truth itself,—thank God. But there is in it what meets gainsayers. So we read in Jude —"sensual (*psuchikoi*), not having the spirit." The Gnostics treated the question according to their views of matter, using Scripture, of course;—man was *hulikos*, material (*hulic*, from *hule*, matter), *choïkos*, from *choos* (1 Cor. xv. 47); "the first man," translated "earthy," literally, "of dust," from Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19; then *psuchikos*, "having a soul," and *pneumatikos*, "spiritual." But all this with them was man as man; for they held, as Origen and Grecian philosophers, that the spirit, or *neshama*, being from the upper world, could not be connected with matter without taking the cover, or embodiment of a soul,—a *ruach*, to speak with the Rabbis. This took, then, a *nephesh*, or animal soul and body. If this last soul—here was their religion—was not spiritually married to that above it, it remained a mere beast's or animal

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life, and died. The mystic Rabbis and Gnostics were exactly on the same ground here as modern deniers of immortality.

My reader will now see why I have referred to all these views. We are now exactly on the ground of modern Annihilationists, and, as will be seen, of both classes of them; for they differed then as now. The mystic Rabbis say men who have only *nephesh* die, simply. The *nephesh* goes down and remains in the grave. If it got united to the *ruach*, then it did not. "There is a garment," they said, "which subsists and which does not subsist, is seen and is not seen; with this the *psuche* (animal soul, or *nephesh*) is clothed." But the *nephesh* was not for them immortal, and where this only was, there the life of the soul was in the blood, and as an infidel would draw from Ecclesiastes:—"That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they all have one breath. So that a man hath no pre-eminence over a beast; for all is vanity. All go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." That is, indeed, all that is seen "under the sun," as to "the life of our vanity." The Positivists, as one class of infidels are called, go no further. They have not the sense to add, with the Preacher,—"Who knows the spirit of man? it goes up on high; and the spirit of the beast? it goes downward to the earth." So one modern class believe death is simple death—ceasing to exist. If a man has not received the divine life, the *neshama*, his *nephesh* dies with his body, like a beast. They have answered the "Who knows?" of the Preacher, —have taken, as the Positivists, the ignorance they are in as a proof that there is nothing beyond it. The beast ceases to exist, and so does the man: *nephesh* is all the one has, *nephesh* is all the other has; both go to dust alike. They lie in the hell like sheep, death gnaws upon them. The mystic Rabbis are found again, and the ancient Gnostics. The *nephesh* has not put on the *endūma aphtharsias*, the garment of incorruptibility and immortality. It has gone down under death, and there it lies. So in the Clementinae, iii. 20 (early Gnostic writings

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pretending to be Clement's), on Gen. ii. 7, he attributes to the breath of God, *Theou pnoee,* as an indescribable clothing of the *psuche,* its being able to be immortal.

But I shall be told that all do not hold this. They believe in resurrection, judgment, punishment, and then destruction, or, if preferred, as one of their teachers once put it, "the soul will lose its personality and individuality and pass off into its elements; for nothing is ever annihilated." It is true there are the two classes, and so there were then. Hear the Clementinae, iii. 6: "Those who have not repented will come to an end (*to telos exousi*) by the punishment (*kolaseos,* the word in Matt. xxv.) of fire. They will be put out (extinguished), becoming extinct by eternal fire: *puri aionio sbesthentes aposbesthesontai.*" Here is exactly the other class of modern Annihilationists, the intellectual and theological children of the mystic Rabbis, and the Gnostics of the early ages, the object of special warning on the part of the Spirit of God in the apostles Paul and John, as the special power of evil in these days.

If we examine Scripture, we shall see it furnish the simple truth, and, at the same time, by its statement of it, meet all these human wanderings. It speaks of *nephesh,* and *ruach,* and *neshama,* but it speaks in a way which, in a few sentences, sets aside all the speculations of men. In the leading text on the subject,—the revelation of God on the subject, we read God formed man (as a potter, *vayizar*) dust from the ground, and blew into his nostrils a breath of life (a *nishmath chaia*), and man became a living soul (a *nephesh chaia*). Here we find that it was by God's breathing this highest power of life from Himself that man became a living soul. He had formed his body before, as He saw good, and it was by the communication of life from Himself that He animated the form He had made. The animals had issued, by His will, from the earth. He had said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind (a *nephesh chaia* come forth) (*yozu*), and it was so." Not so with man. God consults solemnly as to his creation, and resolves to make man in His image, after His likeness. So God created man in His image, and gave him

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dominion, and God blessed him, and God spake to him, and gave him to know his place, his food, the beasts' food. He was the vessel of divine communications, as of the divine breath of life, and the object of divine counsels. He was to have a helpmeet for him, as an intelligent and affectionate and devout creature. God made a paradise, a dwelling for him, and for none else, gave him his easy and pleasant service, putting him into the garden.

But more than this, He put him into conscious relationship with Himself, as son of God, and put him under responsibility, giving him a law not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That would bring death in. The sea monsters were made to multiply themselves, beasts created after their kind, and we know they multiply, and it is enough. But not only God formed the human form, and animated it from Himself, — of which there is no hint as to beasts, but He formed, builded, the woman, too, by a mysterious process, which gave her a simple, and the closest, tie to the man; builded her, as the word is, Himself, — and when He had, presented her Himself to Adam.

Man is said to be of the race — the offspring — of God (Acts xvii. 28); and Adam is called son of God (Luke iii. 38). "In him we live, and move, and have our being," and, though fallen, are still recognized as made after the image of God (James iii. 9). So God, though He found him lost, could come down and walk in Paradise and have intercourse with Adam. And it is the more important to recognize that he was fallen, because it gives the distinct and definite witness, that, though death had come in, man was still the responsible being he was before, having to say to God in a double way, — the exercise of present government in the earth, and exclusion from God's place of blessing and His presence. The case of Cain shows us the same thing, the responsibility and its results being distinctly stated. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? if ill, sin (or a sin-offering; which I doubt not is the sense) lieth at the door." Man's relationship, and responsible relationship, with God is thus clearly placed before us. The

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whole history of Scripture up to his rejection of Christ is the development of it. Sin, from the entrance of lust up to hatred of God, is as fully, as sadly, brought out. He had a soul capable of affections towards God; for it was found that the mind of the flesh was enmity against God. This, mark, was the unregenerate man, the man with only a *psuche*, a *nephesh chaia*, if they will have it so. He, God's offspring, had a soul capable of feelings towards God in this relationship. Alas! enmity was his state.

But I am told that Hebrew will tell us wonders, and I have only to make some square Chaldaic letters and immortality disappears. Let us follow the Scripture use of these Hebrew words. Now I think it will be found that *neshama* is the act of respiration, or breathing. If from God in the power of the life in Him, but breathing. *Ruach*, spirit (but used for the Spirit of God, a wind, or other spirit, the spirit of man, or even of beast, in Ecclesiastes), is that by which man or beast breathes — the life which expresses itself in breathing. Hence, in the flood, all wherein was the *nishmath ruach chaiim*, the breath of the spirit of life, died, man or beast, all whose present life was sustained by breathing. *Nephesh chaia* is the actual result, in a living individual. The man or beast doing this is a *nephesh chaia*, a living soul, any living animal, man or beast. And *nephesh* so fully gives the idea of what is individual, seen and known, moving about, represented to us by bodily presence, that it is used for a dead body, because the same once-living form is there. An Israelite was not to profane himself by a dead body (*nephesh*), rightly so translated, but there is no *neshama* nor *ruach*. So we should call dead relatives by their names and show their corpses as themselves, though we well know there is no life in them. It is called *nephesh meeth*, a dead body, or simply *nephesh*. Priests were not to profane themselves by it, unless for their nearest of kin.

But the Scripture rejects the thought of the soul's not living distinct from the body, where it uses *nephesh* properly for the soul of a man, as it does, see 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22, where Elijah prays that the child's soul may

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return to him again, and the Lord heard him and it returned. On the contrary, but proving the same point, Saul says of Eutychus, "his soul is in him"; Acts xx. 10. What the creation, therefore, affords us is the most careful elaborate distinction between man and other animals. They, by God's will, springing up out of the earth, to live by breathing, and being *nephesh chaia*, a living individual being with a body, having breath, *neshama*, and a *ruach*, a life which lived by breathing, — man having all this, too, as every one on the face of the earth knows, without knowing Hebrew at all. But it teaches us that man got to be such on the earth in a totally different way from other living animals, namely, by God's breathing from Himself into him, when He had formed his body of the dust, a breath of life, and that thus he became a living soul. Hence he was the offspring (*genos*, offspring, race, kind, generation, is the only true meaning of this word, and it is so used in Acts xvii.) of God, lived and moved and had his being in Him, and was in responsible relationship with Him, intelligently subject to a law, and, alas! not only disobedient but capable of hating God, capable of such an apprehension of Him as ought to have drawn out love, but from his moral state brought out hatred; capable of receiving communications from God as in nature and place in relationship with Him. It teaches that he has, in fact, received these communications, and that God has dealt with him — as acceptable, if good, or, if sinful, as the object of a provided sin-offering when in that natural state, no question of the gift of eternal life having been raised. The whole of Scripture proceeds on this ground, exactly where the gift of eternal life is not spoken of. That is a new thing given, but man is dealt with all through as a responsible being, where it is not given, and this, whether, to use the first grand statement of it, you say sin, or, as I should, a sin-offering, lies at the door. The death of Christ, though, surely, a means, and, in fact, a needed means of it — applies not to the gift of eternal life in the first instance, but to a responsible sinner, a child of Adam.

The Old Testament saints, however obscurely, did gather the truth of the subsistence of the soul after death,

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and the resurrection, too, I admit obscurely, but they gathered it. Abraham looked for the City which hath foundations. The Preacher speaks of the spirit's returning to God who gave it. The Psalms told of the King's soul not being left in Hades, nor His body seeing corruption; and in God's presence fulness of joy (Ps. xvi.); and being satisfied when one awoke after God's likeness (Ps. xvii.). Many suffered, looking for a better resurrection; to say nothing of Job's hope shining through his wasting disease. And the Lord's judgment is pronounced on the Sadducees that they greatly erred, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God; and we read in Luke not only there was a resurrection, but "all live unto God." They are dead for man, they are not so for God. But eternal life, we are told, is "God's gift in Christ," and so only. Admitted, fully. But first, then, let it be admitted that eternal emphatically means eternal; for otherwise, after the reception of eternal life, a man may as little have immortality as before; and after its reception even, in the Scripture use of immortality, that is true, for mortal applies to his body, and it is only in resurrection that the saint ever puts on immortality. But that (the gift of eternal life in Christ alone) has nothing to do with the question of the immortality of the soul. It neither proves it nor disproves it,—save only that, in a very vague way, it suggests immortality, because the gift of eternal life to a beast would make him a wholly new kind of being. Eternal life, though above and out of the reach of man's responsibility, yet is connected with it. It is grace to a being capable of it, while remaining the same being, and dealt with on the footing of his previous responsibility. Were it given to a beast, it would have no connection at all with it as a being, or have anything to say to its previous existence. It would be itself a simply new being. But while eternal life is a new gift to man, in Christ, and comes in Christ become man, yet it is fully connected with, and refers to, man as previously existing, is, by the word acting on his mind, heart, conscience, and, while a new thing, in itself, wholly, acts in and connects itself with him to whom it is given, so that he remains the same

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person, and by it recognises and takes notice of all that he was before, as a responsible and the same person. The "I" remains the same. The nature is acted on, and by it judged and condemned, and the "I" for so acting in it.

The gift of eternal life proves, as far as it goes, an immortal soul that has relationship to God, not a beast's estate,—"made to be taken and destroyed,"—"the beasts that perish." Indeed, why should such language as I here quote be used if man was just the same? But Scripture does not so speak. It does express the darkness of man, who sees his present life disappearing and knows—nothing beyond, but even then, it carries him onward, in thought and hope,—cravings, not knowledge that the spirit returns to God who gave it. It does not know, but asks "who knows the spirit of man? It goes up above." There is not knowledge here; there is the heaving desire of what was breathed from God—not the answer to it. Man had plunged himself in darkness. Death was there,—what beyond? Hope, saintly confidence in God, a deliverer and a deliverance to come which would not leave believers without hope. But life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel. They were not *brought to light* before; mind, he does not say, did not exist. The poor and shallow sophistry that would use this to say, they began to be then, must deny that saints had life, from God too, were born of God; or that Enoch and Elijah were other than fables, or exceptions to the truth as to others, even in their souls; and Abraham's faith vain, and that God *was* the God of the dead, not of the living. They were brought to light, then, in the Gospel revelation, because they were there to be brought to light, though the incorruption had only been wondrously exhibited, the life dimly apprehended, though certainly there, and not the subject of the immediate government and revelation of God. In Christ life has become the light of men, and we have the light of life, we do not walk in darkness.

But I am told, God only has immortality. Undoubtedly. But if this use be made of it, the saint has not it. The angels are mortal, too. But both statements are

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clearly unscriptural,—see Luke, xx. 36, not to cite other passages. It is not, therefore, what the passage means. It is a false use of it. God only has, possesses, immortality in Himself, independently. But we, all men, live, move, and have their being in Him who is so. None of us have it, independently, in ourselves. All things subsist by Him. But whether a being is perishable or not by his creation, is a question of fact. The angels do not die. God only possesses in Himself immortality. On the other hand, *thneetos* (mortal) is never applied to the soul, always to the body, as Rom. vi. 12; viii. 11; 2 Cor. iv. 11; v. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54; and, which is the important point here, man is mortal when he certainly has eternal life and his soul will never die. Mortality applies to his body. He is only called mortal in the New Testament, when, by the confession of all, he has a life which can never die. That is, mortality does not apply to his soul at all, as used in the New Testament, where the truth is brought to light. So as to death. In the Old Testament, it is applied to the fact of dying, and, generally, darkness lies beyond. It is sought to use "The soul that sinneth it shall die" as meaning that the soul shall die after death, or, as the out-and-out Annihilationists would say, in death itself. These last fly in the face of Scripture, because, to say no more of it, after death comes judgment. But if it is not in death, then death does not mean ceasing to exist,—as, in fact, it never does,—but ceasing to exist in the way and relation ship men were living in. Of the second death we will speak further on. Man ceases by death to be a *nephesh chaia*,—a living soul and body in this world,—and becomes, as to this world, a *nephesh meeth*,—a dead body, or body of death. But, if we turn to the passage in Ezekiel where the expression is found, and whence it is taken, we shall see that it has nothing to do with the death of the soul as apart from the body, but a man's death as living in this world. Such a use of soul, for person, is common now. I say it is a town of fifteen thousand souls. Who misunderstands me? Israel complained that they were in trouble and cut off for their fathers' sins; that the fathers had eaten sour grapes, and the children's

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teeth were set on edge (Ezekiel xviii. 2), and, such was the law, the son bore the iniquity of the father—the iniquity of the father was brought upon the children. This should no longer be done. As the soul of the father, so the soul of the son, was Jehovah's. The soul that sinned, it should die. A devout father had a wicked son: "should he live? (verse 13) he shall *not* live; he hath done all these things; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him." So when the righteous turned away from his righteousness and committed sins, he should die in them. As the Lord said: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." "Our father," say the daughters of Zelophehad (Numb. xxvii.), "died in the wilderness; he died in his own sin." But with a wicked father, if the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live: the soul that *sinneth* it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord, and not that he should turn from his ways and live?" So if the righteous turn from righteousness, in his sins that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. What light may be thrown on the final result by the New Testament, is another question. But in Ezekiel what is spoken of is a man belonging to this world dying in his sins. Death never means ceasing to exist. It is used for other things than physical death. The woman that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. The believer has passed from death unto life. He who loves the brethren has passed from death unto life. That is, when applied to the soul, it has nothing to do with ceasing to exist, but means separation of the soul from God, as a state of a soul which was alive, as to existence, not possessing divine life, but as much alive, as a being, as when he had. So Rom. vii. 10, and verse 24, teaches us the same truth. Paul found the commandment to be to death; but he was just as much alive, as to existence, as ever. The sin unto death is physical death. In a word, death means either simple physical death as we see it, or separation from God,—not having divine life,—when a man is alive.

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We have now to see if physical death is the extinction, or even the sleep of the soul. And, further, we must search the New Testament, where these things are brought to light. First, it is stated that all live to God. This is given as a general principle, when the living state of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is declared to the Sadducees, *who held annihilation doctrine.* God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Thus far it may be reasoned that it only applies to the saints whose God God is. The Lord therefore adds: "For all live unto Him." It is a general truth not merely applicable to Abraham and those that had his faith. It is true of all: *pantes gar auto zosin.* And this is the more important because the Lord is speaking of saints. For though they were born of God, He does not rest the truth of even *their* being alive on that, but says: "God is not the God of *nekrōn,* but of *zōntōn,*—not of dead men, or bodies, but of living persons. What is the great principle on which it is founded? —"For all live unto him." No one is really dead as regards God. Accordingly, the Lord charges His disciples not to fear them that can kill the body and have no more that they can do, but Him who, after He has killed, can cast into hell. That is, death is positively declared not to be the end or cessation of existence. Death means men killing the body, and no more. Killing (*apokteino ;—thanatoō* is more to have a person put to death, as in a persecution, or judicially) and death are fully correlative, as may be seen in Rom. vii. Further, the parable of Dives and Lazarus plainly pictures the same truth. Death is no ending of existence for wicked more than for just. Hades was known to the Jews, and Hades was owned of the Lord as true.

And this leads me to the question: Is the state after death, for just or unjust, a state of unconsciousness? Is the soul asleep? The reader has the answer from Luke xvi. already. But a word more. It is never said nor hinted that the soul sleeps after death. That is all a fable. Death is called sleep or falling asleep, as to the just. But there is not the most distant suggestion that the *soul* sleeps. When Christ told His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," He explained the word. Lazarus,

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apethane, has died. "He spake" we are told, "of his death," not of his state after death. Falling asleep is a man living in this world's dying, not his state after dying. Stephen fell asleep, not Stephen's spirit, which surely was received up by Christ, as Christ's had been by the Father. Did He cease to exist, or was He unconscious? Again, the Lord said to the thief, replying exactly to the point in question: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Did that mean, he should go to sleep and know nothing? Paul thought it far better to depart and be with Christ. Did that mean, go fast asleep and know nothing? To be absent from the body and present with the Lord, — which meant, that he should be fast asleep, and not know whether the Lord was there or not! I have said the thief's case applies directly to the point. The thief, in his bright faith owning Christ to be King when all had forsaken Him, asked, thinking only of that, that the Lord would remember him when He came in (not into) His kingdom. The Lord's answer is, "You shall not wait for that happiness. I have a heavenly place for my people's souls meanwhile; *to-day* thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Which means, I promise you, you shall be fast asleep and know nothing till the kingdom comes! Are we to be mocked with such interpretations? Finally, the rich man in Hades, and the poor in Abraham's bosom were very far from being asleep. We are told it is only a picture on Jewish principles. No doubt. But it is the Lord's picture, who meant to teach us by it, and certainly not that the dead are fast asleep, but just the contrary.

But we are told it is in the second death they are extinct. But this destroys itself, for then death does not mean ceasing to exist; for if death meant ceasing to exist, there could be no second death, for the being would have ceased to exist in the first. It is all a fable, so using death. Christ has died. The saints have died, just as truly as the wicked. They may have a life which the wicked have not, but they have as truly died, and they have not become extinct nor ceased to exist. And if the wicked undergo a second death, *death* does not mean ceasing to exist; for they died the first death, and did not

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cease to exist, for they have to undergo the second. But then, we are told, the second will be—not because it is death we have seen,—and we must look to Scripture to see if that is meant by the second death, *i.e.*, if ceasing to exist is what is meant. Scripture teaches the contrary. Men at the final judgment are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. The second death is the punishment of the lake of fire,—not that punishment's ceasing by the punished ones' ceasing to exist. The punishment destroys them, we are told, as the Clementine Gnostics had told us before. But then, the lake of fire, the punishment, is the second death, not their ceasing to exist so that the punishment ceases. "They have their part in the lake of fire, which is the second death," existing there in it, having their part in it, is the time they are in the second death. Their part is not said to be punishment, ending by death, but the actual punishment of the lake of fire. So the Devil, that deceived the nations, was cast into the lake of fire, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. There is no word of the close of their existence and of torment being the second death. It is the punishment itself, of the lake of fire, which is so called, the outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This naturally leads me to the word eternal (*aionios*). We are told it does not mean eternal. If I go out of Scripture I find the fullest proof that it means eternal.* Aristotle defines it, *aien on,* always existing. I have found several others, but I quote only one passage from Philo, because it is so directly to the point, and is the Greek used at the time of our Lord: *en aioni de oute pareleluthen ouden oute mellei alla monon huphesteke,*—in eternity nothing is either past or to come, but only subsists—it is proper eternity. What we have then to look to is how *aionios,* the adjective, is used in Scripture.

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* In Homer *aion* is used for a man's life, often. It is used by Herodotus and the Attic poets so far as to say, *anepneusen aiona,* he breathed out his life, when eternity was not known. It is used for the whole time a thing subsists, for ever, as I give a child something for ever.

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Now I say that the word regularly means, in Scripture, "eternal," in the sense of contrast with any period of time. "If our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1). "To whom be honour and power everlasting" (1 Tim. vi. 16). "The God of all grace, who has called us to His eternal glory" (1 Pet. v. 10). "And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him" (Heb. v. 9). "Having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 12). "They which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. ix. 15). "Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14). "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18, and Rom. xvi. 26), which is conclusive. Now these suffice to show that the regular meaning of *aionios*, in its own plain and absolute sense, is eternal. Where it is used of punishment, in Matt. xxv., it is in purposed and express contrast used of life; the one have eternal life, the others eternal punishment. The duration of the punishment of the wicked, and of the life of the just, are expressed by the same identical term,—I may add, that of the existence of God Himself. And this term is put in contrast elsewhere with all that has a temporary duration, so that I do not see how it could be stated more plainly.

But we do not escape these efforts to elude what is plain, even by this. Punishment, we are told, does not mean punishment. It means pruning, or I know not what, cutting off a branch—*kolasis* is the word. It is used in one other place in Scripture: "Fear hath torment." Its scriptural sense is torment. So in a passage I have quoted from the Clementinae, it is used as torment. And that is its meaning—punishment, or torment. This, according to this verse, is eternal, not temporal. But the verb *kolazo* (punish) is found elsewhere in the New Testament. Acts iv. 21: "Finding nothing how they might punish them." So 2 Pet. ii. 9: "Reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished." This is the plain sense of the word.

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But the word destroy, also, is referred to, to show that though the punishment is everlasting, the punished are not. A thing hard for a simple mind to understand. For if there remain none to be punished, it is hard to conceive how punishment remains. Hard to suppose that where the Lord uses the figure, "their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," they die, or cease to exist, though the worm and the fire remain, though it be *their* worm that does not die. Still we will see if destroy means what is said. It is very hard to understand "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" to mean, that nothing exists. What is out of the presence of the Lord? What is everlasting destruction? If a thing ceases to exist, and destruction means that, it cannot be everlasting. But the truth is, on their own showing, the passage has not this sense at all. For this happens at Christ's appearing, at the beginning of the Millennium, when there is no destruction, in their sense of it, at all. They are punished with destruction, but, in that destruction, they still subsist, as is admitted. It is the time of weeping and gnashing of teeth in outer darkness (Matt. xiii.). *That* destruction is everlasting in which the punished ones subsist.

But the word does not mean this ceasing to exist. The angel of the bottomless pit is called Apollyon, or Abaddon, the destroyer, in Greek and Hebrew words. But he can destroy nothing. It is written, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help." "I am not sent but to the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel." "Destroy not thy brother with thy meat, for whom Christ died." "And through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish." "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." "Zacharias perished between the temple and the altar." "Carest thou not that we perish?" "The scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him." "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "Art thou come to destroy us?" (Mark i. 24.) In Matt. is an analogous case. They say, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" This was in the bottomless pit. But Satan, we read, is tormented in the lake of fire "for ever and

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ever"—the term used for the existence of God. Matt. x. 39, "He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." "For when they shall say Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them,"—confessedly here not ceasing to exist. 1 Tim. vi. 9, "Foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." "They perish in the gainsaying of Core." "So the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished."

The word, then, is used for ruin, moral or physical. It is false to say it means simply a ceasing to exist. It may mean a ruin of the state in which a thing existed; hence the driving a human being from the Lord's presence, or his present state of alienation from it; and it is so used. I doubt a single passage could be found which proves it means causing to cease to exist.* I have known Annihilationists object to the name, because nothing can be annihilated. But if so, their whole theory falls to the ground. It is merely making a physical thing of the soul, dispersed, then, into its elements, instead of moral ruin for which, as to the soul, the word is certainly used, as we have seen. I have cited passages where *apollumi*, *apoleia*, and *olethron* are used. The root is all the same. The statements made on these subjects set aside one another. If death be ceasing to exist, there can be no judgment after. It is in vain to say they are raised; for if they have ceased to exist there is no one to raise. Nor can punishing, or destruction, in the sense of ceasing to exist, come afterwards.

My object has been, to go through the words by which, or as to which, Annihilationists seek to puzzle simple minded Christians,—not to reason out the subject. I add only two or three words to show why their fair words and smooth speeches do not attract me, where they seem fairest. We have seen that the morally dead and the lost may be alive, and that Scripture so speaks. But if the soul be simply mortal, with the body, and there is no

* I had thought from memory, there was a passage "I create and I destroy," but I cannot find it in the Concordance. I am told it is from Handel.

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life, out of Christ, beyond this, where do sinners get the life they are punished in till burned out? It must be from Christ, for creation has not given it to them. That is, they get, not their wicked life, in which they are fallen, and enemies to God, but a new life of Christ, in which to be punished in another world. I do not see the moral sense or attractiveness of this doctrine. Further, I understand an immortal soul that is at enmity with God and excluded from Him, though once formed to own Him, being for ever miserable. But why God, out of pure pleasure, should keep alive a soul to torment it for a time, only to burn it out at the end, for no possible effect, I cannot conceive. It does not alarm men now. For tell them that they will simply perish in the end, and it is, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The infidel finds it a very comfortable and reasonable doctrine. It is in vain to say, it is not honest to say, that men fear total destruction and perishing more than any thing, for its advocates resist eternal punishment because it is dreadful to think of. They know it is not the same thing. No doubt man does not like dying or perishing, in itself, as to this world, where he is alive,—but to come to an end in a future one, where there is only torment, he likes very well.

My horror of this doctrine is, its weakening our sense of the nature of sin, of our responsibility, and of the atonement. If sin means eternal exclusion from God's presence, it is dreadful enmity against God now, exclusion from God then. If death is the only wages of sin, Christ had no more to suffer for me. Nay, if I am a Christian, He had nothing to suffer, if I die before the Lord comes. I have paid the wages myself. If it be only some temporary punishment I had incurred, He had only that to bear. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me" has lost its force. It is in vain to say, He gives us life. He can, in itself, quicken without dying. If He died, He died for my sins, and bore them. If death be the wages, millions of saints have paid them. And if a partial punishment be all I had to bear, it is all Christ had to bear. The sense I have of sin and its desert is not, being forsaken of God, shut out

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from Him when I can know what it is, but a temporary punishment, a quantum of offence,—which is all I have to think of, and all Christ had to bear, if anything.

It is alleged, I have been told since I wrote this, that there is another view held, namely,—that the soul, having its life in Christ is in Christ when a man dies, and is, so to speak, lost in Him, and then at the resurrection becomes a conscious person again. This is a mere notion, and a foolish one too. It destroys not consciousness nor has anything to do with sleeping, but personality. It applies only to saints, and as to them is in direct violation of the testimony of Scripture, which attributes personality to the saints when gone hence. "To-day shalt thou be with me." There are the distinct persons. Again, "present with the Lord." There must be a distinct person to be present with the Lord. And so with other texts. That our life is hid with Christ in God, the only allusion to an idea approaching it in Scripture, proves, as far as it goes, the contrary; because it is spoken of saints living on the earth, where their personality is unquestionable. But the best answer to it is, it is a mere human invention. In the hiding in God we are associated with Christ. He also now is hid in God,—I suppose a conscious person,—and it is in contrast with our appearing to others when He appears, not to any living personality in which we enjoy His presence. It is, we have seen, spoken of our present state, when living personality is unquestionable.

There is another word I have omitted to notice, *basanizo*, and *basanismos*, torment. This, we are told, comes from a Lydian stone used to test gold. Very likely, but the conclusion that, therefore, the words, when passed into common use, meant "to prove," and not "to torment," is simply false. Thus, Matt. viii. 6: "My servant lieth sick, grievously tormented." What has that to do with the lapis Lydius? 2 Pet. ii. 8, "He [Lot] vexed his righteous soul." In Rev. ix. 5, the verb and the noun are used for the torment of a scorpion's sting. Matt. xiv. 24: "tormented by the waves." So of the men, Mark vi. 49,—showing how the etymological meaning was wholly forgotten for the fact of torment.

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Rev. xiv. 11: those who worship the beast are tormented for ever,—have no rest. Rev. xviii. 15, we read of Babylon's torment; xx. 10, the devil is tormented day and night. Is he put to the proof as gold by the lapis Lydius? Matt. xviii. 24, the unforgiving servant delivered to the tormentors. The attempt to deny that *basanismos*, because that in its etymology it is borrowed from the lapis Lydius, means torment, in the ordinary sense of the word, is a mere fraudulent effort to pervert the plain fact.

There are a number of Hebrew words out of which something has been attempted to be made, in one tract I have seen, as *acharith*, *tikvah*, *opher*, *etzem* and *otzem*, *tzelem*, and others; but what is said of them does not really deserve any notice. It astounds somewhat a person who has the smallest acquaintance with Hebrew, or can use a dictionary and concordance. But I recall the reader's attention to the fact, that "this mortal" is said distinctly of the body, not of the soul. "This mortal shall put on immortality," "our mortal bodies" and the like. That consequently we read of killing the body, and having no more that they can do. We read of God, as the "Father of spirits"; "the God of the spirits of all flesh"; and "that formeth the spirit of man within him." The fact that the angels do not die and are not mortal is the plain proof that it is a false use of *God only having immortality*, using it to prove men have not immortal souls; for the same argument would prove angels were also mortal,—which is false. But of this I have spoken. It is immortality in and of Himself.

It has been attempted to say, there is no appeasement of wrath with God. The words *ilaskesthai, ilasmos, ilasterion* all have exactly this sense. They meet the qualities or attributes, in God, which are necessary and must be maintained or He is not God as He is, or not God at all, to maintain what He is, His holiness and righteousness. But He is supreme in love.

I press, too, on my reader that when a man receives eternal life, he takes notice of all his past evil and sin as that for which he is responsible. If a beast received eternal life,—and the theory makes animal life the same

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in all,—could a beast hold himself responsible for all his previous conduct as a guilty, responsible soul? Are they to be judged as in their nature capable of guiltily rejecting Christ? If not, the whole theory is a disgraceful fraud on our minds. If *athanasia* was literally, as to the fact, to be applied only to God when Paul wrote it, then the saints who had got eternal life had no immortality even then, or else mortality applied only to their bodies, which is the fact in Scripture, for, as I have said, the saints are spoken of as mortal, like the rest. Thus it is evident that mortal, corruptible, death applies to the state in which we are down here as men living on the earth, where death is entered by sin, and to the separation of soul and body. It is, as Scripture speaks, killing the body, and has nothing to do with the soul A person who, in his soul, has eternal life, has not *athanasia* more than another,—has still to put it on. That is, it has nothing to do with the dying nature of the soul, or the contrary. It means that it cannot cease to exist in the state in which it exists at present; not that it has it in itself, as God, but that is its condition by His will. What puts on immortality is what was liable to death,—this body which could be killed in a saint as in a sinner, for the saint lives because Christ lives,—his soul cannot die more than Christ now; yet he is as mortal as the sinner, and so, in fact, did Christ die. Did he cease to exist, or did He not truly die? Does it cease to be true that God only hath immortality, when we are raised,—for then we certainly have *athanasia?*

When I find all these efforts to falsify the use of words, I know the source of this doctrine, and that no lie is *of the truth.*

B. M.

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No. XI.

SELF-JUDGMENT.

"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but *now* mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself."—Job xlii. 5, 6.

"For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged."—1 Cor. xi. 31.

IT is a common saying that "self-preservation is the first law of nature," and, without doubt, nature *does* prompt self to preserve itself in every condition and circumstance. *Naturally* man cares for self before any other object, and whether it be in connection with his life, his possessions, his ease, or his character, self has the first place in his thoughts and affections. Even the law of God fully recognises this, for (addressing man as it does in his unregenerate state, 1 Tim. i. 9, 10) it says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as *thyself*." Greater love than this God's law does not exact from man to his fellow.

Now, as self is a selfish and a jealous being, justification is its first impulse when accusation or conviction is brought against it. *Naturally*, if it can avoid it, self will never condemn, but will always justify self; and thus self-judgment is a work not of nature, nor of willingness, but of compulsion and constraint.

Self-judgment, however, lies at the very basis of Christianity in the individual soul, and it is the inseparable condition of a walk in communion with God.

I think we may say that self-judgment is an effect of the conscience of a man (sinner or saint) being brought into the presence of a higher standard of righteousness than it has hitherto apprehended; for although self-judgment is a spontaneous act of the conscience of man,—as distinguished from his being judged by another,—yet self cannot judge self apart from a standard, and that standard or measure must be outside self, and to be of

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any value to the soul in the way of comparison, it must also be altogether above it. True self-judgment is therefore always in the presence of God, and of His revelation or word, for here alone a *perfect* and *unchanging* standard is to be found. No judgment of self by any lower standard can avail either to arouse the conscience or to raise the condition of a soul.

Indeed we may say that self-examination or self-judgment by any lower than a divine standard, must always partake of, and end in self-justification. Thus, for instance, if the uneasy conscience or dissatisfied soul commences a comparison of its present with a past condition, whatever may be the discovery as to advancement, or declension, it cannot profit or raise the soul above its *own* either present or past experience. So we find with Job's case, his remembrance of what he had been in the past, gave him no power in the present (chaps. xxix., xxx., etc.). He was measuring himself by himself, and though dissatisfied enough with his present, yet he boasted in his past condition, and was proved after all to be "righteous in his own eyes" (chap. xxxi. 1). But no sooner does he apprehend the righteousness and the glory of God than self is judged and abhorred.

Again, the examination of self by comparison with others can only bring the same imperfect results; for though on the one hand self in me, may in a degree be rebuked, and judged in some respects by the higher tone and character of life in another, yet on the other hand I see failure in them, and then there is the tendency to say in the heart, "I am not so bad after all. Though he exceeds me in this, I excel him in that, and our trials and temptations are not the same"; and so self, whether in me or my brother, is excused and justified. Paul sums them all up in 1 Cor. x. 12, saying of those who "measure themselves by themselves," and "compare themselves among themselves," that they "are *not* wise." This, however, is the tendency of the natural heart, and of a human religion. Human rather than divine excellence is set up as the standard, and so in Romanism, "Saints," so called, are the examples set before the soul, as in them may be found a righteousness attainable by

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human nature, and infirmities offering an excuse for the failures of the flesh.

But how different and how perfect is the work of self-judgment when produced by a divine and unchanging standard, that is, by the conscience of man, a sinner, being brought into the presence of God, the Holy God. Genesis iii., Exodus xx., Isaiah vi., Luke v., are well-known instances of what is wrought when God is seen in His holiness, and self is judged in its sinfulness before Him. "I was afraid"; "Let not God speak with us"; "Woe is me"; "Depart from me," are the varied utterances, telling the same tale, that conscience had been brought into the presence of a righteousness which it had not before apprehended. And in the case of a sinner unreconciled to God, or of *unjudged flesh* in any, whether sinner or saint, the sense of this righteousness is insupportable, and the conscience seeks to escape from its presence. And this work still goes on when the souls and consciences of men are brought into contact with the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel of Christ (Rom. i. 17). A sinner is proved to be a sinner by this very Gospel, gracious and blessed as the message is (2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Tim. i. 15), and if on the one hand the grace of God, when learned in the cross of Christ, brings peace and salvation to the broken and convicted heart, on the other hand it is the unwavering righteousness of God's judgment of sin in the person of His Son, which breaks and convicts the heart, and shuts it up to this *one*, this *only* way of salvation.

But it is self-judgment in the believer that we rather desire to speak of and to press upon the consciences of our readers. We have said that it is an inseparable condition from a walk in communion with God, and this is the question which is so important for the soul of every Christian.

God has brought His people to HIMSELF. It is not merely salvation from death and judgment which they obtain by the Lord Jesus Christ, but they are brought "TO GOD" (1 Peter iii. 18). This has ever been God's purpose in redemption, that man might so have fellowship with Him, and walk with Him. He brought Israel

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to Himself (Ex. xix. 4); but they refused Him. In that nation it was tried, and proved that unregenerate man, however favoured, could not have fellowship with God. The mighty signs and wonders by which His presence with them and favour towards them were evidenced, never touched their hearts, nor gained their affections. No mere exhibition of the grace or of the power of God can alter man, or give him power *in himself.* "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Man to have fellowship and communion with God "must be born again" (John iii.), and "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," God has shown how His purpose is now fulfilled. In the death of Christ we learn how the believer's sin, and sins are judged, forgiven, and put away (Rom. viii. 3; 1 Peter ii. 24; Eph. i. 7; Heb. ix. 26); the "old man crucified with him" (Rom. vi. 6); "the body of the flesh destroyed" (Col. ii. 11). In His resurrection is declared the way in which He becomes the quickening Spirit, and thus imparts to the believer a new life, a divine nature, in the power of which he can and does have fellowship with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, the Lord (see John v. 26; 1 Cor. xv. 45; Eph. i. 19, 20, and ii. 5, 6; 1 John i. 3).

Now it is this new standing, this nearness to God, which gives the believer power for self-judgment. The believer now knows God, is no longer in ignorance of Him or of His will. Not only by outward revelation through the Word, but by the inward witness of the Spirit hath He "shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). "We *have* the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16). In Christ, the believer is *always* in the presence and power of divine righteousness, for "we are made the righteousness of God in Him."

For self-judgment the believer has therefore a perfect rule and measure, *and the ability to use it.* He has only to ask himself, "How has God judged, how has He examined, by what has He tested my nature, my thoughts, my words, my deeds"? "Do I know peace

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with God, and have I tasted that the Lord is gracious, even He who bore my sins in His own body on the tree? If so, do I desire to know communion with Him"? "Then let me ever in honesty and sincerity bring myself, and all that is within me, to the light of His presence, and by the Word of His grace test it, and judge it, even as He has done already. God knows me through and through, and He has given me ability to know myself through and through. Deceitful and desperately wicked as my heart is, yet He has searched it, and I can search it too, and may and should detect every motive and thought, and sift them and judge in their true character in His sight. What will bear His eye, and the judgment of His Word, I may allow ; and whatever will not, let me condemn it that I may be of one mind with Him out of whose presence the soul can have no true rest,—the heart no joy."

True self-judgment then is the judgment of myself as God has judged and still judges me.—Christ as the revelation of God, in His love,—His righteousness and His glory, is the rule, and touch-stone for my conscience : the Word and the Spirit the means and power for applying Him thus.

Faith in, and the practical application of the word of God to the soul is what we need. The Word which tells us of the infinite grace of our God, tells us also of His Holiness. And the same revelation which gives the believer to know his completeness, his standing in Christ, beseeches him to walk worthy of his calling.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way, by taking heed thereunto according to thy word" (Ps. cxix. 9) ; "clean through the word" (John xv. 3) ; "the washing of water by the word" (Eph. v. 26) ; also Heb. iv. 12, 13, and 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17, show us the fulness and value of the word of God as a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path, and the searcher of our hearts.

Now we must again repeat, that without self-judgment there can be *no* communion with God. Faith may have believed the Gospel, and a soul may know forgiveness of sins and peace with God through the precious blood of

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Christ; but his fellowship and communion with God depend upon his judgment of self, and confession of sin. It is one thing to be a believer and a child of God; it is another thing to walk in the light of His presence, in the *sense* of relationship, and of unhindered communion. We may often hear Christians, when spoken to in admonition about some inconsistency in their course, reply that they are "happy in the Lord," thus implying that the thing rebuked does not hinder communion. But what such really mean is, that they know their sins are forgiven, and do not doubt that they are saved. This, however, is not communion — this is not the happiness, the joy in God which He desires for His saints. It is the common portion of God's children to know forgiveness of sins, indeed no one can call God, Father, who knows it not; but communion, fellowship, confidence, gladness, joy in His presence, are something more, and these cannot be attained or enjoyed apart from self-judgment.

"Can two walk together except they be agreed"? (Amos iii. 3.) Can parent and child go on happily together if there be controversy between them? The nearer the relationship and the greater the love which exists between *two*, the more sensitive will their hearts be to any difference of judgment or mind. And how infinitely true is this of us in our dealings with God our Father. "His divine power *hath* given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. i. 3); and His desire is that we "may stand perfect and complete in *all* his will" (Col. iv. 12); and it is in His presence, in Whom is no "darkness at all," that it is our privilege, as it is also in our power, to judge and bring into light the secret and dark corners of our hearts. And what growth would there be in our souls, what power and what testimony in our lives, if as the light of God shone in we opened up more willingly these dark and hidden things. *He* knows that they are there, and we know many of them ourselves, but alas! we often close our hearts, desiring to keep within us, or around us, things which will not bear His judgment. "Happy is that man that condemneth not himself in that thing

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which he alloweth." Happy indeed; and one may add, that none other is truly happy.

It is blessed to realise that, for Christians, self-judgment is not a *legal* exercise, but an evidence of that liberty which belongs to them as children of God. There should be no sense of bondage for the quickened soul, in having to detect and subdue things which make against its apprehension and enjoyment of the love and presence of its Saviour and God; and on the other hand how wonderful is the grace of God who has thus given to His people the power of meeting and overcoming by self-judgment all the infirmities, temptations, and conflicts of nature and flesh, which unjudged must separate their souls from Him, but when judged prove the intense reality of the things so freely given to them of God, and the abounding grace and power of Him with whom they have to do. For we can truly say that our very weakness, and the infirmities of our nature when dealt with in self-judgment, so far from hindering communion, cause the grace of God to be more precious to the soul, and the things which seem to be most against us, prove to be for us, giving us, as they do, experiences of God which we should otherwise be ignorant of; for weakness, infirmity, and temptation in themselves are not sin in the believer, though they be evidence of sin in the flesh. It is only as they are allowed, excused, or justified that they defile the soul, and destroy communion.

1 Cor. xi. 28 teaches us how inseparably self-judgment and communion are linked in connection with the table of the Lord. It is there the communion of saints in Christ is openly witnessed, and so each one is to approach in the spirit of self-judgment, lest by the presence of one with a defiled conscience he eats judgment to himself, and destroys communion in the assembly. "Let a man examine himself, and *so* let him eat." For our God is a Holy God, and "the Lord shall judge his people." Sin must be dealt with, if not by ourselves then by Him; but He has said, "If we would judge ourselves, we should *not* be judged," and this is the way that He has chosen for us, and that we should choose for ourselves.

It may be said that all have not equal discernment

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even of their own hearts, and that we must not judge one another in this matter. This is quite true, but it is not about judging one another, but about judging ourselves that we have been speaking. Every quickened soul can and must judge itself in some measure; what, however, all must own is that the measure is usually low and insufficient. In divine exercises as in all other things "practice makes perfect." It is "by *reason of use*," that our consciences become "exercised to discern both good and evil." That "all seek their own" is too true of Christians now-a-days, but the perfect Exemplar remains the same, unchanged and unchangeable, for the soul that desires to know the secret of communion with God. Christ, who "pleased not himself," could say, "I do always the things that please him." With Him, self—precious and perfect as He was—was always denied, and His own will disallowed, and thus "his judgment was just." B.

PSALM CXXXIX.

*** I would add a word or two to the foregoing paper. If there ever was one time more than another in which the duty and privilege of self-judgment were important, that time, as it seems to me, is *now*. The night far spent and the morning star soon to appear, how little are we, practically, like unto those that wait for their Lord!

In perusing the paper, I trust with profit to my own soul, it struck me that the subject might be looked at from two different points of view:—1st. We are pilgrims and our feet tread the earth (as in 1 Cor. and Pet.). We know whose we are and whom we are called to serve; and we have power and responsibility (in the new nature) to walk in the light, and to cease from all the unfruitful works of darkness. Examining ourselves to see whether we are consistent with our professed calling, there is no need for God to judge us, lest we be condemned with the world. Our doing so is part of our privilege (it is priestly, too), and is an expression of our individual identification of ourselves, through the Spirit, with the glory of God. But

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2ndly (and this sets its seal on the other), as being in spirit in heaven and in fellowship with the Father and with the Son Jesus Christ, it is impossible for any of us to feed on and enjoy the beauty and the glory of the blessed Lord, without the consciousness being produced in us of the contrasts between Himself and us. Would we wish to lower Him to what we are? Never! no, never! Because He *was* the perfect one and very contrast to what we were, therefore He could give Himself a ransom for us. He *is*—how perfect now, all-glorious in light! and we see in Him the character and nature of our acceptability, and His fitness up there, to secure all for us, poor mortals that we are! whose inward weakness and whose outward circumstances need such an One on high. And we know that He *will come* forth soon, and then what we are in spirit now (cleared from all guilt and accepted sons of God) will be made evident. But how could a John, or a Paul, or a Peter, have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, without that fellowship producing, in him, the consciousness of the contrasts between them and that Lord?

EDITOR.

No. XII.

PSALMS.

Book 1. (Psalm i.—xli.) In Book 1, the Remnant is not looked at as driven out of Jerusalem; hence *covenant* mercies with Jehovah, are all through referred to.

Psalm i. The righteous man, the Remnant in Israel.

Psalm ii. The Messiah, the Son of God, King of Israel, but rejected.

Psalm iii.—vii. The state and feelings of the Remnant, in consequence of His rejection.

Psalm viii. Exaltation to the higher place of Son of Man, consequent on His rejection as Messiah.

Psalm ix.—x. The historical condition of the Remnant in the last days,—Jehovah's judgments being their deliverance.

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Psalm xi.—xv. Express the Spirit's giving them expressions suited to their state and feeling in that condition.

Psalm xvi. Messiah coming and taking His place among them, as trusting Jehovah, and having Jehovah as His object; it leads up to heavenly joy.

Psalm xvii. An appeal to righteousness, ending in glory.

Psalm xviii. The suffering Messiah the centre of all God's ways, from Egypt till the Royalty of Messiah.

Psalm xix. The heavens and the law.

Psalm xx. The Remnant prophetically see Messiah in His trouble.

Psalm xxi. The answer in His heavenly exaltation, the result being judgment on men, who are His enemies.

Psalm xxii. His suffering as forsaken of Jehovah; the result being grace, traced on to the Millennium.

Psalm xxiii. Jehovah recognised as Shepherd, Messiah having taken His place with the sheep.

Psalm xxiv. Messiah is Jehovah, entering into the temple in glory and after His victory over all His enemies.

Psalm xxv. The foundation being thus laid in the place which Messiah has taken, you get the confession of sin.

Psalm xxvi.—xxxix. We get the moral exercises of the Remnant, which follow from it, amongst the rest the blessing of forgiveness.

Psalm xl. The foundation laid in Messiah undertaking to do the will of God, and His patient endurance in going through it.

Psalm xli. The blessing of the man who understands the position of the poor (the sheep).

Book 2. (Psalm xlii.—lxxii.) The Remnant are seen driven out, and, unless viewed in the future, God, not Jehovah (His covenant name), is referred to. The consequence, however, being that what is in God Himself is more deeply learned and desired.

Psalm xlii. Casting out by the heathen.

Psalm xliii. Casting out by the ungodly Jewish nation.

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Psalm xliv.—xlviii. A series extending from their first appeal to God, to their re-establishment in Zion, Psalm xlix. being a general moral commentary on it.

Psalm xliv. They plead ancient favour and present faithfulness, and their extreme distress.

Psalm xlv. Messiah is introduced, the mighty deliverer.

Psalm xlvi. Consequently God rises above all the waterfloods to give blessing to Israel in Zion, and the covenant relationship of Israel with Jehovah is re-established.

Psalm xlvii. Establishes His dominion over the heathen.

Psalm xlviii. Zion is the settled centre of the blessing. What they had heard in xliv., they now see with their eyes.

Psalm xlix. (Which is a comment on the preceding), shews how man's glory is set aside, and all his pretensions come to nothing before God, who is the deliverer of all those who trust in Him.

Psalm l. The great principles in display of God's judgments.

Psalm li. Israel's confession of sin, looking for mercy and cleansing, and owning it in its root in nature and its results in the rejection of Messiah.

Psalm lii.—lxvii. The Remnant's exercises of soul, in which Israel becomes the blessing of the nations.

Psalm lxviii. Messiah ascended and exalted, is the bringer in of the blessing.

Psalm lxix. The full depth of Messiah's sufferings in connection with the Remnant.

Psalm lxx. Appeal from the sufferings.

Psalm lxxi. Carrying it on to the deliverance of Israel, when their strength is all but gone.

Psalm lxxii. Messiah is established as the Son of David.

Book 3. (Psalm lxxiii.—lxxxix.) Takes up Israel as well as Judah; but only *the Remnant* in Israel. Hence it refers to all the history of Israel from the beginning, the external attacks against them as a nation in the latter days, and looks for the judgment of the kings of the

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earth assembled against Jerusalem. It goes through the whole history of Israel, ending in God's electing love in David, which He is to make good. In it we find reference to Israel's responsibility, but his reappearing like the new moon; the judgment of the judges of the earth; the destruction of the last confederacy, so that Jehovah's name shall be known.

Psalm lxxiii. Takes Israel up thus, and distinguishes the Remnant, and weighs the momentary prosperity of the ungodly as the trial of the Remnant's faith, who cannot understand it until it goes into the sanctuary of God, who judges them at the end. Meanwhile he (the Remnant) trusts in the Lord's guidance and care.

Psalm lxxiv. The destroying inroad of the adversary in Mount Zion and the Temple, and the appeal of the poor (the Remnant) to God's delivering hand.

Psalm lxxv. Messiah takes up the congregation, and judgment into His hand.

Psalm lxxvi. God is made known in Judah and Israel, and *judges the kings of the earth.*

Psalm lxxvii. The godly man (? the Remnant) goes back in his sorrow and trouble to the long known, early faithfulness of the Most High to Israel.

Psalm lxxviii. He goes through the whole history of Israel's failure under the law, and resorts to the principle of God's electing love for blessing.

Psalm lxxix. The Remnant sees the anger of God, and the laying waste of Jerusalem by the heathen, founding an appeal to God upon it.

Psalm lxxx. Replaces Israel under the Shepherd care of God as in the wilderness,

Psalm lxxxi. while Israel is judged under responsibility, and reappearing as the new moon.

Psalm lxxxii. God judges the judges of the earth and even in Israel.

Psalm lxxxiii. God is called upon to judge the last confederacy, that men may know Jehovah is Most High over all the earth.

Psalm lxxxiv. They rejoice in the thought of going up to Jerusalem.

Psalm lxxxv. Being restored to the land they look

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now for the full blessing, according to the full blessing of Millennial rest.

Psalm lxxxvi. The personal sentiment of the godly man looking, before it comes, for the blessing in the midst of the sorrow.

Psalm lxxxvii. God founds Zion,—counts the redeemed to her as her children, and she is the boast of the restored Remnant.

Psalm lxxxviii. The utter desolation and condemnation under the law, and looking for deliverance.

Psalm lxxxix. This, on the contrary, refers to mercies and centres them all in Messiah.

Book 4. (Psalm xc.—cvi.) In connection with Israel. The bringing in the Only Begotten into the world.

Psalm xc. He turns back to the original unfailing security of an unchangeable Jehovah, their dwelling-place in all generations, and looking for the manifestation of His work.

Psalm xci. Messiah takes the God of Israel as His God, and the promises are thereupon conferred on Him.

Psalm xcii. The millennial celebration of the Most High, consequent on the above.

Psalm xciii. Jehovah reigns and the throne is established in holiness and peace, after all the raging of man.

Psalm xciv. The cry in distress, for Jehovah's coming in vengeance, and then He must set aside the power of wickedness.

Psalm xcv. He calls on Israel to come for Him as their God (to the Jews).

Psalm xcvi. The testimony goes out to the heathen, because Jehovah is coming.

Psalm xcvii. He is actually coming in the power of His reign.

Psalm xcviii. He is come, and remembered His truth to Israel and set aside their enemies.

Psalm xcix. He is come, and sitting between the cherubim in Jerusalem on earth.

Psalm c. The heathen are called to come up and praise there.

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Psalm ci. Messiah states how He will rule the world when He gets it.

Psalm cii. Is perhaps the most striking expression of the sufferings and rejection of Messiah, and the inquiry is raised, if Zion is to be restored, what is to become of Messiah who has been cut off? And the answer is, the Eternal Divinity of Christ.

Psalm ciii. Forgiveness and healing for the Remnant thus restored, or the blessing of Jehovah.

Psalm civ. Praise to Jehovah as the faithful Creator, but who rejects sinners out of the earth.

Psalm cv. Thanks to Jehovah as the One who having given unconditional promises to Abraham, acts in grace to Israel. (The previous book does not go back beyond Moses).

Psalm cvi. Gives the full confession of the constant sin of Israel, in spite of mercies, and looks now for the accomplishment of that mercy; and grace celebrating it, therefore, as enduring for ever.

Book 5. (Psalm cvii.—cl.)

Psalm cvii. Celebrates the bringing back of redeemed but scattered Israel from all lands as a testimony of the goodness of Jehovah and His mercy enduring for ever.

Psalm cviii. Counts upon God with a fixed heart for triumph among the nations, through the strength and help of God.

Psalm cix. The desolation of the apostate, but God's care of the poor who trust Him.

Psalm cx. Jehovah exalts Messiah at His right hand until He sets Him in Zion, as Melchizedec.

Psalm cxi. Specially celebrates Jehovah for His works, Who sent redemption to His people and sets forth the fear of Jehovah as the beginning of wisdom.

Psalm cxii. Hallelujah! Assures the godly Remnant of his place in blessing with Jehovah on the earth while the desire of the wicked shall perish.

Psalm cxiii. Hallelujah. Celebrates the praise of God for His condescension to the poor of His people, whom He has exalted.

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Psalm cxiv. Celebrates the presence of Jehovah in the midst of His people.

Psalm cxv. Appeals to Jehovah for the glory of His own name in contrast to idols. And calls on Israel and those that fear the Lord to trust Him. Israel are the blessed of Jehovah.

Psalm cxvi. Rehearses how Jehovah brought them up when they were at the grave's mouth, and almost in despair.

Psalm cxvii. Calls upon the nations to praise Jehovah because of His goodness to Israel.

Psalm cxviii. Celebrates Jehovah for the deliverance of Israel, but enters into the detail of the nations encompassing them, Satan's hostility in it, and Jehovah's chastening seen in it all. Then the gates of righteousness are open, and Messiah is owned as head of the corner, and blessed as coming in the name of the Jehovah, in the day which the Jehovah hath made.

Psalm cxix. The law is written on their hearts and they confess that they had gone astray.

Psalm cxx.—cxxxiv. The songs of degrees. A progressive celebration of the course of the Lord's ways from the time of their crying in distress till they bless Jehovah in the sanctuary.

Psalm cxxxv. Praising Jehovah in contrast with all idols. Proved in His deliverance of Jacob, and His dwelling in his midst.

Psalm cxxxvi. Still celebrates the mercy that endures for ever, connects it with creation and His dealings in favour of Israel.

Psalm cxxxvii. The judgment of Edom and Babylon.

Psalm cxxxviii. Praises the endurance of mercy for ever, in connection with Jehovah's care for the lowly pious one.

Psalm cxxxix. They have been searched out by Jehovah, from whom it is impossible to escape. But the pious can trust Him as a faithful Creator, for good.

Psalm cxl. Looks for deliverance, from (by?) Jehovah, on the ground of God's own character as contrasted with the wicked.

Psalm cxli. Looks to Jehovah to keep the hearts and

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lips, that there may be no connection with the wicked whom He will judge.

Psalm cxlii. Is the expression of confidence in Jehovah, so that trouble is only the occasion of looking to Him for refuge.

Psalm cxliii. The extreme of distress is urged as a motive for God's interference.

Psalm cxliv. Urges the worthlessness of man as a reason for God's not delaying judgment, by which His people shall be brought into full blessing.

Psalm cxlv. A dialogue between Messiah and the blessed remnant in the Millennium, and celebrating Jehovah's praise.

Psalm cxlvi. Hallelujah. Unfolding His character in His dealings with Israel in the last days.

Psalm cxlvii. Still praise to Jehovah for His great kindness and condescension to His people, and that He who governs all creation has given His word to Jacob only.

Psalm cxlviii. Calls upon all creation, from angels downwards, to praise Jehovah who has exalted His people Israel.

Psalm cxlix. Praises Jehovah in the congregation of Israel, and of the saints to whom God has given power to destroy their heathen enemies.

Psalm cl. A summons to universal praise to Jehovah.

"TUSCA."

N°. XIII.

POETRY.

"If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because . . . I go to the Father."—JOHN xiv.

LORD, we rejoice that Thou art gone
To sit upon the Father's throne;
And, all Thy days of suffering o'er,
Thou now shalt weep and grieve no more.

Lord, we delight Thy path to trace,
So full of wisdom, power and grace;
To sit as learners at Thy feet,
And find Thy loving words so sweet.

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The desert and the mountain brow,
Garden and lake are sacred now;
Each spot Thy holy footsteps trod—
The Son of man, the Christ of God.

We love to muse on Olivet,
The guest-room we shall ne'er forget,
Nor thy dark vale, Gethsemane!
The groans, and sweat, and agony!

But how our hearts again, again
Upon Thee on the cross remain;
Searching the heights and depths to know
Of love, e'en greater than Thy woe!

O wondrous cross! O blessed tree!
We glory now in nought but thee;
Where God's own Lamb was crucified,
And, for our sins a ransom, died!

We love to look within the tomb
Thy vict'ry robbed of all its gloom;
The stone, the guilt—all rolled away,
Witness that death has lost its prey.

We joy to see Thee, Lord, arise
Triumphant through the opening skies;
And hear the shouts of rapture there,
Thee worthy,—Thee alone,—declare!

Worthy to sit upon the throne!
Worthy to reign as Lord, alone!
The Lamb of God for sinners slain,
Worthy at God's right hand to reign!

Lord, we rejoice that Thou art there,
In spirit we Thy triumphs share;
But perfect will our rapture be,
(When we Thy face in glory see)
Or—When we shall share them all with Thee.

D.

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O God, Thou art my God."—PSALM lxiii. 1.

SHALL I distrust Thee, O my God?
Whom can I trust but Thee?
I rest upon Thy faithful word;
I call Thee Abba, Saviour, Lord;
For Thou art *God* to me.

Creator! I Thy creature owe
All that I am to Thee;
Thy hands each day each gift bestow,
Provide for all my wants below;
For Thou art *God* to me.

Saviour! how blessed is that name!
Salvation is from Thee.
'Twas from Thy bosom Jesus came,
To bear my sins, and curse, and shame,
For Thou art *God* to me.

"Abba," my Father—God Thou art,
Abba! I cry to Thee;
Among Thy children is my part,—
I have the witness in my heart,
Thou "Abba" art to me.

All that I have or hope to have,
I have my God from Thee:
He who for me His own Son gave,
And raised as First-born from the grave,
Is God of Love to me.

Yes, I will trust Thee, I will cleave
All my life long to Thee:
No more, by doubts Thy spirit grieve
But all thy promises believe,
A God of truth to me.

D

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THE "MAN OF SORROWS."[a]

O! ever homeless Stranger,
Thus dearest Friend to me:
And outcast in the manger
That Thou might'st with us be.

How rightly rose the praises
Of heaven, that wondrous night
When shepherds hid their faces
In brightest angel-light:

More just those acclamations,—
Than when the glorious band
Chanted earth's deep foundations,
Just laid by God's right hand.

Come now and view that manger:
The Lord of glory see,
A houseless, homeless stranger
In this poor world for thee.

'*To God in the highest—glory*,'—
'*And peace on earth*,'—to find;
And learn that wondrous story—
'*Good pleasure in mankind*.'

O strange, yet fit beginning,
Of all that life of woe,
In which Thy grace was winning
Poor man his God to know.

Bless'd babe who lowly liest,
In manger-cradle there;
Descended from the Highest,
Our sorrows all to share.

O, suited now in nature
For love's divinest ways,
To make the fallen creature
The vessel of Thy praise.

[a] Printed, with permission of the Editor, from "Words of Truth," Vol. I., No. 12, May 1, 1867. GLASGOW:—R. L. ALLAN, 75, Sauchiehall Street.

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O love all thought surpassing,
That thou should'st with us be;
Nor yet in triumph passing—
But human infancy.

We cling to Thee in weakness,
The manger and the cross—
We gaze upon Thy meekness
Through suffering, pain, and loss.

There see the Godhead-glory
Shine through that human vail,
And willing hear the story
Of love that's come to heal.

My soul in secret follows
The footsteps of His love—
I trace the Man of Sorrows
His boundless grace to prove.

A child in growth and stature,
Yet *full of wisdom rare:*
Sonship, in conscious nature,—
His words and ways declare.

Yet still, in meek submission,
His patient path He trod;
To wait His heav'nly mission,
Unknown to all but God.

But who, Thy path of service,
Thy steps removed from ill,
Thy patient love to serve us,
With human tongue can tell?

Midst sin and all corruption
Where hatred did abound,
Thy path of pure perfection
Was light to all around.

In scorn, neglect, reviling,
Thy patient grace stood fast,
Man's malice unavailing
To move Thy heart to haste.

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O'er all, Thy perfect goodness
Rose blessedly divine—
Poor hearts oppressed with sadness
Found ever rest in Thine.

The strong man, in his armour,
Thou mettest in Thy grace,
Didst spoil the mighty charmer
Of our unhappy race.

The chains of man, his victim,
Were loosened by Thy hand—
No evils that afflict him
Before Thy power could stand.

Disease, and death, and demon,
All fled before Thy word,
As darkness the dominion
Of day's returning lord!

The love that bore our burden
On the accursed tree,
Would give the heart its pardon,
And set the sinner free.

Love that made Thee a mourner
In this sad world of woe,
Made wretched man a scorner
Of grace that brought Thee low.

Still in Thee, love's sweet savour
Shone forth in every deed,
And showed God's loving favour
To every soul in need.

* * * *

I pause,—for on Thy vision
The day is hast'ning now,
When for our lost condition
Thy holy head shall bow.

When deep to deep still calling,
The waters reach Thy soul;
And death and wrath appalling—
Their waves shall o'er Thee roll.

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O day of mightiest sorrow—
Day of unfathomed grief—
When Thou shouldst taste the horror
Of wrath without relief.

O day of man's dishonour,
When, for Thy love supreme,
Man sought to mar Thine honour,
Thy glory turn to shame.

O day of our confusion—
When Satan's darkness lay,
In hatred and delusion,
On ruined nature's way.

Thou soughtest for compassion,
Some heart Thy grief to know,
To watch Thine hour of passion,
For comforters in woe.

No eye was found to pity—
No heart to bear Thy woe:
But shame, and scorn, and spitting!
None cared Thy name to know.

The pride of careless greatness
Could wash its hands of Thee:—
Priests—that should plead for weakness—
Must Thine accusers be.

Man's boasting love disowns Thee;
Thine own the danger flee—
A Judas only owns Thee,
That Thou may'st captive be.

O man, how hast thou proved,
What in thy heart is found—
By grace divine unmoved,—
By self in fetters bound.—

Yet with all grief acquainted
The Man of Sorrows—view,
Unmoved—by ill untainted,
The path of grace pursue.

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In death, obedience yielding
To God, His Father's will:
Love still its power is wielding
To meet all human ill.

On him who had disowned Thee,
Thine eye could look in love—
(Midst threats and taunts around Thee),
To tears of grace to move.

What words of love and mercy
Flow, from Thy lips of grace,
For followers that desert Thee,—
For sinners in disgrace!

The robber learns beside Thee,
Upon the cross of shame,
While taunts and jeers deride Thee,
The savour of Thy Name.

Then finished all, in meekness
Thou to Thy Father's hand—
(Perfect Thy strength in weakness)
Thy spirit dost commend.

O Lord, Thy wondrous story,
My inmost soul doth move;
I ponder o'er Thy glory—
Thy lonely path of love.

But O, Divine Sojourner,
Midst man's unfathomed ill,
Love that made Thee a mourner,
It is not man's to tell.

We worship when we see Thee,
In all Thy sorrowing path—
We long soon to be with Thee;
Who bore for us the wrath.

Come then, expected Saviour—
Thou Man of Sorrows, come!
Almighty, Blest Deliv'rer,
And take us to Thee, home!

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No. XIV.

LUKE XXIV. 26.

THE work of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the life which He lived when on earth, though carefully distinguished in the scriptures from the death which He died on the cross, should never be separated from it, or we shall miss that grand whole, which embraced His incarnation, and found its accomplishment in His crucifixion. Nevertheless, this mighty whole has its parts, and it is encouraging for us to know that the Holy Ghost has employed apostles and prophets to give out the particular aspect or relation of the Christ of God with which each was entrusted.

The history of the world and the ways of God with mankind are plainly enough recorded, and perhaps sufficiently understood, to lead any careful reader of the Old Testament to discover that the Creator was, as a consequence of Adam's sin, restricted to a general but providential care of His creatures,—and that all men being sinners, and the world itself filled with violence as the result of sin, the waters of the deluge closed up that state of things, by the righteous judgment of God, and the destruction of all flesh. What else could follow, when man was corrupting his way upon the earth by the activity of a fallen nature, and when God, supreme in His own goodness, was lavishing every outward gift *providentially* upon His creatures. Man had the more to corrupt, by the very liberality of his Creator, who put all into his hands—till it repented God that He had made man upon the earth! Sovereign grace preserves Noah; and the ark, floating upon the waters of death, shows how in judgment God remembers mercy.

It is at this very point, that a great difference is established in the further relations of God and mankind; for if Adam's blessing was based on his personal respon-

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sibility in obedience, and lost,—God will pass Noah through death and judgment to bring him forth upon a new earth, with *covenanted* blessings secured by the bow in the cloud. In Adam's world, man was a driven out creature,—in Noah's new world, man is reprieved, and an heir of covenanted blessings, on the ground of the altar and its sweet savour.

The confederacy of the nations in combined will and action at Babel, led to the confusion of tongues by the righteous judgment of God, and to the consequent scattering of the people over the face of the earth. This state of things in punishment leads to the *calling out* of Abram from his country and his father's house into a land that God would show him; and makes him righteous by faith, and the head of this new family,—the father of us all. These new principles of action, thus introduced and established, get their width in the people called out of Egypt by Moses, and finally "brought in, and planted in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established" under Joshua as captain—and under Solomon as the typical king. How cheering, as one takes a place in Jerusalem, and reads, in those chronicles of Jehovah's faithfulness to His promises, the people's prosperity and peace, under their king, or takes a place in the temple, to witness the nation's worship and allegiance to the God of Israel and God of the whole earth, under the anointed priesthood of Aaron and his sons! What a point of glory is reached by the king who sits on the throne, under this theocracy of Israel,—and what a point of holiness is maintained in the temple, so that the covenanted relations of Jehovah and the people promise fair! Alas, who that has learnt the fall in Eden does not tremble to see the advancing steps of Noah, Abram and the patriarchs,—then of Israel under Moses and Aaron, or under David and Solomon. What splendid and weighty endowments,—but depending upon the fulfilment of added responsibilities. For though all these blessings are *finally* covenanted and sure, yet were they necessarily

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conditional upon obedience from a people under *the government* of Jehovah. It cannot be too plainly seen that Christ, the true seed, has secured, by His own death and resurrection, all these forfeited blessings for the "heirs of promise," as well as by redemption secured the people being brought under the *new covenant;* and thus fitted for their enjoyment in *perpetuity,* to be made true in application, at His second coming! Most of the Lord's people see and acknowledge *this,* though many have not as yet discovered the immense charm which the righteous and personal title of Christ sheds upon all the future ways of God with His earthly people. For instance, must God, in absolute, *sovereign power*, accomplish His own promises, as due to His own faithfulness,—and must He in this way too, make good all His covenanted blessings,—or is there a Christ, who has come in, as a man, and a true Israelite, and on account of whose intrinsic excellence, and perfect obedience from first to last, this new consideration springs up, as to what is *due* to this Son of man, in righteous reward from God? What a new question is this for settlement! and with what joy is every eye turned upon such an answer as His ascension to the right hand of God supplies.

But, before we follow this risen Son of man into places where man never was before,—what shall be said or done as respects the many places and relations in which typical men had been once set—and failed? Will this same Jesus charge Himself with the defects and disgraces of the people, as well as finally with their sins, and so personally stand in these positions towards God as not merely to regain them, but, because of what *He is,* bring a higher character and lustre into them all than they could have had in any other way? In this way God is vindicated by *this* Son of man, in every relation in which God had been outraged: by these means, the ways of Jehovah with Israel are re-established, for He goes over the whole path in perfectness with the remnant at John's baptism. The devil is also defeated by the temptations in the wilderness;—and man, in the person of Christ, is master of the whole position, in righteous

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title through obedience! What a triumph (not got by death and resurrection—but) by those three and thirty years, which measured what else was immeasurable. Besides the recovery of lost positions for man and for Israel, and securing these in His own person for the latter day glory, and for the people that shall then be born, the Lord will only now take them up with His people, in a manner suited *morally* to their state, and the condition, through their own failure and sin, of everything around them. For example, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;" and again, "the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Besides these positions, and others, into which man lapsed by transgression and punishment, but into which the perfectness of Christ brought *Him*, as recognising all such penalties, not as due to Himself, but as righteously fallen on the sinful race in whose behalf He came—what a relief to our souls is it to see this last Adam gathering all these sufferings around Himself, and making them the very stepping-stones by which He will reach the place where as a man, in such a world as this, He can suit Himself to the holiness of God! He is not yet putting aside the causes of these sufferings and sorrows,—this He will do at the Cross: but He will go down into their consequences, so that in all their afflictions He may be (not separate from them) as the afflicted one; and, being there in righteousness as the only position into which correspondence with the mind and ways of God towards men could place Him, He will cry out of those depths, or suffer being tempted in those depths. God can now change the whole course of His government, and open the heavens to this "fulfiller of all righteousness,"—or send the Spirit like a dove to rest upon Him, or send angels to strengthen Him, or make His own voice to be heard (as it rolls around the length and breadth of the whole world), "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." What a moral victory is won in these very depths of man's disgrace, and of God's dishonour! and with what astonishment and fright does the devil cast his eye upon this second man, triumphant in the very circumstances which, alas!

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had only, hitherto, been the proofs of man's defeat, and of Satan's strongest holds! This Son of man will win, by such weapons as these, more than Adam ever had to lose, and far more than the beloved nation, even when at her brightest, could ever forfeit. But He will win it all for Himself in righteous (though suffering) title *first* with His people, till, in making atonement for their sins, He will glorify God yet further by laying down His life, and by shedding His own blood for the remission of His people's transgressions, and even exhaust the judgment of God, by suffering "the just for the unjust." What a history is this! and how brightly does it shine, in its pathway of light, across this dark world—with its closed gates, and flaming sword, and the waters of a flood,—or, in later times, with a nation judicially blinded, and with a veil upon their hearts. Who can dispute the fact, that the Messiah has for *Himself* (and, as one of the people, *for them too*) made a claim upon Jehovah to come out from the strange place of lightnings and thunderings, into which He had withdrawn Himself—as the voice from the excellent glory on the mount of transfiguration shows us, and to come out to bestow "majesty and glory" upon this beloved Son, in that hour when "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." What a change passes upon this Son of Man in the heights,—corresponding to His jealousy for the holiness of God in those depths out of which He rose for this bright moment of intercourse with the heavens about "the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." But He must descend into those very depths again and deeper and rougher ones still, so that "all thy waves and thy billows" should pass over Him, and He from the bottom of that pit, cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me." A scene such as this, is for the loving heart of a disciple, much more than for the pen of a writer. The soul would find its relief in being melted, in its measure, where *His* soul was melted like wax; and the heart would feel how becoming is a broken heart, where He broke His. Precious Jesus, what we owe thee! Man is recovered and saved; yea, redeemed by

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blood, risen with Christ, in eternal life, and sealed by God through the Spirit as an heir of glory, and a child of the Father's love. God has known ONE, upon this earth, who accepted the place of man's dishonour and defeat, that He might justify God in all His ways with men,—and then (surpassing, in virtue of His own perfectness all that Creation had ever witnessed in what the Creator *gave*) found a new title for Himself, and for His Church, upon His own righteous sufferings, so that not only He should get a new answer by ascension to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, but leave His own people His own pattern for their *present* conformity: "for *me to live* is Christ." But for these new ways between this Son of man and God, how could the Apostle say, "that I may know *Him*, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." These are, now, the footsteps of His chosen ones, and it is upon this moral elevation that they assert their true dignity, "the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, etc." Who made such a position as this, for others, but He who won it for Himself, as "He glorified God upon the earth." May we not say, further, it is these moral victories below, which give to the heavens their jubilees. Who was it that said: "Get thee hence, Satan," and when was it, and where? "Angels *must* come and minister to Him" the emptied one, the humbled one, this obedient servant—this fasting, hungered, and tempted son of man. "Then the devil leaveth Him." What triumphs are these, in the living ways of Christ, previous to the final overthrow and destruction of Satan's power in the grave, by His own death. How all is changed between the heavens, and the earth; and the power of hell—the devil is defeated; the Son of man is the victor everywhere, and God is glorified. "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains." "Yea, let the very trees of the fields clap their hands," as it befits them. But will the Lord Jesus

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win these triumphs for Himself *alone*, and stand solitary in the midst of all this glory? No. For He will say, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit"; that by means of His death and resurrection, we, and His people, may hold the respective places *now*, and in the millennial age, which He secured for Himself. The "Son of man," upon the earth, having been thus led of the Spirit, and tempted by the devil, and tested and proved by God, in every place and relation on behalf of man and Israel, He will close up all that He was in life, by going into the strongholds of the enemy's power; "that by means of death he might overcome him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," and so possess Himself of the keys of death and of Hades! That prophetic word too, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts," having found its *full* accomplishment in the atoning sufferings of Christ on the cross, and judgment having done its strange work upon Him, as the victim, the cup of wrath having been drunk to its very dregs by our Substitute,—and every thing done, that as our Surety He undertook to do,—He will at last say, "It is finished," and give up the ghost! Nothing, no nothing remains of this kind for Jesus to do below. He has made Himself known amongst us, as the One "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This One has said upon the earth, "*I have* glorified thee, I have finished the work which *thou gavest* me to do." The fulfiller "of all righteousness" in His life;—the taker-away of the sin of the world;—the justifier of God by suffering the consequences of His righteous government *on the earth*, and making a path, through them all, for Himself;—the vindicator of God, as regards all the inflictions and penalties and wrath itself, by bearing these in His own body on the tree, where He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. . . . . What

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can God *now* do as the suited answer to obedience and sufferings such as these? What will He do, but rend the veil that hid Him, from the top to the bottom. If care for the glory of God led Jesus to death, God will introduce the new power of resurrection, and give Him the new title of "*first born* from the dead." Will He lay Himself in the sepulchre with its guard of soldiers? It shall only be to declare "the snare of the fowler is broken." He has indeed finished the work, and completed all "by binding the strong man, and taking away the armour wherein he trusted and spoiling his goods."

Hitherto we have been tracing the steps and paths of "Him that descended" into the wreck and ruins of this world and its occupants, *since the fall.* But what becomes of the *paradisaical* symbols in that brief day, when the man and the woman were first created;—when the Lord God brought her to Adam, because "He said It is not good that man should be alone,"—the hour when this last and only void was filled up, where all else was good? Will this first, and perfect type, this "great mystery" be out of reach, and will it be the abiding and everlasting witness, that there was once a purpose in the mind of God, brought out in the annals of time too, and set up in this Adam and Eve in the garden, before the fall, *in figure*, which is lost and gone for ever? What a question! and will the perfect one, the second man, the Son of God on earth, give an answer to this, as He has to every other question? Yes, He will, for, in the depths of His solitudes, He will say "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." The very thought of "*abiding alone*" is repugnant to *Him;* and He will take up in anticipation His own deep sleep, and speak of "falling into the ground, like a corn of wheat, and dying," that He may bring forth His fruit in His season, and get His Eve, His Bride; that so in the coming day of His joy, He may "present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." But first He will go into this sleep, His own deep sleep of death, that God may go into the new place of "the quickener of the dead," and call the heavens and the

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earth to behold another power introduced into the scene of ruin and wrath around — "the 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. . . and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Another sphere is required for this antitypical mystery, when Christ and the Church are to be displayed, and it is our turn now to learn, that He, the Son of man, who has won every blessing that the future day of His glory will make good in manifestation upon the earth, has also won new trophies and new relations for God and for Christ and for the Church which the heavens must open to receive, and which the heaven of heavens are alone worthy to display. Through what Christ has done in death, and because of *who* and *what* He is and deserves, another wisdom (the hidden wisdom) and another power, (which raised up Christ from the dead) will settle such new demands as these: and this "Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness," will make the opportunity for the bringing out of all the hidden mysteries of God, as He passes triumphantly by ascension title, into all His new glories, with His redeemed ones, throughout the everlasting ages! Thus will the Lord Jesus Christ open a new volume with its ever-increasing perfections; by which will be displayed, in the risen populations above, the present meaning of that scripture, "for it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." In prospect of this result in glory, Jesus had said, when His hour was come to depart out of this world unto the Father, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." The Father's House, and its many many mansions, shall ere long receive its "many sons." And in that day, when the Father has His many sons, God will take care that the Son shall have His "many brethren," according to that word "for whom he did

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foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first-born *among many brethren.*" Moreover if this "salvation" (when enquired and searched into by prophets, who prophesied of the grace that should come,—or, in later times, when reported to us by the Holy Ghost sent down), was a "thing which the angels desired to look into,"—what shall be said as to these new lessons, now that the grace which has come, is about to get all its fulfilments in the glory? What must the Bride, the Lamb's wife, be in the light of the coming nuptial day? What must be their instructions and attainments in the things *which are ours*, when we are taught that one object of God is "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God!" These sons of God had shouted for joy when Creation's work was done; but since then they have viewed our "great mystery of godliness, God was manifest in flesh, justified in the Spirit, *seen of Angels*, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Redemption by the blood of the Cross, flowing from Him who hung there, and resurrection from the dead, and the ascended glorified One in the heavens,—are their new objects. Angels ministered to Him once on earth; two angels in white were at His sepulchre; angels attended on Him, as He went up in the clouds; and, in the coming morning of His reintroduction, "when God brings again His first begotten into the world," He will say, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." How truly are we brought, and how well can we perceive why Jesus must say, "No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him": and he turned and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see."

Nevertheless He will leave behind Him like the Sinaitic inscriptions which marked the journeyings of His ancient people, the proofs and witnesses of the out-of-sight path which He made for Himself, as we are led to the manger,—the carpenter,—Egypt,—Jordan,—the opened heavens,—the descending dove,—the voice of

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God,—the wilderness and Satan,—the last supper,—the Sanhedrim,—the Judgment Hall,—Gethsemane, and Calvary,—the crown of thorns,—the soldier's spear,—His cross,—His death,—the sepulchre (that womb of sorrows and sufferings, which gave birth to "the *Son of God with power*, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"); the man,—the Word made flesh (who cleared the world of all that stood in the way of God's glory, and of universal blessing) is now, by ascension title, at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, "crowned with glory and honour and set over all the works" of God's hands. What new places and relations with a Father's delight open out for this Son of his love, in the bright future which He has made for Him!

Man being no longer under judgment (through the efficacious work of Him who bore it on the Cross), and God having now got man for Himself in resurrection, and that same man, too, who is the righteous and appointed heir of all things,—He, in whom all the covenants and promises are made yea and amen, and who has won, for Himself and His people, the necessary and suited positions and spheres for their accomplishment in glory on this earth and in the heavens—what will God invest Him with, as due to such an One, but all "honour, power, wisdom, riches, and strength and glory and blessing." If the garden of Eden showed us the man who had forfeited everything, the earth and the heavens are to manifest in glory the second man, who is worthy to receive all the Father has, and has given Him. Besides this, "God has given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." Daniel by the spirit of prophecy had long before said, "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days and they brought him near before him, and there was given unto him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people and nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." An evangelist will tell us, that

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the humbled Son of man who stood alone in the earth, as the master of the entire position by life and death, and who is now in the ascendant at the right hand of God, is soon coming again; and, that "when this Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, *then* shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, etc." An apostle will confirm this great fact in result, as he says, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power; for he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (1 Cor. xv. 21—28) "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." The Apocalyptic writer will tell us, "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war . . . and he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." "All power is given unto me (Jesus said) in the earth and in the heavens"—the proof (not merely of the Son of man's righteous title to power and glory everlastingly, but) that "the Father *loveth* the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth." Yea, God himself will tell us not only of the place this Son of man had in the eternal counsels of the Father, but that he is glorified by making room in all the further displays

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of His wisdom and grace and glorious power by leading this Son, the second man, to the very highest place in heaven: "above all principalities," and making Him the unchanging centre of all accomplished blessing,—"that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him," etc. What a relief to the aching heart, which has learned its humiliating lessons with the man who fell, to see where Man is, in the Person of the Son, in this new creation of God,—the risen, the ascended, and the exalted One. The might of that arm which rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre and began the celebration of its acts and deeds in Him who lay there in the silence and majesty of death, by raising Him from the dead, will presently "bring again his first begotten into the world," which once cast Him out, to begin there, afresh (not the triumphant career of the man, great and supreme in His weakness and humiliation, but) the pathway of the mighty One, whose name shall be celebrated evermore as the "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace;—of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it, and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and for ever." This authority to set in order, and to *establish* everything great and small,—and to *put aside,* in righteous retribution, all his enemies—gets a yet further extension in John's gospel: "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are *in the graves* shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation:"—and all "authority to execute judgment (founded moreover on the title) because he is the Son of man," is His. As one with Him, and His associates in these very scenes, we are reminded (by the apostle to the Gentiles) "Do ye not know that *the saints shall judge* the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that *we shall judge*

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angels? how much more things that pertain to this life!" The poor man who once cried out of the depths, and "was heard in that he feared" — the one who knew no sin, when "made in the likeness of sinful flesh," and *bore the judgment* of our sins in His own body on the tree—He who once bowed His head and gave up the ghost—is now in the ascendant, and has all *judgment committed to Him*, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." And execute this judgment He will, as the Son of man on the throne of His glory—as the Messiah-King when He brings His majesty and power into connection with the throne of David; or when the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. The Lord Himself says, in anticipation of His day of renown, "now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out." And to the very last will He affirm "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." How supreme is our Jesus, in these noiseless victories, as He thus gives them out to us,—and as He bids us be of good cheer in an overcome world; and not to let our hearts know either trouble or fear, through the conscious *peace* which He leaves us, till He comes in power "to judge and to make war"; for all His enemies shall lick the dust!

The first Adam's transgression threw Satan into prominence and strength, and obliged God to retire into the heaven of heavens, or else maintain His righteousness in judgment by destruction. The second Man (come to do the Father's will, in the body prepared for Him) has set up a claim before God to come forward, and (by righteous judgment) take this perfect One, out from the death into which His devoted obedience carried Him, and put Him into position, place, power and glory! "Behold I make all things new," is the only, and fitting reply from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as He introduces the man of the new heavens and the new earth, into their length and breadth, and instals Him as the beginning of the new creation of God! We may well ask in the midst of such gains and

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triumphs as these, is there a power that can not merely grapple with Satan and overcome Him—but is there authority likewise to *put aside* the great enemy "the Wicked One" himself? With what gladness to our hearts (afraid because of the past) is the assurance from the risen One, "and I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the dragon, that old Serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, etc." How freely can one breathe now, as we see the Son of man exalted into the highest place—the centre of all prophesied, promised, covenanted, and purposed blessing for the glory of God with His redeemed,—the families in the heavens and on the earth in their Goshens, by undisputed right, and in undisturbed possession, and Satan — nowhere! or, if memory, bestows a thought on the past, as regards that old serpent, only to be assured by the key, and the chain, and the bottomless pit, and the seal, that the stronger than he, who once took away his armour, wherein he trusted, has now shut him up, and shut him out, "that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled," and that when loosed for a little season "out of his prison," only to earn a heavier punishment, by being driven to his own place. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever." The liar, from the beginning, is gone! the great enemy of God and man is judged and cast out! Man, in the person of our Jesus, has glorified God upon the earth, and finished that work, in life and death, which was given Him to do; and God—thus liberated from His place of righteous judgment against sin by the waters of a flood, and by melting elements through fervent heat—is set free to raise, and exalt, and glorify, and crown *the man* whom He made strong for Himself, and to re-introduce man from the heavens, into the whole scene of previous defeat and disgrace and destruction below, till every

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creature's heart and voice shall give expression to their new-bought joy in ascribing salvation and honour and glory and blessing unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever. What a day for our God—and what a day for our Lord! how truly will He take the place of His typical Solomon in times of shadows and figures, when He said, "the Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness; but *I have built an house* of habitation for thee, and a place for *thy dwelling for ever!*"

"Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God," so God *rested* from all His works on the seventh day.

B.

No. XV.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

Part I.—The Introductory Portion. Chaps. I.—II. 22.

The main feature of this most precious book that lies before us is the exhibition of the Lord Jesus as the Word made flesh, the glory of the only Begotten who is in the bosom of the Father, and who reveals the Father as one with Him. The book is made up of these glories, which pass successively before our eyes in its successive chapters. Hence there is so much of "testimony" and "witness" in it: God calling our attention, as it were, all through to Him in whom all Heaven's glories meet, and meet for the supply of man's need, discovered in its deepest in the light of this glory; for "whatsoever doth make manifest is light."

Man's need in its deepest is that he is "dead in trespasses and sins." At the end of long ages of trial the full manifestation of this was made in the person of Jesus come in grace among men. Man's trial was not limited to that. It was only the close of a long course of it which God in His patience had given him: the

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"ages," of which the apostle Paul speaks in Heb. ix. 26, at the "completion" of which,[a] Christ "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

The cross thus stands as the dividing line between two periods of entirely different character; the former of which was characterised, as I may say, by its being the time of *man's being manifested and God hidden;* while the latter shows us, on the contrary, *man set aside and God revealed.*

It is most important to see this, to which the whole of Scripture gives the most unequivocal testimony. So in 1 Cor. x. 11, it is said, "Upon whom the ends of the world (literally *αιωνων, ages*) are come." As to the character of these ages (of which several other passages make mention) Rom. v. 6 speaks—"When we were yet without strength, *in due time* Christ died for the ungodly." The "due time" was when man had been thus manifested, "ungodly" and "without strength." These ages had run on from the fall itself; and their probationary character, as to the most important of them, is strongly marked in Scripture. Take the law. "God is come to prove you," says Moses, before it was given. And the apostle Paul, answering that question, which still perplexes multitudes, "Wherefore serveth the law?" replies, "It was added"—not as our translators have it, "*because* of trangressions," but—"for the *sake* of transgressions;"[b] that is, to produce them, to bring out the sin of man's heart in open shape, as transgression of the plain command of God. Take it as elsewhere, where there needs no emendation of the text—"The law entered that the offence might abound" (Rom. v. 20), the necessary result of "proving" one, of whom "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually."

But this verdict upon man's state had been pronounced long before. It was spoken at the close of his *first* trial, which the judgment of the flood ended. For the full result God had waited. He had let men have the earth

[a] Gr. *Επι συντελεια των αιωνων*, "at the completion of the ages;" in our version, "at the end of the world." *Morally*, that is true, however.

[b] *τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν.*

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to themselves, and given them ample time to show what they would do in it; and at the end of nearly two thousand years "God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Then God said, "The end of all flesh is come before me."

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord;" and in his person, brought through the judgment, wherein "the world that then was, perished," human government was set up of God, and man was made his brother's keeper. "Whoso shed man's blood, *by man* his blood was to be shed." Such was the divine principle. But instead of that, the form it takes is that of tyranny in the hands of Nimrod, and that course of ambition and thirst for power begins which has filled men's chronicles ever since.[c] All fails once more, and God calls Abram from his kindred and his father's house to walk with Him, a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth.

The character of the law, which followed after that, we have already seen. In it God took up man again in his own way, to see what he could do. The people undertook it,—"all that the Lord hath spoken;" but the covenant is broken before ever the tables of testimony are come to them from the Mount. Under pure law they do not stand a moment. The law *finds* them under its curse; but God retreats into Himself, and falling back on His divine prerogative of mercy, takes them up anew. "I will have mercy," says He, "upon whom I will have mercy." And though the law is given a second time, there is now *along with it* a proclamation of the "Name of the Lord." Christianity is not that, it is a declaration of the *Father's* name. This to Moses was not properly a revelation of God Himself, but of His "back parts"—the skirts of His glory. "And He said, Thou canst not see my *face:* for *there shall no man see me and live;*" but "it shall come to pass, while my glory

[c] "Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" Men's chronicles, and God's judgment.

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passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; *but my face shall not be seen.*"

I would call attention to these words, because they give us so perfectly the contrast between those long dark ages, and the blessed light of Christianity, into which we are brought. Take the brightest display of God's goodness to the most favoured of His people then, still it was —"No man can see me and live." The veil of the holiest afterward, according to Paul's testimony in the Hebrews ix., declared the same thing—"The way into the holiest was not yet made manifest." No one could come into God's presence, to see Him face to face. The high-priest on the Day of Atonement, if a seeming, was no real exception: he was to "put incense on the fire before the Lord that the cloud of the incense may *cover the mercy-seat,* that is upon the testimony, *that he die not*;" for the presence of the Lord was there.

The difference between "proclaiming the name of *Jehovah,*" and "declaring the *Father's* name" was, in short, all the difference between God hidden and "God manifest." The first was Judaism; the last Christianity.

It was an important announcement, no doubt, and served, in some measure, to temper the severity of an outraged law. Yet it did not change it, nor man's nature. It gave no *life* and therefore no *righteousness.*[d] It left man space for repentance, but wrought no repentance in him. It left him under responsibility to meet God still and answer for himself.

"And the Lord descended in the cloud, and proclaimed the name of the Lord (Jehovah): and Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and *that will by no means clear the guilty;* visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third, and to the fourth generation."

[d] Gal. iii. 21. "If there had been a law given, which could have given *life,* verily *righteousness* should have been by the law."

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Christian reader, with all the grace of this announcement, is it the revelation of God, such as we know Him? Could you or I go into His holy presence on the footing of what is here declared? Alas, the veil of the holiest and the high-priest's incense tell the same truth about it, and our consciences bear witness we could not. For law is still law here, whatever be the mercy, and a God who "can by no means clear the guilty," is not one before whom we can stand. The grace here may, like the angel's hand, trouble the waters of the law and make them "Bethesda,"—a pool of healing; but what are we to do with our poor, palsied limbs?

Yet though it were but the "back parts," not the face of God that was seen here (as to which the passage itself is conclusive), yet God having declared Himself "gracious," He could still go on with those who had already manifested themselves "a perverse, rebellious people." He could patiently show out His goodness, and manifest His power in their behalf. All this protracted, indeed, the trial without altering the result. But it was of God that it should be protracted, that man should have full time and space to show himself in. And so he does, alas, to the end. Law broken, mercy despised, God's messengers persecuted whom He sent in His love, "rising up early and sending them"; such is his course throughout. And at length the trial is once more over, and with the sentence of "Lo-Ammi" upon them (not God's people), they are led away captive to Babylon. "The mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, nor *can* be."

Still the "due time" for the display of God, the full revelation of Himself, was not come even yet. One last resource remained, one last way of trial: it is thus represented by the Lord Himself in the parable of the vineyard—"And he said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence my son, when they see him."

And "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." In the lowliest form, in the "form of a servant," self-emptied, yet full of power and grace for man's deliver-

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ance from all that sin had brought upon him, the earth was hallowed by the footsteps of One "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him."

Such a sight it had never seen before; such a sight it shall never see again. He could touch the leper, and his leprosy was gone. He could heal the sick. He could raise the dead. Devils would give up their victims at His word. He could speak as never man spake. He could say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and work a miracle to assure that it was done. He was the Friend of sinners, and blushed not to own it. From whomsoever needed Him He could not be hid. And in all this, it was His constant declaration that He came but in His Father's name, to declare Him, whom knowing they knew not; that God, whom behind the veil and "in thick darkness" they had worshipped, now made known.

Alas, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

They said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." "So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him."

That was the end of the *trial,* and therein was "the *judgment* of the world" (John xii. 31).

The mind of the flesh, when under law, "not subject to the law," was now manifest, outspoken "enmity against God."

But if sin had now reached its height, it was time for God's grace to abound over it. Man, "dead in sins," could be set aside, and God could unveil Himself. Christ died, and the veil was removed. The way into the holiest *was* made manifest. Man *could* see God and live. Instead of One who "could by no means clear the guilty," there shone out the glory of Him who "justifieth the ungodly."

It will require little thought to understand my object in dwelling upon this so much at length. It is most needful to the right apprehension of the whole scope and character of John's gospel. For this gospel is just the

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shining forth of this divine glory which in Judaism had dwelt within the circling flames of Sinai, or behind the veil of the temple. God is no longer here "in the thick darkness"; the testimony is that He "is light, and in Him is no darkness at all"; and we "walk," therefore, "in the light, as *He* is in the light."

Not indeed that the full time of manifesting God, in one sense, had come, while Jesus walked on earth, though He were indeed *Himself* "God manifest." A verse in this first chapter of the gospel explains the seeming contradiction. For though "in Him was life, and the life was the light of *men*," yet it is added, "and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Nor was this true only of dead men upon whom the light might shine, but not remove their darkness. Even the eyes of disciples,—of those who could say *afterwards*, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,"—were scarcely opened to it. They saw what *was* "the glory of the Only Begotten," but not at that time did they apprehend its wondrous significance. Only after Christ's death had fully rent the veil, and the Spirit of God had come to lead them into all truth, did they apprehend it. Only *then* could they say, "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." Even at the very close of that marvellous course Philip could say, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," and the Lord answer, "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known *me*, Philip?" What a flashing out of glory it must have been, when the true light did indeed shine unto their *souls!* "In *that day*," says the Lord again, "ye shall know that I am in the Father;"—yea, and beside that,—"and ye in me, and I in you."

But the Gospel of John, nevertheless, puts us in the full light of this already. For it is not man's history simply, true history though it be, but God's revelation. It is the Spirit of God, now come, taking of the things of Jesus, and showing them to our souls. Hence, though historically and for man, the veil of the holiest was not rent, there is no veil here. And though men were not yet introduced into the blessing, the blessing itself is

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already here. It is "God manifest in flesh," manifest in love and grace for men: "grace and truth come by Jesus Christ." It is divine fulness for men's need, and when that need is fully exposed. "Life" for him as dead; "light" for him as in darkness; "grace" for him as a mere sinner, and only grace, nay, as it is expressed here, "grace *upon* grace."

In a word, man is set aside, as fully convicted and exposed, and God is manifested. The cross is, as it were, over; (not of course that it historically was;) "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." That is, as it were, the moral of Luke's Gospel. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." That is pre-eminently Matthew's. And now "to as many as received Him, to them gave He power" (privilege or authority, rather) "to be the sons of God, even to those that believe on His name." And what of these? "Who were born, not of blood (or natural generation), nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of *man,* but of God."

Thus at the outset we are met by this great truth of regeneration. And after the introductory portion of the gospel is over, it is that with which (in chap. iii.) we start again. None of the other gospels speak of it at all. They give us the grace of God in its *appeal* to man: its solemn warnings, its exhortations, its tender and blessed invitations. But it is not these we have in John. There is not so much as "Come to me, and I will give you rest." There is, surely, the solemn truth *stated,* "Ye *will* not come," but no *invitation*, though "him that cometh, He will in no wise cast out." But it is not man's coming that we are occupied with, nevertheless. It is "*God's* coming," rather. *He* quickens. He "quickens whom He will." Men are "born of God": a thing into which one's own will enters as little as when we are born into the world.

And then it is upon this being born of God, that all blessing is founded. Being born of Him, we are owned His children; and thus are given to lay hold of and enjoy that revelation of the Father, which Christ, the only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, makes of Him.

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And I add another thing. In the light which manifests everything in its true form and character, a dead Jew is no more than a dead Gentile. Judaism is therefore already gone, (not historically, as I said in another case: *that* was at the cross, but practically;) and "the true light,"—true to the nature of light, falls on all alike. "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." In contrast to the law, as one outside it, (and so He says, "What is written in *your* law?")—it is said, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

It will be seen that these are the principal features of chap. i. 1—18, which is evidently the doctrinal introduction to the whole gospel, and gives its distinctive character. The whole, however, of the first chapter, and down to the end of ver. 22 of the second, is introductory, and beyond that the main subject matter of the book begins in the distinct enunciation of man's real need, and its only true remedy. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," so that "ye must be born again."

And thence out of the fulness of the "Word made flesh," is developed in varied and orderly succession, the blessedness which is his. Man put in his true place as a recipient merely, the fulness of divine bounty is poured into his bosom,—"grace upon grace" indeed,—commencing with the supply of first wants, but pouring on and on, till the full cup overflows in deep, adoring worship, in the unveiled presence of Him to whom we are brought: "presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

Before going on to consider this, however, I would spend a short time upon the introductory portion of the book. This seems evidently to divide into three parts. The first, simply doctrinal (as we say), and which I have now briefly noticed (chap. i. 1—18). The second, the witness of John (verses 19—34). The third, the dispensational view of the grace here witnessed of, first, with regard to the saints of the present time (verses 35—42), and then to the remnant of Israel in the last day (43—51); the whole closing with the millennial features of glory and of blessing (chap. ii. 1—11), of a holiness

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which is to be maintained in power, by Him, who is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead" (verses 12—22). And surely of great importance it is to have these distinctive characters of blessing set before us in the first place, before we go on to consider the portion of the heavenly saint, as it is detailed in the following chapters of the book.

As for the first section of this introductory part, what I have already written may suffice. I would now notice how beautifully characteristic is the Baptist's testimony in this book, and how the glory of the Son of God completely fills the eye and heart of him whom the other gospels give us as the preacher of repentance. Here he whose place was in the wilderness, who came in "the way of righteousness" to others, apart from them as judging them unclean, himself falls into the dust before those blessed feet, "whose shoe latchet he is unworthy to unloose." Here we see it was no thought of *self-righteousness that set him in that place apart.* The eye that now drinks in "the light of this world" was once closed to it as much as others. Nothing but infinite grace had made the difference. "I knew him not" is, twice over, his lowly acknowledgment. It was the registry of the condemnation of the world.

But how the eye, divinely opened, is taken up with the object now revealed to it. And the Spirit of God Himself, how He presents to us this picture, as delighting in it, of a man absorbed with Christ. They come out to him from Jerusalem, attracted by his fame, to find one whose heart is an utter stranger to it all. He is "*not the Christ,*" he says. What need they care who he was, when he was not Christ? He was "a voice" only: a voice that spoke not of itself but of another; a voice to imprint the imperishable "*Word*" upon the hearts of men; and then to be forgotten. "He confessed and denied not, but confessed," says the recording Spirit with emphasis. A little thing it might seem, and only *not* presumption; but among such as we are, how great a thing! "He must increase, but I must decrease:" words how true for us all! but only grace can add to it

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such words as elsewhere the Baptist, "This *my joy* therefore is fulfilled." And this is he of whom our Lord said, "Among those that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." If this is true greatness, then, how is "the first last, and the last first!" how human thoughts are reversed! But is not he really greatest, who in lowliness is likest to his Master?

And what then must be the blessedness of heaven, where these principles have their only full and uninterrupted sway. You get a blessed picture of that in the chapter x. of Mark, and which in many parts of it we cannot wonder to find repeated elsewhere. It is where the Lord is enforcing this principle of true glory, and showing Himself in opposition to all the narrowness of man's heart, even in disciples, where all sought their own. Peter had been reminding Him of the "sacrifices," as we speak, that they had made to follow Him. And the Lord assures him, that He knew it all, in a love which could not forget the very smallest particular, and would not be left a debtor, but overpay it a hundredfold. But he adds the significant reproof,—for it was needed,—that the judgment of God would yet be the very opposite of man's own. "And many that are first shall be last, and the last first." He whose heart vaunted the largeness of its offering was not of necessity the one who had offered largest. Giving to receive was not a gift. Love would forget nothing indeed that was the fruit of love. But he who thought he had done most only showed the poverty of his love in it. For love reckons not what it does, and where truest, has its blessedness, after the pattern of Him in whom it is perfect, in giving rather than receiving.

How sweetly is the unutterable grace of God maintained, and yet the heart searched in its inmost workings, in this word of Jesus.

But it does not end here; for then we find the Lord laying open His own heart. His way was even then to the Cross.—"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the Scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death,

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and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock Him and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him, and the third day He shall rise again."

It falls as the "shadow of death" indeed upon them. There is no response to it. But the solemn lesson of the cross unheeded, they return to that which occupies them. Two of those most honoured, one of them "the disciple whom Jesus loved," ask Him for the best seats, right and left beside Him in the kingdom. The Lord proposes to them the Cross. Are they able to drink His cup, and be baptised with His baptism? The moment it is set before them as the way to their own blessing, they "are able." Jesus says, that though they shall have His cup and baptism, as "seeking their own" in it, it would be folly: the places in the kingdom should be given to them "for whom it was prepared of the Father."

But this arouses the jealousy of the rest, and "they began to be much displeased with James and John." And now comes the full answer to it all. "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise *lordship* over them, and *their* great ones exercise authority upon them." A few simple words, but how, again, they search the heart! Is it not the key to the whole history of human "greatness"? "Seeking honour one of another": place, and power, authority and patronage; how much of this, or what would satisfy man's pride in this sort, do we suppose we should find in the possession of those seats in glory? Nothing; absolutely nothing. There will be such seats; but all that on earth men covet in them, what of that? "So shall it not be among you, but who will be great among you shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all." That is "the first last, and the last first" again. Not only fitness to rule is required in the servant's place, (though so it surely is,) but heaven's order is the reverse of man's order, and heaven's "greatness" the reverse of all his thoughts. The greatest is the lowliest, and where all shall be delivered from the "reproach of Egypt," circumscribed

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the second time, and delivered from that badge of misery, "seeking one's own," in the glory of the kingdom, "rule" shall be "service" still; the blessedness of giving higher than of receiving; the pattern of all greatness, of all blessedness, He who is the same Jesus, impossible to change, who, as "Son of man" down here, "came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

And recurring to what our Lord says of John the Baptist, have we not the real key to it here, and to what He adds to it, which has been not a little cause of perplexity to many. "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." I cannot turn to these opening chapters of John's Gospel without feeling this "greatness" to be that of a man (whose like in it Scripture indeed scarcely shews us again) to whom Christ is all, and to whom therefore, self is nothing; and the words "notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he," open to me not a vista of thrones and titles, but a glorious scene when (in the *coming* kingdom) Christ shall be the one blessed and satisfying object filling perfectly all hearts. John shall be greater than himself there, and the least in it shall be more perfect in it than this precious picture which we have of him.

He was no stoic steeled to human sympathies, though he walked so alone, apart from all. He was no practiser of a long penance, done to propitiate a God he knew not, like many, his would-be imitators since. He was simply a man occupied with Jesus; too happy in it to turn aside to other things. His sanctity (notwithstanding his garb and food, in which he stood a witness to others simply) was no creature of his own making, no fruit of ordinances and self-mortification. No, it was the abstractedness (if you please) of one who was simply filled with the glory of another, whose whole heart said, with his lips, "Behold the Lamb of God." We shall do well to ponder it.

With the 35th verse of the first chapter begins the

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third division of this introductory portion of the Gospel. It begins with this witness to Jesus as "the Lamb of God," the fulfilment of and contrast to, all Jewish shadows, a witness which, given from the fulness of a believing heart, gathers disciples to the Lord. That which follows is a beautiful picture of believers in the present time. The question as to where Jesus dwells,—the place itself unnamed as if earth knew it not,—their stay with Him through the night that follows,—are all significant. They are things indeed which spiritually interpreted characterise the Christian now, while He who declared, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world," is absent from us. In this way we learn to say, while looking for the morning of His return, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Yet even so we are not children of the night, but of the day, though the night be about us; we know where He dwells, and in heart and spirit dwell with Him whence the night is banished.

And no less significant is the adding to the number of these first disciples, of one who was afterwards, though "apostle of the circumcision," chosen of God to teach others the lesson he had himself first to learn, to "call no man common or unclean," and to open the door of the kingdom to the Gentile: one to whom as taken out of natural relationships, a new name in grace is given, speaking of the spiritual ones into which he should be brought, as a living "stone" in that building of God, which was to be His own peculiar "habitation."

And similarly significant are all these "interpretations." Grace is speaking another language from that of Judaism. Even the Hebrew title "Messias" is changed into the Gentile "Christ." And in all this who cannot see intimated the great change that was at hand, as well as its character? The temple was already empty, the people already were "Lo-Ammi," and now people and temple were to be but one in the new Christianity which was to replace this worn-out system, and this temple should never be deserted: the Spirit given to abide with us for ever, should dwell in it and consecrate it to God for ever.

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Not that it should abide here or belong ever to "the world." Like the tabernacle, which "grew into" the temple, and which was in germ the temple, it should have the wayfaring character and be a pilgrim. Indwelt of, and dwelling with the Lord we yet mourn His absence and look for Him, and are (as I said before) in heart and spirit with Him where He is, "not of the world" just *as* and *because* He is not.

And this I say again is Christianity. It is marvellous, yet how thoroughly lost sight of in men's systems. It could never without changing its very nature, gain the throne of the world. Nor will it change the world. Its mission is to gather *out of it* "a people for His name": a people who will be to the end, and even in the most fair-seeming times, "a little flock," poor, despised, persecuted, struggling against all the power of him who is the "god of this world," and against the "course of this world," ruled by him.

If the world were to receive the Gospel, we should have in large measure to lay aside our Bibles as quite unsuited to times so changed. The whole web and woof of Scripture, so far as it affects our Christian walk and character, would be distorted and displaced. We could no longer say "the whole world lieth in wickedness." He "that would live godly in Christ Jesus" would no longer "suffer persecution." That which makes up "the world" for God would no longer be "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Such things would be the mere records of a state of things which had passed out of being.

And yet the word of God shall surely be fulfilled, and "the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Yes, when "He shall *appear* in His glory." But at that time,—it is the express assurance of the Word,—"when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." And when "this King shall reign in righteousness," we "shall reign with him" who has "made us," in all the value of His work, "kings and priests to God." Is it now this reign of righteousness? Are Christ's foes now made His footstool? Are all things now put under Him? Nay, says the

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apostle, "we see not yet all things put under him." That will be in what he calls "the world to come" (Heb. ii.), not heaven, but earth blessed and purified, a dominion extending to,—according to the apostle's quotation of Psalm viii.—even "all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the seas, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."

But if those who now look and wait for Christ are in the day of His power to sit down with Him on His throne and share His dominion, who are to be the subjects of this blessed rule? Chief among these is to be restored Israel: "Ye which have followed Me," says the Lord to His disciples, "in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging *the twelve tribes of Israel.*" Than this nothing can be more precise. It distinguishes the two parts, the heavenly and earthly glories of the kingdom which is to be set up. Other passages speak of "Jerusalem" being "the throne of the Lord," in those days, and "the law going forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Then shall "*Israel* blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit": "the Gentiles shall come to the light" of that glory of the Lord, now risen upon her, "and kings to the brightness of its rising."

I do not enter upon these things more at length. But the same passage which I have just quoted forewarns that the darkest of the night will precede the dawning of this millennial day. It is when "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people," that "the Lord," it is said to Israel, "shall arise upon thee; and his glory shall be seen upon thee."

Thus darkness as gross as that which for ages has covered Israel is yet to fall upon all the vaunted enlightenment of Gentile Christendom. They would not "walk in the light" while they had the light, and it shall be taken from them. The saints caught up to meet the Lord in the air, the "light of the world" gives place to darkness. Out of this darkness, according to the testimony of this passage in Isaiah, Israel is to be the first to emerge.

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She is to be new-born to God with all the throes and anguish of childbirth. She is to be "chosen," once more, "in the furnace of affliction." It is impossible to go into detail. All I can say here is that a little remnant of Judah will first be brought to the Lord amid the cruel persecution of their unbelieving brethren. And in the judgments of those days "it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." (Zech. xiii. 8, 9.)

This is not a needless digression from the subject of the chapter before us. In ver. 43 we are carried in spirit beyond the Christian and (in principle) Gentile confession of the Lamb of God, to a *new acting* of grace which gives rise to a new testimony, and Nathanael becomes the representative of the gathering of a future day, as Peter has already been seen the representative of the present. "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write," is Philip's testimony; and Nathanael questioning at first, is drawn nevertheless to Jesus to find in Him one who had already known him in grace (as it ever is) and all the exercises of his heart, while yet unconscious of the love that even then was yearning over him. "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the figtree, I saw thee." The figtree is the constant figure of the Jewish nation, and the book of Psalms is the precious witness to this remnant in their "time of trouble" among the mass of the unbelieving people, of a true and tender heart in sympathy with them. When they "look upon Him whom they have pierced" what a witness it will be of His love who has all through "borne their griefs and carried their sorrows." Nathanael like, their hearts shall burst forth in the adoring exclamation, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

This is the complete reversal of former unbelief. The two charges that they brought against the Lord, and in

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the order in which they were brought, are here recalled. That He made Himself the Son of God was the charge before the Jewish court. That He made Himself king was that before Cæsar's. They shall yet acknowledge Him as both ; and then the Lord's words to Nathanael shall find their complete fulfilment, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the figtree, believest thou ? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, from *henceforth* (*απ' αρτι*) ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Even thus Israel's eternal day shall begin in the glory of an open heaven, and the angels, the ministrants of their past economy, shall wait upon Him whom they have rightly owned as Son of God, and who Himself delights to call Himself by that touching name of sympathy and tenderness, "the Son of man."

To use the figure of Revelation (chap. xii.) Israel clad with the glories of the risen sun, shall issue forth from her "night of weeping," all her past reflected glory, but as the dim moon eclipsed by day-dawn, beneath her feet.

The second chapter carrying on the type, gives us restored Israel's union with the Lord. The figure of a marriage is no uncommon one in the prophets, and with express reference to Israel. Thus their past relationship with the Lord is styled, and their departure from Him is judged as adultery. So Jeremiah and Ezekiel speak, and so their return to the Lord in the latter days is given as under the figure of the renewal of marriage-vows: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord ; for I am married to you: and I will take you one of a city and two of a family, and bring you to Zion" (Jer. iii.). And in Hosea, after the sentence of divorce for unfaithfulness is pronounced: "Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband," and the judgment against her is fully executed, then in judgment mercy is remembered : "Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor

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for a door of hope; and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt; and it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shall call me Ishi, (my husband). . . . . and I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving-kindness and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord" (chap. ii. 14—16, 19, 20.)

The scene at the marriage at Cana in Galilee is a divine picture of what the prophet thus foretells. The very mention of "the third day" marks it as a period of resurrection-gladness. The question put to Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones will be answered then. With noise and shaking bone will have come to bone, and the sinews and flesh covered them, and the breath from the four winds come unto them. Israel's hope, which they have clung to through so many long and weary years, will at length have reached fruition; and men will realise in their case that "the gifts and calling of God are" indeed "without repentance."

Israel's Bridegroom, too, will be the risen Lord. In the type of it here, He takes as it were that place towards the close, providing the wine of the feast, which it was the bridegroom's part to do. Thus it is told forth what He will be when the day comes for accomplishing these shadows. Yet very sweetly, notwithstanding, is the higher blessing of His heavenly "disciples" kept in view. "Both Jesus was called and his disciples to the marriage." So inseparable from Him are they, that if one were called so must be the other. And so it will be when the day of Jerusalem's bridal comes. "When Christ shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory." Then, when those hitherto empty waterpots being filled with the purifying water, they shall draw out of them with gladness the best wine kept till now.

What a striking figure of hollow formalism were those empty waterpots! And even such was the nation when the Lord first came among them. Like the mother of Jesus they asked Him for the wine then, but His

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"hour was not yet come." He must shed His blood for that: noway else could they have it. The "wine that cheereth God and man" comes from the side of the Crucified One. This is the Samaritan's balm for our deadly wounds. This is the "strong drink" for those "ready to perish," the cordial for those "of heavy hearts:" — "that they may drink, and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more."

And when the set time to favour Zion shall have come, when "they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced," they "shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Then the antitype of their day of atonement will have come, "a sabbath of rest," when "they shall afflict their souls," and through the offering made for them, "be clean from all their sins before the Lord." Then the water-pots shall be filled even to the brim, but the water of repentance shall be, by a mightier miracle than that of Cana, changed unto the wine of joy and gladness for ever. Those *resurrection* words of blessing shall be again spoken: "Peace be unto you," and He shall say again as He said once to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." And with Thomas they shall answer and say to Him, "Our Lord and our God."

But the higher blessing still shall be their's, who having not seen, have yet believed. We, too, shall be Nazarites no longer. We shall drink of this new wine also. In a higher sense still to us, that shall be fulfilled: "I will drink the wine new with you in my Father's kingdom."

In the 13th verse of this chapter, another feature of this time of blessing is presented. Cleansing the judgment is what is before us there. The Lord is as one whom zeal for His Father's house devours. His *title* to cleanse is resurrection: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." "He spake of the temple of His body."

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And very blessed it is to see, that just as Jesus is represented to us all through His blessed life of lowliness down here,—One who comes not in His own name, nor seeking His own glory, but His who sent Him,—so is He the selfsame Jesus, "yesterday, to-day and for ever," when in glory He takes the kingdom. When on earth the prayer He put into the mouth of His disciples was not for His own, but for the Father's glory: "Our Father, . . . *Thy* kingdom come," passing over His *own* throne as Son of man,—passing over the blessedness of the millennial day,—on to the time when in the "new heaven and new earth," (for there only "righteousness" shall "*dwell*,") "His will shall be done on earth even as it is in heaven." In like manner when He takes His throne on earth, He reigns until "all things are subdued unto Him," and when that is accomplished, "He delivers up the kingdom"—none taking it from Him—"to God even the Father." And "then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him who put all things under Him, that *God* may "be all in all."

Of course this touches not the truth of His absolute divinity. As God He gives up no place: as man He is subject. How wondrous the union of these two, in one adorable Person! "The image of the Invisible God,"—"the first-born of every creature." The blessed unperishable link between God and all that He has made. The eternal display of divine glory in its fulness before the eyes of all. God who loveth,—who is Love,—and who has brought us unto Himself that in the knowledge of Him our hearts might be filled with joy,—might overflow in worship. For that it is WORSHIP that is so to occupy us in heaven, is just the testimony of how full, even to overflowing, every heart shall be. G.

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No. XVI.

THE HEAVENLY CALLING.—IN WHAT IS THE POWER OF IT?

EVERYTHING connected with the Heavenly Calling evidently lies on the resurrection side of the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ: the centre of it is *Himself*, and Himself *ascended to heaven*. When He was risen from the dead, He tarried and showed Himself to His disciples during forty days—nearly six weeks, as we speak—Himself the centre of all the affections and thoughts and actions of those that were disciples—and they, not knowing what was about to take place, did not and could not in heart or mind precede Him to heaven. When they saw Himself, however, go up, "and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts i. 9), they could and did follow Him—they recognised that He was in heaven. And did He not carry off their hearts and minds with Him? This is *the first* great point of *power:* Himself, the recognised spring and centre and end of all their blessing who loved Him, was gone away, be it to receive a kingdom and to come again, but still He was gone away, and gone *into heaven*. The needle turns to the north, and love turns to Himself wherever He is.

But, *secondly*, they had not then inward power; the promise of the Father was not come. Obedient to their Lord's words given after the resurrection (Acts i. 2), they had to wait for this. Ten days after His ascension He shed forth that power. Life they had had before; instruction and the opened understanding had been given to them, but now the power of God the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, was with them. "They were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (ii. 4). Here was power, power indwelling. The Spirit had come down from heaven, proof of God's

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delight in Jesus: "This Jesus hath God raised up. . . . therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Jesus their Lord and, through three-and-a-half years of eventful service, their proved and tried Saviour and Lover,—Jesus was Himself gone to heaven ; and they had proof of it, and the world too had proof of His discriminating love, when He sent down the Holy Ghost to them that, being one with Him, they might be able to bear worthy witness of Him. But while He was in heaven and they on earth were vessels of the power of God in heaven, witnesses that Jesus had been made Lord and Christ,—they knew not that He would not return to Jerusalem. Israel was called by them to repent of its sin and to receive the fulfilment of the promises that had been made to it. This, however, was changed when they rejected the Holy Ghost and martyred Stephen.

With his death came out to light a proof of his Lord's amazing grace, and that in a form which brought out, in principle, the outline of the truth of the heavenly calling. An earth-rejected Stephen—"being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts vii. 55). And he declared what he saw: "the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God" (ver. 56). And then, invoking the Lord Jesus, and saying, Receive my spirit, and again (when kneeling), Lord, lay not this sin to their charge—he fell asleep.

As the types of Leviticus, as the tabernacle and the temple, as Moses a mediator, and Aaron a high priest—were embodiments in tangible things addressed to sense, of truths presented in the Lord Jesus Christ, just so do I look upon this scene. It is what might serve as a vignette at the head of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and of Peter's first epistle. Who can read 1 John i. 1—3, and not see how John's previous intercourse with the Lord down here was the elementary experience which was meant to be developed in his after service. Just so,

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as I judge, that which shined down from the Lord, in a way addressed to man's senses, when Stephen was martyred—is taught to every partaker of the heavenly calling in spirit and by faith. Earth rejecting, and all down here that is of it against us—heaven open and the vision of the glory of God, and Jesus the Son of Man on the right hand of God—this is at once the golden key to the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man (of Hebrews), and the lamp to the feet of the pilgrim according to Peter's first epistle.

The Holy Spirit, promise of the Father shed abroad by Him who, seated at Jehovah's right hand, had been proclaimed Lord and Christ, is the grand revelation and doctrine in the second chapter of Acts. The Son of Man standing at the right hand of God, the sustainer of this rejected witness, is the truth of the seventh chapter. I will but advert now to Him as the caller of Saul of Tarsus and the energetic guide to the testimony in its flowing out in various ways down here—in all of which we see the mind of Heaven with regard to man upon earth. It is in the epistle to the Hebrews that we find the grand outline of the heavenly calling. And what a string of precious glories does it open to us as being the Lord's.

In the first chapter we have His *personal* fitness as Mediator to lift up His head in the presence of God. As to God—Son; heir, by appointment, of all things; maker of the worlds; brightness of glory and the express image of His person; upholding all things; seated (after having made purgation of sins), on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and then (from ver. 4—14) the roll of titles in which He is contradistinguished from angels.

In the second chapter we have Him looked at, on the other hand, as Man. Made once low that He might be crowned with glory and honour—set over all the works of God's hands. All things to be put in subjection under Him, nothing left not put under Him. And, though all is not yet seen put under Him, Himself is already seen crowned with honour and glory. The suffering of death; the tasting death for every man; the being made

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perfect through sufferings; the taking a place in which He could trust in God, have a servant's work assigned Him to do for those committed to Him, that He through death might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage; a man among men,—though a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people,—able to succour them that are tempted.

But in the third chapter He is presented to holy brethren down here, partakers of the heavenly calling, as the object of their faith: the Apostle and High-priest Christ Jesus, to whose claim they had bowed. Faithful to God in all things to which He was called, as Moses had been in that which fell to his charge, yet as pre-eminent to Moses as the builder of a house is better than the house. God was the builder of all things, and Christ as His Son was over His house. How should we, who are of His house, "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." But Israel, adopted by God as His first-born among nations when in Egypt, carried their own flesh with them out of Egypt,—and to get through the wilderness into Canaan was another thing than merely to get out of Egypt. So, those who believed in Jerusalem found too; to receive Christ for pardon and for acceptance, and deliverance from the world was one thing, and to walk with God through this life was another. But provision for that their second need had been made in Him who was their Saviour. As the great high priest who has passed through the heavens, He is our living and our professed Helper. His eyes read all that is *within* us (iv. 13); His word searches all, and makes all to appear in its true colours (ver. 12), when we have to do with Him. And (ver. 15) He is not One who "cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

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The fifth chapter treats of His being the great responsibility-bearer, and that as an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, king of righteousness, and prince of peace.

The sixth chapter presents Him in connection with a pilgrim band as their sure and certain hope. "Men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (chap. vi. 16—20).

The seventh chapter unfolds the pre-eminence of His priesthood above that of Aaron.

The eighth shows how all the covenants are sure in Him.

The ninth and tenth handle the insufficiency of all the types and shadows to satisfy either God or man, and show how He has at once become, in heaven above, the displayer of the mercy, compassion and grace of God, and is, through faith, the former in man down here of a conscience fit for God and His presence in light.

Having touched upon this elsewhere, I may leave it now.

Most blessedly does the remaining portion of the epistle take up practical consequences. The eleventh chapter leads us through the battle-field of life here below of His worthies from the beginning.

The twelfth teaches us, however, a deeper lesson as to what this earth must be to *us*. Himself who is set down at the right hand of God,—Himself beginner and finisher of faith was once down here. His heart, filled with the joy that was set before Him, took what the world gave Him and endured the cross despising the shame. Deeply does every section of this chapter press *practical*

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conformity to His sufferings upon us to whom Himself is revealed as set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

What a vision of glory, already in all its brightness, does this epistle open to us. The curtain rolled back which intervened between God above and man down here, and all the wonders of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man made known to us partakers of the heavenly calling.

A few words on Peter's epistles and I have done. He, according to the grace given to him, takes up the case of some who had been outcasts from the land, for the faith's sake of Jesus Christ. They were not, however, like those to whom the Hebrews was written,—letting slip the truth they had received and professed. This accounts for the difference of his first letter from that written to the Hebrews. Beautiful and perfect in its place is the consolation to the suffering pilgrims contained in Peter's epistles. In the first, he shows what we have got, while down here, in our own selves and according to the thoughts of God and of Christ. In the second, he shows how men and profession will corrupt themselves and become identified with the very world itself (as is now the case), which world will all pass away to make room for a better. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again: and this new birth is unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord.

This, our "being begotten again, already" with the ground of that confidence and the hope of it,—is the leading thought in the epistle.

As another states it—we are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus and we can call upon the Father. But Israel had to come out of Egypt, *and* to go through the wilderness, *and* to come into Canaan. So we leave the world, pass over the earth and get into glory. But we are sons all through, and if we believe in God, that raised Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God, we have to know all the blessing of the various glories in that Blessed One.

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One set of glories, so to speak, may come out in deliverance from Egypt and the world; another set in conducting of us through the wilderness, the battle-field of life down here; another set in receiving and leading in, establishing in, the Canaan, to us the Father's house and new Jerusalem on high. But, in all these lessons, we learn Christ and His works and workings as the servant of God. Are we sons,—born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible? Then our all is assured to us in Abba and in Him, who is the only begotten Son of the Father. But then, too, not only is the place of our sojourning *now* one of strangership and patience, but as the second epistle shows us, all that is around us *down here* reminds us of conflict and declension and apostacy, and even of judgment to come.

What is heaven then to *me?*

Well 1st, Jesus is gone up there and there abides. The One whose well-proved love to God and man has rescued me from Satan and the world,—*He* is in heaven.

2ndly, He has sent down the Spirit and I know Him, and the unction whereby we know all things.

3rdly, But His own self is there! the one that enters into every trial and sorrow of His people down here, He is this Jesus.

4thly, the curtain dropped, all heaven is opened upon us!—and the precious glories of His person and offices and works wrought, or now doing, or about to be wrought,—all stand confessed before all and shed their light down upon us—blessed people, partakers of the heavenly calling.

5thly, all within us, save the seed incorruptible, is sorrow and vexation; that seed connects us with the Father of the Lord Jesus in heaven; and 6thly, all as to what man is—in himself, in the professing body, in the house corrupted by superstition and infidelity—all moves on to judgment. G. V. W.

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What a scene of grace it will be. Why, I shall delight and adore when I see it all as I adore and am thankful—oh, how thankful—for it now. Were it judgment, it must be judgment of all Christ's work set aside, and my condemnation certain. But it is not, and that cannot be. But it is knowing as I am known and seeing God in all His ways with me. But it has another and a present effect. We are manifested to God. "We shall all appear," should be "We shall all be manifested." Now faith anticipates this, and it has thus a practical sanctifying effect: keeps us under God's eye. We *are*, says the apostle, manifested to God, not merely we shall be. Now this is most important, we all need it; however holy affections may be our highest portion, and they are, we all need our consciences to be in God's sight, in passing through this world, *according to the judgment He has* of things. We are manifested to God. It stimulates too as to persuading men still exposed to the judgment of that day; makes us careful not to judge others nor put a stumbling block in their way. These are the consequences the apostle draws from even the terror of the Lord, never the fear of judgment for ourselves who in that day (blessed be God) shall be perfectly like the Lord himself. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

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No. XVIII.

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH CONCERNING THE JUDGMENT TO COME?

FIRST, that definitive and final judgment is entirely committed to the Son.

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men shall honour the Son even as they honour the Father" (John v. 22, 23). The Father "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is Son of Man" (ver. 27).

As regards our sojourning *in this world*, the Father does judge (1 Pet. i. 17): "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed. . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." This judgment is carried into effect in the holiness of His nature, against evil,—and, in His fatherly care of us, in holiness: as it is written, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name," etc. (John xvii. 11). And so we have to judge ourselves; and if we do not, we are judged of the Lord. There is His government in this respect (1 Cor. x. 31, 32). It is chastening. Compare Job xxxiii. and xxxvi.

Christ judges the *quick* and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. *Now* is not the time of Christ's judgment, save as Lord over His people for their good, as we have seen. It is the time of grace to the world. That the Jews as a nation are rejected, is, as to God's dealings, the reconciling of the world, the accepted time, the day of salvation. Of course God can interfere in judgment, supremely if He pleases, as He once did in the flood, not a sparrow falling to the ground without Him. But this time is the time of grace to the world. When He appears and establishes the kingdom, it will be the time of judgment. As it is expressed in the Psalm—

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Himself, and raises them in glory to have them with Him. But they do give an account of themselves to God when in glory, and receive the reward of service, though it be grace that has wrought it in them. Such is the Scriptural instruction on this subject.

B. M.

No. XIX.

ON THE EFFECT, ON THE MORAL STATE OF ENGLAND, OF THE PROGRESS OF DEMOCRATIC POWER.

I NEED hardly assure your readers that I have no desire that they should meddle in politics; I do not do so myself, nor do I think that a Christian ought. He believes that God governs, and governs with a view to *the glory of Christ, and that He will infallibly bring* about His purposes. But it seems to me to be well that Christians should apprehend what they have to look for, and be prepared for it, if the Lord tarry. Did it not concern them religiously you would have no word from me on such subjects.

What I purpose doing is to review briefly the course of events, and state what seems to me their results. Parties are all alike to me; they are all alike guilty, and have all alike had their part in what is going on. Lord Derby it was who banished the Scriptures from Irish schools and set up the Irish national (really, Popish) school system. He stated that there was no proselytism, but that "the use of Scripture" was a fatal objection, because it was displeasing to the Priests. We must remember that politicians have no idea of principles, but only of existing influences to which they must be subject.

The next step was that of that most short-sighted man, however great a general he might have been, the Duke of Wellington. I take no side with any party,—I distrust them all, but he was a Tory as they call it, aristocratic

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in principle. He, with Sir R. Peel, passed the Catholic Emancipation bill, so called, which admitted some sixty or seventy violent democrats into the house, and by that party (as it is well known), the reform bill of 1832 was passed; the majority of English members were against it. Now, for a state with a political machinery like that of England to work smoothly, a large portion of influential masses must not be outside its institutions. The Duke of Wellington declared the system perfect which did shut them out, after introducing elements which made it impossible to hold that ground. He thought to stem it by the House of Lords, and nearly brought on an open revolution; and Lord Harrowby and the waverers (as they were then called), gave a majority to the reform bill in the House of Lords. That bill was a revolution. That is, it was not an admission of excluded influences into existing institutions, but a total change in the institutions themselves. Democracy became ascendant, and possessed the power. The Lords' house became insignificant, and populous boroughs acquired the power once wielded by the land. Old habits modified the effect, but every one knows that this is what took place. The ancient institutions of the country were in principle overturned. With this, railroads and the commercial movement, and the refusal of landlords to increase the population on their lands, concurred to throw the population into the towns. Vaunted education ministered immensely to general infidelity, Satan in that being let loose in that respect, and by the growth of this and of dissent, which predominates in the great towns, the clergy were, on the one hand, thrown into ritualism and popish principles, or, on the other, adopted infidel or semi-infidel principles; and (the bands of the establishment and its general hold on the population of the country loosened), infidel notions acquired a powerful influence over the mental activity of the country, and exercised a very great power in the governing body, the House of Commons. Morally speaking, the Protestant Church was gone, and rationalism and popery, in principle, divided the country. Evangelicalism became practically null in the Establishment.

In this state of things the democratic influence has

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acquired an immense accession of power by the new reform bill. It is an immense stride in legally revolutionising the country; checks, and balances, and reckoning on the English character and history is all nonsense. Power is put into hands which will use it. The forms are immaterial; they will probably be changed immediately or ere long.

But my object is to notice the effect on the state of society. God cares for the poor. But the poor have ceased to be so in the Scriptural sense of the word. They are masters. The effect on the masses and on the active minds of the country will be infidelity, exalting man. Even popular religious preaching will take this character. It will keep up the name of Christian, but will exalt man in its statements, not Christ:—despise government, says the apostle, presumptuous, self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Human reason, not God, will be the arbiter of good and evil. What already prevails so largely, will be open to a vast party in the country. The will of the people, confidence in man, his rights, his general perfectability, will be the banner of all this class. The aristocracy, on the contrary, having lost power will seek to compensate themselves (vexed and dissatisfied in heart), by luxury and pleasure. To maintain quiet (principle having gone in both classes), and some influence—some barrier, against the strong will of the people, they will rapidly seek to increase the influence of the clergy—the only remaining one over those that constitute the bulk of those around. In the country it will be the body of the poor subject to priestcraft, and in the towns a very large increase of popery, so as to have an integral place in the population; the bulk of those who are not so, or who do not side with them, being infidel.

It may be thought that I have not sufficiently allowed for the influence of religious dissenters. It is, really, next to nothing, and will be always becoming less. Already exalting man is the system that most widely prevails, going on with the age. But there is another thing, they will join with the Roman Catholic in putting down the Establishment, which has little or no political

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hold on the country. The Episcopalian must then, as against dissenters, base itself on its distinctive character, in alliance with (if not in the form of) popery, successional grace and sacraments, and the clergy the only channels of it. I do not expect Protestantism nominally to cease, but it will be really infidel. You may find individual ministers, Independent or Episcopalian, preaching Christ, but the disruption that is taking place is a disruption into infidel radicalism or popular will, and popery in the aristocracy and in all that they can bring under its influence, as a check upon that will. I have no doubt that God will keep every faithful soul, and maintain every needed testimony, but it is well that Christians should know what is before them, as time goes on more rapidly, perhaps, than we are aware.

I do not look for violence, because I believe there is no courage anywhere to resist the course of events. I do not pretend to say how long it may take to bring these things about. God knows, and God holds the reins or looses them; but I have no doubt as to what is coming on. The Christian may walk in peace through it all, waiting for God's Son from heaven, and keeping the word of His patience: yea, having a specially blessed place of testimony in the midst of it all, but a lowly one, content to be nothing in a world which has rejected Christ, and is ripening for His judgment. Their part is to *keep His word* and not deny his name.

The result as to the western world will be, as known to students of prophecy, that the Babylonish or idolatrous power, with which the kings of the earth had committed fornication, will be utterly destroyed, and the popular will in the same sphere will give itself to the beast destroyed, with the false prophet, by the Lord Himself coming from Heaven.

The present result of what is now enacting will be: the aristocratic part of the community giving itself up to luxury and pleasure, and, with the dependent part of the population, to Popery; the independent and mentally active part to infidelity. The opposition to Popery will be infidel not Protestant. The general public effect will be a great and rapid increase of centralisation or despotic

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power, and loss of personal liberty. Individual personal independence of character will disappear almost entirely. Men must go with others to be anything. Protestantism having lost its integrity and energy, God allows infidelity as a check on popish power. If things go smoothly, I apprehend the first move towards centralisation will be the substitution of a paid for an unpaid magistracy; to set aside, nominally, local territorial influence and gain efficiency, but throwing a vast increase of power into the centre of government, and being the first move towards despotism or central power as a counter-balance to multitudinous self-will or anarchy; personal liberty and independence being proportionately set aside. Other social questions, as primogeniture, will soon come in; the importance of money and luxury, the necessary consequence of its abolition, will rapidly increase, and the moral degradation and dissipation which go with it. All this will be modified by existing habits, no doubt, and the love of something aristocratic is inherent in the human mind,* but this will not materially affect the result.

* Liveries and armorial bearings are coming in in New York, and carefully studied genealogies where there are any.

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No. XX.

DAVID ON HIS THRONE A TYPE.

FEW, if any, will dispute the statement that David was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. When he was raised up to be king over Israel, God had before Him, as it were, the life and acts of His own Son as King, and so ordered the events in the history of the type, that, whilst what took place seemed to outward eyes the lot appointed for David, when his life should be read centuries after his death, its typical character should be discerned, as the history of the one of whom he is a type should be gathered from the prophetic Scriptures.

For convenience in studying this period of his life we may arrange it under four heads—David at Hebron; David at Jerusalem; David in his priestly character; David in his kingly character.

Prophet, Priest, and King are titles of office which belong to the Lord Jesus. By one only besides him have these three offices been in any measure together filled. David and David's Son stand alone in this. But the difference between them when these offices are more carefully examined is immense. David was a prophet, but he was not *the* prophet. In common with the other prophets he probably knew not the value of all that he penned. The Lord as *the* prophet spake of what he knew, and testified of what he had seen. As Priest, David could not minister at the altar of the tabernacle, much less enter the holy of holies. The Lord will be a Priest on His throne after the order of Melchisedek, and He has now entered the holy of holies, a privilege restricted to the high priests after the order of Aaron. David was king over Israel, and his dominions reached from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, but he could not fill the throne for ever. The Lord will have the throne of His father David, and reign over the house of Jacob for ever.

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From Bethlehem, the burial place of Rachel, came David. Of all his descendants the only one whom we read was born there, was that ruler, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Years before David ascended the throne he had been anointed by Samuel as the king of God's choice. Who can say what time will elapse between the first announcement that God's King, the Messiah, was on the earth, and the reins of Government being placed in his hands? Persecution was David's lot before he reigned. Rejection and death were experienced by his Son.

1. To turn to David at Hebron.

Saul was dead. David's words on the hill of Hachilah had come true. "The Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish" (1 Samuel xxvi. 10). He had descended into battle, and perished, and with him three of his sons. The man given to the people at their request to be their king had passed away, conquered and slain by the inveterate opponents of his nation — the Philistines. Israel had asked for one to fight their battles. Their king had fought and was overcome. David, the man of God's choice, had been in conflict at the same time with the Amalekites, the persistent enemies of God's people. Saul in the north was fighting with the Philistines; David in the south was engaged with the Amalekites. Israel under Saul fled. David with the 400 pursued their enemies. The Philistines stripped Saul and the slain, and came and dwelt in the cities of Israel. David entered the camp of the Amalekites, recovered all that belonged to himself and his men, and returned to Judah laden with spoil, to learn that Saul was dead, and the time for him to have the kingdom had come.

To outward eyes it might appear that the kingly power had merely changed hands. In God's eyes we learn it was a most important epoch in the history of Israel, and of the world; for, *now* was to be set up, that throne on which the Lord is to sit, and rule over all. Unasked by the people, God had selected the family and tribe. David succeeded Saul, not because he was the king's son-in-law, but because he was the Lord's anointed. He was

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chosen by God, and anointed by Samuel, before he had done anything to commend himself to the people, or had connected himself by marriage with the house of Saul. Before he was at Saul's court he had the anointing oil poured on him. His valour and his wisdom commended him to the people as a fitting successor to Saul; but, before he could show to them what he was, he had been designated by God for the throne. He succeeded Saul, but did not sit on Saul's throne. In point of time he was Saul's successor. As regards dynasty, he was the head of his own family, and founder of the throne. Ever after it was David's throne on which the kings of Judah sat, however much their dominions might be curtailed, or the glory of the kingdom dimmed. Another point to be noticed is the extent of the kingdom. Saul reigned over all Israel, but was unable to preserve their territory from the inroads of the Philistines; David's kingdom was co-extensive with the grant given by God to Abraham (Gen. xv. 18—21). As God did for David, so will He do for His Son. He will set up for Him a kingdom, posterior in time to the four great empires of Daniel's vision, but more extensive than any of them, and deriving its succession and power from none of them—after them, but not of them or from them.

Before Saul's death David had been a wanderer and an exile, not from choice but necessity. Driven from his house when Saul sent messengers to take him (1 Sam. xix.), he was never allowed to have a settled abode till he sat on his throne in Hebron. From his house he went to Naioth in Ramah to Samuel. Flying from Naioth he is found with Jonathan in the field; thence he escapes to Nob, and then takes refuge with Achish, king of Gath. Unable to remain there, he conveys his family to the king of Moab, with whom they remain; but himself, directed by God, goes into the land of Judah to the forest of Hareth. Thenceforth the forest, or the wilderness, or a cave sheltered the Lord's anointed, till, his faith failing, he betook himself to the Philistines, and had Ziklag appointed for his residence. Was this to be his home? Had his wanderings now ceased? Was he to be content with that city as his permanent abode?

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Was the king of Gath to settle the dwelling-place of God's king? He returned from the camp of the Philistines to find Ziklag burnt with fire, and his wives and substance, and all that belonged to his men, carried away by the Amalekites. He rescued all, and reached Ziklag just in time to hear of Saul's death, and then asks God if he should go up to any of the cities of Judah.

How different were the circumstances of Saul. When made king, he had a home to which he repaired without a question (1 Sam. x. 26). David was a wanderer without any sure dwelling-place. He had many haunts (1 Sam. xxx. 31), but no home, a type in this of Him, who, when on earth, though king, had not where to lay His head, and, till He receives the kingdom, will never have had on earth, since He began His ministry a settled dwelling-place.

Saul went home to Gibeah, *i.e., a hill*, probably a position of some strength, suited to the leader of the hosts of Israel.

David did not betake himself to Bethlehem, and there, among his kindred, commence his reign. He asked counsel of God, and is directed to Hebron, a city of great antiquity, built seven years before Zoan, in Egypt. It stands in the middle of a fertile valley, surrounded by hills, which afforded in ancient days good pasturage for flocks. As a shepherd he might have found Hebron a good centre, but would it answer as well as the seat of government, and head quarters of a military power? During the days of his persecution, Hebron had been one of his haunts, now it was to be for seven years and six months his fixed dwelling-place. Why, it may be asked, was Hebron selected? Why would not Lachish or Eglon or Jarmuth, seats of Amorite power in common with Hebron, have done? What was there in Hebron more than in Bethlehem? Why was not Jerusalem selected?

With the histories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Hebron is closely connected. To the oaks of Mamre by Hebron, Abraham first repaired after Lot had chosen the plain of Jordan, and God had just given to the patriarch and to his seed, all the land he could see for an inalien-

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able possession. "To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gen. xiii. 15). There he sojourned for years, and in its neighbourhood he was buried. There too, in Hebron, Isaac was living when Jacob saw him on his return from Padan Aram. There Jacob lived till he departed to go down into Egypt. In the Books of Numbers, Joshua, and Judges, Hebron is brought before us in connection with the people of Israel at eventful epochs of their history. Was this the reason that David was directed to go there? Was it because Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had lived there? Was it not rather because they were buried there? For David was a type of Him whose reign was to commence in resurrection. Hence on that spot where lay the bones of the patriarchs, and those of Sarah, Rebecca, and Leah, David's progenitors, and as it were over their very graves to shadow this forth, the kingdom was first set up. He, in whose family the promises to Abraham were to be made good, and whose Son in resurrection should exercise dominion over all the land given by God to Abraham, commences his reign in Hebron. Joseph was buried in Shechem, Rachel in Ephrath, *i. e.*, Bethlehem, for from neither of these did the kingdom proceed. Jacob's own property, which he bequeathed to Joseph, was not the place he selected for his own sepulchre. With Jacob, as far as we read, that burying place in the cave of Machpelah was closed. Leah had to be buried there because Judah was her son. Jacob was laid there because his seed should be the king. So David was directed to Hebron, and there began his reign, where, upwards of eight hundred years before, the date of the birth of Abraham's heir had been first declared. How fitting then it was that Hebron should have been selected rather than Bethlehem or any other of the cities of Judah. And though subsequently the seat of power was transferred to Jerusalem, no other spot, not even Jerusalem, could have answered the same purpose as Hebron. It matters little where Saul commenced his reign. It was all important where David began his. Saul was not the type of Him that was to come. Perhaps David did not understand the reason of his being directed to Hebron.

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We see the reason of its selection in preference to any other city in the territory of Israel. Had David in his own wisdom gone at once to Jerusalem, he would clearly have acted contrary to God's mind. Had he stayed at Hebron all his days, he would equally have run counter to the divine intention. There was a time to be at Hebron, and a time to leave it; and when the seat of government was removed from it, it was never to be brought back. God's purpose regarding it was accomplished. David understood surely something of this when he removed to Jerusalem, and brought thither the ark, and desired to build God an house. He intimated by this that he understood Jerusalem, when once reached, was to be the abiding centre of government, and the earthly dwelling-place of the Most High.

Comparing David with Absalom we at once see the difference. David understood about Jerusalem, Absalom did not. Imitating what had been done by his father, he too commenced his reign in Hebron. But the throne once established could not be established a second time. By this action it is clear that he would have set up a new throne. Instead of being David's successor he would commence anew in the place where David had begun his reign. When Solomon began his reign he did not seek out any other place than Jerusalem; neither Hebron nor Shechem did he visit for that purpose. He succeeded David, and so took the kingdom in the place in which it was established.

To Hebron David removed with his two wives as yet childless. His men too did David "bring up, every man with his household, and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron." Anointed by Samuel at Bethlehem, he is anointed by the men of Judah at Hebron. And here for the first time we meet with the men of Judah acting apart from the men of Israel. To all who witnessed this schism it must have seemed natural enough. It was natural that Judah should support one of their own tribe, in preference to going after the king Abner had set up. Natural as it was it was also according to His mind who had raised up David as a type of the Lord Jesus, that under his reign the men of Judah and the

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men of Israel should be re-united, after they had been separated, in anticipation of that day spoken of by Ezekiel, when the two sticks shall become one, and they shall become "one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be king to them all; and they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. . . . . And David my servant shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd." (Ezek. xxxvii. 22—24). The differences between Judah and Israel now manifested, though outwardly covered over in the days of David and Solomon, were never permanently removed. We have an instance of this after the rebellion of Absalom, when the king was to be carried back to Jerusalem. Israel was jealous of Judah, and the contention, though no blows were struck, was the occasion of high words, for we read "the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel." At the end of David's reign Adonijah attempted to interest the men of Judah in his cause, but failed. During the reign of David and Solomon the people once united could not be divided. After Solomon's death the division was easily effected. The two kings, types of the Lord, having passed away, the breach, again made apparent, became wider than ever, to be closed, and that finally, only when the David of prophecy shall come. For not only must He come to set the world in order, keep down evil, and establish and maintain to the end of His reign, what never has been maintained throughout the reign of any king, an unvarying righteous rule, but His presence will also be needful to reconcile the long alienated hearts and tribes of the children of Israel and Judah.

When Saul began to reign, there was a division among the people, but not among the tribes. "The children of Belial said: How shall this man save us? and they despised him, and brought him no presents." (1 Sam. x. 27). To reject an untried man does not seem strange. But when David took the kingdom, known of all as a successful warrior, whose name in Saul's reign had been much set by, anointed by Samuel as the man of God's choice, which Ishbosheth was not, it does seem strange,

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till the typical character of his reign is seen, that the greater part of the nation were determined to oppose him. For he must unite all Israel under his sceptre, but to do that they must first be separated.

David, however, acts as king over all Israel by sending a message to the men of Jabesh Gilead. He takes cognisance of their kindness to their master Saul, who had rescued them from the king of the children of Ammon. They befriended him in death by decently interring his bones. As God's anointed, David waits his time for the submission of all the tribes, but, whilst waiting God's time, he does not give up for a moment the idea that he, and he only, is the rightful king over the house of Jacob. "I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing," is his promise to the men of Jabesh Gilead. Surely one might have supposed this would have been the duty and desire of Ishbosheth. We read not that he took notice of their action at all. But the anointed king, whose prerogative it is to reward and to punish, lets them know that he is acquainted with, and approves of, what they have done.

Those seven years and six months spent at Hebron were years of expectancy. David awaited the submission of the tribes. He did not strive with Israel willingly, for the battle between Joab and Abner seems to have been forced on by Abner, as Joab's reply (2 Sam. ii. 27) intimates. As type of the Lord Jesus we understand how he is owned as king by the house of Judah, before the other tribes hail him as their sovereign. But here as elsewhere we are reminded that David in all this was only a type. For in his case, Benjamin was with his opponents. When the remnant own the Lord, Benjamin will be associated with Judah, forming part of the ancient kingdom of Judah. Asahel, also, one of the worthies of David, was killed in the conflict by Abner, and never lived to see David king over all Israel; and David, though God's anointed, had to own, after Abner's death, that he was not rightly master in his own dominions. "Know ye not," he said to his servants, "that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? and I am this day weak though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me:

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the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." (2 Sam. iii. 38, 39.) As the type, however, of the Lord Jesus Christ, God works that the kingdom should be his, and he does not owe it to any man. Abner thought to turn all Israel to him. He died before his plans could be carried into execution. David would have received it through the influence of Abner, but that could not be. He must be accepted as king over all Israel, but that consummation must be brought about by God. He was God's chosen one, not the candidate put forward by the people. Joab could not have turned all Israel to David. Abner alone had influence sufficient to attempt this. He was killed whilst busy about it. After his death the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and we read, "David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord; and they anointed David king over Israel." Abner's proposition was that the people should make a covenant with David. To do that they must have been able to treat with him. But man's thoughts are often wrong. David made a covenant with them, not they with him. And this was fitting. Shall the nation in a future day make a covenant with Messiah regarding the terms on which he shall take the reins of government into His hands? A new covenant will be made, but made by God with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. So here they do not treat with David as an equal, but he treats with them as their superior in position.

We read of the patience of Christ. He waits the Father's time to take the kingdom according to the statement of Ps. cx.: "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Perfect is He in everything. If we compare David with his Lord, the imperfection of the former only comes out more and more. Personally there could be no comparison between them. Typically there can. And what we know is true at this very time of the Lord, we find exemplified in the history of His servant. Again and again he refused to be a party to violent measures for the obtaining of the kingdom. Twice was Saul within his power, and though urged to take his life he refused. When,

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too, the messenger announced to him the king's death, and professed to have killed Saul at his own request, David had him executed for having put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed. So also when Rechab and Baanah brought Ishbosheth's head to Hebron, he refused all participation in their guilt, though the great obstacle to the union of all Israel under his sceptre was thereby removed. He had them killed as murderers. From God had he received the promise of the kingdom, and His time he would await.

2. David at Jerusalem.

The submission of all Israel to his authority having been effected, he removed from Hebron to Jerusalem. War is the immediate consequence, and David is victorious. The Jebusites, the original inhabitants of the land, left unsubdued since the days of Joshua, have now to be taught that resistance is impossible. Presuming on the strength of their citadel, they think that the blind and the lame can defend it against the king. The gates may be shut against him, but the enemy cannot keep him out. Joab climbs up by the gutter, and the stronghold of Zion is taken, and called the city of David. Jerusalem, the citadel excepted, had been taken at an earlier period of their history, but the capture of the hold was reserved for the reign of David. "So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. And David went on and grew great; and the Lord God of Hosts was with him" (2 Sam. v. 9, 10). How completely he makes Zion his own. He fashions it as it pleases him, building what it suits him to build, and calling it his own city. He sojourned at Hebron, he dwells at Jerusalem. Reaching it he finds he has reached his permanent resting place on earth. He evidently regarded it as a great point gained. Friends and foes thought so too, as the history now points out.

A new feature in the history of Israel is now brought out. "Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons, and they built David an house." Very briefly is this embassy described. It deserves, however, a few minutes' atten-

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tion. It was the first embassy that we read of that ever set out from Tyre to Jerusalem. During Saul's reign, the princes of Tyre took no heed about the king over Israel. When Joshua conquered the land, and mapped out the territories of the tribes, we never hear of any attempt of the Tyrians to obtain the goodwill of the conqueror. But, when David had taken the citadel of Zion, Hiram sent to build him an house. When Solomon reigned, we find Hiram again manifesting his good will to the king, for he "was ever a lover of David" (1 Kings v. 1). After Solomon, we never find the king of Tyre concerning himself about any one who reigned at Jerusalem. Prophecy tells us of the fate of Tyre, continental and insular, and of the future yet in store for her. Taken by Nebuchadnezzar, she will be found in the confederacy at the last days (Ps. lxxxiii. 7); and subsequently "her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord, it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing" (Isaiah xxiii. 18). And when that takes place, Tyre will be found, as Hiram was in the days of David, concerning herself with the king at Jerusalem. For we read "The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift" (Ps. xlv. 12). She exulted at the fall of Jerusalem (Ezek. xxvi. 2.) She will present herself with a gift when Jerusalem is restored, and the Lord reigns, and her colonies also, for "the kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents" (Ps. lxxii. 10). We can understand then this embassy from Hiram to David now at Jerusalem, and see how suited it was, the earnest of that coming day when the wealth of the Gentiles shall flow to Jerusalem, and the kings of the earth shall yield obeisance to Messiah.

Whilst Hiram manifested good will to David, the Philistines show their enmity by setting themselves in array against him. Whilst he dwelt at Hebron they were quiet. As soon as they heard he had taken Zion they were all astir, and came out to fight him. Does not this remind us of Ps. ii. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the

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earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed." Why all this tumult? Because God had set His king on His holy hill of Zion, and the submission of all to the Anointed One must follow. So when David established himself at Zion the Philistines appear against him, and manifest how important in their eyes was his new position. Whilst in Hebron they could leave him in peace. Satan tried in different ways to prevent the establishment of the kingdom, first by fomenting discord between Israel and Judah, next by the apparently impregnable position of the Jebusites on Mount Zion; and now lastly, when all else failed, by stirring up the Philistines to dislodge him if possible from the stronghold. No stone was to be left unturned to prevent the consolidation of power in the hands of David at Mount Zion, the place of God's choice (Ps. lxxviii. 68). Outwardly the struggle was between the Philistines, who had vanquished Saul, and their old opponent David. In reality the war was between the god of this world and the Lord God of Hosts. David's move to Jerusalem excited the jealousy of the Philistines. God's choice of Zion for the seat of His Son's throne aroused the anger of the enemy. The uncircumcised and the conqueror of Goliath could not exist in peace side by side. Hence they determine to subdue him. And as in the last days, before and after the millennium, the conflict will rage round Jerusalem, so it was the selected battle field, when David was anointed king by all Israel. "All the Philistines came up to seek David, and David heard of it, and went down to the hold. The Philistines also came, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim" (2 Sam. v. 17, 18). They sought him, not he them. So will it be when the battle of Rev. xvii. 14 takes place. "They will make war with the Lamb." All the power of the beast will be collected to make war with the Lamb. But the Lamb shall overcome. All the Philistines were gathered together in the valley of Rephaim, but in vain.

From Jerusalem the wave of conquests spreads. Eight hundred years before, Abraham had stood on the neighbouring mountain Moriah, with his son, as in a figure, raised up from the dead. At that time, and on that spot,

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and then and there only, did God make promise to Abraham that his "seed should possess the gate of his enemies." Now from that place where the promise was made, for Mount Moriah formed part of Jerusalem, the fulfilment in its widest extent commenced. Under Joshua the nations of Canaan were conquered. Under David all the nations of the territory given by God to Abraham, were first reduced to submission. As soon as David dwelt on Mount Zion the sword was drawn, which was not to return to its scabbard, till, from the great river, the river Euphrates, to the river of Egypt, and from the wilderness to the sea, the authority of God's anointed should be owned as paramount. Does not this remind us of what Isaiah predicts? "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people" (Isaiah ii. 3, 4). It was needful then to go to Jerusalem as at first it had been to sojourn in Hebron. Had the Philistines acquiesced in what God had done in Israel there would have been no war. They entered into conflict with David, and were signally defeated. Twice did they come up against Zion, for the valley of the Rephaim is at its base, and each time they were worsted. Did we not know what all this pointed to we might wonder at the interest shown in this rock. The worshippers of idols were at war with the servant of Jehovah. What issue could there be but one? They had slain Saul, for God had forsaken him. They could not conquer David, for God was with him. And most signal were the victories, for David asked counsel of God, and did as He directed. The first time he confronted them, the second he circumvented them. Before or behind they could not resist him. On the first occasion they left their idols, and David and his men burnt them. God's Ark had been in captivity amongst these uncircumcised, but He delivered it in His own way. The idols were taken by the conquerors, and for them there was no deliverance. Was not this a foreshadowing of what Isaiah also predicts? "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day, and the idols He shall utterly abolish. In that day shall a man cast his idols of silver, and his

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idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats" (Isaiah ii. 17, 18, 20). When the kingdom is established in power the idols must give way. At the time of the Exodus, the redemption of God's people, on all the gods of Egypt judgment was executed. When the kingdom was first set up a similar result was seen. And when redemption shall be completed, and the kingdom established in the hands of the Son of man in power, the idols will be demonstrated in the most signal manner to be no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone (Ps. cxv.).

On the second occasion that the Philistines come out and spread themselves in the same valley, David again enquires of the Lord. He would own each time his perfect dependance for guidance and for strength. This time God preceded the host of Israel. David had to follow where the Lord led: "And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself; for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines. And David did so, as the Lord had commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer" (2 Sam. v. 24, 25). How vain was the attempt of the enemy to disturb the purpose of God! Zion had He chosen, Zion would He guard. How vain will be the attempt of the Assyrian in the latter days to frustrate the counsel of God! Zion is God's chosen dwelling-place for ever, Jerusalem He will defend. He may, as He has, leave it for a season, but no power in heaven or earth can drive Him from it: "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and passing over He will preserve it." And these battles of David we have warrant for regarding as typical of the contest yet to take place, "when the Lord of hosts shall come down to fight for Jerusalem, and the hill thereof;" just what He did in the days of David, for we read—"The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim," referring to these very battles (Isa. xxxi. 4, 5; xxviii. 21).

3. We have now, following the order in 2 Samuel, to view David in another character—his priestly character.

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Established firmly in Zion, the next step was to bring up "the Ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubims," from Baale of Judah to Jerusalem. This was an important matter and a memorable epoch, for it was the entry, for the first time, of the symbol of God's presence into the city which He loved. He took possession, as it were, on that day of Mount Zion as His dwelling-place, His rest for ever which He has desired (Ps. cxxxii.).

From the days of Hophni and Phineas the Ark had been neglected. During the days of Saul the people had not enquired of it (1 Chron. xiii. 3); once only is it mentioned (1 Sam. xiv. 18) during his reign. Separated all the time from the death of Eli to the dedication of the Temple from the altars of burnt offering and incense, the service of the day of atonement could not have been carried out; for the high priest, though he might enter within the veil, could not sprinkle the blood on and before the mercy seat. Till the kingdom was established in the hands of Solomon, and the great work of his reign completed, no day of atonement could be observed. How this resembles the present condition of things in Israel! Since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the Jews have not been able to go through the form of keeping that day. Since the times of the Gentiles began to run, when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple, and the Ark ceased to exist, the services of that day have not been rightly carried out. But, as in the time of Solomon, when the kingdom was set up in peace and in power, that day could be rightly observed, so when the Lord reigns in power as Prince of Peace, the day of atonement will again be properly kept. Then, as Ezekiel teaches (xlv. 18, 20), in a new way, and at a different season of the year, in the first month instead of the seventh, will the cleansing of the sanctuary be annually carried out.

The entrance, however, of the Ark to Zion, and the building of the Temple, are very different things; David brought thither the Ark, Solomon built the house. By the Messiah both will be effected in the same order. God's presence at Jerusalem, unde the symbol of th

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Ark, suggested to David the building of the house. The Lord Jehovah's presence on Mount Zion, in the person of Christ, must precede the rebuilding of the Temple. As on the return from Babylon the Lord returned to His city before His house was built (Zech. i. 16), so, knowing of whom David, as king, was a type, we see the propriety of the Ark being brought to Jerusalem in his reign. As king the Lord will appear in Jerusalem, and as king He will build the house: "Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne" (Zech. vi. 12, 13).

David felt the importance of the step, as we gather from the psalms sung on that occasion. He regarded it as a remembrance of God's covenant to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that their seed should inherit the land, so they sang Ps. cv. 1-15. He looked forward to supremacy over the nations as a consequence, so they followed with Ps. xcvi.; and he counted on the restoration of Israel to their land in a day future to him, and even to us, so they concluded with the first and the two last verses of Ps. cvi. We know, too, that the step then taken was important, as foreshadowing the re-entry of the presence of God into Jerusalem, and the joyful consequences following it, when Messiah himself shall be there.

As the presence of God on Mount Zion, symbolised by the Ark, was something quite new, so we have David appearing in a new character, that of priest; girded with a linen ephod, he danced before the Ark. With all the house of Israel he brought up the Ark "with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet." Will not there be a day when shouting and the sound of a trumpet shall again be heard in connection with the presence of God in Jerusalem? Ps. xlvii. 5 surely speaks of it, but it will be when the Lord God is acknowledged by Israel as their king, and the king over all the earth. At the close of that day's proceedings we find David not merely clothed in the priestly garment, worn by those who ministered before the Lord, but acting as a priest, for he

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blessed the people in the name of the Lord. Saul had never blessed them; David and Solomon both blessed them, the one after the Ark had entered the city of David, the other after it was placed in the oracle on Mount Moriah. Never more do we read of such an action performed by any king at Jerusalem. Hezekiah and his princes blessed the Lord and the people (2 Chron. xxxi. 8). But the character of the blessing David and Solomon imparted was surely different from this; they blessed the people alone, typifying that which none of the princes could share in. For, as types of the Lord Jesus, the priest on his throne, who could be associated with them? The high priest had been commanded to bless Israel; here, in the presence of Zadok and Abiathar, David exercises that privilege.

On that day none were forgotten; it was a time when all should rejoice. David blessed them, but he did more —he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and "dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine" (2 Sam. vi. 19). Feasting had accompanied the recognition of David as king over all Israel, but then, some of Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali provided it. Feasting accompanied the work of this day, in Jerusalem, but here David provided it. On that day the king, who took the chief place, must do everything; he offered offerings; he blessed the people, and sent all away rejoicing with what he bestowed. After that he blessed his house, something distinct from the nation of Israel.

On another occasion we find David acting in a priestly character. An occasion it was of deep sorrow. The Lord had been angry with Israel. Satan had moved David to number them, and the plague of three days' duration was the punishment God inflicted. The angel told Gad that David should go and set up an altar in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. This he did, "and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the Lord; and He answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering"

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(1 Chron. xxi. 26); and the sword of the angel was sheathed. Here all depended on the anointed one; he must entreat, he must offer the offerings. The grace of God is manifested in arresting the arm of the destroying angel before David was told to offer the offerings; but the king, not the high priest, could alone act here. Do we not see how this, faintly indeed, yet truly, shadows out the king averting God's wrath from the people by a sacrifice he offered up? In the wilderness Aaron could alone stand between the dead and the living to stay the plague. That was the high priest's work. Now a similar service must be performed by the king. On that day the king was the prominent one. He interceded for the people, he paid the price for the threshing floor, and bought of Araunah the animals for the sacrifices.

When Joshua was appointed captain of the armies of Israel Moses set him before Eleazar the priest, and told him he was to stand before Eleazar, at whose word he and all the people should go out and come in (Numb. xxvii. 21). In the days of David a great alteration had taken place. He did not stand before the priest; Abiathar bore the Ark before him (1 Kings ii. 26). Nor did he receive directions from the priest how to act. He enquired himself (1 Sam. xxiii. 9; xxx. 8). And he not only regulated the affairs of the kingdom, and the marching of the armies, but also what was connected with the worship of God. The priests received orders from him, and ministered where he located them, and he distributed them according to their offices in their service (1 Chron. xvi. 39; xxiv. 3). The priests ministered at the altar, but the king instituted "the service of song." The courses of the priests he appointed, the service of the Levites he regulated. By the law of Moses the Levites entered the sanctuary at the age of twenty-five, and carried the burdens at thirty. By the ordinance of David, the tabernacle being no longer migratory, they were to begin their work at twenty. Before his day we never read that singing formed a part of the regular service of God. From the entrance of the Ark into Zion the worship of the congregation had this accompaniment. David appointed of the Levites

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singers, and others to praise the Lord on instruments of music, which, said he, "I made" (1 Chron. xxiii. 5). And what he arranged was never set aside. The returned remnant conformed to it (Ezra iii. 10). Zachariah, the father of John, a priest of the course of Abia, officiated in accordance with it (1 Chron. xxiv. 10; Luke i. 5). Besides, he announced where the temple was to be built, and prepared for its erection wrought stones, and iron, and brass, and gold, and silver, and cedar wood. All the strangers in the land were numbered for this work, and cunning workmen sought out (1 Chron. xxii. 2—15). The pattern of the porch and of the houses he gave to Solomon, and the furniture of the house he described. By revelation all was made known to him. He, not the high priest, was the depository of this secret. God revealed it to him, and he gave it all over to his son; all of which the Lord made him to understand in writing by His hand upon him. Surely the fitness of all this is apparent. Who should arrange for the service of God as was needful but the king, the type of Him to whom the house belongs? And how suited was the introduction of the service of song at this time. What songs will be sung when David's Son shall sit on His own throne, and the instruments of music, which David introduced, give body in harmonious concert to the notes of praise! Does not this explain why the service of song forms part of Christian worship? We are in the kingdom now. He who is the King leads the praises of His people (Psalm xxii.), as David did before Him. Comparing David with Solomon, David was the originator of all that was new in the temple and in the service of God. Solomon carried out what David had previously traced out, for both being types of one king, the plans of David and Solomon could not be allowed to clash, nor the work of Solomon deviate in any one instance from the design given by David. What must have been the thoughts of the aged king as he handed over to his young son all the patterns for that house, which was to be exceeding magnifical, for which he had prepared so much, and which he had desired to build. The desire for a house to be built was right, but the manner in

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which he thought to proceed was wrong. He could not build the house, but his son should after his decease. The Prince of Peace builds it. So David must die, but die in the fullest confidence about its erection; for his seed, which should proceed out of his bowels, God would set up after him, and establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. Would David's name then be forgotten when the throne of his Son's kingdom should be established, and that for ever? It will be the throne of his Son (2 Sam. vii. 13), yet David's throne likewise. "Thy throne shall be established for ever" (16). And, though he had to die that the promise might be fulfilled, God declared he should live for ever; the glory of the kingdom he should behold, the faithfulness of God to His word he should witness, "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before *thee.*" To none before, and to none since, have such promises been made. David was the first of his line, his Son shall be the last, but the line will never end. For ever will be the duration of His kingdom. For ever before David his Son will reign. Well might he worship God after Nathan has set before him such a brilliant everlasting future.

4. This leads on to other glories, which we must glance at, connected with David in his kingly character.

The attacks of the Philistines to prevent the establishment of his throne at Zion had been successfully resisted. Now he looked beyond the valley of the Rephaim, and even the confines of Canaan. He had acted on the defensive. He must take the initiative. Beginning with the Philistines he captured Metheg-Ammah. Going outside the land of Canaan he smote Moab, and measured them with a line. Hadadezer, king of Zobah, who went to recover his border at the Euphrates, experienced the irresistible might of the son of Jesse. The Syrians of Damascus, Edom, Ammon, and Amalek, all have to succumb to him. He must be supreme between the Euphrates and the river of Egypt. In the days of the Judges both Moab and Ammon had been worsted in conflict with Israel, after they had first invaded the territory of the tribes. Now David, it would

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appear, acts not like Ehud or Jephthah, who delivered Israel from the presence and the yoke of strangers, but he invades their land, and is successful. A second time he is brought into conflict with the Syrians and the Ammonites, only to show them how invincible he is. The Syrians became his servants, and brought gifts; Rabbah of Ammon was taken, and the crown of Hanun transferred to the head of David. For the first time in the history of the world the king, who dwelt at Jerusalem, was obeyed on the banks of the Euphrates. The converse of this has also been seen. From the banks of the Euphrates has a word gone out which was obeyed on Mount Sion. By and by it will be again discovered that the king, who shall reign at Zion, must be submitted to as supreme even in the province of Babylon. But besides conquests we have an account of Toi, king of Hamath, who submitted quietly to David. Thus he became the head of the heathen (Ps. xviii. 43). "The Lord preserved David whithersoever he went. And David reigned over all Israel, and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people" (2 Sam. viii. 14, 15). The chief officers of his government are enumerated, and his sons are installed as chief rulers. Compare for this Ps. xlv. 16.

A feature in the wars of David must be noticed. He warred for supremacy, not for extermination. Under Joshua it ought to have been a war of extermination, under David it was not. For, though the scene of Joshua's victories and some of David's battles was the same, their character was very different. Joshua's entrance to Canaan typified the saints of the heavenly places entering their proper place. David's battles in the land, and outside it, represent the establishment of the kingdom on earth under the Lord Jesus. From the heavenlies Satan and his angels must be driven out. On earth all who will submit to the righteous rule will be spared. "The strangers shall submit themselves" (*margin* "yield feigned obedience").

Never were greater vicissitudes endured by any nation than by Israel. Entering Egypt at the invitation of the king, a little company of seventy souls to be preserved

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during the famine, they were detained there in slavery till, numbering 600,000 men besides children, they were brought out by the strong hand of Jehovah. A prey to various enemies from without during the time of the Judges, reduced to the most abject condition by the Philistines during the reign of Saul, they found their alliance desired by the surrounding nations under David and Solomon; and, owned by them as superiors, to whom gifts were to be brought, the Egyptians, the descendants of their former masters, came to regard them as equals, when Solomon contracted marriage with Pharaoh's daughter. Reduced to the lowest condition for their sins, an astonishment and byword to the nations of the earth, scattered abroad over the face of the globe, the only nation which is not at home in its own land, they will again be gathered to Canaan, the two tribes first to go through a tribulation unequalled by any yet seen on the earth, after which the ancient kingdom of David will be revived, and his family be reseated on his throne in the person of the Messiah. Where has the like been ever seen, that the sovereignty should be continued in one family without change for such a length of time? Dynasties rise and fall, families die out, but the house of David abides for ever. The sceptre has indeed fallen from their grasp. It is ages since one of that family wielded it on earth. It has fallen to be taken up by Him who will rule all nations with a rod of iron, "the sceptre of whose kingdom will be a right sceptre." The stem of Jesse, though cut down, has sent up a rod, a Branch has grown out of its root, destined to reduce all nations under its sway.

Besides the nations submitting to David we read of the race of giants being extirpated (2 Sam. xxi.). There had been a race of giants on the earth whose origin is shrouded in mystery, but whose country formed part of the territory given by God to Abraham and his descendants. First mentioned in the days of Abraham, we read of their gradual extinction. The Moabites and Ammonites had prevailed against them. Og, who was of the remnant of the giants, was smitten by Israel under Moses. Caleb slew the three sons of Anak, and now under David the race is finally

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extirpated. He had slain Goliath, and others killed the rest. The power of man, however great, must bow before the rule which God sets up. Isaiah sings of a time "when the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." In the prospect of this the admonition is given, "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah ii. 11, 22). When the giants are slain we see indeed "wherein is man to be accounted of."

All enemies overcome, God's salvation is celebrated in a song which clearly looks forward to the establishment of the kingdom of His Son. Delivered from the strivings of the people, made head of the heathen, David has reached the pinnacle of greatness. From the sheepfold he had risen to the throne, to wield a sceptre which the nations around submitted to. But raised up so high he does not forget those who have accompanied him in his wars, and done acts of service for him. His warriors have each their place in the kingdom according to their deeds, and the special act of devotion of those three at the well of Bethlehem is placed on record never to be forgotten. Besides this, we learn from 1 Kings ii. that service done for him in the day of his flight was indelibly fixed on his heart. Man in the zenith of his power may forget those who have ministered to him in the day of his distress. It was not thus David acted, for in this surely he is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Barzillai's kindness to David must be remembered, and rewarded by Solomon. It was not enough that David should acknowledge it. It must not be forgotten whilst the Prince of Peace reigns. But here as elsewhere we see that the antitype goes beyond the type. "They came to me" David said, "when I fled because of Absalom thy brother" (1 Kings ii. 7). He remembered service done to himself; the Lord will requite service done to others during His absence from the earth (Matt. xxv. 35—40; Mark ix. 41). As David rewards, he also speaks of punishment to be meted out to those who have risen up against him. For all who resisted the authority of the king during any part of

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his reign meet with the doom they deserve. None can stand up against God's anointed and prosper. Ishbosheth, Abner, Absalom, Ahitophel, Amasa, Sheba, Adonijah, Joab, Shimei are all killed in one way or another, and Abiathar is thrust out of the priesthood.

With this solemn lesson the life of David closes. Are we wrong in regarding him in his kingdom as typical of the Lord Jesus Christ? Surely the different facts in his history stated above prove the possibility of it. But we are not left to draw our own conclusions, for the words of David show the certainty of it. He, a prophet of God, so regarded the kingdom and the throne, when he said: "Of all my sons (for the Lord hath given me many sons) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the *throne of the kingdom of the Lord* over Israel" (1 Chron. xxviii. 5). And ere the sacred historian announces the death of David, he shows that he understood the typical character of their joint reigns, for he writes "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father" (1 Chron. xxix. 23). C. E. S.

N°. XXI.

JOHN II. 23—III.

THE introductory portion of this Gospel, chap. ii. 2—22, gives us what took place before the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and therefore (comp. Matt. iv. 17) before the Lord's ministry in its full character began. In so far, the part we now take up has also this introductory character. The subject of it tells us how suitable this is. We have in it what is needful to the understanding of that ministry. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is this opening of man's eyes we have to do with here. Let all the light of day fall upon dead eyeballs, "the darkness comprehendeth it not." Quicken him and he sees. How simple it is that faith is the distinctive mark of the children of God.

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But there is a feature about faith that we need to keep in mind, and it is just what we are reminded of in the last verses of the second chapter. "We beheld his glory, the glory as of an only begotten with the Father" is faith's testimony. We must not separate it from its object, nor from the glory of that object in its view. "Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did." Was that faith? Clearly not, for it is added, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." It was "*in* man," then, to believe after *that* fashion. It was not the manifestation of Divine life at all.

But this is very solemn. It is startling. For if you turn back to the first chapter you will find the character of those who received Him, and to whom He gave title to the place of sons of God, to be expressed in the self-same words, "those that believed in his name." What then is the difference here, or how shall we distinguish between true faith and false, if this be so? The difference lies in the words added about these at Jerusalem. They believed "when they saw the miracles that he did." Unspeakably solemn truth for Christendom, which yet grounds its faith on the same testimony! But it is certain that that which negatives as true faith this "believing in His name" is that it was one that rested simply upon the ground of His miracles.

But how should this negative it as true faith? Orthodox enough it was as to *what* they believed. "They believed in his name." Fair-seeming as that was, there was something in it, which to the eye of One who "judged not according to the appearance," rendered it unsound and untrustworthy. It was belief on *outside evidence*, not the true knowledge of the glory of the Son of God.

You may receive a miracle and say, "This man must be a teacher come from God, because no man can do these miracles which he doeth, except God be with him." All very true, indeed, but it is reasoning and not faith. You say "he *must* be," you do not say "he *is*." When I have Christ's glory before my eyes, I do not say, "it must be there," I know it *is*. We under-

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stand this difference in common things. If I say, "I must have left my book in such a place," does it not prove I am not there where it is? As soon as I get there, I do not say, "it must be there," I put my hand upon it, and say, "Here it is." So I may reason about God out of His presence. When I am there I do not reason, I adore.

"We beheld His glory." We did not believe it was there because something outside of it proved it. We beheld it ourselves, we did not need the proof. That is direct, personal acquaintance. "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Not to argue, but to *know*.

This is unspeakably solemn. But some will ask, Do you not set aside the fact that "faith cometh by hearing" or "a report?" and if so, must I not judge if the report be true? I answer, thousands do so judge and believe upon that warrant, who yet remain totally unchanged by it. But when God by His own word searches the heart, it is different. The word, with one to whom it so comes, judges *him*. It comes in the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power." It is not something which he judges by his reason. He may be an idiot, still he knows that it is God. "The world by wisdom,"—with all its intellectual searching—"knows him not."

When that disciple wrote "we beheld his glory," he was not speaking of an intellectual process, but of faith. They of whom he spoke were none of the world's wise ones, but the wonder of that presence was upon their hearts. Eyes that had watched Him, had not seen it; ears heard nothing of it, that had listened to His words; it had not come of man's heart. God had revealed it. God was there.

And nothing short of this is life. To know God and His Christ,—that only,—is to *live*.

Nevertheless in Nicodemus we see how reasoning may be mixed up with faith in the soul of one who really has life. A faith *founded* on reasoning is a different thing. But just as we know in the same person flesh and spirit lust against each other, so in the same person may intellectualism be at war with faith. So with

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Nicodemus. He comes professedly upon the same ground as those before spoken of, and the Lord, taking him upon that ground, meets him with, "Except a man be born again." But *he comes to Jesus.* His heart is attracted, and although his coming "by night" shews his feebleness, it shews too the spiritual instinct of a soul wherein God has wrought. The world will be against him and he comes trembling; but he comes, and to Him whom the world will be against,—he, the Pharisee in the need of his soul; he, the wise man, for wisdom.

And thus is brought before us another characteristic of true faith. In the least measure of it there is confidence. The heart is drawn to the person of Christ; for saving faith is, as we have before seen, the knowledge of a person, not of a creed, however true. "He that hath the *Son* hath life." It is quite true we have to listen to the word of Him to whom we are brought, and to know His work, for *peace.* And thus fear may contend with love, where His word and work are not rightly known. But there is, in spite of all, a sense of goodness which attracts, wherever there is faith. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." That seek *Him*, not life merely or a reward: of that men *are* capable. But naturally, "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after *God.*" All that the world understands by religion is something very different from this, nay, the reverse of it. Natural conscience seeks to hide from God; and how many systems of divinity are moulded upon this pattern. Elaborate processes to turn away His anger—preparations to meet Him who must be met at last,—futile as the fig-leaves of Eden when God is really there; but salvation thus, with multitudes—God unknown—merely to be saved from *Him.*

Doubtless, the renewed soul may, in its first bewilderment, be entangled in such devices, but even so, there is a truer instinct at bottom, and that before He be known as a Saviour and a Justifier. Its sighing is still after Himself; "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" Life and salvation, too, surely, if not known, but withal

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"Him." Gleams of His glory are breaking through the clouds, however lowering, and the soul, while not *satisfied*, is yet *won*.

And such an one is Nicodemus. Yet, though not in nature merely, he takes that ground, and therefore must learn what nature is. Indeed, so it is with us all. Only as quickened do we learn what death is. And it is absolutely necessary we should learn it, for therein lies the whole mystery of strength and blessing for us. God's way of saving is the unveiling of Himself. But to be saved I must be a sinner. I must be "ungodly," and "without strength." I must be in my rags before Him. Do you think, when I have Him upon my neck, I would, for anything that you could name, have rather had my rags off before I had Him there?

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said to thee, Ye must be born again."

The connection with the line of truth which we have in this gospel is here apparent. "Water" has come before us already in the 2nd chapter as a symbol. We have it again in the 4th, 5th, 7th, 9th, 13th, and 19th chapters. In some of these, indeed, it is "living water" that is spoken of, and in the 7th this is interpreted to mean the Spirit: "this spake he of the Spirit." But that helps all the more clearly in the understanding of the rest. The use of water is in cleansing and in refreshing. Both are by the Spirit, and both are by the word. Beautifully, if the Word be water, the Spirit is "*living* water." "Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken to you." "The washing of *water*, by the *word*."

The commencement of this waterwashing is manifestly in new birth. After that there is still the daily practical cleansing of our walk and ways. The Lord speaks of both when He says, "He that is washed (or has been bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet."

There is another thing, also, in close connection with cleansing, which water signifies. It is the figure of judg-

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ment, as it was actually the judgment of the old world. And to this Peter refers when he writes, "the like figure whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us." For we are saved by judgment. Like Noah, we pass on to our new world through the ruins of the old. "Our old man crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Out of flesh you can get nothing else. There is no change, therefore, as to it: "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be." It is judged, not saved—destroyed, not changed.

And withal there is the impartation of a new life, as distinct and real, at least, as was the old. Scripture speaks of it as "eternal life abiding in" us (1 John iii.), and of the exhibition of it in its perfectness in Christ's life down here, so that having spoken of Him as the "Word of life," the Apostle goes on to say: "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." So distinct, so perfect, so separate from mixture with the old, that it can be said of everyone born of God, "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The flesh cannot do ought else, for it is not of God, but it is for faith "crucified with Christ," and I look at it and say, "it is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me." As born of God—in the new life which comes from Him—we cannot sin.

Were it otherwise, a gradual change of the old man into the new, it could not be said that God "hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," where that expression "in light" speaks of everything made manifest. Instead of that we should only be meet when that process was completed. Nor would new birth be a bathing, a washing of the old person, never needing to be renewed. But Scripture, with perfect consistency, speaks of it as that, as we have seen.

But people naturally object, How about sanctification,

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then? Is there no growth in grace? Surely there is. We do not start at once into full-grown men in Christ. Spiritually, as in nature, there are babes, young men and fathers; and these very terms may tell us how the two things consist. A child's *nature* is as perfect as a man's. It wants development, that is all. It gets that as it grows up among men, and has before it the full maturity of what it is. Let a child grow up in a desert apart from men, and it will scarcely be a man at all. Yet not from its not possessing a nature perfect as any other's. Even so, with Christ before us, we grow up unto Christ, no more perfect in *nature* at the last than at the first, but perfected in development—the full-grown man.

But how we do marvel when we learn, as we must do practically, this mystery of new birth! When in the sincere desire of our souls we come to Christ as the teacher of righteousness, only to learn that it cannot come of us! How we cavil at it, and question it, and try to falsify it too, seeking the help of His grace to work out a character for ourselves, to substitute our righteousness for His righteousness, and so be at peace! And how, in His mercy, when all such efforts fail—as it is of His mercy they should fail—and we find, indeed, our place in death, ungodly, and without strength—"baptised into his death," we find our new birth unto a "living hope," unto "life and peace," in and with Him who lay in death for us, *our* death, and has risen out of it, the first-begotten from the dead, and brought us up out of it, quickened together with Him!

Of new birth, law, strictly as law, knew nothing, just as it knew nothing of salvation. "What shall I *do* to be *saved?*" is the question of man's ignorance simply. It never said, "the man that doeth these things shall be *saved*," for *if* he did them, he needed no salvation. Yet there is a form in which (when, along with law, God's long-suffering goodness was proclaimed, as when the tables came out of the mount the second time) God did connect these things: "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." It is not even here "he shall *be* saved,"

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but "he shall save *himself.*" That is a wide enough difference. In reality it is only the opening up of man's need more distinctly. Already once lost, could he now conform to God's conditions, and save a life already in strictness forfeited? God never so couples doing with *His* salvation, but if man could even now "save himself," there were the terms.

Just in the same way you find the need of new birth coming out, but it is put upon man himself to effect. As hopeless a task as in Nicodemus' question, "Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" So God says in Ezekiel, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"[a]

[a] In the use of the term "repentance" there is a more remarkable change. In the Old Testament, the book of God's government, repentance on the part of *man* is only six times spoken of. In three of these places (two in Judg. xxi. and one in Exod. xiii.) it does not mean repentance in the full spiritual significance of the word at all. "Lest the people repent when they see war." "And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother." Again, we have (Jer. viii. 6) in the negative, "No man repented him of his wickedness." The two passages left are, one prophetical of Ephraim's future repentance (in Jer. xxxi.), and the other (the fullest description, indeed, of repentance that is to be found) in the book of Job, a book exceptional in many ways to the general character of the Old Testament. Two other apparent passages should rather be, "Return" (Ezek. xiv. 6, and xviii. 30).

With reference to repentance on the part of God, on the other hand, the word is used thirty-six times. For what the law proposed to man was to change (if he could) God's mind about him. "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return," had been God's word to Adam, but "the man that doeth these things shall live in them," was the proposition of the law. And in a somewhat modified form, this is announced (Jer. xviii.) as the principle of God's dealings with the nations. Yet, while this was proposed, practically, if God repented, it was "because of the multitude of his mercies," or else to cut man off in judgment (*e.g.*, Gen. vi.) as a sinner.

Looking at Israel from "the top of the rocks," one that "heard the words of God and saw the vision of the Almighty," could say, "God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent." And an apostle of the New Testament could echo with him that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." This is the only passage in the New Testament in

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Prophetically, however, Ezekiel tells us, under the *new* covenant, of God's doing this, and here is what a "master in Israel" ought to have known. "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh," is certainly complete moral renovation or "new birth." And such a change was necessary in order to the introduction even of the earthly kingdom. If these "earthly things" stumbled him, how would he be prepared to believe One who spoke of things outside the range of the old prophets altogether? "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

And this bringing out of new truth yet further tests the state of the soul to which it is presented. Do I know the Shepherd's voice? Can I distinguish it from the voice of strangers? Or do I receive only what is accredited by the concurrent testimony of the piety or wisdom of past generations? That may seem very humble. It *is* practical infidelity. I do not believe God until man assures me He has spoken! Which is it then I really trust? It is one of the saddest things in a day of confusion to hear people say, "But so many good men differ." Yes, I reply, but are you listening to the distracting voices of men, then? Does not the Lord Jesus say, "My sheep hear *my* voice"? And is it not written, "There must also be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you"? The argument that because *we* are not infallible, God cannot communicate to us His mind infallibly, is as unreasonable even as it is dangerous. It is denying a distinctive characteristic of the Lord's teaching, "He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes." But if I cannot recognise His voice from that of the scribes themselves, what becomes of that authority? It is as much gone as if He had never spoken, and I cannot certainly say if I be walking in the path of His will or not. Though I "will do his will," I *cannot* "know of the

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which even the thought of it on God's part suggests itself. It is now to *man* that repentance is proclaimed.

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doctrine." Though my "eye be single," my "whole body" cannot be "full of light."

Nicodemus might have said, "The whole mass of rabbinical commentators say nothing of new birth." Would that excuse him? The question was, did he know the voice of God? And with heavenly things now to be revealed, could he receive them, without the sanction of antiquity, upon the simple word of Him whom he had just acknowledged "a teacher come from God"?

And now, in our day, when there are no new revelations, but only the old truth, amid the perplexity of critics and the folly of wise men, unperplexed and unchanged, the question still remains for each one of us, with all its interest, and with all its solemnity, Do *I* know the voice of God?

Then comes the testimony of the glory of His person who is there. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Then the wonder of His work, still more revealing Him, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And then, as soon as you know Him, you know another. In another way than simply by the *value* of His work, He brings to *God*. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

He would not leave you short of that blessed revelation, for that would be still to leave you short of perfect rest. "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us," is, though the request of ignorance, for in Christ they had seen the Father, yet a true judgment of what it *does* need to "suffice" the heart. Were there aught, back of Christ, still to be revealed, we should not yet be fully blest. Christ in His love paying my debt to God would not content me without the knowledge of God in His love, so declared by that debt paid. If my *conscience*

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needs the one, my *heart* needs the other. "God *in* Christ,"—that satisfies. "And not only so, but we also joy in *God,* through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation."

For it is a reality that we are "without God in the world" naturally, and that is another and a sadder truth even than being outcasts from God. Both go together, no doubt, but while to be an outcast from God is to be outside all I know of light and goodness, to be *without* Him is to be *without the knowledge* of light or goodness. And it needs that surely to make up the perfect agony of woe.

What a difference it is to say I know that I am safe, and "to know God"! And in one way, although it needs the knowledge of security, *perfectly* to know Him, this is the first thing proposed, and it is that which we go on in continually. In it comes the knowledge of peace, because to "acquaint thyself with him" is to "be at peace." But this is only one of the varied fruits of that tree of life and blessing.

We know *Him.* We *have* a *God.* It is joy to put our mouths in the dust before Him, and to own Him as infinitely beyond us in *goodness* as in power and majesty He is. This is what the Cross reveals. This is what faith receives. And this is where I begin to live and walk with Him, whom daily I know better, and daily seek yet more to know.

What follows in verses 18—21 is man's responsibility in view of "light," thus "come into the world." John's Gospel gives us no pleading[b] with man, no trial of him. The light exposes him, that is all. What can be looked for from one dead in trespasses and sins? Yet even so, that does not excuse him, his *responsibility* is unaffected by it. For if he be "dead," it is "in sins." If he be in darkness, he "*loves* darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil." "*This* is his condemnation." This is why he does not come to the light, why he does

[b] Except in so far as chap. xii. 35, 36 may be called so. I know of no other passage of the same nature throughout the book.

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not believe. It is his *will*[c] that is in fault—his heart. The converse of "they believed not the truth," is simply "but had *pleasure* in unrighteousness."

Yet "death" it is, surely. A state out of which none but God can bring. And we must know it, each one for himself, so that it shall be, save in the grace of it, no mystery, that the "Firstborn" of this "new creation" is also "the first begotten from the dead." Even so we, born unto God, are new-born out of death. He for us risen out of it, we "quickened together with Him," "that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren."

And thus, it is solemn to see the Lord of life and glory taking up John's work. "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there He tarried with them, and *baptised*. John also was baptising in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there, and they came and were baptised." It is the last time you meet with baptism in this gospel, for with this chapter we pass out of the region of death into the life beyond. It was fit to have this solemn witness first. It comes as the seal of the previous teaching, and because "the testimony of two men is true," the master authenticates the testimony of the disciple. All this will be left behind when He takes up His own peculiar "witness" of "heavenly things." But while passing on to this, He must confirm the "earthly," for grace does not "make void," but "establish law." The new revelation (if it go behind it) puts emphatically its seal upon the old.

John has accompanied us then so far. But the wilderness voice is now to give its last utterance, and joyful if solemn utterance it is. O how more than calmly we can look on at our own burial when Christ the Life is there! "He must increase, I must decrease" now. Think you there ought to be sorrow about that? Surely in another sense than old Simeon, but with relief of heart like his, we say "Lord, now lettest thou thy

[c] I do not say this is *all*, for when "to will is present," "to perform may be far off." But for the will to be changed is the way to all the rest.

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servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Beautiful is this last utterance of one, than whom none greater had risen among them that are born of woman. He is still only "a voice," "a witness to the light," "not the light," and he pretends not to it. "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all."

Precious, simple, ungrudging witness! His glory was to be nothing. Cheaply attained as that is, who among us desires it?

But again and again this solemn testimony to man's utter ruin comes. Let heaven pour out its treasures, he does not value them. "What he hath seen and heard he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony." To receive that is to set to one's seal that God is true.

Truth is here again everything. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

There the voice ceases. What is beyond is not for John (blessed servant as he is) to utter. He that comes from heaven is to speak now the things "which he hath seen and heard." F. W. G.

N°. XXII.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE GREEK ARTICLE.

EVERY noun which is not itself a proper name is in direct contrast with this latter; it is the name of what a thing is, not of an individual.

Where, in the nature of things, there is ostensibly only

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one, as Sun, Moon, Heaven,—imagination easily personifies them. But as John, Peter, etc., are names of individuals, or become so, so tree, table, glass, etc., is the name of a thing not of an individual. Such a word, or appellative noun, answers to the question *What?* Just so a proper name answers to the question *Who?* I say, "Who, what individual, is that"? The reply is, "Peter, John," etc. If I say, "What is that"? The answer is, "It is a tree, a table," etc., that is, *what* it is.

Habits of language may vary. A language may have an indefinite article, or use the number *one* for it; and either of these individualises; thus in French, *un homme*, a man; and even in Greek, εἷς (one) is often so used in the New Testament. But the noun in itself states what a thing is,—table, chair, etc.

In this lies the whole doctrine of the article; at least the root of it all. The style of language varies as the mind of the people who speak it. An Englishman says, *law;* that is, he uses the abstract idea *law* by itself. French cannot bear this. It must have a *positive* object before the mind, it cannot deal in abstractions. Hence it can say *sans loi*, because *sans* excludes existence, but not *par loi*. Where the sentence implies existence, it cannot use a mere abstract word. It must be *toute loi, toute loi quelconque*, or something tantamount.

Each nation may insist that its own habits of thought are the best. That does not affect the question which we have to treat.

Whenever a word is merely descriptive of something else, not an individual, it needs no article. So, even in French, *par bonté*. In Latin all is thus abstract. Every noun, when not defined by a pronoun possessive, or the like, answers to the question "*What*"? not to "*Who*"? or, it is not individualised. German and Dutch are more like French. Our business now is with the *Greek;* but the general principle will help us to understand it.

A noun, as elsewhere, is always a quality or kind of being, or answers to "*What*"? As for instance, *ανθρωπος, βιος, οικια*, etc. The article makes it indi-

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vidual, *ὁ ανθρωπος* ; a similar principle will be found in Hebrew ; and its form, when a word is in regimen, shows the individualising, indicative character of the article ; *Ish ha-elohim*, the man of God, that is, a man, that one that is of God. So we have *ha-Adam* that special race, or being, which God had created, and Himself quickened ; so *ha-nahar*, the Euphrates ; *ha-baal* the lord (baal). Now, in Greek, when once we have taken a noun substantive for *what* a thing is called, and the article as indicative of individualisation, all becomes easy; *νομος παρεισηλθε* (Rom. v. 20), in English, "law," the thing so called ; *ὁ νομος*, the law (scilicet) of Moses ; *ανθρωπος ηλθε*, *What* (not *who*) came? A being that was a man not an angel. In English we should say "a man;" *δι' ανθρωπου*, by man. In English, either "by a man," or "by man" would do, but better "by man."

What follows is striking : *ὁ θανατος*; but *αναστασις νεκρων*, anarthrous. The latter—this thing what is called by that name; the former might have been equally anarthrous, but *ὁ* points it out as the well known king of terrors. It is individualised, a being to the mind. Abstractions are the chief difficulty: for the article individualises. But a thoroughly abstract word is made a unity of, *i.e.*, individualised by contrast with all other things possible compared with it. Hence an individual of any kind, *and* an abstraction will both have the article. When I say "man," I individualise the kind or race, sum up qualities which distinguish him from animals, angels, God, etc., with which the mind would compare him. So *ὁ ανθρωπος* may be *man*, that kind of being summed up as an individual being in thought, or a particular individual man, already known. So *ὁ νομος* may be "law," or "Moses's law," or any other known law ; less familiar here, because *νομος* is more difficult to individualise abstractedly by a tacit comparison with other things: a few particular laws, is what we think of, or law simply in its nature, *i.e.*, the name for what it is. Law cannot be so abstract a thought, is more positively instituted. With abstract qualities, the case is simple. That particular one is, itself, in contrast with

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all other qualities, *ἡ ανομια, ἡ ἁμαρτια.* I think it will be found that of such words, those that are in kind familiar to us in detail, we make what is called an abstraction of; *i.e.*, we sum up the various things as a whole, and it becomes a unity, and in Greek has an article: as *ἡ ἁμαρτια, ἡ ανομια.* The principle applies anywhere, but such a word as *νομος*, for example, is less liable to be summed up thus. Species afford facility for this; if accustomed to be viewed as species, they are individualised in contrast with other species. In English every species is not individualised: the word remains a kind of adjective. I say man. I say the horse, meaning the horse tribe, and the ox, sheep, that class. God and man are alone, I think, given a personal name thus, in English. It is not a set of beings, but a being. It is really a name.

Take, now, to illustrate the principle John chap. i.:—*ὁ λογος* is an individual personal being;—*Θεος* a kind of being;—*προς τον Θεον* a personal being; *εν αρχη* is absolute, [*εν τη αρχη* would be a particular beginning, perhaps, of all things, but one, designated one]; *ζωη ην*; it is, what was there [*ἡ ζωη* would have individualised it, and there would have been none anywhere else,—that life would have been in Him alone as a whole]; then *ἡ ζωη*, because it is the life mentioned, *i.e.*, it is individualised. It is not *what*—but *which* life. So *το φως το αληθινον*, it was the light of men. Here it is clearly individualised, a particular light, and, indeed, the only one owned as of men. In the case of *τη σκοτια*, it is important. You could not say *φως φαινει εν σκοτια* because there would be no darkness if the nature (the *what*) of the thing was in question, but *τη σκοτια* is a particular darkness,—abstract, no doubt, but what was opposite to the light of men, which was life in Christ the Word. What that found itself in, was a darkness opposed to it, and which could not comprehend it, the darkness of this world. It is stated mysteriously, but it is that darkness in which the light of men, Christ, shines. That darkness did not comprehend it,—no doubt because it was darkness, but the opposite of that light. Whatever is contrasted has an article, for it is thereby a

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positive object individualised, consequently, as one whole before the mind; hence as above species. *Εγενετο ανθρωπος* sent *παρα Θεου*. What was sent? A man, not an angel; here it is evident. So *παρα Θεου* is what the being was, he was sent from; *παρα του Θεου* is Greek, but it individualises God, *παρα Θεου* characterises Him: the messenger was a man, but a man sent from God;—*ονομα αυτω* is not his name was, but there was a name to him, John. We have, lower down, *το ονομα αυτου*, here it is a particular name amongst others. Here, what had he? a name, which was John. You could not say, I apprehend, as stating a fact *ονομα αυτου*, because the genitive gives a particular name—his name. It is known that in ordinary cases the possessive pronoun requires the article before the noun;—*εις μαρτυριαν*, that is what he came for—his mission, what particular testimony it was, he goes on to say;—*ὁ κοσμος* is the one individual world, clearly;—*τα ιδια, οἱ ιδιοι*, I note as being plural, where the plurality itself clearly individualises, gives positive objects as units to the mind,—only it also embraces all of them,—*τα, οἱ*, all the units which bear the name or designation of *ιδια, ιδιοι*;—*εξ αἱματων*, etc., is clearly of *what: εκ των αἱματων* would have specified the particular kinds, *i.e.*, individualised each kind of blood,—probably it is meant to exclude all, if not a mere hebraism;—*εκ θεληματος ανδρος* is noticeable, because a genitive very commonly brings an article with it, as giving the particular kind of the governing noun, and so objectively individualises it (*το φως των ανθρωπων*), but here the whole is merely what the thing is, *εκ* marking nature or quality. Their birth was not of that kind, that was not what it was. It is not merely an actual will supposed to exist in the individual man.

ὁ λογος σαρξ is a common form of proposition, that individual person or being did now become that.

την δοξαν αυτου, there was the particular actual glory which they saw; *δοξαν ὡς* then, what it was, its quality. This may suffice.

Θεον stands as a name. Yet involving they saw. Yet even here, where it is used personally and objectively, the article is used; *προς τον Θεον*, it was somebody He

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was with; but παρα Θεου, the quality of His mission. So here ἑωρακε Θεον, Him, who is truly *such*; τον Θεον would have been personally, and not have given the force: it would have been the fact. Here it is more in the nature of things. In John viii. it is εκ του Θεου, for it was from God himself [that] He came out.

In verse 44 you are εκ πατρος του διαβολου; the Devil, is personal, individual; but they were not *out of* him personally but characteristically. They had him morally as their father. From the Devil as father, the source of what they were.

το ψευδος objectively contrasted with ἡ αληθεια and, so, individualised; ψευστης what he is.

εκ των ιδιων—of distinct things which are his own.

So περι ἁμαρτιας is neither one particular sin, nor as an ideal or abstract whole, but what they could or could not convict Him of.

So αληθειαν, speak truth, what characterises the speaking. Hence, as heretofore observed, in such cases of accusatives after verbs, and of the verb substantive, an anarthrous word is usual.

In John v. 37 we have an instance which might seem strange, φωνην αυτου. It is not properly *his voice* as one known voice which speaks, but a voice, any voice of his; so ειδος αυτου, anything that was his form. It is not one known voice or form, but anything that (what) was that. But τον λογον αυτου (ver. 38) because that is one recognised word. In (ver. 41) παρα ανθρωπων that character of praise, παρα των ανθρωπων living individuals in fact. So (ver. 44) δοξαν παρ' αλληλων, but την δοξαν την παρα του μονου Θεου.

John, perhaps, tests the principle best, from the peculiar, abstract way in which many things are stated by him. In more narrative books it is simpler.

I quote now some more peculiar forms. Acts xiv. 3, ἱκανον μεν χρονον.

Here, clearly, it was not the object to designate one particular, pretty long, time, individualising it from others—but *what* the time was; it was a ἱκανον χρονον. With ην and εγενετο, as stated, it is the question of *what* took place; there was a ὁρμη there [ver. 4 and some

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(ησαν) were with the Jews and some with the apostles], ver. 5, ως δε εγενετο ὁρμη των εθνων τε και Ιουδαιων συν τοις, etc. The individuals των of both classes.

It is a mistake to think there is never an anarthrous noun followed by an article. When the first noun depends on another word to which it answers, as "*What*," and the following one is of individuals who refer to that, you will have the first anarthrous, the second not. When the first is an individual whole, dependant on the following genitive, it must have the article, το πληθος της πολεως.

It was *the* multitude, the one whole multitude of *that* city, not of another (ver. 4); but ὁρμη των εθνων, etc., because there it is merely *what* took place, and does not belong wholly and exclusively as an embodied individual to those people.

Ver. 8, και τις ανηρ εν Λυστροις αδυνατος τοις ποσιν. The man was αδυνατος τοις ποσιν: his two individual feet, though there is no αυτου (his); χωλος εκ κοιλιας μητρος [αυτου], his mother's womb is merely a date to characterise his lameness. The womb is not before us objectively as an existing thing.

Ver. 10, ειπε μεγαλη τη φωνη is somewhat peculiar, but accounted for in the same way; μεγαλη φωνη would do, but simply characterise the manner of ειπε: τη φωνη is his voice, raised to a loud pitch,—I have not the character of speaking but Paul's voice; μεγαλη φωνη is, practically, one word. Hence, the article in the plural, unless there be a limiting word, means all of that kind.

Ver. 13, ταυρους bulls, τους ταυρους would be individuals designated; and the *what* is ταυρους, *i.e.*, all that comes under that name.

All this is not a different principle from the previous paper on it, but goes to the root; the other more to the form.[a] The former grammatical, this metaphysical.

The noun is always characteristic, or the *what* of something, even when there is an article. The article indicates an individual, or single (many if plural) object

[a] [The article in the Present Testimony, Vol. I.]

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which is that, "What." The form of subject and predicate is merely an effect of this. The person "ὁ" or object I call man, the what of the object is an animal. Other words may take the place of the article in individualising as τις, πας, πολλοι. Οἱ πολλοι is something else; οἱ gives a number of designated individuals in contrast with one, a number of individuals lost in the designation πολλοι in contrast with some one or few otherwise connected though contrasted with them—οἱ ἡγεμονες, οἱ πολλοι, πολλοι is, becomes, a qualification, not a mere uncertain number. Hence, as a general rule, an unmentioned individual kind has no article; αγγελος, ανθρωπος, προς παρθενον. It is what the being is; singular, but known by its character.

When mentioned, the article comes, too, as a rule, because an individual (now known) is designated.

There is an oracular absence of the article which, though apparently exceptional, only confirms the rule: πνευμα ἁγιον: και δυναμις ὑψιστου. It specially characterises what it was and is, not merely historical of what took place; in which case, the article would have been used. The translation (Acts i. 8) is right: "Ye shall receive power, the Holy Ghost coming upon you;" not as in the margin, that would have been, I conceive, την δυναμιν.

No. XXIII.

REVELATION XX. v. 4—15.

4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.

This is the first resurrection. 6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

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7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it—from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Ver. 11. "A great white throne" is here presented to us, as having been seen, seen in vision, by John. This is commonly called "*The* great white throne."

And there was "him that sat on it" seen too.[a]

Then we read "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."

Here, clearly, we have the end of all that *on* which, and in connection *with* which, man had been found, in time, a dweller upon earth. This last of God's acts in

[a] In the Acts, two witnesses declare that it is Jesus who is to sit upon this throne, namely, in chap. x. 38—43, Peter; and in chap. xvii. 30, 31, Paul.

"God . . . commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he (Jesus of Nazareth, v. 38), which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead" (ver. 42), so said Peter.

"God . . . now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." So testified Paul.

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time is described, here, very briefly, "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away." Peter also, in his second epistle, describes this scene, and tells us *how* it shall be brought to pass, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (iii. 10); "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (ver. 12).

Time (as men speak) is that portion of eternity which is measured and marked off in portions, in connection with man here on earth, where he was originally placed by God as the centre and head of this earth's system. When the system itself passes, time (as we speak) passes with it. God's last act as to this earth is this causing the heavens and the earth which now are, and which are, by the word of God, "kept in store, reserved unto fire" (2 Pet. iii. 7), to pass away.

Some argue from what has been here, on earth, to what will be in another and entirely different system of things. And that what is true now would be true then. This is folly. If we do, by experience, know a little about things as they have been and are, yet do we know nothing correctly unless it be that which is derived from Scripture; and to God's word *must* we go, if we would know *anything* that lies beyond the passing away of the present system.

Next, we read of a judgment. And, mark it, I pray you, it is a judgment, not in this world, nor in the time of this world; but after "the earth and the heaven fled away," after the whole system has been purged by fire. But there is a judgment then. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Who are judged? The dead only.

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It is *not* a general judgment; but only of such as are, at that time, "the dead."

It is not *a general judgment*,—for the first resurrection had brought out of the grave (as God thought it due to Christ that it should be) all that were therein who had believed in and served Him. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection" (ver. 6). After living and reigning with Christ a thousand years, and being (together with those who had been alive and waiting for him, and had been changed), priests of God and of Christ (ver. 6), there is no question about judgment for them. God had shown what He thought it meet and right to do with those that slept in Jesus, and those that waited for Him. They had both been associated with His Son, reigning with Him a thousand years. Christ had come (1 Thess. iv.) to raise those that slept through Jesus; to change those that were still alive and awaited Him. They will not be among the dead. But, from Adam downward, many had died as unrepentant sinners,—down even to the host of daring, open rebels, stirred up by Satan at the last: "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (vers. 7—9).

Where are they to be judged? All that is said is—They stand before God.

There is no difference; the dead, small and great, stand before the throne. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell[b] delivered up the dead which were in them.

The trial will not turn upon human evidence. Books are to be opened—books of *works;* and another book to check them by—the book of life; that it may be shown that none that have their names in that book of life come

[b] *Hades* is the word here, i.e., *the unseen world;* not Gehenna.

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into judgment. "And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" . . . "And they were judged every man according to their works."

Of the sentence, I may speak presently.

To two things I now call attention. *First*, that this scene presents "the dead" who have ceased to be in time; the scene is in "God's for ever," and there *they* are: and *Secondly*, that they that stand to be judged, have been brought there by the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we turn to John v. we shall see the proof of this second point.

There I read "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (ver. 22). "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (ver. 27). There are two resurrections mentioned here, the resurrection of *life* and the resurrection of *judgment;* both are the expression of His power, "marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"[c] (vers. 28, 29). As to the first of these two classes, viz., those who partake of the resurrection unto life,[d] the Lord has known and

[c] The word rendered "damnation," is *not* damnation but *judgment*, i.e., to be judged.

[d] Observe, one of these resurrections is directly "*unto life*"; the other is *unto judgment*, and though the second death follows, it is not said that it is *unto death*. Both classes come out, in their proper times; in the one class *what life is* will be made manifest—this is the fruit of faith. The others come forth to the fruits of unbelief *to be judged*. But both come forth into *manifested* being—however different their respective states, or the results of it are. Has the life in which they *come forth* from the grave no points of difference? Christ's power acts upon a renewed man, and upon an unrenewed man, without the life in the two men being at all in the same state and condition. Human life in Adam while in innocency and after the fall; in Cain, in Abel, in Peter unconverted and after conversion; in Judas, in Antichrist; in Saints now in sorrow, and in Saints hereafter in heavenly glory, when He makes us to sit with Him on His throne, is one life; but how various its states and conditions! "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the

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wrought in them previously in a special way. This we find in vers. 24—26, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation,[e] but is passed from death unto *life*. Verily, verily, I say unto you the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."

When a creature, whose existence began yesterday, has to speak of his Creator, who is self existent and never had a beginning, surely humility and caution become him. I would remember this; yet where truth has been revealed in Scripture, that must, in all the details of it, be carefully gathered up as the humbled creature's safeguard against the cunning wiles and the vain reasonings of deceivers. In connection herewith, there are several things which I would now notice as to the Son of God.

First, because He is God, this same self-existence, this power to say "I am," the glory of being the First and the Last, is His. Himself, "the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15); "in him it was well pleasing that all fulness should dwell" (ver. 19); "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (ii. 9).

Secondly, and more[f] than this, He could say and did say "He that has seen me has seen the Father also" (John xiv. 9). "And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (xvii. 4). Both these glories are referred to separately, in the first chapter of the Gospel of John. First it is said of Him, in His name of the Word, "In the beginning was the Word, and the

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last Adam was made a quickening spirit . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." (1 Cor. xv. 45 and 47.)

[e] The same word *judgment.*

[f] The Jewish scriptures speak of "God, Messiah, and the Spirit" as each Jehovah God. But the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was not revealed until Jesus Christ came.

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Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (vers. 1, 2). And afterwards, "and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (ver. 14). "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (ver. 18). And of Him, as the Son, it is written, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power," etc. (Heb. i. 3).

Thirdly, the glories of being the alone Creator, the alone Upholder of everything, as also of being the one *for* whom all was made, are His.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything [not one thing] made that was made" (John i. 3). "God who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii. 9). "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17).

Fourthly, as to the life which He gives to believers.

His own life is that which is God's, for He is God; and it has, therefore, all the moral character of God. He had in Himself, as God, immortality (1 Tim. vi. 16) and incorruptibility; but, as we saw above, in John i. and Hebrews i., the whole moral character and glory of God was and is His, the Son's. I notice this because some speak as though *the eternal life* which He gives to the believer were merely the same thing as perpetuity of existence. When the Son of God speaks of having eternal life in Himself, which He gives to any that comes to Him, this is not merely perpetuity of existence: that is clear, for our life is "hid with Christ in God," and Christ himself is our life; "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory" (Col. iii. 3, 4). Certainly to any simple and honest mind such scriptures as these suggest far more than mere perpetuity of existence. As do these also: "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4); "born again,

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not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 24); "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth. And of [out of] his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John i. 14, 16); "born . . . of God" (i. 13); "changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. iii. 18), etc. The Lord so makes us one with Himself *in the Spirit*, that without destroying our individuality as men having human life, He can speak of us who believe as having been crucified together with Him (Rom. vi. 6), dead together with Him (2 Tim. ii. 11); buried together with Him (Rom. vi. 4); quickened together with Him, raised up together with, and made sit together with Him in heavenly places (Eph. ii. 5, 6). And this is true now. The mind that can see nothing more than perpetuity of existence in this, I can only suppose never tasted it. It is a spiritual nature, a moral being. Just so in speaking of "death," of "being dead," the Holy Ghost does not use these terms only in connection with the *body*. Besides Saul's "consenting unto the death of Stephen" (Acts viii. 1), when he was stoned,—he (after Saul had become Paul) states of himself that he had, at that time, been "dead" as to God—"Even when we were dead in sins"; for he had persecuted the church, dear to God as it was (1 Cor. xv. 9; Phil. 3, 6). He was morally, spiritually, dead.

But, again, I need not say that He "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6), existed as God ere "he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (ver. 7), and was "found in fashion as a man" (ver. 8). But I would remark that when God was manifest in the flesh, —that very body was one altogether peculiar,—born of a virgin, and this is told us in the angel's answer to Mary's question, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke i. 34). "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee"; and as a consequence, "therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the

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Son of God" (ver. 35). Many overlook this truth that the babe, that which was born of Mary, shall be called Son of God.

And observe, too, here that as to the power of laying down His life as a man, and the power of taking it again, He was quite by Himself. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John x. 17, 18). Of what other man could this be said?

Again, observe here, a difference as to *life* itself. "*The* life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" [in Jesus Christ] (1 John i. 2). This if, in Him, the source of all manifested life, is not the life of all the creatures. Nothing exists in creation wide, whether in heaven above, or on earth, or in the prison of wicked spirits, but what derived its life and being from Him. He made all good. In heaven, some fell—He still holds them in existence by the word of His power, fallen though they be. Man fell on earth: the race still lives on earth; and though death, the wages of sin, is at work on the human body, there is yet to be a resurrection of the just and a resurrection of the unjust. That He has given various kinds of life is clear. Angels, beasts, birds, fish, plants, men, etc., are the witnesses of various kinds of life, or of life in creatures of various kinds and entirely different destinies. In man he displays one life in how many various states and conditions; but of the heavenly saints alone can it be said, One Spirit with the Lord himself.

Resurrection is not part of God's law as laid down for Adam at his creation. It could not have been so, for death[g] did not exist among men. When the Son of God so far identified Himself with man as to become seed of the woman, we learn that He was to be, also, Raiser of the dead, and Judge of quick and dead. When

[g] Death is not "the debt of nature," as some speak, but the debt of *fallen* nature.

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He comes for His own people, "and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28), He comes to fulfil his own promise made in John v. 24, as quoted above. In this resurrection there is no question of the merits of *man,* but only of the free gift of God, working on account of His estimate of Christ's merits. Now the first resurrection takes place in man's day, in time, from the earth as it is, and out from among the dead, one thousand years before the close of earth's history. And a body fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. iii. 21), one fit to go into the Father's house in, to see God in, and to share His glory in, the being like Him, when we see Him as He is, are gifts of His love. Gifts surely not natural to the position of Adam the first as placed in Eden, though natural enough for the last Adam to give to those whom He has so associated with Himself that they can know that Christ Himself is their life (Col. iii. 3, 4). And this is our present blessing, according to John xiv. 19, 20, "Yet a little time and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

But the resurrection of those who are to be judged, and judged according to their works—*that* does not take place in man's day of possessing this world, it is in God's eternity. None but the wicked rise then. They are raised by the power of One whom they knew not. Those who have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam, and perished in the gainsaying of Core, with every doer of unrighteousness, and the fearful, and the unbelieving, will then be raised without their consent, and against their every desire, raised in eternity, when time is no more, in God's eternity, and then the judgment will take place and the sentence be pronounced.

And now let me observe, that the language of the Bible is strictly the language of man in every-day life. It means what it says. Man with man makes himself understood very well without any school-master's over-

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accuracy, and no mistakes arise to the simple mind as to what he means. Is God the only one who cannot use language so as to correctly awaken man's mind to His meaning? I will take as an illustration of what I mean the words "for ever." Who in every-day life, in the things of men, gets into any mistake about the words for ever, or supposes that "for ever," always means the same duration? No; the context always decides the sense. A father gave to a child a plaything. The child (but of five years old) asked "How long is this to be mine?" The father replied "for ever." And the child said "Then it is my own, my very own; and I may burn it, if I like, or give it to my sister." Land is sold in Devonshire on leases of one, two, and four thousand years, but not "for ever." A child was run over on the car-line; the judgment of the doctors at the hospital was that the child would be a cripple "for ever." In all these, and in innumerable other cases which occur, there is no ambiguity, no mistake in the hearer's mind of what is meant; and is there to the simple man who, taught of God to be as a little child, takes the Scripture as it is written, any difficulty when God speaks? I speak as a fool; not as a wise man, nor as a learned man, but as a fool, who asks God to teach him, and who desires to let Scripture speak to him whatever it means—without vain reasonings or quibblings.

If I say, God is "for ever," how long does this "for ever" last? He who calls himself a Christian and hesitates to say "'tis an endless for ever, the life of God," is a fool. And if, when the earth and time are passed, God, in God's endless for ever, declares something is to be "for ever," 'tis an endless for ever, which God so pronounces, and will make good too. The bliss and blessedness of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ is as endless as is He who has loved them, and whom they love; and the woe of those brought up for judgment after man's for evers have ceased, and sent into torment, is too an endless for ever: where their worm dieth not, and where their fire is not quenched (Mark ix. 44).

God's word does use the words "for ever," in the same way as do men for durations which have an end; but

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then it is said of something in man's day, and not when man's day, with all its subdivisions of time, is past. Ever and for ever, etc., are so used—I give instances from Cruden's concordance—

Ever.

Lev. vi. 13, fire shall *ever* be burning on the altar.
Ps. xxv. 15, mine eyes are *ever* toward the Lord.
Luke xv. 31, and he said, Son, thou art *ever* with me.
Eph. v. 29, for no man *ever* yet hated his own flesh.
2 Tim. iii. 7, *ever* learning, and never.

For ever.

Gen. xliii. 9, then let me bear the blame *for ever.*
Exod. xii. 14, a feast for an ordinance *for ever.* 17. (said of the passover, a type until Christ came).
Exod. xxi. 6, bore his ear, and he shall serve him *for ever.*
Exod. xxxii. 13, give this land, and they shall inherit it *for ever.*
Lev. xxv. 30, the house shall be established *for ever* to him.

The "for ever" of the Mosaic economy, with its mediatorship, priesthood, sanctuary, nation, etc., seeing that it all pointed on to another, the Lord Jesus Christ, was necessarily limited to the duration of that economy. Just as the "for ever" of a man's service to another was limited to his life.

So again—

1 Kings ix. 3, this house built, to put my name there *for ever.*
2 Kings v. 27, leprosy cleave to thee and to thy seed *for ever.*
Ps. xxx. 12, I will give thanks to thee *for ever.*
Is. xxxv. 6, Jonadab said, Ye shall drink no wine *for ever.*
Jon. ii. 6, earth with her bars was about me *for ever.*

How different is the "for ever" in the above cases to its sense, where it is used either of God himself, or of the truth of His word, or of the blessedness which awaits His own people. That of which when time is done, and it is in God's eternity, the weal or the woe is "for ever," is surely an endless portion; whether of the good, bound up in one bundle of life with the Christ of God, or of the wicked raised up in the day of God, still haters of Him and of His Son.

Rom. i. 25, the Creator, who is blessed *for ever.*
Rom. ix. 5, Christ, who is over all, God blessed *for ever.*
Heb. xiii. 8, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and *for ever.*
1 Pet. i. 23, the word of God, which liveth *for ever.*
1 Pet. i. 25, the word of the Lord endureth *for ever.*
Gal. i. 5, God to whom be glory *for ever and ever.* Phil. iv. 20; 1 Tim. i. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Heb. xiii. 21.

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Rev. iv. 9, to him that sat on the throne, who liveth *for ever and ever*. 10. v. 14; x. 6; xv. 7.
Rev. xx. 10, tormented day and night for *ever and ever*.
Rev. xxii. 5, and they shall reign for *ever and ever*.

Any one can follow out this as to the terms everlasting, eternal, evermore, etc.

My statement is plain, and, I trust, distinct. The words "for ever," "ever," etc., if they are applied to any thing or person, in man's day, may be a duration limited by the context, short or long. But if presented to us as being said of God, or of anything found in His presence, when man's day is passed, then they are as much for perpetuity as is the God who announces them; their "for ever" is as long as His.

Reader! may God grant unto you, and unto me also, to receive His word as a little child, and to bow to it.

N°. XXIV.

THE FEASTS OF PASSOVER AND TABERNACLES.

"THREE times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God" was the announcement made to Israel at Sinai. How far they entered into the spirit of these solemn feasts, how long they continued, without any intermission, to go up year by year to appear before the Lord, is not revealed. That there were breaks in the period between their entrance into the land under Joshua, and their leaving it as captives for Babylon, during which they neglected this command we must suppose. At times we have indications that these feasts were not forgotten. David appointed the Levites "to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even; and to offer (*rather* at the offering of) all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord, in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts" (1 Chron. xxiii. 30, 31). Solomon wrote to Huram that he desired to build a house to the name of the Lord his God, to dedicate it to Him, and to burn before Him sweet incense,

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and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord his God (2 Chron. ii. 4). Hezekiah restored the worship of God, appointed the courses of the priests and of the Levites to minister, and appointed also "the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, *to wit*, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the Lord." (2 Chron. xxxi. 2, 3). The returned remnant set up again the altar, on which they offered the burnt offerings on all the set feasts of the Lord (Ezra iii. 5). At these epochs of their history, and doubtless at other periods also, they did observe the feasts in their regular order, though, from other Scriptures we learn, that the manner in which they kept them was not uniformly the same. Between the days of Solomon and Hezekiah there was no such Passover as the one mentioned in the reign of the latter. Between the days of Samuel and Josiah there was no such Passover as the one the king kept. Between the days of Joshua and Nehemiah the people had not kept the feast of Tabernacles aright by dwelling in booths. At times neglected, and again at times kept with different degrees of spirituality and gladness of heart, how is it, it may be asked, that we have mention made of the Passover and Tabernacles only at certain eventful epochs in their history?

Of the observance of the feast of Weeks we have no mention in the Bible, till the accomplishment of that which it foreshadowed commenced. Then it first comes before us as a feast which had been kept, but to the celebration of which, during all the period of Israel's history whilst owned of God as His earthly people, no allusion had been made. The reason of this is apparent. Though appointed to be kept in its order along with the other feasts of the year, because in common with them it looked forward to what God would accomplish on earth, it had respect to what was properly speaking outside Israel, regarded as the accepted earthly people. It looked on to that day when the Lord would begin a

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work outside them, yet not exclusive of any of them who would acknowledge it; but a work which, whilst carried on, would not treat them as a people favoured beyond others, and to whom all must be gathered if they desired favour from God. This of course explains at once why, when the ecclesiastical years of Israel shall again run their course, no feast of Weeks is set down for observance. The barley and wheat harvests will be reaped as heretofore, but the first fruits of God's creatures (James i. 18) will before that time have been gathered into His barn. The seasons will come round as surely and as regularly as they did in the days of Solomon, but the great event, to which that feast of Weeks pointed, having taken place, its name is left out of the revised calendar.

With the feasts of the Passover and of Tabernacles it is different. They have special reference to the times when Israel are owned as God's earthly people, so in the calendar of Ezekiel (xlv. 18—25) they appear. Every blessing for fallen man being based on redemption, the Passover, which speaks of this, concerns us equally with Israel; but the special portion of Israel being on the earth, whilst the feast of Weeks has a peculiar interest for us, Tabernacles has a peculiar interest for them; and so, as in the coming time of blessedness for them they will celebrate the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles in remembrance of redemption, and as enjoying final rest after all their toil, these are also the two feasts ordained of God, the observance of which is mentioned from time to time in their history. Our inquiry now is the special reason for the mention of these feasts at these times.

As the Lord's redeemed people, having first kept the Passover in Egypt, and learnt the value of the blood, they went up out of it, passed through the Red Sea, traversed the wilderness, and encamped at Sinai till the 20th day of the second month of the second year after they came up out of that land. On that day, for the first time since the erection of the tabernacle, the cloud was taken up from off it. Brought to Horeb, where Moses had previously been, they had now to traverse a country to which he, from his request to Hobab (Numb.

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x. 31), was evidently a stranger. But, just before they started on this journey, all kept the Passover. On the 14th day of the first month the congregation kept it according to God's institution. But there were some ceremonially unclean, defiled by the dead body of a man, who could not then keep it. For them and for others who might hereafter be lawfully hindered, the 14th day of the second month was appointed by God. Till all had kept the Passover, and commemorated redemption out of Egypt, the cloud abode on the tabernacle. After that it was taken up, and they journeyed forth afresh with the remembrance alive in their hearts that they were the redeemed of the Lord. How suitable was this. What could have so strengthened their hearts for a journey through an unknown country, and that a desert? What encampments, suited for their herds and flocks, they might come to none of them could know. What difficulties, what enemies, what trials they might have to encounter, of these they were ignorant. There were people in the desert, but people they had not before seen. There were tracks in parts of it, but none among them had ever traced them out. The road, to their leader and to themselves, was new. But they were the redeemed of the Lord. He had charged Himself specially with all their necessities. This should have quieted every apprehension, and checked each rising murmur. We know it did not; but we must agree that the best preparation for that journey was to celebrate the Passover.

Thirty-nine years pass ere we again hear of the Passover. All have died of the congregation who kept it in the wilderness of the age of 20 and upwards, except Caleb and Joshua. The territories of Sihon and Og have been actually portioned out between the two tribes and a half, Jordan has been crossed, and Canaan entered. All the males hitherto uncircumcised having submitted to that rite, the feast of Passover is kept just before they go forth to war with the nations of the land. Could they not have entered the land at a different season of the year? No season was more difficult, for Jordan overflowed its banks all the time of harvest; but no other season would have been so suited, considering what they

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had to engage in. To fight; to be bold against the Anakims, the Amorites, and the Canaanites; to stand up against the chariots of iron; to defeat and subdue the seven nations greater and mightier than themselves, what could have so well nerved them for the task, what could have so effectually braced up their energies as the remembrance of redemption fresh in their mind. They kept the Passover, and then went forward against Jericho.

Changes take place in Israel; the priesthood no longer holds the first place in the nation; the people, once united, have been for centuries divided; the glory of the kingdom fades away, and the captivity of the ten tribes draws near, ere we read again of the Passover. The pious Hezekiah succeeded his idolatrous father Ahaz, the Temple doors were re-opened, the sanctuary cleansed, the lamps re-lighted, and the worship of God restored. Then he summoned all Israel to keep the Passover. Divers out of Asher, Zebulun, and Manasseh humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem at his invitation. Many of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, presented themselves at the feast, though they were not ceremonially sanctified (2 Chron. xxx. 11, 18). On the fourteenth day of the second month the king and all those assembled together kept that festival. Much had Hezekiah done previous to this in the work of cleansing the land from idols, but much remained to be done; so we read that, after the Passover had been kept, they proceeded forth on their work. All Israel that were present at the Passover went out to the cities of Judah, and brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of Judah and Benjamin, and in Ephraim and Manasseh, till they had destroyed them all. How suited was this action of theirs in connection with the Passover. If the Lord Jehovah was their Redeemer, what had they to do with false gods? If the one true God was the God they owned, what business had they with idols and shrines? His altar was at Jerusalem, His house was on Mount Moriah. He owned no other altar; He had sanctified no other house by His presence. Owning them-

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selves to be His people, the descendants of those redeemed out of Egypt, they finish the work in Judah and Benjamin which Hezekiah had commenced in Jerusalem; but it is after they have been reminded of redemption, and as a direct consequence of it.

Eighty years or more roll by, and this feast is again kept in Jerusalem, this time under the presidency of Josiah. Like his great grandfather Hezekiah, he has been engaged in the work of reformation, but he does it alone. It is his work, more than that of the people. In Jerusalem, in Judah, in Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and even to Naphtali, he acts with vigour. The altars and the groves are broken down, the graven images are beaten to powder, and all the idols throughout all the land of Israel cut down (2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, 7), after which he returns to Jerusalem. His heart thus manifested to be right with God, the word of the Lord is recovered. He hears it, and causes all to hear it. He makes a covenant himself before the Lord, to walk after Him, and to keep His commandments, and His testimonies, and His statutes, with all his heart and with all his soul, and makes all present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. His work of restoration already accomplished, God's mind about himself made known, his desire for the people's welfare plainly shown, if anything could persuade the people to be faithful to their God, it would surely be the remembrance of His faithfulness to their forefathers in Egypt; so he summoned all to keep the Passover with him at Jerusalem.

On one other occasion only in the Old Testament do we read of this feast being kept. After the people had returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel, when the house of God had at last been finished and dedicated, God having in the meantime shown them how, if troubles arose from their refusing the assistance of the mingled people in the land in building that house, He could turn the heart of the king, and incline him to favour the work, they keep "the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy; for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God,

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the God of Israel" (Ezra vi. 22). He was their God, and had proved it; they were His redeemed people, and they owned it. They kept the Passover. Was not this a fine testimony to all around them? Weak, outwardly, as a people, as they surely were, dependent on the favour of a Gentile sovereign for the completion of the Temple, they here stand forth, and publicly own that they are God's people. What a proof they have had of the rightness of their position in keeping aloof from an alliance with the mingled people. If redeemed by God as a nation He would surely help them. Jehovah of hosts had taken their forefathers to be His people, He avouched Himself to be their God, and now had afresh shown that He would care for those whom He regarded as His own. But though the house was finished, all was not done of which Daniel had prophesied. The wall had to be rebuilt. Besides this, a real separation from those among them who favoured the Samaritans had to be effected. In this, as for everything, the secret of their strength lay in complete separation to God, because they were God's. Full of joy, then, because of what had been done, they must have been conscious of much that was still undone. And, knowing wherein their great strength lay, the Passover would remind them of that separation from evil, as God's people, which was absolutely essential to future success. Looking backward, they had just proved the reality of redemption; looking forward, success could attend them on no other ground. They remember the deliverance from Egypt, and rejoice in the celebration of it.

When anything fresh had to be undertaken, the unknown wilderness to be traversed, conflict in Canaan to be commenced, a reformation to be completed, or the hearts of God's professing people to be stirred up, redemption in God's appointed way was first commemorated. Of redemption by blood, saints are reminded in the New Testament. Is it the wilderness, in which we are to be but sojourners, that is before the mind? Peter reminds us that we should pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, because we know we have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from our vain con-

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versation received by tradition from the fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ. Are the Corinthians exhorted to keep themselves pure from the vices of the heathen? The reason is given, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. vi.). Were the Galatians slipping away from the right ground, to be justified by works of law? The apostle tells them he is crucified with Christ, and the life he now lives in the flesh, he lives by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave Himself for him. And, to show believers in Crete what they ought to be, he writes to Titus of Him "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

After the Passover mentioned in Ezra, we hear no more of the feast in the Old Testament, except the intimation in Ezekiel of its re-observance when there shall be a prince again in Israel, and the people be gathered to their own land in peace. Then, throughout the millennium it will be annually kept; for the remembrance of redemption accomplished can never be out of place on earth, as it will not, we know, be in heaven (Rev. v.).

Coming to New Testament times we meet with the feast again, but now styled "a feast of the Jews," a term as has been pointed out of deep significance, and, what adds force to the deductions drawn from this change of term, that what was originally called by divine authority "a feast of the Lord," is now, by the same authority, called "a feast of the Jews," is this, that the only feast of confessedly human appointment mentioned in the New Testament—the feast of dedication (John x.) has no such appellation given it. Here, where we might have expected it to mark its human origin, we do not find it. But it is applied to those originally instituted by God, to mark how completely the Jews had shut Him out whose feasts they had originally been. The Jews kept the Passover, they gloried in keeping this and other feasts most scrupulously. The courts of God's house at these seasons were thronged with the multitudes who came up. The Pharisees and

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chief priests thought highly of the Passover, and would not enter the judgment hall of Pilate, but made him come out to them, lest from being thereby defiled they should be prevented keeping the feast. Nevertheless the Evangelist, who wrote from the height of God's thoughts about everything, calls it a feast of the Jews, and well he might, for the one of all others who at such times was a stranger there, and unwelcomed, was the Arm of the Lord Himself. He was there, but unknown. He was in their midst as they outwardly commemorated redemption, but they did not discern who He was. His words at the first Passover they heard with incredulity, and misunderstood. Afterwards His life was not safe in Jewry, for the Jews sought to kill Him; and, finally, at another Passover, they crucified the very One who had interposed on behalf of their fathers, and brought them out of Egypt with a high hand. In the Old Testament these special seasons were suited to reanimate God's people; in the New Testament they afforded opportunities for showing, how far a people could go in an outward profession of piety without one spark of spiritual life, how far they could be occupied with observances, and yet reject Him, when He came, whose intervention of old was the cause of their institution. In the Old Testament they were seasons for stirring up the hearts of the children of Israel. In the New Testament they were the occasions for showing up the hearts of the Jews.

Pentecost, or feast of Weeks, being wholly passed over, as was observed, in the Old Testament, we come next to the feast of Tabernacles, the last in order of the three great festivals, during which all the males were to appear before the Lord. It took place at the end of the harvest, when the corn and the wine had been gathered in, the fruits of the earth garnered, the toil of the year ended. Connected with the harvest, like Pentecost, it could not be observed while in the desert. There the Passover was in place, but these feasts were to be kept only after they had entered the land (Levit. xxiii. 10). Throughout Joshua and Judges we find no mention of Tabernacles. Samuel and David pass away before we read of its observance, not surely that they had never

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observed it, but that during all those years it did not find a place in history. The ark of God must no longer dwell in curtains, the tabernacle must be superseded by a fixed abode, the temple must be reared up before this feast comes before us. When that is accomplished, when the glory of the kingdom is displayed under Solomon, and the house that was to be very magnifical has been dedicated, then, typical of the millennial rest that will yet dawn on this earth, we have mention for the first time of the keeping of this feast. Was it a mere accident, or was it designed by God, that the feast of dedication should take place in the seventh month, so close to the feast of Tabernacles? "They kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days" (2 Chron. vii. 9). Would this have been in keeping with the character of David's reign? Who does not at once see that this arrangement was in perfect keeping with what this feast prefigures? Yet it was only an earnest of the future, for the feast passed away; the people returned to their homes, but *the* rest had not commenced. Hezekiah and Josiah each keep the Passover, Daniel goes into captivity, and the remnant under Zerubbabel return to Jerusalem before again we read of the feast of Tabernacles. In Ezra iii. it comes in just where we might expect to find it. Prospective in its character, looking forward to a rest that remaineth, it comes in when the feeble few first re-enter their land, an earnest of that full and final restoration which we know will surely come. Under Joshua they had entered the land in the month Abib, under Zerubbabel they re-entered it just before the month Tisri. Could this be called a mere accident, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, which none can account for? It was surely designed that, when the seventh month was come, the children of Israel should be in their cities (Ezra iii.). Their first work was to set up the altar, and restore the daily sacrifice. On the first day of the seventh month the day of the blowing of trumpets, they effected this; and afterwards, on the fifteenth day of the same month, "they kept the feast of Tabernacles, as it is written." God's word about their restoration by Jeremiah (xxix. 10)

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had been fulfilled. God's word about the rest and glory of the millennium cannot fail. They kept that feast which points onward to all that, while the city was still laid low, and the house unbuilt, for the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the historian is careful to add, was not yet laid. Sad was the view as they looked around at the desolation that encircled them; bright surely must the prospect have been, as by faith any among them penetrated the vista of ages.

Again, but under brighter auspices, we have mention of this feast. The wall of Jerusalem had been finished on the 25th of the month Elul, which immediately precedes Tisri. The gates and bars set up, they could dwell in some degree of security. Nehemiah's great work had been accomplished, and God's word by Daniel fulfilled (ix. 25), the street had been "built again, and the wall, even in troublous times"; and all Israel, we again read, were in their cities in the seventh month. Of the temple beautified, and finished, we have word in Ezra. Now Jerusalem is again encircled with a wall to the discomfiture of their enemies (Neh. vi. 15), and the first of the three feasts, which they have to keep after this, is the feast of Tabernacles. They kept it with great gladness, dwelling in booths. There too, we can see the guiding hand of God. The wall was finished not in Adar but in Elul. Their enemies saw in the finishing of it a proof that God was with them. Had the wall been finished at any time they might have thought this. But for the remnant there was something peculiar in the season of its completion, for they kept the feast in security, an earnest of that day when in greater security they shall be in perfect rest, for the Lord shall be a wall of fire round about Jerusalem and the glory in the midst of her (Zech. ii. 5.)

It is when speaking of this time that the feast is next mentioned in the Old Testament. When the Lord shall come again, sit on His own throne, Israel be restored, and the whole earth be quiet, not as in Zech. i. ii, sitting still and unconcerned about the ruin and degradation of Jerusalem, but quiet, in peace, because the Prince of Peace has come, then Jerusalem being the centre to

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which the nations converge, they shall keep the feast of Tabernacles yearly within her walls. Israel will keep both the Passover and Tabernacles. Of those left of the nations who came up against Jerusalem, it is said, all shall observe the feast of Tabernacles, and worship the king, the Lord of Hosts, in Jerusalem. Failing to do this, judgment will fall on them. Israel will celebrate redemption. These nations are not said to do this, but to own by their presence yearly at Jerusalem, the characteristic of the dispensation. The king is there, so peace reigns. Such are the occasions on which this feast is brought before us in the Old Testament. Perfect is the order of all God's works. It is nevertheless instructive to trace that order out. The Passover took back their thoughts to the past to nerve them for the work they had to do; the feast of Ingathering carried forward their thoughts far into the future, to tell them of the hope they should cherish, and to encourage them under circumstances calculated to depress.

Once only in the New Testament do we meet with the feast of Tabernacles. Then we read (John vii.) of the Jews keeping it without Jesus, and of His brethren being satisfied to go up to it knowing He was still in Galilee. They think they can do without Him. But in the midst of the feast He is found in the temple teaching, in words such as never man spake. Ready to do without Him at first, unable to understand Him when he taught, they seek for reasons to satisfy their consciences in rejecting Him. He knew what man wanted, and stood forth before them all on the last day of the feast to offer it. All the joy of that great feast was nearly over, the morn would see all returning to their place, to await the month of Abib or Nisan, which would again assemble them together. The joys of earth they had, the blessings of a rich harvest they might know; and the rejoicing attending that feast they might have fully entered into. But were they satisfied? To all who were unsatisfied He addressed Himself. "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." Nor was this all. Not only would He refresh the soul, which came to Him, with a portion it could find nowhere else; but He added, "He

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that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Satisfied himself, he should be a channel whereby others should be satisfied too. The epoch to which this feast refers had not, nor has it yet, arrived. Creation still groans, and will groan till the manifestation of the children of God. Millennial rest cannot be entered upon till the kingdom is established in power. Creation, bowed down as it is under the consequences of man's sin, knows no rest as yet; but any one, every one, who comes to Him and drinks may get refreshed now. We enter now by faith into the results of redemption, which creation cannot yet do: we can enjoy now in some degree what the feast of Tabernacles will bring to it; for in the kingdom now through grace, and joined to the risen Head, blessings connected with the kingdom are ours already before the king has appeared, and before the earth has welcomed the commencement of His reign.

No. XXV.

THINGS AS THEY ARE, AND "THE TIME OF THE END."

WHATEVER the character of the respective governments in Christendom may be, the constituent elements which mark the masses to be acted upon, even though separated off into nationalities, are the same.

Indeed, these apparent diversities, by geographical boundaries of mountains and rivers, which divide one kingdom from another, have more to do, in distinguishing a throne, or form of government from its neighbour, than as affecting the generic character of their populations.

The diverse languages of Europe do much more in this respect to break up the masses, and so prevent a general confusion, by one great moving crowd swayed this side or that, as powerful agencies may act on human

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passions, or enterprise. In truth, these great continental distinctions are *now* viewed as little more than deeper-cuttings of our home-method of dividing a kingdom into counties—or of the varying dialects, which meet the ordinary traveller in an extended provincial tour. Passing by these considerations, which mark differences of an external order—what are the constituent and common elements of the people who are to be governed?

These cannot be more in number than each man naturally possesses as his birthright, and they are soon told. He may be viewed (in these relations) physically, mentally, and morally, and it is in this way that each government treats its subjects *practically*. Physically, man becomes the care of the State from his birth, and is thus registered; his health is in a great degree its concern too, and therefore sanitary measures are instituted; poverty is also considered and provided for, hence its poor-law unions.

The paternal kindness of the State, in those needing this care, raises no opposition on the part of those receiving it; but the danger and difficulty begin, when these governments take up their subjects, as mental and moral beings, to be instructed and controlled.

The schoolmaster, and an education which was first purely elementary, and met by national schools, presented no fear to the State—reading and writing were good, and useful for every-day life; but can any government say to development "hitherto but no further"? A population, made conscious of a power put into its hands, different to the wealth, which is seen all around (and only seen to be coveted), asserts its own rights, by calling in question the rights of others. What is now to be done? The State will patronise the Church and its clergy by the enforcement of duties and obligations, and seek to counteract this one-sided liberation of mind and will. Religion and conscience are added, as checks to what has become rank and luxuriant.

Moral means are also in abundance, and man is a moral being, and can be thus acted on—but the discontent is wide-spread, and ingenuity is prolific in the assertion that all *outside* is not what it should be for the

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general good of society. What is to be done with a new born power, which the State is impotent to guide, and unable from the nature of its constitution to satisfy? If the disaffection cannot be suppressed, because of free institutions and liberty, it will find an opportunity from this state of things, to help itself forward, and by means of agitation and public meetings, make its threatening voice to be heard by the rulers in a popular outcry.

The pressure from without is felt and yielded to—the franchise is extended, and a further grant of power is thus put into the hands of the people, "the iron mixes itself with the miry clay," before the downfall of the image.

When a throne or government forbids such assemblages for such objects, and enforces its authority by the sword, the discontent changes its character to a growl, and in its enmity waits the hour for a bite. Barricades, and a revolution at length break out, like a volcano from its hidden depths, and these are the reliefs, and the resources, alas! But is bloodshed a remedy? Let history answer. Mankind goes on repeating itself in these forms, only in new latitudes and longitudes, and what is there magnanimous, or great in this? Modern history is but a new volume of an old and disgraceful series. Egypt with its Pharaohs—Babylon and its Nebuchadnezzars, have given place to the Medes and Persians, and they in their turn to the Greeks and Romans. What are these ten kingdoms of modern Europe compared with the empires and dynasties of ancient times? A man who thinks he would be content with a freehold plot of ground, and another who counts up his acreage by hundreds and thousands, cannot understand what the Imperial monarch feels as he looks around the vast enclosures by which his kingdom is hedged in, and sighs for a base of operations large enough for the unlimited conquests of neighbouring states. An Alexander may regret there is not another world to conquer—a Cæsar may find enough to do in this—and a Napoleon may covet a reconstruction of the Roman earth. Every one upon his own line of things, great or small, mistrusts his fellow, and is mistrusted. Restrictions by diplomatic

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arrangement must be put around the great potentates, and "a holy alliance" will be mutually formed and signed. When this has been broken through, and war has exhausted the resources of the combatants by blood and by wealth, "a balance of power" will be accepted, as a common term of honourable compromise. By such means an Autocrat, an Emperor, or a President, may agree upon certain conditions of expediency; but essentially each means to be what he was. More recent compacts have made us acquainted with the principle of "non-intervention" (if such it may be called), as an accepted proposition by the allied powers. But what is this in result, if it be not leaving might to overcome right—a state of things which every man of common sense shrinks from, and repudiates emphatically the nearer it fastens on his home circle and family interests.

A mere glance such as this, at governments, peoples, and tongues, must show the gravity of an enquiry whether the prophetic image of gold, as interpreted by Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, the head of Gentilism, remains true, and is fulfilling the course of predicted declension? Has the boasted progress from Babylon to Rome, and from Rome to these ten kingdoms, reversed the doom and fall of the image—or, are men bold enough to change the gradation of the symbolic metals, and affirm that the progress has been from iron to brass, and from brass to silver, and from silver to gold?

What a relief to any student of Scripture, and much more to the man of God throughly furnished therein—to open that book, and step into the vast arena of human enterprise, and Satan's seat, boldly saying "Let God be true, but every man a liar." There are few lessons so solemn to such an one, as the discovery that God allows evil to grow, and come to its maturity, before He deals with men in the midst of it, and then puts all aside by judgment. If we confirm this statement by Scripture, we may call to mind the early record in Gen. xv., "for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full;" and again, the words of Jesus, "in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares and bind them;" and further, of the time when "iniquity

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shall abound." The closing scenes of this dispensation, as described in the Revelation, will confirm the fact of the growth of evil to its climax, by the judgment which is poured out on the seat of the beast, and the binding of Satan.

There is, however, another way of learning according to truth, besides that which makes all plain by judgment, at the close, when every eye must see and own "there is a God by whom actions are weighed." This same God who judges in crisis, teaches those who are simple, in the beginning—and none else can tell the mercy of being saved the disappointment of a longer or a shorter life, spent in the schools of science, falsely so called, where our lessons have been accepted according to the course of the world.

First, we may learn by the man who fell, what man was at his best,—or we may learn by Cain, what man is at his worst—or we may learn an end of perfection, as we look at Job ; and after these examples, who can find a ground of confidence, or a door of escape ? But further, God passes outside the mass of mankind, and calls out a people and judges all other nations, by that sample nation ! God judges a king, when at his brightest, for He magnified Solomon exceedingly—and then put him to the proof. If we step outside the nation and its king into Gentilism, and see power and majesty transferred in righteous judgment from Jerusalem to Babylon, and from Solomon to Nebuchadnezzar, we shall find this new head, forfeits as speedily as His predecessors, his place and dominion, "for he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."

There is nothing left to be proved. "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting," is the handwriting on the wall, and the threatened consequences follow. History gets its place, after God has tried the creature upon the original ground of responsibility, where He placed it in sovereign goodness. And what is history but a filling up of the dark interval of ripening iniquity by successive generations, till men, carried away

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by delusions, "believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Do any wish to learn the doom of Gentile greatness, in its last forms of crisis, let them listen—"and they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast, who is able to make war with him?" The practical value of these lessons, when viewed in the light of God's word, is immense, to the soul which seizes them and holds them fast. The contradictions between the wisdom of the age, with its flattering prospects, and the gathering clouds of divine vengeance upon the ripening grapes of the vine of the earth, are of giant growth! But let no soul hesitate a moment; "at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come." Neither the world, nor men in it, would be what they are if the light of divine truth were accepted; on the contrary, "the prince of the power of the air" would be detected and exposed; and the vaunted spirit of this age would be discovered in its character, and shunned.

Who is bold enough in these last days to challenge the course of this present world? Who dares take a place outside the ranks, with a sling and a stone, to defy the uncircumcised Philistine, this antitypical Goliath? Let not such an one be discouraged, even though Abner, the captain of the panic-stricken host, knows not the youth, and though the king may command him to enquire whose son the stripling is? Then, the armies of the living God were defied—but now, the man of sin, son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, is on the scene. Much that perplexes, and terrifies the heart, on its first discovery of the wide departure of man, and Israel, the Gentiles, and the professing Church, from God and His word—is explained, as we learn that Satan is the grand actor, in the midst of mankind, and the corrupter of whatever God gives. Indeed, as the grace of God is to the sinner—so is light to the great enemy of souls—and if that light be turned into darkness, how great is that darkness, for the devil's use. What else

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can he do so well, as corrupt and change the truth of God into a lie—so that the Lord, in separating Himself from the lie, must judge His people. What is the history of Judaism but this—and why the coming judgment on Christendom, but for the same reason?

The working of the enemy with man is awful—take, as examples, Judas, and Satan entering into him—or the closing up of the age in the coming Anti-christ, to whom "the dragon gives his power, and his seat, and great authority." What a place does man occupy, in his three score years and ten, so close to the devil and his wiles and stratagems—and, on the other hand, so close to God, by the testimony of the gospel of salvation, through His Son.

Oh! the deliverance to stand outside the whole scene at the cross with Jesus, and to take the place of rejection with the cast out Lord and King. What an elevation to be one with Him, as an heir of God, and joint heir through Christ, and to look on to the dignity that awaits us in the coming day of His glory, for which we are now sealed by the Holy Ghost! Occupied as men are by power, riches, and glory, skilled as Satan is, in their bestowment and use—they and the devil alike know, that the Son of Man refused them at his hands, and said, "Get thee hence." Full well does Satan realise the fact, that the Lord Jesus is the rightful possessor of them all, by the sovereign decree of the Father—and that the angels of God worship Him as the rightful heir, before the day comes, when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess it on earth. "The dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan," knows too that his time is very short; and that the bottomless pit awaits him, when the morning without a cloud dawns, which ushers in the second Man, the Lord of glory, with ten thousand times ten thousand round about Him. How graciously has God turned all round, and will yet do so, to His praise and glory, and for the blessing of His own people, who by faith in Christ Jesus have come out to Him, and thus set to their seal that God is true. "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven," introduces us to a power,

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that will establish that kingdom which cannot be moved.

It is a sad thought, in the midst of the world's swellings and strivings, that man is doing nothing for himself in his relation to God—and therefore only earning a heavier title to judgment, by scattering abroad, and bringing on the delusions of the wicked one, and thus gathering fast for the burning. "For Tophet is ordained of old, yea for the king it is prepared—he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and *much* wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

The power that shakes, and the power that binds and destroys, is the power that will build up and bless. "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." B.

No. XXVI.

"ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD."

IT is a well known fact, that Satan, when he cannot entirely set aside any truth of God, seeks to pervert it; and the most advanced saint has need to watch, and be prepared, for such perversion. Nay, so subtle is the nature of it that invariably the most effectual instrument, in the hand of Satan, is the one who hitherto has progressed furthest in truth; for the higher one has reached, and the more one has learnt, the more extensive the injury he perpetrates, if he be perverted. The higher, and the larger the building, the greater the crash when it falls. A small one might be unnoticed, but a great one necessarily involves great damage.

In every day it has been according to the vigour in which truth was presented, that there was opposition to it; but the opposition most successful, and the one most difficult to counteract, has always been that which comes

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within a shade of the truth. The greatest lie is that which is nearest to that truth which it seeks to supplant, and to be accepted instead of. And often the line of difference is so fine that to give a definition of it is difficult; and it can only be determined by the eye set on God, and not on man; for it will be found that the perversion of the most dangerous and injurious order takes its rise from having the eye turned to man, and seeking to make the truth suit him, and not to conform man to the truth; so that the way to resolve this almost invisible line of difference is by the simple question, Is it God-ward I am looking, or man-ward? When Satan turns Eve's eye to herself and her own advantages, God gets no place in her mind; but on the contrary, His will is refused, and His nature denied. Cain thinks only of man, and what suits the creature as such, without any reference to what God, in His nature, may require of the creature now under judgment, because of sin. Lot thinks of himself, and of what suits his own interests: he does not leave Canaan; but while remaining in it, he thinks of things entirely in relation to himself. God is not thought of; and thus, His object, and purpose, in calling Abram out of Mesopotamia, is entirely overlooked. This is a sample of the most dangerous and effectual order of opposition; and that to which the people of God so continually fall victims. Lot does not depart from the call of God; but while acceding to the letter of the truth, he thinks only of himself; and is eventually found in Sodom; his righteous soul vexed from day to day with their ungodly deeds. Jacob, in the same way, thinks only of his own interests and what suits himself (and that, too, after he had been taught in the wrestling that God is supreme, and that man is set aside in His presence, as his halt ever after declared) and settles down at Shalem. He might say that as within the land, he was within the territory of God, the limits of divine call; but yet he was thinking only of what suited himself. God was not in his thoughts, but with reference to himself, his altar, El-Elohe-Israel, and hence, not only, like Lot, does he personally suffer, but he and his family become an offence instead of a testi-

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because he refuses to accept God's grace offered to him on clear ground—ground where there is nothing, no barrier, between him and God; nothing to bar his acceptance of it; *no, nothing!* The offer of mercy is on the very terms that every barrier, every old thing has passed away; and the condemnation necessarily is, *not* on account of disobedience, as in the day of the "old things;" but because man does not believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God. By that Son, God has cleared away all; and hence there is condemnation if I do not believe in Him who has effected this wondrous work. Man adheres to the old things as if they were not put away, and refuses the Son of God, who now before God occupies the place of the old things, and hence the wrath of God abides on him. If old things have *not* passed away, we cannot say "Behold all things are become new."

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2 Cor. V. 12—18.

"We commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: 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 hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

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No. XXVII.

MATTHEW XVI.

WHATEVER may help to make the mind clear on passages used to support the errors of Popery and Puseyism, is of use at this moment,—at least to supply an answer to those whose minds are less exercised on such subjects, even though their own faith may be settled by positive truth. God's goodness may preserve a soul from Popish error; but, as to doctrine, where redemption is not clearly known, I have always felt that there was nothing to secure the soul from its inroads. Its positive superstitions and errors may suffice, under mercy, to lead the mind to reject it, and for this we may thank God; but, as to peace and acceptance, a vast portion of the evangelical world is so little removed from the Popish faith that one can never be surprised (in the present confusion, and prevalence of superstition) if people fall into the snares its agents lay for souls. Even the doctrine of the Reformation, of "*assurance of salvation*," held then by all, and condemned by the Council of Trent as the vain confidence of the heretics, is condemned by a vast body of Protestants now-a-days as presumptuous, and is possessed by few in simplicity of well-grounded faith, though the number of these be, thank God, increasing. Where redemption is clearly known, where what Christ positively promised is possessed, "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father and ye in me and I in you," the whole system of Popery and Ritualism falls to the ground, has no possible place in the mind. Popery and Ritualism profess to patch up continually the conscience for those who are still far from God; leaving them to answer for themselves in the day of judgment: the true believer is with a perfect conscience in the presence of God. He is accepted in the beloved and has boldness to enter into the holiest *now*, and

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N°. XXVIII.

DOCTRINAL EVIL.

. . . . hast not denied my name (Rev. iii. 8).

THE following extract is from the letter of a brother in the Lord: we have but one Lord, and I trust we shall love one the other (according to the one faith and one baptism), even *as* He has loved us. Our Lord's love has not hindered the brother from condemning (contemptuously enough, as it seems to me) what he mistakes for error in myself and others, and he will not, I trust, love me the less for presenting in love the effects upon my mind of his remarks. For, so far as our love is *as* Christ loved us, it is love in *the truth.* These are His words:—

"*I fail to find in the word any authority for dealing with doctrinal evil. Moral evil we have direct Scripture for judging.*"*

The thoughts which rose in my mind after reading this were—

* If this had been the simple confession of individual ignorance I should have answered it in another way than I now do: "*I fail to find*" might be the expression of *humility*; that it is not so in this case, may be seen, 1st, by the text that follows: "The dogmas of the brethren in the question of judging doctrinal evil, I cannot accept as they lack the direct authority of Scripture and therefore present nothing to faith. In the last time we want God's thoughts and not man's—more of the Spirit of Christ and less of that of Diotrephes"; 2ndly, by the writer having left Brethren and associated himself with those whose company is a covert to false doctrine. To be *neutral* where that as to which we would be neutral is, on the one hand, "the truth of the person of Christ with a whole hearted devotedness," and on the other, "the supposed duty of receiving, all who come in His name, without caring whether they bring His doctrine or not," is very like being neutral between Christ and Satan,—between the Spirit of God and the spirit of error,—between zeal and lukewarmness.

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1. How strange that a good man should not, on committing such a sentence to a letter, be struck with the fact that in so saying he condemns all of that which is called the Reformation (that is, all Protestantism in its setting up), and the whole of Nonconformity too;—for Luther and Calvin, etc., left Romanism on account of *doctrinal evil*. And has not the writer *himself* left the so-called Church of England, and *other things too*, upon the same ground of judging *doctrinal evil?*

2. Then came this text to my mind: "If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?" (Ps. xi. 3).

3. Then came another thought: "It is the discovery that the, so-called, Church of England cannot put out from itself the infidel teaching of Colenso, cannot deal with the writers of the Essays, with the writer of 'Ecce Homo,' with the Ritualist teachers, which is now driving so many godly people in England out of the Establishment, as out of a city betrayed into the hand of the adversary. Would *you* say they are wrong?

4. Then I read the sentence again: "I fail to find in the word any authority for dealing with *doctrinal evil*," and I said to myself (as if speaking to the writer): "But must not this be only blindness in yourself? Might another God than Jehovah be preached to Israel, and Israel be passive under it? Ought you not to be sure that there must be, though you cannot see it, some sanction of a shelter from doctrinal error about God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost? Doctrinal error about the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby alone you can be saved? Doth not *nature* teach you that there must be that which you cannot find?"

5. But who can divide between *doctrinal* evil and *moral* evil, without bringing down the moral good and evil with which he occupies himself, to the mere level of human morality; so leaving out *God's* ways and thoughts, and so denying that we are to have the same mind which was in Christ Jesus.

I write this foolishly, as a man, just giving the thoughts as they arose in my own mind after reading the extract.

Then I turned to "God and the word of His grace": and I read such words as these:

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"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 8, 9). Did Christ give these words by His Spirit, through Paul, to the Churches? And can I say that "I fail to find in the word any authority for dealing with doctrinal evil." A heretic preaches another gospel; I try to deliver him from his error but do not succeed. Try every means in my reach—uselessly. Believe that the man is one of those that the verse refers to—that he is accursed—and can I say "I fail to find in the word any authority for dealing with doctrinal evil."

Again there is some one among my associates who teaches (would that it were less common) not openly, but really, that love in the disciple to the Lord is not needful. I find he does not himself love the Lord. Am I to say "I fail to find in the word any authority for dealing with doctrinal evil" while this text stares me in the face. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha" (a curse for eternity) (1 Cor. xvi. 22).

Again, it is written, "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of *the truth*" (1 Tim. iii. 15). What the house and assembly of the living God is to be is *the pillar and stay of the truth.* Babylon in the Revelation, the city and mother of Harlots, was Satan's strong hold and had nothing save corrupted truth, truth turned to wrong purposes; but of her it is written, "Come out of her, my people, that *ye be not partakers of her sins*, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (chap. xviii. 4). Surely my brother must admit that his statement is, to say the least, too loose. The character of the house and assembly of the living God is, that it is *the pillar and stay of the truth.* Doctrinal evil comes in,—will he say that the character of the house and assembly contain *no* authority for dealing in any wise with the doctrinal evil?

To an intelligent mind 1 Cor. v. 5, 1 Tim. i. 20, Tit. iii. 10, would contain authority; but I pass on to texts

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more immediately limited to *doctrine*. In the addresses to the seven churches, we have words fully bearing upon the question of doctrinal evil.

"I know . . . . how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars" (chap. ii. 2). "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (ver. 9, and comp. iii. 19). "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (ver. 15).

To have among us those that hold false doctrine and those that preach false doctrine is in either case as strongly rebukeable as to have those that do the evil things which result from false doctrine. And the allowing any such among us is here rebuked of the Lord.

"I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication: and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden" (ii. 20—24).

[This is according to 1 Cor. xi. 17—34, where we are taught that we are as individuals bound to judge ourselves; if we do not, then the Lord surely will judge us, UNLESS *the assembly* does its duty and steps in to clear herself from the evil in us in her midst whatever it may be.]

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These texts taken out of the word may suffice to prove that the word does lay responsibility upon us, and so does give authority to deal with doctrinal evil. It warns us against the consequences to ourselves, if we do not deal with the evil.

There are a few important matters which I would add. As 1st. The connection with individual salvation itself of that which is questioned. My eternal salvation requires me to separate—pre-supposes my separating—doctrinal evil from myself and myself from it. Am I saved? Yes. And how? By faith in Him who having died for my sins and risen again for my justification now sits at the right hand of the Father. He is *the truth.* If the truth has made me free, I know that my salvation and safety are in my holding the truth and walking according to it: to remain under, or in association with, any doctrinal evil is rebellion against my Lord and sin against my own soul. If I resist the devil he will flee from me. Being, through faith, a member of Christ's body and a child of God, I have the Spirit of God and of Christ in me and with me for power. No doctrinal evil, no doctrine of devils, may I knowingly sanction. My walk is to express *the mind* which was in Christ Jesus (Phil. ii. 5). In him certainly there was no covering of a lie anywhere soever. Nor need there be in us, as Paul goes on to describe (ver. 14, 15, 16). "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world: holding forth the word of life."

2ndly. But if I have eternal life, I am a member in particular of a body of which Christ is the Head, and also, a child of God. There are others such around me and the relationships which are for eternity have a present existence to us all and we are *a company.* Through our profession we are *also* parts of a habitation of God through the Spirit who was sent down here on the day of Pentecost, in proof of Christ's exaltation on high. This habitation of God down here will not abide for ever: it may corrupt itself; it has corrupted itself; it

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will be judged (see Rom. xi. 18—25). As I do not cease from my true profession of Christ because others profess what they do not possess, I cannot separate myself from the house. From the evil of it I must. If asked for my scripture warrant to do so—these texts would suffice me. 2 Tim. ii. 20 and 21, and iii., 5, from such *withdraw thyself*,—if a man *purge himself* from these,—from such *turn away*.

"Shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness: And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour *If a man* therefore purge himself from these [vessels to dishonour, that is men that concerning the truth err (doctrinal evil?)] *he* shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. ii. 16—21). The Spirit dwelling in the house down here is the same one as formed in each of us an incorruptible seed through the word of the Gospel; who also unites us to Christ as members of His body, in eternal life. He is the witness down here of and to the truth and against all error. If in a day like the present I have to withdraw myself from those who profess incompetency to deal "with doctrinal evil," I excommunicate no one,—I excommunicate no assembly, no company of assemblies in withdrawing *myself* from doctrinal evil. Nor do I excommunicate any by refusing to be in companionship with those who avowedly cannot deal with doctrinal evil. The life I have (which is Christ), my conscience enlightened by God and the word of His grace, bid me save myself, if I cannot also save others. The individuals whom I leave, who compromise the truth, stand upon their own individual responsibility. And if they

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do not repent, sore will be their judgment. Nor is there want of love in thus leaving them, for my continuing in their evil would have been *a sanction* on my part to it, after they have refused to judge themselves as to it. If they like not the voice which calls to repentance, I can yet pray for them now I am outside of the evil, as I could not while I was inside of it.

3rdly. But the Assembly is responsible for the discipline of the House of God upon earth: The assembly as such, not an apostle or any man, but the assembly. Take the case of extreme discipline (that is the act of the assembly which finding a *wicked* person (1 Cor. v. 13) inside who will not purge himself from evil, puts him outside), this is the act of *the assembly as such.* Paul knew the power which he had as an apostle—yet he would not go to Corinth until they had as an assembly cleared themselves and their consciences by judging wickedness which was among them (compare 1 Cor. v. and 2 Cor. ii.). To make a sin of immorality to be a subject for the assembly to judge, and a sin of doctrine a subject for an apostle to judge is sheer ignorance. In either case it is the word of God's grace alone which can shew us what is immoral for a Christian and what is the truth which has to be kept. But in neither case is it other than the Spirit in the assembly which is *power* with us to act and to put away, if there is to be blessing; for if an apostle had acted without the assembly its conscience would not have been cleared, and if Paul, as he feared, had had to act at Corinth *in spite of* the assembly, then it would have been to destruction (2 Cor. x. 8), and not for edification. The Spirit of God, to a pure conscience, is quite enough of *power* to enable an assembly to put away evil. His presence too is our warrant for doing it. False doctrine is *leaven* of the worst kind. Read 1 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8 and you will see the call to purge out all leaven, that we may be an unleavened lump.

Observe authority and power are two distinct things.

For those who have professed to separate themselves from the so-called churches unto God, and the word of His grace, to vindicate the toleration of leaven of any kind (in word, or practice, in doctrine, morality, or prac-

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tice) is to build again the things which they have destroyed, and to make themselves transgressors (Gal. ii. 18). They are self-condemned, too, and are to be rejected. When the question is about doctrine, no doubt can remain. See Tit. iii. 10, 11; and 1 Cor. ii. 19, Gal. v. 20, 2 Pet. ii. 1.

Finally, to use the name of the Church as a cover for evil or error of any kind is, I believe, a great sin, and is to dishonour the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For God's Church is the habitation of God through the Spirit, and contains the children of the Father and the Bride of Christ. That there is a spirit abroad who is counterworking, in every way he can, the Spirit of God in His gracious efforts in these days to gather together in one the children of God who have been scattered abroad, I know. The adversary will be judged, and so will all those who work under him for this wicked end. That some are ignorantly going out in this current "in their simplicity, and they know not whither they go" (2 Sam. xv. 11), I also believe. Such I would, if possible, pull out of the fire (Jude 23).

M. R.

N°. XXIX.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

PART III., iv. 1—42.

AND now we are left to walk simply with the Lord alone. John's testimony, blessed servant as he was, is over,—confirmed indeed as to man's state by the word and deed of Him by whom came grace and truth. And more solemnly confirmed it could not be. "Grace" itself could not trust man. "Truth" had to say, "Ye must be born again." Through His disciples He had even taken up John's work, and baptised with the "baptism of repentance." Thus the revealer of the love and grace of God had borne true witness to the state

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and condition of man; Sinai's thunder, and the veil which it was death to pass, not more.

And this must needs have been. For all God's attributes commend each other, and it is the blending of them all, like the colours of the prism, however various they may seem, which alone makes the ray of perfect "light." The flames of Sinai did not indeed reveal God's love, and yet it was there unseen amid the flames of Sinai. Take the law which says, you cannot draw near to God, and the voice of Him who says, "I am the way," how surely they tell the same tale of man as an outcast naturally from the glory of God. And when the law says, "there is none righteous, no, not one," does grace reverse that sentence, when it speaks of One "of God made unto us righteousness?"

Only, as I have said, grace speaks of this far more solemnly, and there is a persuasiveness in its accents I find not in the other. I look at the cross, and how can I escape the conviction—the overwhelming conviction —of sin? Can that be by any possibility an overdrawn picture, that lone figure hanging between earth and heaven,—there are others, but I think of no other,—for which heaven has no help, and earth no pity? Can that be an exaggerated tale which love tells me of what I am, in that cry of forsaken sorrow, the outburst of the broken heart of the Lord of life and glory, given for me?

But thus grace, while it does substantiate the law's verdict, has a thing to speak of peculiar to itself, still righteousness, aye, "righteousness of God," wondrous to tell, *for* the sinner and just *as* a sinner. This the Baptist's lips could not declare. He could point to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and could say, "He that cometh from heaven is above all," not knowing how much lay hid in the words he uttered. And the Lord, on the other hand, could and did confirm the testimony of one who, "in the way of righteousness," called men to repentance. But even so, this was not in the line of Christ's peculiar testimony. Thus He Himself "baptised not." It is perfectly beautiful, that sanction given by disciples' hands, to that to

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which yet He could not put His own. It was meet and right to sanction it, and He does. But in passing as it were only. After resurrection, when the glory shines out through those opened heavens into which He has gone, even baptism itself, the declaration of death, has to take new shape, and John's disciples are baptised afresh. If it be death still, there shines even there too the track of His footsteps who has now passed through it. And the new truth is, if dead, we are "dead ***with Christ.***"

And now we pass with the Lord from Judea to Samaria. Solemn to say, yet sweet, the new truth can be more fittingly and freely told out in that land of outcasts than among them of whom, in the Lord's testimony, salvation comes. Itself an outcast, it has come to dwell with outcasts. "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan?" was the reproach of another time, answered by that tale of Samaritan pity, where priest and Levite had no help. And now grace would stoop lower still, and be more wondrous, however they might cavil. A weary man, not so much with His journey as with the unbelief of His own to whom He had come, would seek that refreshment at the wells of Samaria, which Israel's streams had failed to give. Think of it, beloved. Think of Him, who made the worlds, Him for whom all streams ran, Himself the fountain of gladness in a poor barren world that had departed from Him, and that knew Him not when He was there, and that cared not for Him when it knew—now content to be debtor to a Samaritan sinner for that which shall relieve His thirst. And was it Christ, the Man, thirsted only? or was it Christ, the All-sufficient, thirsted—thirsted for a weary heart into which to pour out of His own fulness, to fill and gladden it, and to find Himself refreshment in so filling it? Surely, with this before us, we have the key to the apostle's declaration, that as "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," and we now "in Christ's stead"—Himself gone up on high,—carry this "word of reconciliation"—it is "as though *God* did beseech by us." For did not *Christ* "beseech"? Content to expose Himself even to rebuff and scorn at the hands

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of a poor wretched creature, herself the scorn, and worthy of the scorn of others, that He might win but one soul, one uncared for and careless soul to God, that He might cause to spring up in it that "living water" of which He spake, of which whosoever drank, thirsted no more for ever!

I do not intend to go at length into what follows, though indeed there is a freshness in it that never tires. But my object is rather to trace the doctrine that is developed here and its connection with that which precedes: the place of this blessed chapter, in the general line of truth running through the gospel. Yet a few thoughts that strike one may fitly find place first.

Notice then the Divine style of reaching a sinner's conscience.

You might say, she had none practically. At least, that callousness had come upon it, the natural result of a bad life which the world knew, and after its manner scorned and pointed at. She was alone and she was weary indeed, and felt, no doubt, the world's reproach. She came by herself, not at the time when women draw water. The grossness that could scarce see anything beyond her water-pot, it may be was just the weariness of a heart which had been saying "Who will show us any good?" until by degrees had come utter despair of good, and the little petty wants of every day life had become the only certainties—"let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." A lesson of the world's vanity, which brought no deliverance with it, but shut up hopelessly to what seemed contentment with vanity itself.

However it was, she was dull enough, indifferent enough, callous enough, to excite wonder. You would have said, a soul so dead, a conscience so dull and seared, would have needed some rousing appeal, some startling denunciation of the sin which had seared and deadened it. You expect to hear such, it may be, from the Lord's lips. You think that very love itself would need to speak in thunder, as at Sinai.

But it is not so, but the very contrary. No gentle dropping of the rain, no distilling of the dew, no "small rain on the tender herb," is gentler. And though it

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seem at first as vain as showers on desert sand, no repulse repels. "If thou hadst known the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink," is the only rebuke;—a word of pity and sorrow which does the work, reproach would never do, and the wonder of His presence steals in upon her heart, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?"

Still she has no thought but of bodily want supplied. Conscience must be roused as well as wonder, ere she can know this man and his strange sayings; but the way has been so far prepared that, rouse it now, she will not start away as at first she would have done, nor resent it as she might at first; cloak her sin, if she can, she will. But even so, at least she cannot brazen it out as she might with another. And, uncloaked and exposed, still she does not turn away, nor resent it. Cover it up again she cannot: "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." The thing is out; she knows it, and He knows it. Is she not already glad He does?

He has told her her sin; but told it, surely as never did man before. He has told her what conscience had accused her of; but He has not accused her. He has shown her her guilt; but not condemned her. He is on the side of her conscience, and yet not against her as her conscience is. And He knew it too from the first, when He forgot His weariness to think of hers, and His thirst to think of hers. What was that living water He had told her of?

From thence, it is not far to know. Yet a little while, and He is revealed to her heart who is thenceforth to fill it. She can go away with her new found joy, to speak of Him to others,—to tell of her shame, heedless if it speak His glory—and in words which show where she has got her understanding of Him: "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

But I pause somewhat more upon the doctrine which is developed here. It is plain that we have something in advance of the last chapter. There it was new-birth; here it is what many a new-born soul for some time knows nothing of—a *heart satisfied.* "He that drinketh

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of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be *in* him, a well of water, springing up into eternal life." A comparison with the words at chap. vii. 38, 39, demonstrates this "living water" to be the Spirit of God. Hence we have in these 3rd and 4th chapters the two great characteristics of the Christian, the two things that lie at the threshold of all progress,—new birth and the indwelling Spirit. Few who may read these pages will need reminding as to the separateness of the two. That there were children of God—new-born, therefore, of the Spirit—who had not the Spirit, is plain from the very form of the question which Paul puts, in Acts xix., to the twelve at Ephesus. And that that was the necessary condition of believers, in a past economy, is equally plain from the commencing verses of Gal. iv. Heirs, though those old saints were, yet in what was a childhood state, and under the tutelage of the law, they differed nothing (in their own experience) from servants, though lords of all. Christ had to come, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons; and only *as* sons, given the right to take openly that place. Did God "send forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father?" "At that day," says the Lord in this gospel, speaking of it to those who were already disciples, "ye shall know that I am in the Father, *and ye in me,* and I in you."

There was no settled peace with God then, no consciousness of the child's place with God, no abiding satisfaction of the heart, short of the cross and resurrection of Christ, and the sending of the Holy Ghost, the witness of His place in ascension glory. In this 4th chapter of John, anticipative in its character, as I have said before the whole gospel is, we have the germ at least, and more than the shadow of it. It is not a question of how far it was apprehended then. The doctrine of it is here, if not the apprehension, a doctrine with which all the features of this touching scene are, by the Spirit of God Himself, most plainly connected. After this manner, therefore, and with this justification, we use them here.

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The features thus sketched for us are, a *Gentile scene*:—Christ the "Saviour of the *world*" (ver. 42),—the living water springing up, type of the ever freshness of the abiding Spirit; and the *Father* seeking "worshippers in spirit and truth." It is not hard to trace the connection of these different elements, nor unprofitable to seek to follow that connection out.

The first points are plain enough, and simple enough in their significance. If the "middle wall of partition" be not down, we have at least nothing to remind us of it, nay the contrast is suggested here. "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? *For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.*" Here, if we take the two chapters, the middle wall is up for the self-righteous Jew rather. "Ye must be born again" was said to such, and though the thing itself was as much needed surely by Samaritan sinners, yet it was not as suited an utterance for such. With Nicodemus it was self-righteous confidence that needed shaking; with the woman it was the weariness of one that had lost belief in good. Hence the different treatment of the two cases, where the same love and wisdom dealt with each. Beloved reader, how have you heard the Lord's voice for yourself? Does it say, "ye must be born again," or "if thou knewest the gift of God?" and from hence read your character.

A door shut for self-righteousness is surely in perfect keeping with a door open for the sinner. Nay, there is something more in the way of contrast in the Lord's dealing with these two cases, for Nicodemus comes to Jesus, to find apparently (and yet in Divine love to him) a shut door, while the woman (sinner as she is, however weary,) is sought and gone after, and besought to know the grace that is brought to her. Oh if the eye of only one in such a condition should ever rest upon these pages,—lonely, weary, with no right sense of sin either, and occupied with a host of petty cares, or the daily routine of an aimless, unsatisfying life,—how I would pray that there might be for such an one in the history of another like one, full and Divine blessing, and that He who took up the denier of His master, Peter,

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and Saul, the manslayer, as suited messengers to proclaim His grace, may make this Samaritan woman a preacher to you now. Poor, weary one, whoever you are, the appeal is to your heart and conscience, what say you of Him, who told her "all things that ever she did," and so told them as to send her away full of the joy of His having told them her,—did ever man speak as this man to a sinner? "Is not THIS the Christ?"

I would notice here, moreover, that it is not the joy of pardon merely that we have before us in this blessed scene. It is the joy of the discovery of Christ rather. In the knowledge of salvation only we have not the abiding freshness of the living Spirit. Salvation (looked at, I should say, as *my* salvation simply) is a negative thing as it were, I am saved *from* something. It is very blessed, and, in the first sense of it, full of a power we think can never fail. Yet how often and how soon sometimes it does fail. We want to know, not merely what we have escaped *from*, but what we are brought *to* —"to see," not *our* salvation simply, but "the salvation of *God:*" Himself displayed in it, and Himself our God; the former loneliness of our being filled up with a new presence. "We joy in *God* through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation."

This is very plainly what we have here. There is no such word even throughout, as "thy sins be forgiven thee"—no similar word to that. "Is not this the Christ?" is the question which shows where her own heart is. And as connected with that, the truth of what worship is, and how produced, is brought before us. "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

It is striking how the woman had introduced the question. With her, as with so many now, worship was the fruit of an uneasy conscience, not of a heart at rest. It was a thing of place and duty and decent form, which had descended to her from pious ancestors.

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Her mind naturally reverts to it, the moment her conscience is alive; still with a certain weariness, as conscious that it had never done much to relieve her disquiet at all events. She has no better authority for it than that her fathers did so. *What* it was she worshipped, she did not know. Would a weary heart find rest at Jerusalem, which Samaria's altars would not give?

Let me vary the question for souls around me now. Shall I find, if I look closely at all at what men call worship in the present day, a much truer idea of it, or much more rest of heart, in general, than this Samaritan enjoyed in hers?

I see the signs of weariness, of emptiness, of want everywhere. I am not deceived certainly by the joyousness of the melody of trained voices, or by the skill of artistic performances, so essential a part now of Christian services. It does not take a very deep plummet to sound the depth of this. Nay, some would say that it all betokened anything but the abundance of joy in the Lord, and that it was the fruit of anything rather than the knowledge and the worship of One, who, being a spirit, "must be worshipped in spirit and in truth." Nay, it might be argued, they do not themselves believe it has that character, as they never question the world's right to take part in it as well as they. And, indeed, beyond even that, confess that they have no skill to distinguish "true worshippers" from those that are not.

Yet "we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit," is Paul's characteristic of Christians. And here we are told, it is what the Father seeketh, in opposition to the Jewish form, which men have got back to. And sweet it is to know that the only "coming together" of the Church as such, which the word speaks of, is for worship. "In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee," is the Lord's own expression, prophetically, as the one risen from the dead, telling where *His* heart is, who is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows:—alone in the sorrow, first in the joy which has sprung out of that sorrow.

Oh, what it tells of the place we have been brought into, a place where the heart of Him who could not rest

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till He could "rest in His love," can rest and be satisfied, and pour out itself in joy and thanksgiving unto God:—a place which He expects us to be so consciously in, that our attitude, no less than His, is to be that of worshippers—worshippers with Him. I would that the saints of God did always remember it, and that when they speak, and rightly speak, of "Jesus in the midst," they did always remember what is His spirit who is in the midst of them. Whatever consequences of blessing flow from it, and surely from all true approach to God blessing *must* flow, yet if we "come together" to seek that, we should remember that we are bringing the testimony of want and neediness where we should be found, rather, giving Him the glory of a full and accomplished blessing; can we be in sympathy with the spirit of Jesus else? And which of us, beloved, would willingly rob Him of His part in that united joy the fruit of His own accepted work of travail and sorrow?

We are set in full blessing. We "who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus," is part of the very definition of Christians. And God knows that our practical strength, and power for walk and service are inseparably connected with it. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." If we have only emptiness to bring to God, be sure we shall have only emptiness to tell of before men. Service is only the man-ward side of worship. We "teach and admonish one another" then, only effectually, when, "with psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs," we "sing with grace in our hearts unto the Lord."

"The Father *seeketh* such to worship Him." There is no veil here which shuts out God. It is the Father in the activity of love coming out, all veil removed, to put His arms round the neck of the sinner, and to bid him know Him now indeed. The joy in this, above all, His who has sought and saved,—the witness of it in this chapter. He whom, having left weary and hungered, they find refreshed. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." But it would be a terrible reproach to us, beloved, if He had to say to us now, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

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And beyond He sees fruit of His own labour, into which disciples may as reapers enter, reaping where others have sown—the blessed harvest-time, when sower and reaper shall rejoice together. What a joy, when the full result manifested, freed from all mixture and from all reproach which man has cast upon it, He who has wrought it all shall see of the fruit of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied! F. W. G.

N°. XXX.

REMARKS ON "THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD."[a]

N°. 1.

AND is it really come to this? All the boasted attractions of the English Liturgy, its adaptation to all wants, the ease with which it can be followed—(as contrasted with extempore prayer),—is found to be an unintelligible farrago for the masses, impossible for an uneducated mind to follow.

The Roman Catholics (where the writer of this paper has known them well), manage the matter better. The service is histrionic, no doubt. But it is in Latin, and the worshipper has nothing to follow. But he is furnished with prayers for himself in his own tongue, which he can say while the priest is saying his, and which are not what the priest is saying at all;[b] a curious form of public worship, indeed, but the priestly distinction is fully carried out. But, taking the English Liturgy as it is, what is the remedy? A worship in spirit and in truth, such as the Lord God requires from spiritual worshippers, such as the Father seeks? Nothing of the kind. That must be sought for, if we believe the Tractarians, neither at Rome nor Canterbury,—neither at this mountain nor at Jerusalem. Spiritual worship is not

[a] 1866. *Third Edition.* London: Longman and Co.

[b] In some places where there are many Protestants there is a translation of what the priest says.

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has neither taste nor leisure for abstruse research, and this is one of the reasons why, as has been said before in this paper, simplicity, that is, bareness and poverty in the externals of worship, is unsuited for a national, much less for a universal religion." (p. 36).

Gathering for worship by a dramatic display which magnifies the Sacraments (and it is carried even to the adoration of the Eucharist), so as to gather the whole nation or be even universal in its effect, such is the system. But it must be added:—all are not supposed to be communicants; there are to be "non-communicating attendance," or better "*non*-communicants," to be put indeed out of the choir, but stay in the nave and look on (pp. 500—503); so that in this centre of Christian worship (for such the Lord's Supper is, as far as rites go), which ought to be accompanied with the holiest Christian affections, we are to find a drama enacted within the rails, to win by stage effects; and spectators without, kept there by what is now intelligible to all, but not taking any part in it.

Such is Tractarianism—not worship by saints, but religion for the nation, to keep them together! How totally contrary this is to antiquity, it is not needful for one who is the least acquainted with it to say. The word "mass" is simply the corruption of the words "*Ite, missa est,*" by which all who did not communicate were sent away. Primitive antiquity had not such a thought as missionary dramas in worship. It did magnify the holy mysteries, as they were called, but it did so by removing all who were not about to communicate. To insist on the word "mass," as is done by these Tractarians, and provide for a non-communicating attendance, is imposing on the ignorance or inattention of the reader.

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REMARKS ON "THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD."

No. 2.

IN my present review I have to do with a more serious paper, written in a more earnest and serious tone, treating upon subjects of the deepest interest, detecting the false points in current evangelical views, and opposing to them forms of truth drawn from the word, but appropriating the value of these truths to that which is wholly unscriptural and even antichristian in its nature, so as to give, if received, the force of these truths to that which is itself, such. Now when truth is used to detect error, and the defects of the erroneous scheme are seen by it, the human mind is apt to believe that what is associated by the detector of the error with these truths is part of the truth, and thus dangerous error is often introduced by the force of the truth.

It was thus with Irvingism. The Church had lost the doctrines of the coming of the Lord and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church, and the enemy used these truths to introduce deadly error. So it is with the Tractarians. On nearly every point on which they attack the Dissenters and Evangelicals they can produce Scripture to prove their defects; but they use this only to accredit more deadly error still, and to sanction views and practices which subvert Christianity. I will quote their statements as to Dissenters and Evangelicals:

"The theory of the latter requires a disbelief in the doctrine of the visible church; that is, in a divinely instituted Body and an equally divinely-appointed government of the visible Body; it requires a denial of the fact that our Lord appointed a Priesthood in His Church, whose office is to celebrate those 'mysteries' which are the means and channels of grace and communion between CHRIST and His body. Nay it denies that the Body itself is a visible community or kingdom, separated from the rest of mankind by the partaking of, or communicating in, these Sacraments. On the contrary, the notion seems to be that the Church is not strictly a Body, but an aggregation of individuals

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years which, though from Jewish influence, is, the apostle declares, a return to heathenism (Gal. iv. 9, 10), because as shadows they were instructive before Christ came, who was the substance, but, taken up now, are the rudiments of the world to which we are crucified with Christ; declaring that we have not died to it with Christ, that we are living in the world as children of Adam, subject to its rudiments, not holding the head, certainly not Jews with instructive shadows, but heathens in the flesh, following its religion and abrogated ceremonies. Such are the beggarly and condemned elements which are given to us instead of living union with the head, Christ, by the presence and power of the Spirit of God, and a conscience perfected towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

REMARKS ON "THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD."

No. 3.

Eucharistic Worship.

I ADMIT the Lord's Supper to be the centre of true worship. I admit, and I adore such ineffable goodness, that Christ leads the praises of gathered spiritual worshippers: "In the midst of the church," we read, "will I sing praise unto thee." But as these essayists have used neglected truths in other cases to pervert the minds of the simple, of those not guarded by the Word, so they have done here.

But we are speaking of worship, and to know what worship is, one must be a true worshipper; and in this case they have, from the very outset of their pretentious teaching, made statements which prove them wholly ignorant of what true worship is; and I must add that throughout the article there is that ignorance of Scripture and Scriptural truth which characterises the school. I am not disposed to deny the existence of piety in many of those brought under the influence of these views.

Where redemption is not known and imagination is

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strong, piety naturally runs into ordinances and what are called mysteries, for ordinances are the religion of the flesh, and where redemption is not known, man, as to the state of his mind, must religiously be in the flesh.

There is, and can be, no walking in the light as God is in the light, for redemption must be experimentally known for that; nor the happy, childlike yet adoring confidence and liberty which cries for itself "Abba, Father;" and as the soul cannot be in liberty with God (a liberty which is exercised in adoration, for the nearer we are to God the more we adore His greatness, and have done with ourselves), it brings God by imagination, not faith, in an awful way near to us in our actual state, and we adore the image formed by our own minds, and are subject to ordinances, have a morbid delight in mysteries, "tremendous mysteries," "transcendant mysteries."[a] I do not say there is no piety in the article we are occupied with, but there is great pretension to spirituality:

"We speak of truths profoundly spiritual, and needing to be spiritually discerned, though liable, alas! like other high spiritual truths, to be unbelievingly rejected by unspiritual minds, or, if unspiritually embraced, to be perverted" (p. 316).

Our essayist of course discerns spiritually these profoundly spiritual truths, neither rejects them as having an unspiritual mind, nor perverts them by embracing them unspiritually. His is a spiritual mind, embracing spiritually high spiritual truths, truths profoundly spiritual. Christ's acts are "embraced in all simplicity of devout affection." This good opinion of self is accompanied by slight and sarcasm cast on the authorities who are over them, the Anglican prelates.

"These would-be iron rulers, whose lightest word would now be obeyed with alacrity, did they know how to show themselves

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[a] All this is a mere abuse of the word *mystery*. Mystery means in Scripture, and indeed it is the original sense of the word, what would be known only by special revelation, but to those taught by it (the initiated) is clearly known.

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but denies it. The former proposition requires a little attention. That Christ is to be adored, every true Christian cordially accepts; but the sting is in the tail, "wherever He is." His body and blood, it is alleged, are in the Eucharist. He is where His body and blood are (p. 315), and, consequently, He is to be adored in the Eucharist. It is the common argument for idols, the divinity is present there. In death, though Godhead may hold its title over the body, nor suffer it to see corruption, yet the soul was separate from the body, or it was not death. The Eucharist, let them say what they will, is a symbol and sign of the dead Christ—a broken body and shed blood. Christ is personally in heaven. He is present in spirit in the congregation; as He expresses it, "In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee." Do they mean to say that He, though in our midst, leads us to worship the signs of what He was when dead. That His body is now to come down from heaven *to be broken*, for that is what is done in the Eucharist; and that He returns into life before death to be broken and His blood shed, for that they avow is what was doing when He instituted the Eucharist. Christ's place, if we speak of "where" as to Him, is in heaven, sitting at the right hand of the Father, nowhere else. God has said, "Sit at my right hand *till*," and there accordingly He sits, nor will He leave it till the time appointed of the Father. Is He present alive in the bread before it is broken, and then does He go through death, there symbolised by the broken bread and the wine to be drunk? If *so*, then His soul is separated from His body. Or is He not present then, that is before breaking the bread, but only after His body is broken and His blood is shed. Then it is not He in any sense who is given and His blood shed. I can understand well that such enquiries offend them, as they talk of the devout and simple affections of faith. Reverence is our place, the right spirit to be in when one thinks of the Blessed One given for us. But if they invent false and erroneous views, which pervert the truth, which pretend to bring Christ down from heaven, when God has said to Him, as to His person and glorified

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body, "Sit on my right hand," it is right to put questions which have no irreverence for Christ, but expose the fallacy of *their* views, which show that it is a false, pretended Christ of their own imagination—that there can be no such Christ, for He is glorified in heaven, and not now broken and shedding His blood on earth, nor ever will again. If death is symbolised, and partaking of Him in that character—and it certainly and evidently is so—there is no such Christ now. He is alive for evermore. In death His soul was separated from His body. It is not so separated now. It is of faith, the moment you use a circumscribed where, to say He is in heaven, and nowhere else, till He rises up from the throne of God—"whom the heavens must receive till the time of the restitution of all things of which the prophets have spoken."

HISTORICAL NOTICES OF SICHEM, SHECHEM—THE SYCHAR OF JOHN IV.

Sichem.—Gen. xii. 6, 7. Here Jehovah first appeared to His pilgrim servant Abram in the land, and promised it to his seed. Here was his first halt and altar to the Lord, who appeared to him.

At Shalem in *Shechem.*—Gen. xxxiii. 18—20. Jacob returning from exile, bought a field of Shechem, spread a tent, and built an altar to El-elohe-Israel.

Gen. xxxiv. And, ere forced by the sin and treachery of his sons to move on, he gathered all the strange gods which were in their hands, and the earrings, and buried them under an oak. xxxv. 4. (Was it about this time that he dug the well?)

Shechem.—Gen. xxxvii. 12, 13. Joseph's brethren, after his dreams, fed their flocks here. He went thither (ver. 14) seeking them.

Jos. xxiv. 32. It was his (Joseph's) burying-place, on a shoulder (or *Shechem*) of *Gerizim.* Deut. xi. xxvii.; Jos. viii. Moses ordered six tribes to stand, as to God's blessing the obedient people.

Shechem—Jos. xx. 7, xxi. 21; 1 Chr. vi. 67—in Ephraim was a city of refuge for the manslayer.

Jos. xxiv. 1. Was Joshua's final rendezvous, for his charge to the people.

Jud. ix. City of Levites though it was, strange wickednesses were wrought as to God and as to man there.

Jud. ix. 1. As a kingdom had here been first attempted, so here David's and Solomon's kingdom was divided. 1 Ki. xii. 1, 25; 2 Chr. x. 1.

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that we cannot trust for a moment the ground on which dissenters have placed themselves, nor the dissenting body as standing on the sure ground of divine truth. I urge, and such statements should only press upon the soul the need of doing so, every humble soul to hold fast the Word of God and its authority, its divine authority.

We all know translations are man's work, and of course in a measure partake of his imperfection. All may know from the Word of God that the oracles of God were committed to men to keep. But they are prophetic, or inspired writings which were so. Their authority is a matter of faith. And though man's failure in faithfulness may affect details, as in the work of his own salvation, they are given, according to the wisdom and will of God to be His Word, and are their own evidence, as the sun in the firmament. Man may, in one sense, labour for his own salvation; he may diligently seek to have the Word of God pure; but the soul taught of God knows God has given both, and will have both owned as His, and appreciated as His. It is God's will that man should use diligence thus; but the humble soul taught of God knows on whom it leans with confidence, and from whom it has alike received eternal life, and the Word by which it has been engendered in him. He may make mistakes in his path, in his interpretation of the Word, but he is, for all that, led and guided of God in both, and attributes his mistakes to man in both, and faithfulness and truth to God. He says: "*Let God be true, and every man a liar,*" and he knows God has not left him in darkness, but that God has given him a revelation from Himself, a revelation of grace and truth come by Jesus Christ, and of all His preliminary dealings, so important to the full understanding of that, and that the Scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, able to make the man of God perfect, and that the entering of God's Word gives light and understanding to the simple. The Christian is one who, by divine teaching, knows the truth, and authority, and power of the divine Word. He accepts it in the largeness and fulness in

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which it is given, thankful if learned enquirers, as hewers of wood and drawers of water, can give it to him as free from all human imperfections as possible, labour that no earthly particles of mud be in the water, but the water he knows to be water, he drinks it and lives.

J. N. D.

END OF VOL. I.—NEW SERIES.

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