

BIBLE SUBJECTS

FOR THE

HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

W. H. BROOM, 28, PATERNOSTER ROW.

G. MORRISH, 24, WARWICK LANE.

1870.

CONTENTS.

	Page
The Jewish and Christian Dispensations Contrasted	1
The Spies	25
Extract from a Letter in Reply to some Questions on the Lord's Supper	34
POETRY—Thy Name is as ointment poured forth	40
1 John ii.	41
There is nothing like the Cross	43
Present Prospects	45
The Vision of the Glory of God	54, 77, 94
Heavenly-Mindedness	65, 85
Notes of an Address on Phil. iii. 20, 21	99
POETRY—"In everything give thanks"	104
On Christian Ministry	105
An High Priest of good things to come	119
POETRY—Alone with God	128
Conformity to the World	
The Kingdom of Heaven	
The Meeting-place in Resurrection	
Hebrews ix. 13, 14	
Jews, Gentiles, and Church of God	
Union with Christ	
The Cross	
On Washing the Disciples' Feet	
POETRY—The Efficacy of Faith	
Extract from an unpublished Letter	
The Resurrection of Jesus	
POETRY—Grace reigns through Righteousness	
Outlines of Lectures on the Tabernacle of Witness	
Lecture I.—The Offerings for the Tabernacle	
Lecture II.—The Ark of the Covenant	
Lecture III.—The Mercy Seat and the Cherubim of Glory	
Lecture IV.—The Table of Shewbread	
Lecture V.—The Golden Candlestick	

THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS CONTRASTED.

THERE is no subject on which greater misapprehension prevails in the minds of Christians than on that of the two dispensations, Jewish and Christian; the analogy which subsists between them on the one hand, and their distinctive characteristics on the other; and yet there is perhaps no other subject which has so important a bearing on the present walk of the children of God: for this reason, probably, it has ever been Satan's first object to confound the distinction between the two, and thus to make the way plain for leading them back into Jewish principles, both as to doctrine and practice.

That there is an analogy between the two dispensations is quite clear; but it is often represented entirely contrary to the order of Scripture. The earthly glory of the Jew in *Canaan*, in the former dispensation, is taken as the type of the state of the church in this; whereas the church is now in the *wilderness*, and not arrived at the land of promise. Canaan represents the rest which "remaineth for the people of God"—the rest of heaven (Heb. iv. 9); and to look at it as the type of the church of God, now in the wilderness, is surely sadly to reverse the order of Scripture. We find, indeed, a very striking analogy, or agreement, between many of the directions given to the people of God, in the New Testament, and those given to the Jews, God's former people, under the law. An analogy is generally admitted to exist between Israel and the church; yet even here care must be taken

not to stretch it so far as to represent the church in a position in which God has not set it. In some things the type wholly fails. We cannot read the 5th of Matthew and not discover at once a manifest difference between the teaching of Moses and that of Christ; and Christians must ever remember that they belong to Christ's, and not to Moses' house. "Moses was verily faithful in all his house as a servant; but Christ, as a Son over His own house, *whose house are we*" (Heb. iii. 5, 6). Unless we keep this in mind we shall constantly be in danger of walking more like *earthly* Jews, than like those who are "raised up together with Christ, and made to sit together in *heavenly* places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6). That we may have a clear and intelligent apprehension of these matters, as represented in Scripture, it is necessary that we understand,

First, *The distinction between the character of the "CALLING" of a Christian and that of a Jew.*

To understand the "calling" of a Christian, we must see distinctly *by whom* the calling is given, as well as that *to which* it is given. Looked at in both these respects, the Christian's calling is "*heavenly*," and the calling of the Jew was *earthly*: and they are thus contrasted in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-priest of *our* profession, Christ Jesus" (chap. iii. 1). The calling of the Christian is by Jesus, "the Lord from *heaven*"; and it is "to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in *heaven*" (1 Peter i. 4). The calling of the Jew was by Moses, a mere man, though a prophet of God,* and it was to an earthly inheritance—"the land of Canaan, this is the land that shall fall to you for an inheritance"

* See the contrast drawn on this point in Heb. xii. 25, 26. Under the law, God spake on *earth*; but now He speaketh from *heaven*.

(Num. xxxiv. 2) ; and Moses describes this goodly inheritance as “ a land of hills and valleys, that drinketh water of the rain of heaven : a land which the Lord thy God careth for ; the eyes of the Lord thy God are continually upon it ” (Deut. xi. 11, 12). The Jew was accordingly taught to look upon earthly blessings as a mark of God’s favour ; and the absence of them as a mark of his curse (see Deut. xxviii. 1—18). But St. Paul commends the Hebrew Christians for rejoicing in the loss of earthly blessings : “ For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that ye have in *heaven* a better and an enduring substance ” (Heb. x. 34). If these Christians had not seen their “ heavenly calling,” they must have looked upon this spoiling of their goods as a curse, instead of a cause of joy. Surely there is a marked contrast between the dispensations on this point.

It is by no means meant to be asserted that there were no spiritual blessings promised to the Jews ; and assuredly there were individuals among them, as there were also among the Gentiles, before the coming of Christ, who had a hope in the heavens after death. But as Jews their hope was an earthly inheritance ; and the nation collectively, in which capacity only it could be taken as the type of the church of God now, had nothing but earthly blessings promised as the reward of obedience, whereas the Christian has no such promises made to him ; nothing but food and raiment is promised him, and therewith he is to be content (1 Tim. vi. 8). As to the earth, he is called to maintain the character of a stranger and a pilgrim ; but not as to the heavens : for he is “ made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places.” His hope is indeed beyond and above all things here, being within the veil, where Jesus is : this is the anchor of his soul, sure and steadfast. No hope is held out to the saint on

earth since Jesus died. The blessed hope of the Christian being connected with "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13), all else to the Christian, as with Paul, should become "dross and dung." While the saint clings to the world he denies that his hope is in heaven. It is by our conduct, and not merely by our words, that the world is to learn our principles. They can read the one, when they cannot the other, and their eye is swift enough to detect the inconsistency. The hope of the spiritual Jew was to enjoy earthly blessings while on the earth; and, after death, he had a hope of heavenly inheritance. The saint has now nothing to which to look, either before or after death, but this heavenly inheritance. The head being risen, so are the members: and, as Paul argues, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*: for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 1, 2). Such an exhortation as this, grounded on such a fact, never could be, and never was, addressed to a Jew.

The office of the Holy Ghost is to take of the things of Jesus, and to show them to the church (John xvi. 14). The work of the spies was to tell the children of Israel about the *land*. It was a land, they said, "flowing with milk and honey." They produced the grapes as an earnest, saying, "This is the fruit of it" (Num. xiii. 27). Such an earnest would not satisfy a saint now. To him is given the Holy Ghost as an earnest: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. i. 13). A *spiritual* inheritance must have

a *spiritual* earnest, and no less an earnest than the Holy Ghost must be given to those who can claim joint-heirship with Christ (Rom. viii. 17); an earnest, indeed, worthy of the superior standing and inheritance of the Christian; though now not known by the world, and not of the world, even as Jesus was not *of* the world, though *in* the world (John xvii. 14). The command to the church is plain and simple, though a most responsible truth: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). The Jews might have minded *earthly* things, because they were what God promised and gave them; but now those who mind *earthly* things are classed with "the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction" (Phil. iii. 18); because they are not what God gives to fill the hearts of His people. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; and having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. vi. 7, 8).

The next distinction that we will notice is,

Secondly, *The mode of obtaining the inheritance.*

The inheritance of the Jew, being *earthly*, and the enemies they had to oppose being those of flesh and blood, they were commanded to use the sword to overcome them; and whether in the wilderness or in the land, the weapons of their warfare were *carnal* ones.

But to the Christian it is said, "The weapons of our warfare are *not* carnal" (2 Cor. x. 4). "For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" [or against wicked spirits in heavenly places; see margin] (Eph. vi. 12). The sword which the Christian has to use, is "the sword of the Spirit"; his helmet, "the helmet of salvation"; his shield, "the shield of faith." Jesus said,

“They that take the sword shall perish by the sword” (Matt. xxvi. 52). “If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now is My kingdom not from hence” (John xviii. 36); and, on another occasion, “Love your enemies.” “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. v. 44). This treatment of certain of their enemies was taught to the Jews, in Deut. xxiii. 3—6: “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord. . . Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.” But the Lord informs His disciples that their conduct must be the very opposite. Again, He told them, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” The directions given to the Jews, when injury was done them, were, “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (Lev. xxiv. 20; Deut. xix. 18), before the judges. But the Lord told His disciples that such conduct did not become children of God, who had the heavenly inheritance before them: “But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; and whosoever shall sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also” (Matt. v. 39, 40).

In short, the whole spirit of the Gospel is as completely opposed to anything like war and violence, as light is opposed to darkness. What was the conduct of the Saviour? Was it not patient and uncomplaining submission to evil in every form in which it could be brought against him? “When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but com-

mitted Himself to Him that judgeth righteously"; in this, "leaving us an example that we should follow his steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21—23). How then can those who profess to be followers of Him use the sword and kill their enemies, when they are exhorted to love them? A strange way of showing love is that! Oh, my fellow-Christians, think of the example of Jesus before you practise or advocate such conduct! Perhaps you seek to excuse yourselves from what was said by Jesus in the last discourse with His disciples: "But now he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one" (Luke xxii. 36). But if you look a little further on, you will find that Peter, having understood this literally, and having used his sword to smite off the ear of one of those that came to take Jesus, He said, "Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. xxvi. 52). This plainly shows, that whatever the meaning of Jesus might be, when He said, "He that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one," He could not mean that His disciples were to seek to establish His kingdom by the sword; and their subsequent conduct shows that they once for all abandoned every such idea. The principle of unlimited forgiveness was inculcated over and over again, both by Christ during His life on earth, and by His apostles afterwards; "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. vi. 15). Again, they were told as to the extent of forgiveness; it was to be "until seventy times seven" (Matt. xviii. 32); and so the Apostle in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." How sad it is that Christians fight one with another, and go to law one with another, just as though Jesus had never taught them otherwise, either by precept or exam-

ple : and thus practically, before the world, deny Him by whose name they are called.

Thirdly, *Let us notice the different lights in which the "flesh," or "natural man"—that is, the unrenewed nature is viewed in the two dispensations.*

Unless the distinction, which exists here, be seen by the Christian, he will be in constant perplexity as to what course to pursue, if "led of the Spirit"—for he will almost daily find himself led by that Spirit in a direction contrary to that which he sees approved of for the Old Testament saints, and hence the conflict and perplexity.

Now the old covenant was a trial of the flesh. The law proposed long life on earth (Ex. xx. 12), the absence of disease (Deut. vii. 15), earthly greatness (Deut. xxviii. 13), and everything that the flesh can admire and appreciate, as the reward of obedience, but without giving the power to obey. The principle of the dispensation was, Obey and Live ; whereas the principle of the Gospel is just the opposite, being, Live and Obey. The power of life being first given by the " quickening Spirit," and then obedience expected after the power is given. It is not intended to be said that the Spirit was never given as the power of life to the Jew, for assuredly He was ; but He was not given in the same way that He was after the resurrection, as we learn from John vii. 39, " For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." He was not then abiding and indwelling under the new covenant (John xiv. 16). While the flesh was under trial, as it was under the old covenant, it was not treated as utterly corrupt ; and it was accordingly not until the present dispensation, not until the flesh had been fully proved to be altogether worthless, by rejecting and crucifying the Lord of life that it was declared, " they that are in the flesh cannot please God " (Romans viii.

8). Since the death of Jesus, the flesh is a condemned thing—it is the “old man” which, in Romans vi. 6, is said to be “crucified with Christ,”—and the believer, in respect of the old man is said to be “dead with Christ” (verse 8); as Paul says in Gal. ii. 20, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but, Christ liveth in me.” The believer is judicially dead in Christ as his representative, and any life that he has in which he can bring forth fruit unto God, and do Him service, is by the Spirit of Christ in him. As Paul says in Rom. viii. 9, “If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” The flesh, therefore, having been on its trial in the former dispensation, and now having been proved worthless, and condemned—it is plain that those things which could gratify and bring glory to the flesh, might be lawful and proper for a Jew, and yet may not be such as a Christian ought to delight or glory in.

If we see this clearly, as Scripture sets it forth, we may understand how—

Fourthly, *Greatness in the earth was promised to the Jew as a reward of obedience and a mark of God's favour, while the Church is warned of the danger of seeking anything of the kind.*

We read in Deut. xxviii. 1, “And it shall come to pass, if thou wilt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God shall set thee on high above all nations of the earth.” There is no such prospect as this held out in the New Testament; on the contrary, the Christian is ever warned against imitating the conduct of those who seek such things, as we see from the following passages: “And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority

upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so ; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief as he that doth serve " (Luke xxii. 24—26). " At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven ? And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven " (Matt. xviii. 1—3). Jesus, after He had acted the part of the servant, in washing His disciples' feet, said, " I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him " (John xiii. 15, 16). We see then that the *servant* and the *child* are signs to Christians, held up to them for examples, and descriptive of what ought to be their character. But some one may say, this is only as to the conduct of individual Christians, and does not speak of the church in her *collective* capacity. But how can a body of men, when brought together, have a different character from each individual of the body ? Would any number of timid sheep, gathered together from the mountains, act like a troop of savage wolves ? or could a nation of Christians—if such a thing were to be—act other than each individual Christian should act ? that is, as a servant or child—willing to suffer the loss of all things ; willing to be accounted " the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things : " but how opposite is this from what the Jew was to glory in—even to be " set on high above all nations of the earth. " " In the world ye shall have tribulation " : this was all the Saviour gave His disciples to expect, and Paul declared that " all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. " Christ was among His disciples as one that doth serve ; He was no

citizen of this world. The manger opened, and the cross closed His life here; the wilderness was His dreary path between; God was His rod and staff, the only one He had while passing through a world that hated both Him and His Father,—and He has left us “an example that we should follow His steps.” In all this, the church has wholly failed,—she has refused to take the place of a servant; instead of relying on God she has relied on the power of the world for her support, and has sought glory from the world, forgetful of the truth which she ought especially to have kept in mind, “he that exalteth himself shall be abased.” Christians count it a reproach and shame to be at a distance from men’s esteem, to have their name cast out as evil, or to associate with those of their brethren who are less in money, education, or fleshly grade than themselves. Are they not, then, partial? If James were to visit the churches now, he would find the gold ring having the best place, and being the most esteemed. The world’s principles have found their way into the very sanctuary of God. How many in these days think they cannot get on without money and patronage. But if Christians, let them consider, had Christ any? or had His apostles any? The answer is easily given—none. But they had the power of God. This was the strength wherein they trusted—this was the armour wherewith they were girded for the battle. And is the Lord’s arm shortened now, that Christians should seek any other strength or armour? Surely not. Let them then be willing to act in accordance with the character of the dispensation in which they live, and not like those who were of Moses’ household. What a difference there was between Solomon, God’s most favoured one among Israel in his day, whom we find in the *highest* place, and Paul, who, although he was not a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles, was, as to his standing on the earth, “the

offscouring of all things" (1 Cor. iv. 13). These two cases exhibit palpably, the difference God has made in this respect, between the saint in the former and present dispensation. But which of the two is most sought after? We may notice—

Fifthly, *A very striking distinction between the PLACE and MANNER of worship.*

The Jewish dispensation was connected with the earth and the carnal senses. The *sanctuary* must partake of the same character. "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a *worldly* sanctuary." Accordingly, David advises his son Solomon on this point (1 Chron. xxii. 5), "And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent of fame and of glory throughout all countries." This was the Lord's house on earth, and it was the only place where acceptable worship could be performed. The sacrifices had all to be offered there, and, when in the land of their captivity, prayer was to be made towards that house (see 2 Chron. vi. 38). Jesus intimated the change which was soon to take place to the woman of Samaria at the well, in reply to her inquiry as to the proper place for worship. He said, "Woman, believe me, 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. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24). There is accordingly now no one place or building more than another where God is to be worshipped, for we have Jesus' own words, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xxiii. 20). It matters not where they may be, in a garret or in a

palace, there being no place on earth answering to the Jewish temple or tabernacle. That which answers to it is "*the heavens*," of which it was the pattern or figure, as we learn from Heb. ix. 24, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." And it is there that true worship is to be offered, in spirit, according to the apostle's exhortation in the next chapter (ver. 19), "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a high-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." This is the blessed privilege of every true believer in Jesus: and wheresoever two or three are gathered together in His name, He will be in spirit in the midst of them. It may be difficult for some to comprehend or understand this transfer of the tabernacle or place of worship from earth to heaven; but every believer must know that unless his thoughts and affections are raised from earth unto God through Jesus, or in other words, unless he be in heaven in spirit, he cannot offer acceptable worship. It is in heaven only that he can hold communion with God—for God does not come down to earth, as He did in the Jewish temple, and commune with men from the mercy-seat, between the cherubims. Jesus is now the mercy-seat, who is in heaven. He is also the sacrifice, the altar, and the high-priest; and these are therefore all in heaven; and the worship of the believer must therefore be carried on in spirit in heaven. There is indeed a temple of God on the earth, but it is not of earthly, but of living stones, as it is written in 1 Peter ii. 5, "Ye also as lively (or living, Gr.) stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices,

acceptable to God by Christ Jesus." This house is the church, "the pillar and ground of the truth"—of which "Jesus Christ Himself is the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord : in whom ye [the Ephesian Christians] also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 21). The analogy which subsists between Solomon's temple and this building (the church) is that in Solomon's temple the stones were all prepared at the quarry, before they were brought to be put in the building (1 Kings vi. 7); and so the church consists of none but converted persons, "lively stones," those who are sanctified or set apart in Christ Jesus, and adopted into the heavenly family. Where care is not taken to exclude stones which have not this character, the building will soon become a mere mockery of a church. But where two or three such stones are gathered together in the name of Jesus, it secures His presence: and what a comfort is this to scattered saints. Oh that they knew more of the comfort of it!

Sixthly, *Another manifest and most important distinction may be noticed in respect to the PRIESTHOOD and SERVICE of the house.*

These were, in the former dispensation, limited to carnal order, being altogether after the flesh; for the priesthood was confined to the *fleshly* descendants of Aaron: "Thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons, and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute" (Ex. xxix. 9). The *service* of the house was confined to the Levites (see Num. iii. 5—8). But first, as to the *priesthood*. Aaron was high-priest, and his sons were priests. In the present dispensation, Jesus is the high-priest: "We have a great high-priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God" (Heb. iv. 14); and all believers in Him are priests. In 1 Pet. ii. 5, they are

called, "a holy priesthood"; in ver. 9, "a royal priesthood"; and in Rev. i. 5, 6, they say, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God"; and the *sacrifices* they have to offer are "spiritual sacrifices" (1 Pet. i. 5). "By Him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb. xiii. 15). All believers are thus "priests to God"; and there is not in the New Testament any other priesthood recognized; and none but believers can offer "spiritual sacrifices" acceptable to God by Christ Jesus: for an unregenerate man can only offer words with his lips, in which his heart cannot join; and this is an abomination to the Lord.

So much as to the change of the priesthood, from Aaron and his household, and their descendants according to the flesh, to Jesus and His household, composed of true believers, the family of God. And now as to *service* or *ministry*, which are one and the same thing, being both used as the translation of one Greek word, *διακονια* which is rendered both ministry and service (see Rom. xii. 7, and xv. 31); and in 1 Cor. xii. 5, is translated "administrations;" "Now there are diversities of gifts, but it is the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations (ministries, see margin), but it is the same Lord." Keeping this in mind, let us see who *were* those who performed the service of the sanctuary and who *are* those who are to perform it now. As with the priesthood, so with the ministry, it was after a carnal order. All the descendants of Levi, *according to the flesh*, were to take a part in it: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may *minister* unto him, and they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the *service* of the tabernacle" (Num. iii. 5). We cannot

read 1 Cor. xii., or Eph. iv., and not at once see that all acts of ministry, in this dispensation, are made to depend upon the fitness of the instrument, chosen and qualified, according to God's own sovereign will. God, working by His Spirit, is the alone source of all true ministry, both as to appointment and qualification; and this without the least reference to human authority, agreeably to 1 Cor. xii. 11: "But all these (different ministries and operations, in verses 5 and 6) worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will;" and therefore all ministry founded on intellectual attainments, education, and the like, without qualification from the Spirit of God, or any that is set up upon the authority of man, is an assumption of power: and a service, which, though He may overrule it for good, as He does even the acts of Satan, yet is not according to the mind of God, and is not such as He has ordered or can accept with delight. The only limitation we find in Scripture as to acts of ministry among the saints, is where there is a lack of gift. Now ministry, in these days, is made to depend not upon the gifts which God may have given, and which men therefore ought to feel themselves bound to receive, but upon *human* credentials, which suffice to give a title to ministry, though the individual possessing them may show plainly by his daily walk that he is destitute altogether of the Spirit of God, and though he may have no qualification for edifying the body: and moreover where the gift is, and is acknowledged to be, when it is not accompanied with the human sanction, it is rejected; but where the form of ordination is, without the power, it will not be questioned. Oh what a picture does the "temple of God" at this day present! The Lord distributes His gifts to His servants severally as He wills, and His household refuse to receive them; and thus "quench the Spirit," despising His word. How long, O Lord, wilt

Thou allow Thy children to be thus frustrating Thine own cause ?*

Seventhly, *There is also a most important difference in the claim which the Lord has on the person, services, and property of a Christian, from that which He made on the Jew.*

The Jew was to give a tenth of his increase, and that was all God claimed : “ Concerning the tithe of the herd or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the *tenth shall be holy unto the Lord*” (Lev. xxvii. 32). There is no such limit as this for the Christian. Jesus said, “ There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses,” &c., “ with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life” (Mark x. 29). The claim is not made in the same way, as a matter of law, but of privilege, though it is a far higher and more searching call. The Apostle says, “ Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s ” (1 Cor. vi. 20). The Christian is altogether the Lord’s ; and as to his property, he is only a steward ; and when Jesus comes again He will require an account of it, and give reward to all according to the manner in which they have used the talent committed to their trust,—as it has been used in His service (see Luke xix. 12 ; 2 Cor. v. 10 ; Rev. xxii. 12). The reward will be

* The whole of the Jewish economy, both as to office and inheritance, was after the flesh ; and therefore every *office* was by descent, according to the flesh. The kingship was limited to the descendants of David ; the priesthood and the service of the temple, to the tribe of Levi. The land was to be preserved by descent, in the particular tribes and families to which it was first allotted ; and if it had been alienated, it reverted to the descendants of its former owner at the year of Jubilee. All this is in complete contrast with the Christian privileges which are the special gifts of God, through faith of Christ Jesus (see Gal. iii. 22). “ He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy.”

proportionate to the service. It is well for us that the love of Jesus is not measured by our love to Him.

Eighthly, In the standing of a Jew, and of a Christian, in relation to God, there was all the difference that there is between a servant or bondsman (under law) and a son or freeman, standing in grace ; that is, as respects the consciousness of their relationship.

This truth we find fully brought out at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth chapters of Galatians: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ [or, until Christ, Gr. ; the words, to bring us, not being in the original], that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." This shows the relationship of believers in Christ to God in this dispensation, whether Jew or Gentile. They are all children, and it is their privilege to know their standing through the "spirit of adoption," or sonship, which is given them, enabling them to cry, "Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15 ; Gal. iv. 6) ; and is opposed to the spirit of bondage (Rom. viii. 15). Now the fourth of Galatians shows that though a spiritual Jew, before the coming of Christ, was a son and heir, yet he had not the consciousness of this relationship ; but was a servant or bondsman: "Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child [minor], differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all ; but is under tutors or governors until the time appointed of the

father. Even so we [Jews], when we were children [minors], were in bondage under the elements of the world [the reference is here evidently to the law, the schoolmaster named in ver. 24 of the previous chapter]; but when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, 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 because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the *Spirit of His Son* into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father! Wherefore thou art no *more a servant, but a son*." The Jew then lived under law, in the "spirit of bondage." The Christian has received "the spirit of adoption," and lives in liberty of sonship. As to the consciousness of his standing towards God, there is as much difference between a spiritual Jew and a Christian, as between a servant and a son; and the character of the Christian's service should correspond to this. But, alas! how many are turning back, like the Galatians, to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto they desire again to be in bondage; and observing days, months, times, and the like (Gal. iv. 9); "after having begun in the Spirit," seeking to be "made perfect by the flesh" (chap. iii. 3). This is Judaising; and wherever there is a lack of discernment as to the distinction between the two dispensations, there will always be this tendency; just as a person who could not distinguish colours would often be in danger of taking silver money instead of gold.

There are many other important points of difference, which it would take up too much space to explain. Those which have been noticed may suffice; and if the reader discern these, he will soon discover many more. In conclusion, I will point out a striking analogy which subsists between the tribe of Levi and the church—which shows us as clearly perhaps as any of the distinctions which have been noticed, what should be the conduct of

the Christian as respects the things of this life. We read in Num. ii. 33, "The Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel;" and again, in chap. xviii. 20, "The Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in the land; neither shalt thou have any part [lot] among them. I am thy part [lot], and thine inheritance among the children of Israel." In all this we see the unnational, unworldly character of the Christian, as Jesus taught in John xvii. 14, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

The inheritance of the saint we have seen to be "reserved in *heaven*"; and so God was to be the inheritance of the Levite. "I am thy part and thine inheritance." He was not to have both God and the land, as many would fain have God and the world, "God and mammon." Satan would seek, and ever has sought, to unite the church and the world, in order that men's consciences might be lulled, on the one hand, by being considered as belonging to the church; and on the other, that the testimony of the church might be lost or marred.

The church and the world are ever put in contrast in Scripture; and those who would blot out the distinction, while they imagine that they are making the church an hospital for the cure of the diseased and dying, are, in reality, introducing leaven which, Scripture informs us (1 Cor. v. 6), will leaven the whole lump, and, at the same time are deceiving souls by accrediting wickedness, or endorsing a false profession. There is one other feature well worthy of notice. The life of the Levite was a life of faith; he had to depend on the sanctuary for his daily support, which was according as God put it into the hearts of the other tribes to bring the offerings to the house. This reminds us of what should be the path of the saint, who should "walk by faith, and not by sight." As Jesus likewise said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and

His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33). Neither power in earth, nor an earthly citizenship, belonged to this tribe—their hope and their place were in the sanctuary: and there also should be the Christian's hope and place—the true sanctuary in heaven.

The chief point on which there is an analogy between the whole nation of Israel, when in the land, and the church of God now, is that they were to be a separate people. They were to "make no league with the inhabitants of the land" (Jud. ii. 2), nor make marriage with them (Deut. vii. 3); and just so is the command to Christians, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:" "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. xiv. 17). But have Christians obeyed this? Alas! they have scarcely even attempted to obey it, either in their individual conduct, or collectively in the church; and it may be said of them with as much truth as it was of Israel, "But ye have not obeyed my voice. Why have ye done this?" (Jud. ii. 2).

This principle of separation between believers and unbelievers is set forth under many types in the Old Testament, besides those already named. It is inculcated in the commands, in Deut. xxii. 10, "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together." It may be asked, as Paul asked, with regard to a somewhat similar precept, "Doth God take care for oxen, or, saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this is written." But one of the plainest types by which the principle was inculcated is the distinction of clean and unclean beasts which, in the case of the Jews, represented the difference that was to be kept up between them and the Gentiles, or between the people of God and the world, and it now shows the same thing.

The distinction between Jew and Gentile is done away in the church ; “ they are both one in Christ Jesus,” as was shown to Peter, by the sheet let down from heaven. But the distinction between the church and the world still remains, according to the injunction, “ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ” ; “ Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” It was alleged against the priests of old, as the head and front of their offending, that they “ put no difference between the unclean and clean ” (Ezek. xxii. 26). And Christians are now treading in their very footsteps, saying, “ all the congregation are holy,” and we have no right to “ sit in the seat of judgment,” and say who are entitled to be called Christians and who are not ; or, in other words, to put a difference between clean and unclean. In confirmation of this, the parable of the wheat and the tares, in the 13th of Matthew, is quoted. These were to “ grow together till the harvest ” ; and therefore it is argued that no separation between the righteous and the wicked is to be attempted till that time ; but one most important point in the parable is overlooked when this view is taken. The parable says, “ Let them grow together till the harvest.” But where were they to grow ? It was *in the field*—and what is the field ? “ The field is the world,” said the Saviour. The parable then tells us that there are to be righteous and wicked in the world till the harvest, and that the righteous are not to seek to extirpate the wicked out of the world—that the Lord will judge them at the harvest. But the directions to the church were, “ Put away *from among yourselves* that wicked person,” “ a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ” (1 Cor. v. 6—13). We find this principle of excommunication constantly inculcated in the Old Testament. In Num. xix. 20, it is seen to extend to any man who defiled the sanctuary—not having purified himself : “ But

the man that shall be unclean and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord : the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him ; he is unclean." In the case of the leper (Lev. xiii. 46), he was to be put out of the camp after his uncleanness was proved : " Without the camp shall his habitation be, he shall dwell alone, he is unclean." At the feast of the Passover, the same principle is taught : " Seven days shall no leaven be found in your houses, for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger or one born in the land " (Exod. xii. 19). We see in all these cases uncleanness and excommunication coupled together—and they are types of the church. The Passover is brought forward by Paul in 1 Cor. v. with special reference to the discipline of the church : " Christ our Passover (Paschal Lamb) is sacrificed for us ; therefore let us keep the feast, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The household could not say that they rightly kept the Passover, while they ate with one who used leavened bread during the seven days of the feast, or with a stranger ; for " no stranger shall eat thereof." God would not have been satisfied with the common excuses, " It is no affair of mine ; " " I am personally free from it ; " " I have not used the leaven ; " " I am circumcised myself ; " " I am not responsible for others, but only for myself ; " " I should bring great responsibility upon myself, were I to obey these Scriptures literally." These are the excuses which are now made by Christians to justify their conduct under similar circumstances. But it is a strange way of getting rid of responsibility to act in disobedience to the Word of God. Surely it must be doubling responsibility.

Again, then, I would entreat the Christian reader, if he have seen any truth in what has been said, to examine his own conduct, in reference both to God and his fellow-creatures, and see if, in any thing, he have been acting in a manner more becoming a Jew than a Christian. Let him remember that the great value of truth is that it should lead into action. If our conduct remain the same, after we have been led to see some great truth, as it was before we saw it, it is a proof that there is some defect of heart or conscience, and it would have been better for us never to have known it.

Let us, then, as those who would be imitators of God, and who would walk as His children, embrace that part of the Jewish economy which answers to the present wilderness, and separate state of the church, however unpleasant may be the task, and painful to the fleshly mind ; let us cast away such parts of it as we may have embraced, or desire to embrace, which are contrary to our profession of the name of the separate and lowly Jesus. Do let the Christian be earnest to live like a Christian, to walk worthy of his calling—his high and heavenly calling, knowing his adoption, that he is an heir of glory, and with the full blaze of glory before him. May the light of this glory be so strong as to cast into the shade all merely earthly things ; and while using them, may he learn not to abuse them, “ knowing that the fashion of them soon passeth away ! ”

H.

THE SPIES.

NUMBERS XIII. XIV.

“AND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel.”

In this way, or with this direction from the Lord to the leader of Israel, does this striking and important scripture open. For it is part of the divine plan to give an *earnest*, as well as a *report*, of the distant land of promise and of glory. This was exhibited in early patriarchal days. Eleazer gave Rebecca more than a report about Abraham and Isaac (Gen. xxiv.) He did give her a report, it is true; but, together with that, jewels and ornaments—pledges both of Isaac's love and of Abraham's wealth. And so now, in the days of Israel, in this case of the spies and their cluster of grapes. The report of Canaan had already reached the camp, for Moses had been telling them of that land of wine and milk. But the spies are to do more. They are to present a sample, or first fruits, of the land. Their cluster was as the gold and offerings of Eleazar in earlier days. And this is the office of the Holy Ghost in the great economy of our salvation. He is “the earnest of the inheritance;” and His divine and excellent service it is to give the souls of the elect enjoyment, in spirit, of the good things reported and promised, after the manner of a first fruit, or fore-taste.

Accordingly, the spies are sent to do their proper business—to search, report, and exhibit the land. The search is made, and the word of the Lord is verified. The land is proved to be a good land, “the glory of all

lands." A fine cluster of grapes, which two of them (I believe Caleb and Joshua, but that is no matter) had to bear between them on their shoulders, attests all and more than had been promised.

But the progress of the story will disclose some serious truth for the soul. May we have grace to ponder it unto profit.

It is a well-known principle, that, *according to the brightness of our expectations, we will submit to present labour*—nay, when the hope is very dazzling or flattering, we can scarcely say what sacrifices we will not make to it;—shame and poverty will be endured; fatigue, privations, and hardships; dangers will be run, and difficulties encountered. This is known, and practised, every day. But let the prospect decline, let clouds hang over the distance, let hope slacken in the heart, then, proportionably, all this energy declines;—fatigue is felt in its unrelieved weight; sorrow and privations are known as they are; dangers and difficulties appear in their huge, forbidding shapes; and shame and poverty become intolerable.

So was it now with Israel. The Amalekites and the walled cities are pleaded, and they refuse to go up. By this, the secret of the heart is again betrayed. For what had given the Amalekites and the cities such size and importance in their eyes? This secret is easily known and understood by us. Their souls had lost the sense and value of the promise, and their eye was, therefore, free to see other objects. A little thing would have done the business (answering the purpose of an unbelieving and averted heart) as well as a giant or a citadel. Their *heart* was not upon the distant, promised Canaan, and any nearer object would command them. And if that object involve an effort or a difficulty, it is better to go back than to face it.

And surely so. If there be nothing to be reached or gained, why encounter a hindrance, though it be but a molehill?

But who, I ask, has thus blotted out the prospect?—what has robbed their soul of the sense of the promise?—what has effaced the distance?—what has shifted the scene so strangely? Their own carnal and earthly

minds. They despised the pleasant land, *because, in their hearts, they had turned back again to Egypt* (Ps. cvi. 24; Acts vii. 39).

The secret is disclosed. They “sought opportunity to return” (Heb. xi. 15). This is the tale of the heart here. All this is plain and an every-day matter. We live, continually, in the midst of experiences and observations like these. The distance is clouded, or left undiscovered and undesired, if the past be regretted and sought again; and then the path is disturbed, and excuses and reasonings upon circumstances arise, as with Israel here. If the distance be brilliant, the present may be dangerous and difficult, still man will try it. If fortune and honour shine afar, an Amalekite will be a man of low stature, and a fenced city an unwallled village. And what does all this? What works this transformation? Hope — desire for the distant and future. It has its eye on the summits at the horizon, and the foreground is overlooked.

All this is surely so. But let me add this serious truth. When, as in this case, the distance is that which *the promise of God* has spread out before us, when it is *the voice of the Lord* that has commanded us (as of old it did Abraham) to lift up our eyes, and look from the place where we are, northward and southward, and eastward and westward, with a promise that *all* shall be ours, then this principle, so found in human nature, becomes a serious *searcher* of the heart. So with the camp in the wilderness. The spies disclosed their own hearts more thoroughly than the land they were sent to search. For if the blessed God propose a good to me, is it morally nothing whether I esteem or despise it? May I have no relish for *His* feast, and yet be thought to have a *right* taste or state of soul? Is it, or is it not, a symptom of an injured condition of the heart, to be in no sympathy with the living God, to feel no hope stirring, when He is making promises? Must not everything in the soul be wrong when this is so? Surely God is the standard by which to measure ourselves. We cannot, we dare not, say that there is nothing in preferring the onions of Egypt to the grapes of Canaan, in having a heart all alive to the

good things of this world, or of nature, and indifferent to the promise of the Lord.

The *real* state of the affections, to all divine and eternal ends, is to be known only by a proposal from God Himself. And this disclosed Caleb and Joshua, on the one side, and the rest of the spies and the whole camp, on the other.

There is nothing, we may admit, *morally* wrong in preferring the onions of Egypt to the grapes of Canaan. May not the palate have its choice? And may I not prefer one company, or one country, to another? If Egypt and its river be pleasanter to me than the land on the other side of the Jordan with its Mount Lebanon, what harm do I to any one? what harm to my neighbour, or to society?

All this is so when our ways are tried in the balances of human moral thoughts. But that is not "the weight and measure" which God uses. He tries the way of the heart, in reference to *Himself*. He assays the purposes, and tastes, and workings of the mind in relation to *His* words and promises. And righteously so, for He has *supreme* claim to us, by every title and on every principle. And, therefore, let all this despite of Canaan, this turning back to Egypt, this preference of the onions that grow there to the grapes of the promised land, let all this have not a single bit of moral wrong in it, as far as doing harm to one's neighbour goes, *God*—the blessed, supreme Lord of all, to whom every motion of the heart should bow and respond—has been despised and slighted.

And this principle, when simply and justly applied, will often show the thing that is most reputable in the world to be the most loathsome. For all its reputation among men is but the covering of deep enmity against God. People sit together in the courtesies and charities of life—but their feast is over the cucumbers of Egypt, bearing witness that the grapes of *God's* land have been deliberately disdained by the whole company!

O the lesson, the solemn lesson, which all this reads to us! The spies were tested, and so was the heart of Caleb, as he himself afterwards says: "Forty years old was I when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me

from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land ; and I brought him word again *as it was in my heart*" (Josh. xiv. 7). His heart was right toward God and His promise. The foreground was lost sight of, by him, in the greatness and brilliancy of the distance. The Amalekite was not a giant in his eye. The stoutest of the Anakims, in the thought of that true Israelite, was meat for Israel, a prey for the camp of the Lord (Numb. xiv. 9). Their strength, in the balances which this dear soul held to weigh it, was nothing—it had melted away already ; and, in the beaming, gladdening eye of hope which he had lifted up on the scene, nothing appeared but victory and its spoils, and the triumphant possession of all the promise.

Who does not covet such a mind ? This was proving, of a truth, the ground of the heart of Caleb and Joshua.

And we might ask ourselves, What fatigues are we ready to endure—what dangers and difficulties could we go forth to encounter, in the strength of that hope which the promise of God has quickened ? Can we make present sacrifice ? can we allow ourselves to be beaten in the race for the world's favour ? can we be patient under present slight ? can we let our generation run past us, looking for objects more worthy, as it judges, of its regards ? These are questions wholesome for the soul. These are honest spies who do their business well. It was a renewed sight of God's distance, or of the scene which the Lord had spread before him, that restored the soul of the Psalmist, beguiled for a moment by the grudged prosperity of the wicked (Ps. lxxiii).

And so we shall find it. Let hope of heaven possess the *heart*, and we shall have this restored mind of David, and all these spiritual triumphs of Caleb and Joshua, and many an excellent quality of grace besides ; but the lust of other things entering in will spoil our hope. It was that which now, to the eye of Israel, clothed the fruitful vales and sunny heights of Canaan with clouds. They had remembered the onions and fish of Egypt, and the grapes of Canaan were not relished (Numb. xi). And there the root of all this mischief lay.

But this was terrible. And it is terrible when discovered in our own hearts. The delights of Egypt, the

land we have left, the place of nature, the great theatre of the world's principles, have their attractions. Too well we know all this. We like gratified vanity and courted pride. We would sacrifice much to the hope of indulging our lusts. All this would animate us, and make us enterprising and patient, if needful. But all this is "of the world," and "not of the Father" (1 John ii. 10). Canaan will not supply us with Egypt's flesh-pots. Heaven will not gratify pride, or make provision for our lusts. And if we remember the fruits of the land we have left, the grapes of Eschol will be scarcely worth the gathering.

But I must pass on, for in the further progress of these chapters we have the Mediator to contemplate in the midst of all this sad and solemn disclosure.

The Lord appears. The glory descends to the door of the tabernacle, and the camp is awed. For let man storm as he may, the divine presence is always too much for him. Adam retreated from it (Gen. iii. 8). Balaam bowed to it (Num. xxii., xxiii). The self-righteous accusers of the sinner had to go out before it (John viii. 9). And here Israel are awed into silence before it. Man can never brook it.

There was a cry of stoning Caleb and Joshua the moment before it appeared, but then all was as still as death; and the Lord and the mediator are left alone to transact the issue of this important moment.

The Lord is angry, and tells Moses what he means to do—that He will disinherit Israel, and make of him a still greater and mightier nation. This was just what it had been in the matter of the *golden calf* (Ex. xxxii). Had Moses changed—had he repented of his refusal of this offer—he might now again close in with it. He might still become great at Israel's expense. And Israel had done nothing since then to bind him afresh to them. They had withstood him, as well as Caleb, in this very matter. But was he changed? that was the question—or is he the same Moses still? Yes, the same Moses still, for love never fails. Moses does not hear, much less listen to, God's offers. He has heart for nothing but the misery and danger of Israel. And, exactly as before, he plies the Lord with strong argu-

ments why He should still go on with the people, and turn from His purpose.

And, more than this, he uses for Israel the advantages he had gained on the former occasion. He had then enjoyed a manifestation of the divine name, and now he pleads that manifestation on behalf of the present need of guilty Israel (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7; Numbers xiv. 18).

The argument which he takes in hand, and the style in which he conducts the suit, is perfect to admiration. It exhibits both the *boldness* and *love* of an advocate.

There was the love of such an one—for Moses, as I have before observed, having acquired a great advantage on a former occasion, now uses it for the people. He does not use a present opportunity for himself, but shows that he valued what he had gained only as far as he can employ it for his poor dependents. Was not this love? And thus it is with our Divine Advocate. He has, like Moses, acquired great advantages. He has won His way to the highest heavens. He is heard “always;” but he uses it for his friend Lazarus (John xi. 42). He uses the highest prerogatives of His present glory in behalf of poor believing sinners.

But, again, the advocate is bold also. He says, “Let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying the Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression,” &c. What does this mean? Does it not tell the Lord to be as good as His word—to let it now appear (for an occasion has arisen for proving this) that He meant what He said? What, pleading with God! Was not this boldness? Yes; and yet grateful, most grateful, to the Lord. It was the Lord who had given this Moses to Israel (Ex. iii). *Such a mediator was His own gift.*

And this boldness is but the expression of the way of our great Intercessor, of whom it is said, “Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” The boldness of Moses’ suit is the expression of Christ’s rights, and Christ’s way, while standing for us, His poor people. Christ, our Intercessor, has rights which cannot be gainsayed. He pleads, that is true—but he pleads as having right

and title. And accordingly, whenever the apostles teach us about his intercessory office, they always convey impressions of its *necessary efficaciousness* (Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25; 1 John ii. 1).

This is of great comfort to the soul. Moses valued his advantages only for Israel's sake, and then used them for Israel in a way that could not be denied.

And I may add that God delights to own Christ's right to prevail; for as He once gave Israel such a bold and successful advocate as Moses, so has He given believers an Advocate who has rights and title which He Himself has appointed. For Christ did not make Himself High Priest; nor would God have made Him such, had He not been such an one as could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way (Heb. v).

Precious mystery! But not only the love and boldness of the Advocate have we to listen to here, but to mark the perfect skill in which he orders his cause. In this feature of it nothing can surpass what falls from the lips of Moses. And, withal, so simple. *He makes this present matter more the cause of God Himself than of Israel.* Such a way is perfect as a piece of advocacy. He reminds the Lord how He had linked Himself with the people, and embarked all His glory in the cause of their safety—His strength, the cloud of His presence, and all His nearest and fullest intimacies; so that now to give them up was to give up the cause of His own glory.

And what could surpass this as a specimen of pleading? Was ever cause more ably defended, or a suit more skilfully conducted?

And this is the way that faith in us may argue. We may say, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh." No; "but nourisheth and cherisheth it." Yes; and that is the Lord and us; "for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. v). Our cause is Christ's. Yes, rather Christ's than ours.

And there is even more than this. The Advocate tells the Lord, not only that He has linked Himself with Israel, but done so *in the sight of the nations*. This is another argument in the mouth of this accomplished

Advocate. And we can take the value of this also. For so, in the sight of all worlds, the Lord has linked His great name with the salvation of sinners who trust in Him. Angels have been made to look at this great mystery (1 Tim. iii. 16 ; 1 Pet. i. 12), and devils have been made to feel the power of it (Col. ii. 15). To principalities and powers in heavenly places have been made known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. iii).

This is our blessed estate. God has linked Himself and His name with our history as redeemed sinners, and done so in the sight of all creation. Jesus and His disciples are in the boat on the rough sea together (Mark iv. 38—40), and it is *His* cause, rather than theirs, that they reach the shore in safety.

Thus we listen to Israel's Advocate. And what a specimen of pleading it is ! Whatever the Spirit touches, it is always to perfection. When He fills the mouth of an advocate, it is with arguments of surpassing skill.

But I close my meditation. I will not pursue the remaining subjects which the chapters might suggest. We have looked at the Advocate—*our* Advocate. And we will address Him in these words, well known among us :—

“ Great Advocate, Almighty Friend,
On Thee alone our hopes depend ;
Our cause can never, never fail,
For Jesus pleads, and must prevail.

In every dark, distressing hour,
When sin and Satan join their power,
Let this blest truth repel each dart,
That Thou dost bear us on Thy heart.”



EXTRACT FROM A LETTER
IN REPLY TO SOME QUESTIONS ON THE
LORD'S SUPPER.

I BELIEVE that the bread remains simply and absolutely bread, and the wine, wine—that, physically, there is no change whatever in the elements. To seek for material and physical things in such a precious institution of the Lord is, to my mind, a poor and miserable manner of regarding it. I have a charming portrait of my mother, which reminds me of her just as she was. If I am told of the canvas or the colouring, I should feel that those who spoke thus knew nothing about it. That would not be my mother. That which is precious in it to me is my mother herself; and they turn my attention from her to the means employed to recall her to me; and the reason is, that they have no idea of what my mother is to me. The portrait has no value except as far as it is a good representation of her who is not there. I say, it is my mother. I could not throw it aside as a mere piece of canvas; I discern my mother in it; I cherish this portrait; I carry it with me; but if I stop at the perfection of the painting as a work of art, the link with my heart is lost.

There is more than this in the Supper of our Lord, because the Lord is really present *with us* in it, by the Spirit, according to the intention of the institution; and this is very precious. But it has pleased Him to give us a physical means by which we may be reminded of Him, so that I am authorized to speak of a portrait by way of comparison. I have still further authority to repel the idea of any physical change in the bread and wine, in that the Lord has said, in the 6th of John, which you have quoted, “The Spirit quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.” The verses of this chapter, how-

ever, which speak of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, do not speak at all of the Lord's Supper, but of Christ : I am, I do not say *persuaded*, but *sure* of this. The Supper speaks of that of which the chapter speaks ; but the chapter does not speak of the Supper—the symbol—but of the thing symbolized. This is perfectly evident ; one has only to read the chapter to see it. If the application that has been made of it to the Supper be correct, then not one of those who have partaken of it would be lost, and he who had not partaken of it would be lost, whatever he might be ; and those who participate of it would not only be *blessed*, but they would be eternally saved (see verses 53, 54). Further, the Saviour says that it is of Himself, come down from heaven, that He speaks (not of the Supper)—of the same Person who will ascend up where He was before in heaven (verses 35—41, 48, 51, 58—62). The Supper presents Christ in only one of these conditions, but in that which is, so to speak, central : it presents us a dead Christ ; but this foundation of all, this precious truth, which could be a motive even for the Father Himself to love Christ—this fact that it is a dead Christ which is presented to us, is the proof that we could not have a living Christ presented to us in the elements. This would be to deny the state of death, and to destroy the object and intention of this institution. This institution presents to us the death of Christ—a dead Christ—His body broken and His blood shed ; but there *exists no dead Christ*. He desires that we should *remember* Him : “Do this in remembrance of me ;” but I do not speak of the remembrance of Christ living in heaven. I live by Him ; He is my life ; I enjoy communion with Him ; I dwell in Him ; He dwells in me : there is no separation. If, through my folly, communion is interrupted, it is no question of remembering Him, but of being with Him anew—with a Saviour who manifests Himself to us as He does not to the world. And see where these poor Roman Catholics (and I love them much) have been brought, by their material explanation of this precious institution. They wish it should be taken according to the letter (“the letter killeth”) ; so they take away, in the literal sense, the blood ; they do not drink the cup ; and this is very

important, because the fact that the blood is out of the body is the sign of death—of the efficacious work of Christ; we are reconciled, justified by the blood. In order to compensate for this loss, they teach that the body, soul, blood, and divinity of Jesus Christ is in the two kinds. Now, if the blood is *in* the body, there is no redemption; without their knowing it, their sacrament is a sacrament of the non-accomplishment of redemption. This is the effect of materializing this institution. There is no greater proof of the manner in which Satan sports with men, when they leave the Spirit for the flesh, than this fact, which is the centre of the Roman Catholic system. I affirm positively that their Eucharist is a sacrament, not of redemption, *but of non-redemption*. If you tell me that many among them think of the Saviour—of the efficacy of His *death*—I rejoice to believe it; but for this they must quit the materialism of their system for the thoughts of faith. They think, then, of a blood shed, and they drink it; they think of a Saviour dead, and a body broken, and they really eat His flesh. Satan has not, in this case—blessed be God!—been able to hide from their faith that which is denied in the form to which they attach so much value.

It is the same thing in the 6th of John as in the 3rd, where we are said to be born of water. If that is applied to baptism, then we are born of God by the water. It is the same system everywhere—a system which the enemy has introduced into the Church to destroy the necessity and the power of a real work in the heart, and to reduce Christianity to the level of Judaism—that is to say, to a religion of forms; adding to these forms a pre'ension, which is not found even in Judaism, to confer on man that which Christianity alone gives him. Baptism procures for us that of which John iii. speaks, when, as it is said, “we are cleansed by the Word” (Eph. v. 26). “The washing of water by the Word,” which reveals the Word living, dead, and raised again for us.

Now, do we by this diminish the importance or the sweetness of this institution? Quite the contrary; we hinder the materializing it, and we insist that the

spiritual realization of that which it represents be in the heart, instead of that which is called an *opus operatum*, that which is purely material. We are united to a Christ glorified; this is the point of departure; there is no longer a dead Christ; death has no more dominion over Him. I enjoy communion with a glorified Christ; I am one with Him; I shall be like Him. I rejoice; my heart is full of love at the thought of seeing Him, at the hope of the glory of waking up in His likeness. Shall I, therefore, forget His death and His sufferings? God forbid! It is precisely this which unites us to Christ by the most tender affections. There where He had to suffer and to do everything, He was alone; my heart, at least, will be with Him. He does not ask me to be one with Him there; I could not have been. There He was willing to be alone—blessed be His name!—and He has accomplished all. But the heart which would give itself for me there, is the same which thinks of me now, and which loves me. In remembering His death, His love, His suffering, what shall I say?—divine though human! I am united in heart with Him there, where He is—on high; it is not another person, another love. Whether in the Supper, where we remember Him in such a peculiar and touching way, or whether at other moments, when I think of His death, when I eat Him as dying for me, I am in communion with Him living, and I realize the love of Him who lives—that same love, that same heart of the Saviour: I dwell in Him, and He in me. It is not said exactly, “Do this in remembrance” of my death, but “of me.” Still we remember Him on the earth, in His incarnation, and in His life of humiliation, and finally and specially as dead on the cross. I remember *Him*!—not Him in the heavens, but Him who lives in heaven as once humbled and dead for me; there is also a certain action of the heart,—we eat. In John v., the Son of God quickens whom He will: here we eat the bread come down from heaven; we eat His body, and we drink His blood. It is most important to understand that it is a dead Christ, who in this state exists no longer, because we cannot have any relation with a Christ living on the earth. If even as Jews we had had this relation, we should have

been obliged to say with Paul, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Death has put an end to all the relations of Christ with the world, according to the flesh, and He lives now as Head of a new race—the second man. Thus then, in John vi. 53, the Lord lays down, as a necessary condition of life, the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood—receiving Him in His death. Hence we remember Him before His resurrection; we are united to Him, as living, after His resurrection; as He has said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it *abideth alone*; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Thus our union is with a Christ glorified; we do not know Him otherwise: but the most powerful spring of affection for the heart is a Christ—man in the world, and a Christ dead. I am nourished by this; I eat it, and I live by this; but if we wish to bring back, so to speak, a Christ such as He has been in this world, as present, we overthrow all the intention of this institution, and even Christianity itself. Every time that we eat this bread and drink this cup we show the Lord's death till He come; but if we will introduce a living Christ to animate this dead one, so to speak, we destroy Him. Why then is it said, "They discern not the Lord's body"? What body? His dead body. A perfect love, His accomplished work, an obedience which was arrested by no difficulty, presents itself to our eyes! Is there anything else there but a dead body? If so, I know not where I am, nor what the Supper means. Do not animate it with the life that Christ had before death! His obedience was not yet finished, nor His work accomplished, nor His love perfectly demonstrated! Do not animate it with the life of a Christ now risen! You take Him from me as dead; death is no more there—death which is the basis of salvation, the proof of obedience, the glorification of God. Take not from me this death, this body *broken*, this blood for ever shed, which tells me that all is accomplished, and—through the love of my Saviour—that sin is put away for ever. If you can lead me to grasp yet more firmly what is precious in this dead Saviour, in the death of Him who is the eternal Son of God; if you can

make me eat Him with more faith, more spirituality, more divine intelligence, more heart; ah! I shall be very grateful to you; but let it be my dead Saviour that is left to me! When one is in communion with Him living, there is nothing so precious as His death; yes, precious even to God. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again." For my spiritual intelligence it is the end, or rather the proof and the consciousness, that I have done with the first Adam; that the first creation no longer exists—blessed be God!—for faith; for the heart it is the tender and perfect love of the Saviour. I am no more either Jew or Gentile, or a man living on the earth; I am a Christian. The death of Christ, Head of all, has put an end to the first creation. He has introduced us into the new creation as first-fruits united to Him.

I discern then the body of the Lord, but the body of the Lord *broken*—His blood shed—His death! It is not an ordinary repast, a simple remembrance, if you will, but an institution that Christ has given to His own; not that they may find in the elements anything else than the bread and the fruit of the vine, but that their faith may, in the sweetest way, by the power of the Holy Spirit, nourish itself by Jesus, by that which He has been for them when He died upon the cross—a work of which the efficacy remains eternally, even to the Father's eye, but of which the love is all for us. If I treat this memorial with lightness, I am guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, for it is that body and blood which are presented to me in it.

I doubt if there is any one in the world who enjoys the Lord's Supper more than I do (though I doubt not that there is with many more piety); but that which makes me enjoy it is that it presents to me the body and blood of my Saviour dead, and consequently a perfect love and a perfect work. But He cannot be in His dead body which I discern there by faith. He is in me, that I may enjoy Him; if He is introduced living, that which I ought to discern no longer exists. All this is in connexion with the fact of the entirely new position of the living Christ—a doctrine which Paul presents to us with such divine energy, and which the

enemy has always sought to hide, even under the forms of piety, and for the preservation of which Paul has so struggled. What anguish he suffered from the efforts of the enemy to draw souls back to Judaism, as if they were still living in the world! "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

May God give us to discern yet more the body of Jesus,—to eat His flesh and to realize His death more! Yes! this death is precious. It meets us in our need just as we are, and it delivers us from it by introducing us there, where He is, in the power of a new life, which by His death knows not the old.

I have written you at much length. I could willingly enlarge on this subject, for instead of thinking lightly of the Supper of the Lord, it is of all institutions the most precious to me; only to be so it must be a dead Saviour that is presented to me in it. I am living with Him now in heaven.

There is another aspect—the unity of the body—which I have not touched on, though it be a precious side of the truth of this institution of the Lord; but it is outside your question. I hope you may, at least, apprehend the ground of my thought, though I write in great haste.—From the French of "Le Messager Evangelique," July, 1862.

UNN

"THY NAME IS AS OINTMENT POURED FORTH."

Jesus! the very thought of thee
With sweetness fills the breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see,
And in thy presence rest.

No voice can sing, no heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find,
A sweeter sound than Jesu's name,
The Saviour of mankind.

O hope of every contrite heart!
O joy of all the meek!
To those who ask, how kind thou art!
How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? O, this
No tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but his loved ones know.

1 JOHN II.

ALL additional clearing up of Scripture must tend to the affording more effectual witness to the Church ; and it will not, I am persuaded, be beside the object of this collection to allude to anything which may bring the force of the Word into light, though it may not be of great depth, or of any special importance as to learning. With this purpose, I would notice the second chapter of the first epistle of John. The term "Little children" is the English rendering both for *τεκνια* and *παιδια*, and this much obscures the division and the application of the Apostle's instruction, the beauty of which appears to me to be exceedingly great. The 12th verse is addressed to the whole of those to whom the Apostle is writing, as in the 1st verse of the chapter, and also again in the 28th—both of which are addressed to all to whom he is writing. It was common to them all to have their sins forgiven, as it was to be warned to abide in Him. Then, in the 13th verse, begins the distinctive address, "I write unto you fathers, young men, little children," *παιδια*. In the 14th, again, "I have written unto you fathers, young men." He then follows out in instruction exactly what young men are liable to, in the strong hope of the vigour of their natural energy, in the which they were the rather to do the will of God, and that did not fade, as the lusts of the world, but abode for ever ; and then he turns to little children, *παιδια*, which, as with the utmost parental anxiety, he warns of their liability to be seduced by deception ; and while with the utmost consideration and holy honour done to Him whom they loved, he gives them credit for all that the communion of the Spirit could afford them ; yet he presents many things before them on which that intelligence could exercise itself. Nothing can be more beautiful than the perfect care with which he parentally provides for their security, strengthening them with reference to Him in

whom their strength was, and exquisitely avoiding what might turn them from the use of His care—the suggestion that they could not do without it. He could not, indeed, intimate this without assuming what no man could assume, because of the common in-dwelling of the Spirit in the saints—the same Spirit which dwelt in him. Yet in what wisdom does he bring forth the greater and more deep apprehensions which the Spirit afforded him, that the same Spirit, leading them, might receive these, and inform their souls by them. As it is, indeed, most exquisitely beautiful in its fitness of address, coming immediately from the Spirit of God, so is it also most instructive to us of the manner of profit in the operation of the Holy Ghost amongst us at any time.

The second series, then, is *fathers*, to the middle of verse 14; *young men*, to the end of verse 17; and *little children*, to the end of verse 27; and then the Apostle resumes the general thread of his discourse. I have merely thrown this out, but the detail of instruction will, I think, there be found to be appropriated with the most exquisite perfection, and to open out the mind and relationship, whether of old or young men, or little children in Christ, in a way which gives us the advantage of all. May His saints abound in the Spirit, which will give them the simplicity of children and the energy of young men, with that acquaintance with Him that is from the beginning—the full purpose of God in Christ, and humble us all in the sense of our weakness. I would only remark, in addition, that the full fact of having the forgiveness of sins is no attainment after previous probation, but the common portion of all the *τεκνία*; and that *παιδία*, babes in Christ, are owned as having this blessing, even the knowledge of the Father, which is the full spirit of personal liberty and joy, though not that full assurance of understanding which in the knowledge of *τόν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* could baffle the snares and wiles of Satan, the spirit of Antichrist. The Lord give us to know much of His glory, and keep His Church continually looking to it, for His name's sake.—Amen.

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THE CROSS.

I LOOK around. What can I see? Heathenism, men worshipping stocks and stones; Christendom that would often disgrace a heathen; yet goodness and wisdom evidenced in the midst of it all. What can I think? All is confusion. The goodness and wisdom I see lead me in spite of me to God, and the thoughts of God confound me when I see all the evil; philosophy, poor philosophy, would justify the evil to justify God. But when I see Christ, the riddle is gone. I see perfect good in the midst of the evil, occupied with it and then suffering under it. My heart rests. I find one object that satisfies all its wants—rises above all its cravings. I have what is good in goodness itself. I see what is above evil, which was pressing on me. My heart has got rest in good, and a good which is such in the midst of and above evil, and that is what I want; and I have got relief, because I have found in that one what is power over it. But I go a little further and I get a great deal more. I follow this blessed one from whom all have received good, and who has wrought it with unwearied patience, and I hear the shouts of a giddy multitude, and I trace the dark plans of jealous enemies, men who cannot bear good; I see high judges who cannot occupy themselves with what is despised in the world, and would quiet malice by letting it have its way, and goodness the victim of it. But a little thought leads me to see in a nearer view what man is: hatred against God and good. Oh, what a display! The truest friend denies, the nearest betrays, the weaker ones who are honest flee. Priests set to have compassion on ignorant failure, plead furiously against innocence. The judge washing his hands of condemned innocence. Goodness absolutely alone, and the world, all men, enmity, universal enmity, against it. Perfect

light has brought out the darkness. Perfect love, jealous hatred. Self would have its way and not have God, and the cross closes the scene as far as man is concerned. The carnal mind is enmity against God. But oh! here is what I want. Oh! where can I turn from myself? Can I set up to be better than my neighbours? No, it is myself. The sight of a rejected Christ has discovered myself to myself, the deepest recesses of my heart are laid bare, and self, horrible self, is there. But not on the cross. There is none. And the infinite love of God rises and shines in its own perfection above it all. I can adore God in love, if I abhor myself. Man is met, risen above, set aside in his evil, absolute as it is in itself when searched out. The revelation of God in Christ has proved it in all its extent on the cross. That was hatred against love in God; but it was perfect love to those that were hating it, and love when and where they were such. It was the perfect hatred of man, and the perfect love of God doing for him that hated him, what put away the hatred and blotted out the sin that expressed it. *There is nothing like the cross.* It is the meeting of the perfect sin of man with the perfect love of God. Sin risen up to its highest point of evil, and gone, put away, and lost in its own worst act. God is above man even in the height of his sin; not in allowing it, but in putting it away by Christ dying for it in love. The soldier's insulting spear, the witness, if not the instrument of death, was answered by the blood and water which expiated and purified from the blow which brought it out. Sin was known, and to have a true heart it must be known, and God was known, known in light, and the upright heart wants that, but known in perfect love, before which we had no need to hide or screen the sin. No sin allowed, but no sin left on the conscience. All our intercourse with God founded on this—grace reigning through righteousness. — *Dialogues on the Essays and Reviews, by J. N. D.*

PRESENT PROSPECTS.

THE knowledge of the mind of God is the Christian's only security both for determining his true position in the world, and his being preserved in it steadfast and immoveable. Where this is not ascertained, all must be doubt and perplexity, and his path must be uncertain. This consideration has an especial application to the present state and prospects of the people of God. Many may say, indeed, as to any inquiry beyond present things, What is truth? But the Scripture sets before us the clear and definite counsels of Him who changeth not; marks out the distinct character of every principle, whether good or evil, in His view; traces their respective advances, and exhibits the great general results, to which they are severally progressing. And these things the Church is directed to observe.—“We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, *until the day dawn.*” And the same Apostle, after portraying the characters of evil in the last days, specifies *this* as the safeguard of the saints, “*That they know these things before*” (2 Pet. i, 19; iii, 17).

All our light then is darkness, unless our apprehension of the circumstances in which we are standing accord with the revealed truth of God concerning them. To take a practical example.—One principal anxiety of the believer (I mean of one who is accepted in the Beloved), with regard to himself, is that his service be wisely given to the Lord. But it seems evident, that unless the pur-

poses of God for this dispensation be gathered by him from the written word, his labours must often be misdirected, and possibly, as to their results, given more to the house of the stranger (Prov. v, 10) than to God's: for instead of ministering according to his ability in God's husbandry, his powers may be diverted into channels whence no enduring fruit is returned to the Lord's glory, and where His Spirit would never have led him; and to all that is not done in that Spirit the word of Jesus applies, "He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Unless the unchanging distinction between the Church and the world, up to "the time of the end" be seen, the expectation of a gradual diffusion of Christianity must constantly operate to the consuming of our services upon that which will absorb in itself all the energy and power of the labourer, and still remain the WORLD.* But the subject assumes an import even still more weighty, when considered with regard to the consummation declared in that portion of the revelation of God's will which embraces the present age. For it must inevitably make a wide practical difference in the Christian's position in the world, whether he considers it as going on to blessedness, or on the contrary to judgment; since on this must, to a great extent, depend the actual character in which it appears to his eyes, and consequently, his own conduct and views with regard to it. The views of surrounding things, taken by two believers, one of whom considers them to be thus far in their progress to perfection, while the other sees that sentence upon them is delayed, only because "the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation" (2 Pet. iii), must be as different as light from darkness. Nor is it too much to say that the character of their testimony will equally vary; and if the mind is resting upon the hope of a progressive enlightening of the world, while it may be that fearful darkness is fast closing

* Of course I do not here speak of preaching the Gospel, or of otherwise meeting the world in testimony, the only way in which a Christian can meet it.

in, all our wisdom will be folly. Most of the Lord's people indeed, in common with others, feel that the aspect of the times is sufficiently awful; yet, perhaps, the greater number are inclined to consider it as temporary, with the hope that it will subside. Let us then briefly try present things by the test of Scripture, for to this will be our safest appeal. If we judge by *sight* of anything, we shall assuredly err; and therefore it is only by taking the word as our criterion, though appearances may seem ever so contradictory, that our judgment can be true.

First, then, how does Scripture uniformly describe the character of the Church throughout the dispensation? And here we at once meet with the incontrovertible fact, that the whole tenor of the commands and exhortations throughout the Gospels and Epistles to the people of God, are from their very nature applicable only to a comparatively small number, in the midst of a world lying in wickedness. The irreversible principle of the dispensation is, that "MANY are called, FEW are chosen:" and with this correspond all the practical addresses of the Lord and His Apostles. It is therefore in absolute contrast to a dispensation in which it is said, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord." The two can never become identical, for, on the supposition that this dispensation should grow into one of universal truth, the whole character of the Apostolic Epistles would gradually become inappropriate to the circumstances of the Church.—The characters to whom they are addressed are thus described: "The sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. ii, 15). "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (1 John iii). "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ" (1 John v, 19). "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Pet. iii, 9). But more

especially is the nature of this dispensation as regards His followers described by the Lord: they are said to be "*the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the persecuted for righteousness' sake; they are the salt of the earth, the light of the world.*" The present is a dispensation of witness, and of witness only (Matt. xxiv, 14): and as such, essentially incongruous with one of universality. The insignia of God's people *throughout*, are *the cross* and *the reproach of Christ*. In truth, the position of the Church in the world, if it were faithful, never could be any other; and in the present earthly glory of the professing Church, the light of Scripture exhibits only the deceit of Satan and apostasy.

The character of the world also is no less clearly and decisively given, as being ever in invariable opposition and enmity to God and to His Christ; and so characterised, not in a vague and generalising way, but as a definite mass, in which the "*Prince of the power of the air* rules, even *the god of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*" Any supposed amelioration of the world, as such, is only Satan's lie to bring the children of God into contact with it in some way or other, by inducing the supposition that the principles of God are working in it, to unite by degrees all in the truth. Yet is the Church's state spoken of as being ever a suffering one till her Lord return; and He has spoken of no time of blessedness to her, or to the groaning creation, until then. "She that is a widow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." But the sure word of prophecy does not fail us here. The last days are shown to terminate in the deepest shades of moral evil; and they have been written for the Church's warning, if her eyes were but open to read them. "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers

of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, **HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS**, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. iii). "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. iii). "Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that *Antichrist shall come*, even now there are many Antichrists" (1 John ii, 18). The whole of Jude is also an awakening testimony to the same effect. But above all, in the last book of prophecy, is the dispensation presented in its true aspect, both in progress and consummation. And here, whatever difference there may be as to details of interpretation, the *principles* exhibited in it are at least distinctly stated. Not a word is contained in it of progressive advance in the world, not one of the gradual spread of Christianity, but darkness, fearful darkness, is brought out in direct, unvarying opposition to the Light of Life; for the conclusion is, that *the earth* and the *whole world* are gathered together in collective array against the Lamb (xvi). We see presented in it (and this excluding all theories of interpretation) the principles upon which the world is acting, and how they end: and God's principles, their full and marked separation from the world, and their result; the separation of the powers of holiness and sin. The obvious practical application to all, even to the poor and unlearned, for "blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, *and keep those things which are written therein*," is in the observing the characters of evil which are described in this book, in order to avoid being in any way mingled with them, and the final judgment in which they are indiscriminately involved. The principles on which the world proceeds must clearly end, not in peace, but in judgment. And whatever may be predicted from present appearances of the moral elevation of the world, all things that the children of this generation esteem—the riches, the luxury, the magnificence, the pride

of man, come only to this—"Alas! alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come!" Let our hearts weigh this well, if we are looking for anything better from the strength and power of man, or are connected with that which gives place and distinction in the world. "The Lord alone will be exalted in that day."

But is there nothing *now* corresponding to these dark features? I say nothing as to the time when the full consummation of these things shall take place, though we may believe them not to be afar off: but is not the mystery of iniquity now working, and are not all the principles already in operation, which, as soon as the restraining hand of God upon evil is removed, will burst forth into the full manifestation of the power of darkness? Let us watch the present movement over the whole of Europe, and we shall see that it is not a superficial modification of things which is now in progress, but an impulse arising from the very central springs of this world's action: the mind of the age is working definitely and steadily to one object, which, to the infidel and philosophising Christian, may seem the commencement of the renovation of society, but it cannot but be seen, by one who looks below the surface, that the very foundations of the established constitution of things are breaking up under an irresistible influence, which may produce the explosion at any hour; and that the apparent approximation to unity is but the selfish principle of man's nature, gathering together all which ministers to his senses or his intellect, for himself and against God,—in a word, the unity of Antichrist. For a season, indeed, there may be an appearance of calmness on the face of things; but this we are prepared to expect, for deceivableness is the special character of the last days; and therefore the Spirit of God is more than ever needed to detect the falsehood which surrounding circumstances ever convey to the eye of sense, and to enable the Christian to judge of them as they are in the estimate of God. The natural man, judging according to sense, must

necessarily err in all his conclusions, for they are drawn from external appearances. Reason may be correct enough in its deductions from *natural* facts; but reason does not recognise the *one great fact*, that SIN IS IN THE WORLD; and therefore all its conclusions are astray, because they are not based upon that which alone enables the spiritual man to account for all the apparent strangeness and contrariety of existing things. Man has not a thought in communion with God, except through His Spirit, which dwells in those who believe and know the truth: and it is marvellous, seeing that the Fall brought utter disunion from God, and that fallen nature, under every colouring that may be superinduced by the pride of civilised man, is still nature separated from God and acting for itself, that the supposition should be entertained by any of our Christian brethren, of a state of universal peace and righteousness being established through the causes which are at present in operation. There is, and can be, no foundation for the reign of holiness (setting aside all that prophecy teaches as to the introduction of this period) in a state of things built up by man, arising out of the necessity of his case; for the whole result of the energy and power of the world is based upon a system of necessity, and that necessity springs from its alienation from God. Nay, such a reign as is looked for would be nothing but the dominion of Satan, using for his own purposes the folly and self-will of men, and bringing them into confederated union with every outward display of human glory, against the glory and truth of the King of kings and Lord of lords; and if this day be expected, it may not be far distant. The evident tendency of all the principles now at work in the world, is to bring men into organised association, upon the ground of their common wants and pleasures; and the result, hastened as it will be by the resources afforded by modern invention and facility of intercommunication, will be the acting upon a grander and more daring scale the scene of gathering together against God, which has been prefigured

at Babel ; for now “ nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do ; ”—to be succeeded, indeed, by an out-pouring of judgment, to which the scattering of the nations, the destruction of the whole world, and the fires of Sodom, have been merely faint shadowings. “ As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man ; they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also, as it was in the days of Lot : they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded ; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed ” (Luke xviii, 26).

It may be well imagined, if these things are so, and the present dispensation ends in apostasy and consequent excision, that the whole policy of Satan will be used to divert the minds of believers from the consideration of them ; and thus in truth it is : and we may observe his power exercised, both in leading some into unholy and unscriptural speculations, and also in using these as instruments for bringing the study of the simple truth itself into discredit in the estimation of others. Either way his end is gained (2 Pet. iii, 17, 18).

In the present crisis, as ever, there is but one position for the Church to occupy, and this in separation from “ all that is in the world,” and in keeping the “ testimony of Jesus ; ” a position of which the strength is in knowing that *in it* God is *on our side*, and *against all sin*. It is a day in which it well behoves believers to look to themselves, that, on the one hand, they may be found walking in the Spirit, and, on the other, that they may not be connected with any form of evil, however accredited. “ Judgment must begin at the house of God ; ” and since nothing of human might or device will stand in that day, it is of the deepest importance, if we look for it, to stand clear of all that will be swept

away at His appearing. May the Lord enable us to abide in Him, and to walk in that simplicity which alone is wisdom, and which will remove every difficulty from our path.

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing that ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (2 Pet. iii, 17, 18).

O WHAT a bright and blessed world
This groaning earth of ours will be,
When from its throne the tempter hurl'd,
Shall leave it all, O Lord, to thee!

But brighter far that world above,
Where we, as we are known shall know;
And, in the sweet embrace of love,
Reign o'er this ransom'd earth below.

O blessed Lord! with weeping eyes,
That blissful hour we wait to see;
While every worm or leaf that dies
Tells of the curse and calls for thee.

Come, Saviour, then, o'er all below
Shine brightly from thy throne above;
Bid heaven and earth thy glory know,
And all creation feel thy love.

THE VISION OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

IN the trust that the Lord will, for His own name's sake, give me much reverence of spirit while treading upon such holy ground, I would give forth to the Church what I believe to be a true, though feeble and imperfect, interpretation of the awful yet beautiful vision described by the prophet Ezekiel (chapters i & x), and its connection with every other revelation of visible glory recorded in Scripture. It is not, however, with the desire of producing a skilful interpretation, by which the mind might be amused or interested, that I do so, but because it is clear to me that it involves most important principles both of judgment and conduct; and, if rightly understood, would enable many a saint to detect error and darkness in his path, and to turn from that which is set aside, by the verdict of God, for dishonour and death, "to see this great sight,"—so often partially, but so soon to be completely and perfectly revealed, as it is written, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Is. xl, 5).

The renewed, and, therefore, emboldened spirit of the saint is called into present intimacy with this glory; not only the moral glory made known to us in the face of the Lord Jesus, but the grandeur, holiness, and majesty soon to be revealed to sight; for "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii, 10—12); and it is, indeed, one of the special acts of "the Comforter" "to take of the things of Christ" (the things con-

cerning His glory, for He saith, "All things that the Father hath are mine"), "and shew them unto us,—to shew us things to come" (John xvi, 13-15).

All serious thought of God's glory is painful to the flesh; for "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all;" whereas the flesh is but darkness, and in it is no light at all; and light and darkness cannot meet in fellowship. "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty," is His name and character; whereas we "are carnal and sold under sin." Might, power, and majesty belong unto God; but "all flesh is grass, and the glory of it as the flower of the field;" for the sun of God's glory is "no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth" (James i, 11). The new creature in Christ Jesus can alone have fellowship with it,—the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus can alone enable us to gaze on it with an undimmed eye, and with a happy and fearless heart.

Thus the glory of the Lord was made known to Daniel (Dan. x): "His body was like beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude;" and the effect on him is thus described by himself: "There remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." The hand of the Lord then touches him, and he is set first upon his knees, and then upright; but still "he stood trembling, and set his face toward the ground and stood dumb;" but when the voice of the Lord was heard in grace, saying, "O man! greatly beloved, fear not, be strong; peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong," the ready answer is, "Let my Lord speak, for thou hast strengthened me."

In the vision of similar glory given to Isaiah (Isa. vi) we see the same results: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple; above it stood the Seraphims:

each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory;" then he said, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!" But when the living coal from the altar had touched his lips with the blessed word, "Thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged;" he was prompt to answer the Lord's call of "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" by "Here am I, send me."

At mount Tabor, when the glory of the kingdom was revealed in the person of its King, who was transfigured before His disciples, and that "visage which was marred more than that of any man," did shine as the sun, and His raiment became white as the light, and the majesty of the voice of God was heard, "they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid;" and in after days, when the glory of the same Lord was revealed yet more distinctly to one of those very disciples, "he fell at his feet as dead" (Rev. i, 13—18). But, as at Tabor, Jesus had touched them, and said, "Arise, be not afraid;" so also at Patmos, He laid His right hand on John, saying, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death:" and thus strengthened, he could give heed to the voice "as the sound of many waters," in collectedness and joy of spirit, and bear away the messages of love and warning to the Churches: and yet more, when the voice of the trumpet called him up to heaven, "*immediately he was in the Spirit,*" and so could stand beside the dazzling throne before which the elders bowed, either to weep or to rejoice, in fellowship of heart with all that was revealed there. He was in the Spirit, and that glory is the Spirit's home.

In the vision before us (Ezek. i) this is repeated.

"This," says the prophet, "was the appearance of the likeness of the Lord, and when I saw it I fell upon my face;" but the voice that spoke to him said, "Stand upon thy feet, and I will speak to thee, and the *Spirit entered into me* when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet."

The knowledge of God's glory, then, is answered thus by man. All he may have boasted in as comeliness in the flesh is turned to corruption; he learns by it his own weakness, poverty, and uncleanness; he is cast into the dust, and can only say with a trembling heart, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee, *wherefore I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xlii, 6). But herein may we rejoice, that grace can then come with its message of joy "to fill the hungry and empty with good things," to set us upon our feet, that we may have fellowship with the glory which has humbled us.

The visions made to Isaiah and Ezekiel, which cast them to the dust as men, and taught them to know in power the solemn truth, "All flesh is as grass," became graven within them; and out of their trembling yet strengthened hearts came forth those mighty utterances of everlasting truth which were the bringing in of all they had seen to bear in destruction upon the pride of Israel and the nations, and the declaration of the triumphs of the grace they had known; "For as truly as I live, saith the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Numbers xiv, 21).

Daniel was strengthened to tell the burthen of sorrow and then of joy which remained to his own people; and John (the Church's Daniel) was the messenger of all that eventful tale of woe, and yet of surpassing triumph, which was to be the history of the Bride of the Lamb, from the day of His absence till they are crowned together "in the day of his espousals, and the day of the gladness of his heart."

If, therefore, the flesh has still vigour for its own pursuits, if the world has still power to charm us,

defiled as it is, is it not because we have not yet seen, or that we abide not in the glory of God's presence? When the prophets saw these wonders, surely they needed nothing else, except as they could use in service to the glory they had seen. When John had seen the throne and Him that sat on it, and had heard the harpers and the new song of the Lamb's exaltation, what was earth to him? Surely nothing, save as the place of his tribulation and patience; and this is the privilege of every saint, to know that glory in spirit, and by judging all present things in the light of its permanent and surpassing excellence, to be enabled "to count them but dung;" so that not only flesh should lose its comeliness in our eyes, however naturally attractive, but all that is adapted to it, "the lust of the eye and the pride of life"—all that the "god of this world" has to give, to keep the heart away from God, should be turned into corruption before us; for this is the sure portion of it all; all, all that is of man, when the glory of the throne of the Lamb breaks in upon this sinful world, when its utmost beauty, "the grace of the fashion of it," will wither and fade before the burning radiance of the light of God's glory in the face of His Son,—then shining as the sun in its strength.

In the unfeigned hope that many will enter into the truth of these prefatory remarks, by having communion with the revelations themselves, through the Spirit, I would go on to the explanation of that in Ezekiel, *as the representation of the presence of God in administrative government on earth*, and therefore never revealed, indeed never existing, till a fit place had been raised for His presence among His own separated people.

Jehovah had called Abraham to Himself, and watched over him with tender care; He was equally the God of Isaac and Jacob, and His eye was never removed from their circumcised children; but until His arm was raised in power for their rescue out of Egypt, He had never been openly declared to the heathen as their Guardian. As far as the world

could discern it, there was no evidence of God's *direct* interference with anything on earth till then, except in judgment. It was true that the cry of Israel in their bondage had risen up unto Him, and He had not ceased to remember His covenant with their fathers; and "He looked upon them, and had respect unto them:" but the world cared not for that; it knows God only in His acts; and until they were seen in judgments upon Egypt, neither His love for Israel nor His faithfulness to His promises were known or regarded. Israel's deliverance was, however, to make God known; and so "That ye may know that I am the Lord," was the message to Pharaoh: and further, they were delivered into a condition, in which, as separate to Him, God might exhibit Himself, through them, to the world; and so they were led forth by the glory of the Lord into liberty in the wilderness, that the glory might eventually dwell among them in the nearest fellowship. The cloud and fire went before them to the mount of God in the wilderness; and there Jehovah came near unto them, and spoke unto them, but they could not then bear Him so near unto them; and they said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die,"—for they were dismayed by the glory of His presence. But God answered their weakness in mercy; "and the law was ordained in the hands of a Mediator" (Gal. iii, 19). The sacrifices were also immediately appointed, as typically foreshadowing the love of God in setting apart a sinless substitute for man's sin, and the holiness of God finding no answer in man, but in His death. The tabernacle erected for God's dwelling place, was sanctified for Him also by the sprinkling of blood; and then it is said, "There will I meet you to speak there unto thee; and there will I meet the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory, and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and be their God" (Exod. xxix, 42—45). The gradual approach of man to his God to be blessed, and God to man to make him a blessing, may be

distinctly traced in what follows, in accordance with this declared intention of the Lord.

The presence or visible glory of Jehovah was either accompanied or surrounded by a cloud; and this cloud was the sure token of His presence, enfolded, as it were, within it, or very near to it. It was first made visible to Israel as guiding them on to the Red Sea, and through it (Exod. xiii, 20—22; xiv, 19, 20, 24),—as their rereward also in their danger, and out of which it is declared the Lord looked when He troubled the host of the Egyptians. The glory itself is noted as first made visible to them when the manna was given (Exod. xvi, 10); yet still *afar off*, though hovering round them, and leading them on; but it was not until the event before stated had taken place, where the cloud rests on the mountain, and the people are led to the foot of it, that they learn what man is slow to learn, that “our God is a consuming fire,” and that all flesh must be destroyed by His presence; the scene described there is man’s humiliation before the holiness of God, as I have before briefly shewn in the history of the prophets, and man’s only answer to that holiness in God’s own gift of love, the blood of the holy victim (Exod. xxiv, 6—8; Heb. ix, 18, 19); and then, as sanctified by that blood, boldness of access to the glory which had but just caused them “exceedingly to fear and quake.” Before the shedding of the blood sprinkled upon the altar and the people, none dare touch the mountain (Heb. xii, 20, 21); but after this “went up Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the Elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel, and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in clearness;” and as the evidence of their boldness in His presence, it is said, “And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand, also *they saw God, and did eat and drink.*” And into yet nearer access was the typical mediator called; for he was folded up in the cloud with the glory of the Lord as it abode upon Mount Sinai, which the

cloud covered six days, “and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the children of Israel.” It was this glory, thus for the first time described to us, that afterwards came yet nearer to all the people dwelling in the midst of the camp of Israel; at times visible to all Israel, but always, until grieved away by their sin, dwelling between the cherubim in the most holy place in the golden Tabernacle, to be consulted by the anointed high priest as the channel of God’s wisdom and love to Israel. The cloud was always visible to all Israel, as hovering over the camp by day and by night in the wilderness, as the sign of God’s presence within the tabernacle; but when the glory was grieved away, as though it were the chariot of the Lord, it enfolded the glory and hid it, and rolled away at the bidding of Him who was within it. Its first entrance into the camp of Israel, as its dwelling-place, is recorded in *Exod. xl, 33—35*; after the golden mercy-seat, or propitiatory, is set up, the priests cleansed and anointed, “according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, and so Moses had finished the work.” The cloud then covers the tent of the congregation:—“And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation.” And then again, after the cleansing of the people (*Lev. ix, 23, 24*), when “the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people, and there came a fire from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat, which, when all the people saw, they shouted and fell upon their faces.”

In this consisted the strength and value of Israel, that they were thus made, as a people, a vessel unto honour, sanctified to contain the treasure of God’s glory; their high and holy prerogative was the fulfilment of the promise;—“I will dwell among you, and walk among you; and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.” And it was in the understanding of this, that Moses pleaded so earnestly—“If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up

hence ; for wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight ? is it not that thou goest with us ? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth" (Exod. xxxiii). When Abraham was called out to receive the promises of God, it was said to him by the Lord, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great;" but to this was added, "and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blest;" this has clearly never been fulfilled in Abraham personally, nor indeed in his seed, whether natural or spiritual ; but surely it will be (for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance) when they are able to sustain the glory of God's abiding presence, that He may act through them in blessing to others ; to this was Israel called in the manner I have shewn ; they were chosen out of the nations, and set on high, not only to be blessed by their own happiness in the favour of God, but to carry about with them in the wilderness the golden tabernacle, and its holy and gracious inhabitant ; and afterwards in the land of their rest, to have His presence ever with them in the "exceeding magnificent temple," and so to exhibit the blessing of His presence to the world, that all nations might turn to Him from their gods of wood and stone, as it is written, "My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations;" and in this they failed, for they sinned, and the glory departed, and the vessel was broken. To the same place, though in a far higher sense, is the mysterious and spiritual Israel called (1 Cor. iii, 16, 17 ; 2 Cor. vi, 16). And the day is not far distant, when it will be seen to be true in both, in the triumph of God's grace and power, for "the Scripture cannot be broken."

After the Lord had thus taken His place in the midst of His people Israel, His name and character were of course developed according to the circumstances that called them forth. In their journeying through the wilderness, He was known as their Guide and Shepherd, though oftentimes smiting them in righteousness, and turning away from them

in sorrow. All the glory afterwards unfolded, and yet to be more fully so, was doubtless always in the cloud which declared His presence, for "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."—"The I AM,"—"The Lord God Almighty, which is, which was, and which is to come." But every event in Israel's history brought forth in broader and more distinct features, His attributes and His purposes. Thus in tracing Israel's perplexing history of that day, we see Him as their Shepherd opening heaven for their food, when earth was barren, and bearing them on eagles' wings in His love; yet we shall see, too, how often He hid His face from them in wrath, and how constantly He was thrown upon the remembrance of His own covenant; though for the fathers' sakes He never left them, but always went before them. The glory, however, soon departed from the tabernacle to the cloud: and in every instance, I believe, where He exercises wrath against them, the glory is seen coming, not from the tabernacle, but the cloud, as though He had been previously grieved, and driven from the place He desired to dwell in, by their sin; and only continued with them in long-suffering till He was provoked by their rebellion to vindicate His holy name, as still present with them, by chastisement and judgment. "But he, being full of compassion, destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath; he remembered that they were but dust, a wind that passeth away and cometh not again" (Ps. lxxviii, 38, 39).

When coming into the land, the glory of the Lord takes the part, seen soon after by Joshua, and made known to him in these words, "Nay, but as Captain of the Lord's host am I come" (Josh. vi, 14). The changed circumstances of Israel revealed the Lord, not any longer as the tender and vigilant Shepherd only, but as the "Lord mighty in battle." Having "rolled away the reproach" of His people in circumcision by the banks of the Jordan; having sealed in this sign His own gracious forgetfulness of the forty years' sin and shame, He leads them on to vic-

tory. The overflowing waters of Jordan stand up in a heap, and are still till the glory moves on—the proud walls of Jericho fall before it, “for the ark of the Lord compassed the city;” and though grieved and driven away by the sin of Achan, as promptly returns at the cry of repentant Israel; and all the might of Canaan is quickly subdued in righteousness, by the power of the glory of the Lord dwelling in the midst of His consecrated people.

After the death of Joshua, they served the gods of the nations; though in remembrance of His covenant, the glory still continued among them in long-suffering and sorrow, yet was Israel subjected, for their sin, to the nations which had been so easily subdued by them while they were walking in obedience; but as the glory still “dwelt among them,” whenever they cried unto the Lord in penitence, He arose in their behalf, and “delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies.” It was not till the iniquity of the priesthood had polluted the sanctuary, and that even this was unregarded by Israel, *except as oppressive to themselves* (1 Sam. ii), and little cared for by those who feared Him, that “He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men, and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy’s hands” (Ps. lxxviii, 60, 61), and “I-chabod” was written upon Israel (1 Sam. iv, 21, 22).

(*To be continued.*)

HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS.

Τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε.—Col. iii, 2.

ONE great end with God, in the gospel of His grace, is at once so to bring those who believe into fellowship with Himself, that they may be like-minded with Him. Until this be the case, there can be no well ordered blessing for any intelligent creature. The misery of man's state is, that he is fulfilling the desires (*wills*, θελήματα) of the flesh and of *the mind*; "that he is alienated in his mind" from God; that his very element is dissociation from God in thought and act. And here is the grace and wisdom of God in the gospel of Christ, that while He meets man in the craving of his own selfishness, His manner of meeting man's selfishness by the blood of the Lamb at once brings man near unto Him. It is not mere escape from coming wrath, but immediate reception into the bosom of the Father. It is reconciliation through the blood of the cross; amity restored between those who had been separate; and this mighty power of the cross is the one grand object of the mind of heaven. Christ crucified, to them that are saved, is the power of God and the wisdom of God; and then there is unison between man on the earth and heaven. Thus he "minds the things above."

There are two ways in which the mind of heaven becomes ascertained to us. The one is, in that which is revealed to us respecting Jesus, as in heaven; and the other as respecting Jesus on the earth. In the first He is represented to us as the one grand subject of thought and theme of praise; in the second, He Himself applies the thoughts of

heaven to the things of earth. Into both these it is our blessed privilege to enter. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." "Whom having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "We are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the First-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel." It is thus that to faith the door is opened in heaven.

On the other hand, as spiritual, we are called on to judge all things—and ourselves can be judged of by no man. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii, 15, 16). "Being now light in the Lord," it is our privilege to walk as children of light; and what is this but the application of the mind of Christ to the circumstances around us—in other words, to be heavenly-minded? And here is the great importance of the subject; it is not abstraction of mind from the reality of the misery around us into an ideal world; neither is it to become an ascetic, but the ability to associate heaven with the present state of things, through the knowledge of Him who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world.

When God had finished the work of creation, He saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. Then, for man, created in the image and after the likeness of God, it was fitting to mind earthly things, to see the wisdom and goodness of God in the beautiful creation which He had put in subjection unto him. Then the mind of heaven and earth was one, "when the

morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." God, angels, and men could take complacency in the earth—it was the expression of God's power, and wisdom, and goodness. Wheresoever man turned to the things around him, they would necessarily be associated in his mind with God. But when man fell under the power of Satan, and subjected the creation to vanity, groaning, and misery, God could no longer be associated in man's mind with the works of creation, except to his own terror and confusion. Everything around him must have been a speaking testimony to his own sin and dissociation from God. He could not look to the earth, and then look with confidence towards God. He saw the withering power of his own evil. He could no longer rejoice in the earth as the work of God's hand, because the constant object presented to his view was the ruin and desolation he had introduced. But God did not immediately interfere in judgment; He left man to the trial of his powers to undo the mischief he had done. But evil increasingly developed itself in man, and through him its baneful influence passed on all around him. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold I will destroy them with the earth." When, therefore, the state of the earth grew worse and worse, instead of improving under the management of man, the condition of blessing could be no longer in minding earthly things, but in walking with God as Enoch, prophesying in word of the Lord coming in judgment, or in testifying by act, as Noah, of its speedy approach.

After the flood, the Lord introduces a dispensation of forbearance and longsuffering, pledging Himself not to curse the ground any more for man's sake; "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Again, it is said to Noah, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth:" but instead of investiture of dominion, as unto Adam, and

willing acknowledgment on the part of creation to man as its lord, it now is only, "The fear of you, and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth—into your hand are they delivered; every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things." But there was a reservation, and that reservation a constant testimony to man that his life was forfeited: "But flesh *with the life thereof*, which is *the blood thereof*, shall ye not eat." This one injunction placed man as a sinner before God, as one who had lost all title to blessing, and needed to approach God through blood. At the same time God Himself interferes in the government of the earth, proving that it was taken out of man's hand into His own, and that He was the God to whom vengeance belonged. "And surely your blood of your lives will *I* require; at the hand of every beast will *I* require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will *I* require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." God had not interfered in vengeance against the first murderer, Cain; on the contrary, He had set a mark on him, lest any should slay him, that man might learn, being left to himself, whether he could undo the evil he had introduced. But now God interfered in the ordering of the earth, and earthly things could only be so minded, as to blessing, by man's seeing his own condition, as before God, and God's rule in the earth.

But the presumption of man only increased by God's forbearance; and instead of acknowledging God in the earth, he purposed the vain attempt of subjecting heaven to his rule. When the Lord had scattered them abroad in all the earth, then did He give them up, as it were, as to palpable interference, though "he left not himself without witness among them, in that he did them good, and gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons." But they speedily turned aside to lying vanities; and since God had left them to themselves, they made gods for themselves, accord-

ing to their own minds, and rejoiced in the works of their hands. Now it pleases the Lord to interfere in another way; He calls out an individual from an idolatrous world, and makes special revelation of Himself to him. And this communication of Himself to Abram by Jehovah, is the introduction of a new principle, even the knowledge of another portion than things present and seen, in having Jehovah for his shield and exceeding great reward. In Abram, therefore, was the introduction of a new principle; he was the one to whom the promises were made; and that which was now to be minded, was not the state of things before the eye, but those things which were presented to faith afar off, leading to the confession that they were pilgrims and strangers in the earth. Abram knew that a long period of darkness and distress would intervene, ere the land, in which he was a stranger, should become the possession of his seed. But when the set time was come, the Lord, faithful to His word, brought them out of Egypt; and, as though He would not hinder the earth's blessing, proposes to the children of Israel to vest that blessing in them, by Himself becoming their Lawgiver and their King: "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for *all the earth is mine*, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an *holy nation*." This was the distinguishing blessing—a holy nation, a wise and great nation; because the Lord God was in the midst of it. Here, then, was one nation in the earth, wherein to have minded earthly things would have been to have recognized God. "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" (Deut. iv, 7). An Israelite would have seen God, not only in the tabernacle service, but in his civil relations, in judicial arrangements, in his household economy—every little circumstance became of importance when sanctioned by "Ye shall"—"for I am the Lord" (Lev. xix).

To have minded all these earthly things would have been to have recognized God.

But the people would have the blessing apart from God, they minded the blessing, but became impatient of having God so near unto them; they liked not the tenure on which they held the blessing, even the acknowledgment that it was a trust to them from God; they said unto Samuel, "Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Thus they rejected God; and although he bore with this their sin, and "gave them a king in his anger," and set up one in all plenitude of wisdom and power, yet it was only to show how abortive must be the attempt, in man's hand, at remedying the evil he had introduced into God's creation—it was all vanity. But although Solomon failed in getting blessing from earthly things, God did not give up the earth; he still recognized one people in it, whose happiness depended on their acknowledgment of him in the things around them. But they only rejoiced in the work of their own hands—they would "none of the Lord their God," so he gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels. All his testimony had failed by the mouths of all his Prophets, saying, "Turn unto me, and I will bless you;" till at last he sent his Son, saying, "They will reverence my Son." He came with the power of earthly blessing in his hand, and presented himself to their acceptance, as the seed in whom they and all nations of the earth might be blessed. But he was despised and rejected of them. He was by wicked hands crucified and slain; but heaven received him, as the only one in whom blessing centred. And now the wide difference between what is the mind of earth and heaven, is made manifest. There is but one mind in heaven, and that is the acknowledgment of the worth of the Lamb that was slain. "Him hath God exalted;" to him hath Jehovah said, "Sit on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool." The whole intelligence of heaven is occupied in discovering all the glories of the person and work of the Son.

Here, then, is heavenly-mindedness; it can only be the portion of those who are risen with Christ. They are already come in spirit to an innumerable company of angels, and together with them desire to look into the sufferings of Christ, and the glories to follow them. There is one all-absorbing subject—it admits not of a divided mind—the loins of the mind must be girded up. It is a subject, too, which is inexhaustible. He who is a father in Christ is the one who has unlearned all else, in order to know him that was from the beginning; and has yet to pray “that I may know him.” It is, therefore, by knowing Jesus, that we know the mind of Heaven. There is nothing fanciful or speculative in this; it is not giving the rein to a lively or warm imagination, in order to picture to ourselves what might be the employments of heaven; but it is our ability, through our knowledge of Him who descended first into the lower parts of the earth, and then ascended far above all heavens, to have fellowship with those who are there. The same substantial reality which is presented to us, is also to them the engrossing object, even the Lamb that was slain. It is this which measures the utter distance between the utmost stretch of human intellect, or loftiest flight of man’s imagination, and one led by the Spirit,—the subject is so different. “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?” It is no longer a God felt after, if haply we may find him, but a God made known in ministering unto our necessities. For redemption is God’s medium of displaying what he is, even to those who needed not redemption themselves. When the fullness of time came for sending forth the Son, made of a woman, it was not they to whom he came to minister blessing, not they with whom he had associated himself in nature, but another race, whose nature He had not assumed, and whom He had not come to help, who sung the song of praise. The wonderful plan of redemption was first recognized in heaven.—“Glory to God in the highest!” This is the great reality: till this, which occupies the

mind of heaven, occupies man's mind, he only walketh in a vain show—he disquieteth himself in vain. That which is before him is vanity—the world passeth away and the lust thereof. His only reality is the sin, sorrow, and death he inherits, and which he seeks to forget in the pursuit of happiness from the creature; but the reality with which heaven is conversant, is the triumph of Him who overcame it all, and who says to His disciples, “Be of good cheer, because I have overcome the world.” This is the victory they celebrate; not greatness in the world, but triumph over it through suffering from it. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” How marvellous is this! everything that the heart of man craves, in order to its happiness, all ascribed to Him whom men by their wicked hands crucified and slew. Who can enter into the thoughts, who into the joys of heaven, but he that glories in the cross of Christ, and sees the world, through that medium, as lying under the wicked one? Surely, to mind earthly things is to be entirely forgetful of this triumphant song. It is assuming a right to ourselves now to receive power and riches, &c., and thus to justify man in his crucifixion of the Lord of glory, and in our hearts to say that Jesus was accursed. He was and is worthy to receive all this because He was *slain*. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name. Jesus sought not honour of men, and would not receive the glory of the world, but showed forth its real character and opposition to God, not only in renouncing it, but in suffering from it.—He died to it and by it.

How needful, therefore, is unison with the mind of heaven, in order to ascertain our own proper standing *in* the world! How do they view all those things which man craves?—power, riches, glory, honour,—they cannot recognize them as in the hands of man, for there they are only turned to evil; they

only know them as in the hands of Him that was slain. There we should know them, and live by faith on them, as ours, invested in Him for us also, heirs of all His glory. He has received in order to give; and the glory He has so hardly earned, He wills should be given to those who believe on Him.

But while we thus learn the mind of heaven, and, as taught by the Spirit, are led into unity with it, there is yet another way in which that mind was exhibited, and of this our calling is to be practical followers. Whilst we have seen the strong contrast of the mind of heaven with the mind of earth, there is another contrast which we are called on to survey, and that is between the beloved Son of God and the world in which He was. It is thus we not only learn the entire alienation of the world from God, but we have the heavenly mind brought before us, in very minute detail, concerning the every-day occurrences of life. It was He who alone could say, "No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven;" who could shew us the thoughts of God concerning the evil in which we are, and point out how those who were made partakers of the heavenly calling, were to walk worthily of it. It is thus that every circumstance becomes an occasion of shewing forth heavenly-mindedness. It is easy for us now to see that one use the wisdom of God has made of man's evil, has been to manifest His own blessedness through it. It is in His dealing with evil that the character of God has been made known to us, and not only to us but to angels. And a further display of God's wisdom is now being manifested unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, by the church, called to act in the world on the very same principles that He is acting in it. It is this which gives such distinctiveness to christian morals, which, whilst they do most fully recognize all that is honest and of good report, at the same time present to us that which is really lovely, because a transcript of God. The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness, but the sphere of its

exercise being evil, it must only be in suffering, in endurance. He is "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," but that knowledge is to be applied to the circumstances of man, to shew that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding;" and that the wisdom which cometh from above, is at direct variance with that of man, as applied to like circumstances. Here is the grand distinction, "that ye henceforth walk not as other gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, *being alienated from the life of God*, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be ye have heard Him and have been taught by Him *as the truth is in Jesus*." Now Jesus indeed is *the* truth, for all truth centres in Him; but here the apostle is speaking not of doctrine but of christian conduct, and the real walk of a believer is only to be seen "as the truth is in Jesus."—This is the lesson before us, "Learn of me;" the Master does not order the disciple to do anything but to follow Him. And the standard proposed is, "every one that is perfect shall be as his Master." It is therefore in Jesus come into the world, that we find what real heavenly-mindedness is, and at once discover that one so minded, could not take complacency in the state of things around us. We, indeed, who are born under the law of sin and death, are made to feel, in ourselves, what misery is; we are "of the earth and earthy, and speak of the earthly," but He came from heaven, and spoke that which he had seen and heard; and, acquainted with the pure blessing of heaven, He could not take delight in the things of the world. He that came from above could make the contrast, and became a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, from the keen perception of moral desolation and ruin into which man had hurried God's creation. Separate from sinners Himself, He could deeply sympathize with the misery of man. He was of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and saw man with-

out the fear of God before his eyes. Knowing the blessedness of being in the Father's bosom, He saw man seeking his happiness in the creature—He knew the wrath of God, and that it was coming, and beheld man living as though he were in the sunshine of God's favour. He dwelt in the holiness of God, and saw man dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air. All the realities were brought before Him, and He mourned and marvelled at man's unbelief, and was grieved at the hardness of their hearts. He saw the full sway of death, and wept at the grave of Lazarus, and yet man had become so familiar with death as to forget that it was the penalty of sin. This is heavenly-mindedness; no complacency in any effort of the flesh, but seeing all its glory fading before the power of death, no rejoicing in what man was rejoicing in—even in the works of his hands, but seeing God in His works, and discovering more real glory in the lily of the field than in all the splendour of Solomon.

This is heavenly-mindedness; it is the ability to rate evil at all its fearful extent, and to know God to the full extent of His blessedness. It is no ideal speculation, no refined mysticism, but the soul apprehending God in Christ, and applying its apprehension of Him to present circumstances. Here is one great value of the incarnation; it is to us the expression of the mind of God on our circumstances. "I," says Jesus, "am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He did the will of Him that sent Him, and therefore could judge righteous judgment: and it is only as doing that same will that we are in the capacity of exercising right judgment. Our judgment must ever be according to appearances, until we have come to recognize Jesus as God's standard, by which He tries everything. It is in this that we fail so much of the heavenly-mindedness.

(To be continued.)

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."—Rev. i, 8.

WITHIN the temple I have been,
And by a light divine,
The secret sense have clearly seen
Of each mysterious sign.

I stopped before the mercy-seat,
Sparkling in burnished gold,
Above whose top the Seraphs meet,
And their six wings unfold.

A cloud of incense rolled around,
The cloud soon passed away,
And there the Saviour Christ I found
In blaze of gospel day.

As priest upon His Father's throne,
He sat in kingly state,
And all heaven's host Him Lord did own,
Jehovah good and great.

"Thou art the Lamb," I heard them cry,
"Before creation slain,
To take thy people's guilt away,
To cleanse sin's mortal stain.

"Thou art priest, altar, sacrifice,
Incense, atoning blood—
Through thee thy people's prayers arise
To Israel's holy God.

"Thou art the laver; from thee flow
Regenerating streams;
The vilest, guiltiest sinner now
In thee all holy seems.

"The ancient veil is rent in twain,
'Tis finished—all is done—
Thou art the Lamb for sinners slain,
Thou art God's only Son."

I heard, I saw, I owned my God;
I knew my sins forgiven,
And in the virtue of His blood,
Shall reign with Him in heaven.



THE VISION OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

(Continued from page 64.)

It was during the continuance of their distress and bondage to the Philistines, consequent on the loss of their strength and glory, that they were tempted, in forgetfulness and disregard of the cause of their calamity, to cry out to Samuel, "Give us a king to judge us" (1 Sam. viii, 5, 6). They turned not in sorrow to their God, they did not look for the return of the glory on which alone their strength depended, but they sought, by complying with the customs of other nations, to gain equality with them, at least in worldly strength. They did not reject Samuel personally, but his mode of government; thinking that a kingly rule, in its pomp and apparent energy, would obtain for them the prosperity they needed. In this they rejected God; they cared not, in their unbelief, for that glory, the presence of which was their only real security, but gave up the pre-eminence of blessing it always insured to them, *and were content to be as others*. The Lord in His mercy endured this too, and brought (as He always must, or evil would overcome Him), good out of their rebellion, and fulfilled His own purpose in setting up that Royal Throne, on which His own KING will surely sit to rule in righteousness in that day, which will be as the "morning without clouds, as the clear shining after rain" (2 Sam. xxiii).

When the ark of the Lord was fully restored to its place in Israel, it was to be the glory of a kingdom. The Lord had chosen and anointed their king. His grace had triumphed over their rebellion, and

David, as a type of the true "Beloved," brings back the ark, to accredit and set forth Israel as God's kingdom; and therefore, the next chapter to that which describes the return of the ark (2 Sam. vi), is the prophetic announcement of "the offspring of David" (Rev. xxii, 16), to sit upon that throne for ever, as it is quoted by the apostle (2 Sam. vii, 14; Heb. i, 5), "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son;" and, from henceforth, the glory revealed that which was seen by the prophet on the hills of Moab, and which is yet to be seen by all in its alone worthy fulfilment, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: THE LORD GOD IS WITH HIM, AND THE SHOUT OF A KING IS AMONG THEM" (Num. xxiii, 21).

The throne, however, in its true glory, was not established, even typically, in David, but in Solomon his offspring. His wisdom, and prosperity, and reign of peace, were the partial exhibition of the blessings yet to be revealed on earth, as declared in the 72nd Psalm; and not only so, but as building the beautiful temple, he stood to foreshow the great Solomon, or "Man of rest," of whom it is said, "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). The throne of Solomon is also called "*the throne of the Lord*:" "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his Father, and prospered, and all Israel obeyed him" (1 Chron. xxix, 23).

Though the ark, therefore, had been restored, and the Lord was with Israel again, and had given them rest from all their enemies, yet it was not till it was brought in solemn triumph, and placed in the beautiful habitation prepared for it by Solomon, that the full favour of God is marked to Israel's throne, as it had been before to the wandering camp of His flock in the wilderness, "For it came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound, to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord,—saying, For he is good, for his mercy en-

dureth for ever ; that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, *for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God*" (2 Chron. v, 13).

The glory thus revealed, I believe to have been seen in full vision by Ezekiel—the kingly glory of Jehovah. The same attributes of God were of course always in the glory, for it was His presence, and He is from everlasting to everlasting ; yet the blessing of kingly government, as that in which God could, and will therefore yet more fully manifest Himself in the day of the Son of man, had not been previously known ; but from the moment the glory of the Lord sanctioned the throne of Judah, that kingdom became the care of Jehovah ; and as every gracious intention toward man on the part of God failed in man's failure, till the Son of man came as claimant of every blessing, and by never failing, secured for Himself, and for others, every place of authority and blessing delegated to man, and among others, this last revealed to us, that of king ; and as Son of man, the offspring of David, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He will one day prove that nothing that God has ever sanctioned can be set aside, except by a higher and further gift ; and that if earth is ever to be blessed, it will be by the righteous dominion of His Son, " who will bear the glory and sit upon His throne," " for the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end " (Luke i, 32, 33).

From this period of the return of the glory, till the scattering of Judah under the judgments of that sad word Lo-ammi, no further or fuller revelation of God was made to them. As directly dealing with Israel, though it were in wrath, it must have been in this character ; and, therefore, it is plain that the vision of Ezekiel is the revelation of His kingly glory. The glory of the throne, which will one day be revealed in the sight of all, as it is

written, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth, and in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one" (Zech. xiv, 9).

From the day of Solomon, as in every other instance, Israel gradually fell away from its privileges and blessings. Sin had grieved the Lord, and He ceased to stand forth actively in their behalf, or He would have justified their sin in the sight of the world. The glory doubtless soon left the temple, but not Israel. In the cloud it still hovered over the throne and land of Judah, and was ready to answer every cry of penitence, putting forth instant power to destroy or discomfit the enemies of His people. Though the staff Beauty was probably soon broken, yet Bands was not till Judah was dispersed (Zech. xi); and around the remnant still the glory spread its covering wing in sorrow, destroying the Assyrian in answer to the cry of Hezekiah—making a wall of chariots and horsemen between the hosts of Syria and the prophet—following the weary Elijah to Horeb, and at last the companion of the mournful captive by the river Chebar; for earth, and an earthly throne were its care, till heaven was opened, and a further glory revealed there.

It is in this place the vision is brought before us. We have traced the glory, from its first appearance to Israel as a nation on the plains of Succoth, going forward in triumph to lead that oppressed people to the beautiful inheritance promised to their fathers, down to its faithful and gracious companionship with the captive prophet, sitting and weeping by the rivers of Babylon. Ample are the details of man's sin and God's mercy to be collected from this long course of time and events; and rich is the profit to be gathered by him that hath ears to hear; but I can only now seek in humbleness to interpret the features of the vision itself, and then to follow it in its future course: and both are replete with instruction and interest.

The characteristic form of each living creature was that of a man (Ezek. i, 5): "*And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man:*" as at

the outset marking the whole vision to represent the essential attributes of God, as revealed in the Son, in whose form or likeness man had been created; and therefore, of necessity, the only form in which perfection could be expressed. The wings, feet, and different faces, mark, I believe, in detail, the attributes of Jehovah in manifestation, but all under the control of the Master form—that of a man, as showing it to be the glory of the only begotten of the Father, “who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, who is before all things, and by whom all things consist” (Col. i, 15, 17).

The faces are first noted in detail (ver. 6); and “the face of a man” (ver. 10), has the pre-eminence given to it, not as confirmatory of what is previously shown, but as marking all the distinctive features of this last and best of God’s creatures to be in the glory, not imperfect, limited, and broken, as we judge of it, but perfect and unrestrained in exercise; and is thus a symbol of mind, reason, intellect, knowledge, discernment, &c., &c., and in the exercise of which, when subject to the Spirit of the Lord, we have that communion with God to which no other creature can be called, “for who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. ii, 16); and the character of the little Horn with “eyes like eyes of a man,” probably has the same meaning, although it is descriptive of great wickedness (Dan. vii, 8). The face is always expressive of the character; and thus “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” is made known to us “in the face of Jesus Christ,” as declaring all the unseen moral glory of the Father, while manifest in the flesh. Action is expressed, as it is in this vision, by symbolic members of a body, such as hands, feet, &c., but character only by the face, and this is too simple a truth to need more proof.

The second face is that of “a Lion,” which denotes majesty, terribleness, strength, dignity, as it is written, “a Lion which is strongest among beasts,

and turneth not away for any" (Prov. xxx, 30); "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a Lion" (Prov. xix, 12; xx, 2). It is said of David, "and he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a Lion" (2 Sam. xvii, 10); of the Gadites, that they were men of war, that they were fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of Lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains (1 Chron. xii, 8; Amos iii, 8).

Lions were the emblems of the strength and dignity of Judah's throne (2 Chron. ix, 17—19), the sign in its standard, and the name and title of its only true king—"the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. v, 5).

The third is the "face of an Ox," which equally expresses power; but used in patient, persevering labour, strength subjected to bear burdens: when spoken of God, it is expressive of long-suffering, or continued and patient exercise of power in subjection to love; "much increase is by the strength of the ox" (Prov. xiv, 4), "able to bear burdens" (Ps. cxliv, 14, marginal reading), "used to tread out the corn" (Deut. xxv, 4; Hosea x, 11). Like every other attribute of God, as exercised among His people, it is used in their behalf when obedient, and for their trial and chastisement when disobedient; thus His patient love is subject to all their infirmities, and is exercised in bearing the burdens of care and sorrow, when those burdens are cast upon His love in humbleness, for it is written, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Ps. lv, 22). But the same power is used in separating the chaff from the wheat as in treading out the corn; and therefore there is doubtless direct connection between the feet and this attribute of God, as the hands are in connection with the man's face; the hand being able as a skilful member to give expression by its cunning, in a thousand ways, to the varied thoughts and intelligence of man's mind; but not so the feet,

though they are as useful in diligent and laborious service.

The fourth is "the face of an eagle," marking quickness and power of sight, and almost equal rapidity of action, and with which the wings are connected, as the hands with the man, and the feet with the ox. With reference to quickness of sight, the symbol of the eagle cannot be doubted; and I would only quote the Scriptures descriptive of this attribute in our God:—"His eyes were as a flame of fire."—"I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins."—"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."—"Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day, and the darkness and the light are both alike unto thee."—"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, to show themselves strong in behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward him." The rapidity of the eagle's flight is noted in its emphatic history in Job:—"She seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off; and where the slain are, there is she" (Job xxxix, 29, 30): and when David would describe the power of Jonathan and Saul, he says, "They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions" (2 Sam. i, 23; also Deut. xxviii, 49; Job ix, 26; Obadiah iv; Prov. xxx, 19).

The feet express judgment on the earth, whether in the Church, which is now the only place of judgment (as separating the chaff from the wheat), or in the world in the latter day, when the Son of man cometh to *tread* the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God; as it is written, "I have *trodden* the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me, for I will *tread* them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment" (Isaiah lxiii, 3). And when the remnant of the Jewish people have power given them against the nations gathered round Jerusalem, it is said, "Arise and thresh, O daughters of Zion, for

I will make thy horn iron and thy *hoofs* brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people" (Mic. iv, 10—13); and again, "For behold the day cometh that it shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch; but unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as *calves of the stall*: and ye shall *tread* down the wicked in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachi iv, 1—3; Psalm cviii, 13). That "they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass" probably denotes imperviousness to defilement while treading on that which is defiled and defiling, and is a strong corroborative proof of the whole vision being but a symbolic description of the essential glory of the Lord, as the feet of the man appearing to Daniel (Dan. x), and the Lord Jesus to John (Rev. i), are described nearly in the same words; in the one, "His arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass"—in the other, "His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."

(*To be continued.*)

JESUS, in thee our eyes behold
 A thousand glories more
 Than the rich gems and polished gold
 The sons of Aaron wore.

Fresh blood, as constant as the day,
 Was on their altars spilt;
 But thy *one* offering took away
 For ever all our guilt.

Thou, great Melchizedec! shalt reign,
 In peace, on Zion's hill
 (Thyself the Lamb that once was slain),
 And bear thy priesthood still.

HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS.

Τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε.—Col. iii, 2.

(Continued from page 75.)

It is as quickened together with Christ, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Him, that we are enabled to survey the world, and all that is in it, by the light of heaven. “If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” “Mind the things above, not the things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” It is thus that we learn that the system of things on the earth is the subject of the long-suffering and forbearance of God, who will put off the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, until man’s iniquity has again come to the full. We see the Lord Jesus Christ ready to judge the quick and the dead, yet patiently expecting, that the testimony may go forth unto His sacrifice, that none may perish unwarned. How needful for us thus to be heavenly-minded, and to learn our place of separation from the world—to bear with it as God does; not avenge ourselves, but to leave vengeance to Him, and to show the same grace towards it that He shows, and to use unremittently the present opportunity of testimony. Here, truly, is the wonderful glory of the mind of heaven—the power to endure. We know not what manner of spirit we are of, till we enter the full mind of Him, the greatness of whose power is the ability to restrain it. “God hath spoken once—twice have I

heard this, that power belongeth unto God; also unto thee, Lord, belongeth mercy" (Ps. lxii). Where, but in God, shall we find power to rid Himself of His adversaries, so restrained by mercy, and His servants beseeching sinners, the meanwhile, to be reconciled to Him. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, humbleness of mind, forbearance and long-suffering, for this is the mind of heaven."

But whilst we learn that heavenly-mindedness is necessarily sorrow of heart as to things around, we learn also that to do God's will on earth is necessarily suffering. The Son of man, which was in heaven on earth, was the just and holy one; He fulfilled all righteousness Himself, but He exercised it not for Himself. To others He was all grace: it was cast into His teeth as a reproach, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them;" and does the Lord vindicate Himself from the charge? On the contrary, He takes it as the occasion of showing what the mind of heaven was. This is His great glory; here is set forth the infinite contrariety between God and man; man, who loves sin, puts away from him his fellow-sinner; God's counselled grace, in showing His hatred of sin, brings blessing to the sinner, and brings him near to Himself to bless him. It is in this that He abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence. Here it is that God's thoughts are so far above our thoughts, and His ways far higher than ours; and yet His thoughts and His ways are the rule He prescribes to us. Not only, therefore, in doing God's will are we called on to put on the new man, created in righteousness and true holiness, but to walk in grace toward an evil world—hence necessarily to suffer—he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. God is not judging, he must not judge. God is not taking vengeance, he cannot avenge himself. God is not resisting evil by righteousness exercised in power, he must not resist evil. But beyond this, the blessedness of that grace we do not know, is to be shown forth practically. It was not compulsion on

our part that brought the blessing from heaven to man. Even had man urged God to bless him, he never could have thought of the possibility of such a blessing being conferred, as to be so brought into God's favour as to be made His sons. God's own grace far exceeded even the exigencies of man's misery. This is the mind of heaven, and how is it applicable to us? "Whoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." We are called upon to show the vast superiority of grace over selfishness—the only natural principle of man—to do more from love than he would exact from interest. And then follows the perfect love of God, seen in His loving those who loved not Him, as the only standard proposed for our imitation. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in *heaven* is perfect." And the same standard is held up to us as walking in connection with brethren: "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you; be ye *therefore* followers (imitators) of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. iv, 32; v, 1, 2).

But the most remarkable characteristic of the mind of heaven, in reference to the world, is, that God should now forego for a time His right to judge the world. "God sent *not* his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." The testimony unto its coming judgment in righteousness is in order to point sinners to Him to whom all the prophets bare witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him should receive remission of sins. "There is now joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

It is the rule of heaven which is prescribed to us, now we are called on to rejoice in the triumphs of God's grace; but the time is approaching when the period of God's longsuffering will be spent, and iniquity come to its full, and then the mind of heaven

will be differently expressed:—"I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God, for true and righteous are his judgments." Here is the infinite importance, that the tone of our minds should be in unison with that of God; that when He is dealing with a ruined world in grace, we should be like-minded with Him in reference to it, but that when His judgments are made manifest, we should be prepared to praise Him for His holiness. This it is into which we are now brought, instead of "being without God in the world," to acknowledge Him in it. The world, as evil, is the sphere of God's display of His forbearance, and Jesus, in such a world, asserted not His right, because the assertion of that must have been its judgment. He always took the place of one who receded from that which He might justly have asserted. John had need to be baptized of Him, yet, with the full allowance of this, He comes to be baptized of John, that thus in obedience He might fulfil all righteousness. So, again, as the Son, He was not compelled to pay the half-shekel for the Temple service, yet He waived His right. It was thus that He taught us our place, "*But I say unto you that ye resist not evil.*" Here is the grand contrast, the system of the world is the resistance of evil; to this end are all the energies and wisdom of man, whether individually or collectively, directed. The standard assumed is man's convenience: hence much that is evil in God's sight is tolerated and accredited by human legislation, and the very end for which man is brought up in the world, is the assertion of his supposed rights. The believer has not so learned Christ; he knows God's right and title in all justice towards him is condemnation, but God has waived that, and given him the right of a son, of His own free grace, having made him accepted in the Beloved. His place and standing in the same evil world in which the Beloved Himself stood, is to follow Him, to bring to bear the same mind on it as He exhibited: "Let this mind be in

you which was also in Christ Jesus." "Dearly beloved, *avenge* not yourselves, but rather *give place unto wrath*, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." That which orders the world in any measure now is vengeance and wrath,—these are the principles of rule in the world as ordered of God. "The powers that be are ordained of God," and the power "beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a *revenger* unto wrath upon him that doeth evil." Here is the most distinct mark between God dwelling in the Church, and God's owning authority in the world. The Church is partaker of the heavenly calling, and her place is to show forth in the world the heavenly mind. And where can this be shown more clearly than in the two simple regulating principles, "The world will love its own,"—"Love seeketh not her own." Self-interest is the world's grand maxim, self-denial that of Christ. It is fellowship alone with the heavenly mind which enables us to walk in a straight path. We know, alas! that the consummation of apostacy is the establishment of the world's own principle upon the seeming basis of christianity. "In the last days perilous times shall come, men shall be lovers of their own selves." The attempt of the Church to act on the world's principle of present power has ever been to tolerate iniquity and persecute truth; while the attempt of the world to act on anything like christian principles has been to give the rein to ungodliness, and strengthen the hands of the wicked. The new piece put to the old garment makes the rent only worse; the new wine put into old bottles causes them to burst, and the wine is spilled. Such has been the result of attempting to apply those blessed principles which can only be acted out in the Church to the rule of the world. It is only as closely following in the footsteps of Him, the Son of man in heaven, even while on earth, that we shall walk in the light and not stumble.

As we see that the crisis, to which all are hastening, is the victory of the world over the professing

Church, our place is to be followers of Him who could say to us, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." The Lord puts in direct contrast the two things which the world and the Church have both sought to unite, that is, power and grace. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many." As He is, so are we in this world; He is the beloved Son and Heir of all things too; we are dear children, and joint-heirs with Him. Now, as the Father loved the Son, and gave all things unto Him, and He stood in the midst of the world as one who could say, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father," so it was in the recognition of the completeness of His title to all things that He said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Here, then, is your place—in title, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; but, as children, now only called to manifest the mind of your Father in bearing with and ministering grace unto a ruined world, and in doing all things without murmurings and disputings.

But there is another way in which we learn the truth as it is in Jesus, in seeing Him, the Son, humbled to the place of the servant, and there learning obedience through the things that He suffered. Our calling is unto obedience and suffering. "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience." "To you it is *given*, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to *suffer* for his sake." This is our heavenly calling—obedience; and as this is exercised here, it must be obedience in suffering. To obey when the world is ordered by a King reigning in righteousness would

not be to suffer; the work of righteousness would be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness; but to obey God, when He is dealing with the world in grace, is necessarily to suffer for righteousness' sake; and therefore we are called upon to "do all things without murmurings and disputings, that we may be the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, holding forth the word of life." Obedience is the one rule of heaven; and strange must be the disorder, to their apprehensions, of man, a creature, presuming to set up his will against that of God. The will of God is known in heaven as the only blessedness;—"Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." Now this was to be shown forth on earth as the only blessedness; and, therefore, He who came from heaven, and had no right to obey in heaven, came to learn obedience by the things which He suffered. This was the great lesson to teach man; this was heavenly-mindedness—obedience to God under any circumstances—"Lo! I come to do thy will, O God." Obedience carried Him unto death; and thus He speaks unto His disciples: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal: if any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." And thus it is that heavenly-mindedness is to be shown, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. The obedience of the Son is the great wonder of heaven, as well as the deeply-instructive lesson to those who dwell on earth, "I have glorified thee on earth." All were glorifying God in heaven; but this was His alone to say, because He willingly became the subject in which the Father's name might be glorified; He turned not away His back: He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to those who plucked off the hair; He hid not His face from shame and

spitting; but obedience and confidence went hand in hand—"For the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." And the result of the humiliation of the Son unto obedience shall be, that the mind of earth and heaven become one. "God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven." Then shall man say as Jesus said, "I know that his commandment is eternal life."

It is of unspeakable value to us to have the steady light of heaven to guide us through the darkness of this world. The example of Jesus ever bears on His own precept. The precept is general, the example affords the limitation, and it is our wisdom to bring the two together, that we may know how to walk and to please God. "I," says Jesus, "am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." We have a most remarkable instance of Jesus, as the light, in His early days—an instance of immense value to those who, on the one hand, are called upon to forsake father and mother for Christ's sake, and, on the other, are warned as to disobedience to parents being one of the marks of the apostacy of the latter day,—He could say, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" and then went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. He recognized God as the only fountain of authority; and when that authority came to bear directly on Him, He would suffer no derived authority to stand in its way. This is the mind of heaven. Power belongeth unto God, and is so to be recognized both in a parent and in a ruler: but they cannot use the power with which God has entrusted them against His own authority. Where that is the point, we must obey God rather than man—obey God, and suffer from man. Obedience to man, in such a case, would be disobedience to God. How many questions would be avoided, how many difficulties solved, had we the mind of Him whose meat it was to do the will of Him that

sent Him! There was in Him a single object; and those cases, which are only perplexing because there is self-will in us, were plain unto Him.

It is thus, then, that heavenly-mindedness is to be exercised in the most common things. The children of God are thus called into direct contrast with the world in which they are—in it, but not of it, and shewing forth His praises “who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.” Almost all the casuistry we are exercising, arises from the supposition that we are still debtors to the flesh, that we must take a lower standard than that into which union with Christ brings us. The word to us is, “Ye are dead.” No longer ought we to look on ourselves as united with the first man Adam, otherwise than unto the disowning of the flesh, but with the second Man, the Lord from heaven; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. It is now to live and walk in the Spirit, now to put on the new man, as being renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him, having thus the earnest of that perfect conformity which awaits them at the resurrection, unto which they are predestinated, even the image of His Son.

And how blessed amidst the shifting morality of man, to have an unerring judgment; at once to find deliverance from the thousand perplexities and inconsistencies which distract the mind of one seeking to serve God and Mammon. “The flesh profiteth nothing;” all its glory is grass. “I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” This is the righteous judgment of him who, taking his stand with Christ at the right hand of God, views all things from thence. How is the fond delusion vanished, the moment we get to our proper standing, of any expectation of good from man! The vain pursuit is given up, and the only desire is to mortify the members which are on the earth, and to find the blessing that follows: “If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

THE VISION OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

(Continued from page 84.)

WINGS are invariably denoted in every description of the cherubim, and declare, I believe, rapidity of action, or I may perhaps say, wherever connected with the cherubim, that they describe the instantaneous action in heaven, consequent on the will of Jehovah, they are further symbols of the standing of everything in heaven, as having power to do the will of God, and thus a difference is marked between them and the wheels, inasmuch as one expresses the character of heavenly speed, the other of *earthly*; and this the careful reader will see in the evident division made in the chapter at the end of the 14th verse; the wings only are described till then, as exhibiting the swiftness of obedience or the instant expression of God's will, as "the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning," and the wheels are then spoken of as distinct from the body of the vision, and yet in unity with it; "for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels;" now as the wings denote rapidity of obedience in heaven, so do the wheels on earth, being severally the emblems of speed in air or earth, and the difference is probably distinctly marked in the 19 verse where it is said, "when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up." The wings were doubtless used to lift up the living creatures, and then the wheels became useless and were lifted up too; but when they moved on the earth, that is, "when the

living creatures went, the wheels went on their four sides and turned not when they went."

There are several visions of the glory of God, but in one other only are the wheels mentioned; viz., that of the throne of the Ancient of days: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool; His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire" (Dan. vii, 9); and their being so specially noted here is strongly confirmatory of this interpretation of their meaning; for the whole previous prophecy is a description of the dominion exercised on earth by the four empires included in the Image, during the casting of the throne of Judah down to the ground (Ps. lxxxix, 44); and the vision describes, as I believe, the judgment of God, in which He declares all men unfit to rule but Him "who loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and whom He therefore anoints with the oil of gladness above His fellows," saying, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre" (Ps. xlv); and having delivered the throne to Him as alone worthy of the trust, all the power and glory is brought into the world by the Son, to execute the Father's judgments, "for He has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man" (John v), and the thrones of the world (Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, &c.) are cast down, "and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ" (Rev. xi, 15; Ps. lxxxix, 20—27; Ps. cx, &c. &c.): in a word, it is the same glory seen by Ezekiel, which in following its course, we shall see has now left the earth,—returning to it again to abide for ever.

It will be seen, that though the throne described by Ezekiel is above the firmament, its action is below it, that is, on the earth, for the unity is not broken by the firmament. The Spirit of life, as coming from Him that sat on the throne, filled the living creatures and then the wheels, "for the Spirit of

the living creatures was in the wheels." The whole vision is constituted in this unity, and on it depends its energy and rapidity of action, the instant and unimpeded answer to the will of Him, whose life was in it all as the spring and power of its movements, and the completeness of unity between the will and act, is thus beautifully stated, "and they went every one straight forward, whither the Spirit was to go, they went and they turned not when they went," which doubtless describes analogously the unity of that mysterious body, instinct with but one life, which will be the "fulness of Him that filleth all in all," and will perhaps yet further teach us indirectly what we pray for when we say, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

The colour of amber "with the fire and brightness round about it" (i, 27), as being the appearance of Him that sat on the throne, again identifies that appearance which was in the throne above the firmament, with the living creatures below it; for the same description is given of them in the 4th verse. Again, the moving of the wings and wheels (verse 24, and iii, 12, 13,) is described as "the voice of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech as the voice of an host." In the 43rd chapter of this prophet, 2nd verse, this is said to be "His voice." In the vision in Daniel (Dan. x), "the noise of his words like the voice of a multitude." In the Apocalypse (Rev. i), "His voice was as the sound of many waters," thus clearly marking the action of the living creatures and wheels, to be descriptive of power consequent on, or coincident with, the utterance of Him who sat on the throne. "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of glory thundereth, the Lord is upon many waters; the voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of Majesty" (Ps. xxix); and in Rev. xix, where a voice from the throne calls for praise, as I understand it, to the Almighty Father who has given the Son both His throne, and His bride, the instant and universal

answer, the responsive chorus, is described in its power to be as the voice of the Lord of glory, "as the voice of a multitude, as the voice of many waters, as the voice of many thunderings" (Rev. xix), and is but the proof how fully in that day the Church of God will be informed with the life of its Head, and how their innumerable voices will be but one voice, and their innumerable thoughts and deeds but one; and that, the mind and will and consequent act of Him "who sitteth upon the flood, yea, who sitteth king for ever."

The voice from the throne as heard by the prophet (i, 25), was in mercy and grace, and not in power, the voice of God in communion with the weakness of the creature; and so when He was thus speaking, "the living creatures stood and let down their wings;" and this is more distinctly seen in the 3rd and 10th chapters. In the 3rd, while the Lord is giving the burthen to the prophet, all is still; but when He ceases, it is said, "I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from this place; I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures, that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing" (chap. iii, 12, 13); and in the 10th, where the humiliation of the Lord is denoted, the living creatures are again seen standing with their wings let down.

The throne, being "in appearance as the sapphire stone" (i, 26), identifies it with the glory seen on mount Sinai, "And they saw the God of Israel, and there was under His feet as it were the paved work of a sapphire stone" (Exod. xxiv, 10).

"The brightness, as the appearance of a bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain," is another symbol which connects the whole vision with the earth's destiny; but as it is also seen in the vision when transferred to heaven, it will be better briefly to speak of it when considering it there.

"The likeness, as the appearance of a man on the throne," will not be doubted by any, I believe, to

be the likeness of the only begotten Son, ever manifested thus as the pattern of man's beautiful form, and into perfect conformity with which the Church is predestinated to be changed in the resurrection (Rom. viii, 29); "for our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii, 20, 21).

Heaven will be glad, and rejoice, and sing "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; Amen, Alleluia!"

Earth will echo back its answer of joy. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice. Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for He cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity" (Ps. xcvii, and xcvi).

The Father then will commit all judgment unto the Son, and "all men will honour the Son even as they honour the Father" (John v, 22, 23); and then shall "every knee bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii, 9—11).

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS

ON PHIL. III, 20, 21.

THERE is a remarkable difference in the aspect and hope connected with the Lord's return in Old Testament scriptures from what is suggested to the believer in reading such a scripture as this in Philippians.

In the Old Testament the glory of the kingdom is connected with the coming; with us, the proper hope is not the glory of the kingdom, but that He, whose the kingdom is, is coming.

Doubtless there will be the full display of the glory of the kingdom then; but it is not what we are looking for, but for the Lord Himself. "Our citizenship is in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

We often sing the words,

"Heaven is our father-land—
Heaven is our home."

There is our citizenship. If we consider the people of God as we see them in the world, we behold them a pilgrim band passing through the wilderness, but when they lift up their eyes to heaven, they are all gladdened with the sweet thought of *home*. Here it is the wilderness, but we have a city. Our citizenship is in heaven. When the people of God raise their eyes to heaven, all is bright and full of joy. Ah! is it not bright to our souls to look up there? But what is it that makes it so bright? what makes it our home? Is it not that Jesus is there? We shall be greeted there by His own welcome. We shall see His face in undimmed glory. There will be no cloud upon that blessed countenance then.

Nothing to dim His beauty. All will be bright. We shall see Him as He is. Heaven is to us the place whence we look for Him whom our souls love. We are not looking to go to heaven, but we are looking for the Lord Jesus from heaven. Mark that expression, "We look for the Saviour." There is exceeding beauty in the introduction of the word "Saviour" here. We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. If I, as a man, had penned these words, I should have simply said, We look for Jesus, or the Lord Jesus. The Spirit of God presents another thought to our souls. We look for the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour. True, indeed, we already know Him thus in having saved our souls, and delivered us for ever from our sins; but we cannot look at this character of the blessed Lord as what applies only to the past. It is the character in which we know Himself personally. If a man could tell me everything about the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ save this glory in connection with Himself as Saviour, with the cross of Calvary, I should say to him, Well, but cannot you tell me something about the blessed Lord as Saviour? Do you not know anything about Him for yourself in connection with the cross. If not, I must say that after all your knowledge about Him, you do not know Himself. As a Saviour it is alone that any can learn what He is. Unless, dear friends, you know His cross—unless you have met Him there, saving you as poor lost sinners—you are as yet strangers to His love, you know not what He is Himself.

And here I would add a practical word on this expression, "We look." It is significant, and reveals the inward condition of the soul, it expresses practical communion with Christ. It is the Lord Jesus saying to your heart, "Surely I come quickly," and your heart replying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." What do you know of this sort of intercourse with Christ? How often is your heart thus lifted up to Him during the day? It is the same thing which we find in Thessalonians, "Waiting for

his Son from heaven.” This is quite another thing from the understanding the doctrine of the coming. That is important solely as a means to an end, even to lead us into this waiting position of soul, this quiet, continued breathing of the heart after Himself. “I have waited for thy salvation, O God.”

I dare say many of you can look back to the time when the Lord had to teach us what His coming meant. We had a vast number of things to unlearn; the idea that the coming of the Son of man meant our death, for instance. Now this process is very important. It is the work of the Spirit in us teaching us to bring all our notions to the word of God, that that furnace may try them, and show us what they are worth. Then we found how one thought after another had to be given up, till the Lord had cleared the ground to lead us into His truth. But this searching out the doctrine of the coming is not looking for the Saviour. We may hold the truth of the coming quite clearly in our heads, and yet not be waiting for the Lord in our hearts. Ah! we well know whether this is really the posture of our spirits, quietly waiting for Him as the One whom our souls love. He says, Surely, certainly, I come. As surely as the blessed Lord Jesus is still a man in heaven, having a human heart and human thoughts and human affections, so surely He will come. Do you know, then, this kind of intercourse with the Lord, He saying, by His Spirit, “Surely I come quickly,” and your heart responding, “Quickly come.”

But it might be said by some, who heard us speak of heaven as our home, from whence we expect the Saviour, Truly, yours is a large title—you have vast expectations, if you can lay claim to heaven itself as yours; but what about possessing your home, carrying about with you, as you do, a body of sin and death. The next verse, which now I turn to, meets this question by that which will enable us to enjoy this glorious home. “Who shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even

to subdue all things unto himself.” Here we have indeed a body that savours of the wilderness. Then we shall have a body that savours *only* of the glory. Here we have a body that well accords with groaning and tears, a body weighed down with the corruption of sin, and with the circumstances of sin and death, which form the sorrows of the way. Well, He shall entirely change this body of humiliation, that not a trace of sin, or of the wilderness, shall remain. It shall be fashioned like unto His own body of glory. You will not be able to sigh or groan in the glory. Now we sigh and groan, not only by reason of sorrow, but sometimes a view of the glory brought home to the heart by the power of the Spirit, produces a groan by reason of incapacity to receive it in this present condition. Like Daniel, we are ready to faint under it. It is too much for this poor body of humiliation. As in Rom. viii, we groan within ourselves, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, because our body is entirely unfit to sustain the glory. Well, we shall have a body capable of enjoying it all in peaceful blessedness. We shall be at home in that bright glory, quietly at rest in all its brightness. There will be no groan because of incapacity. We shall enjoy the rest of God, and be at rest in His own glorious home.

And now, what, let me ask, is to you the most blessed thought in this verse? Is it that then we shall be at home, freed for ever from the sorrows of the wilderness? or, that then there will be no more groaning after the glory through possessing a body of humiliation? Oh, there is a more blessed thought than either of these. I shall have, indeed, a body meet for the glory, but the sweetness of the hope is this,—that body of glory shall be the gift of the personal love of Christ to each individual saint. He shall change our body of humiliation. His own power shall be put forth to bestow on me this blessedness. We shall be able to look at ourselves in that day, and say, So much does He love me, that He has made me entirely like Himself. Mark how His love comes out in the entire action. “He shall

change.” Not your being able to slip the body and get into the glory. No; you must have the glory from Him when and how He pleases. Now He may say to you, “I give you the wilderness, for I wish you to pass through it, that you may learn that it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.” He gives you now the wilderness, and He will be with you all the way, that there you may learn more of His love. Ah! and in which of all your troubles was He not with you. You cannot mention one. I do not say, that in looking back you cannot name one in which you did not find Him, for, alas! we often see Him not through unbelief, though He is with us all the time. Has He not been with you, watching how you have borne the cross? He has seen every time you have pushed up your shoulder under it, and often then He pressed it down more heavily, that your will might be broken.

Thus He who gives you the wilderness now, will give you the glory afterwards; both are alike the gift of His love. If we could get the glory when we liked, we should never know His love in changing our vile body to make it like His own. Yet this is the sweetest thing of all, that He has loved poor creatures so wondrously, that He will fit us to dwell in heavenly clouds; loving us so much that He will not rest until He has made our body of humiliation exactly like His own body of glory according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

In conclusion, I would press this again upon my own heart and yours. Are we looking for Him, not looking for the glory or the rest, but for Himself?

"IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS."

1 Thess. v, 18.

"IN everything give thanks,"
My God, is this thy will?
Give thanks for disappointments given,
For prayers unanswer'd still!

Give thanks! in vain I've pray'd
That I might useful be,
And by thy Spirit's helpful aid,
Bring many souls to thee.

Give thanks! when in the place
Of health and usefulness,
Through sickness thou hast paled my face
With pain and weariness.

Give thanks! if 'twere thy will
Submission to demand,
I then might bid myself be still,
And bow to thy command.

But hush, beneath my eye,
I see in words of blood,
"Will He who gave His *Son* to die,
Refuse the *any good*?"

Give thanks! Yea, Lord, I *do*,
And by thy help I *will*,
Give thanks! for blessings not received,
Although expected still.

Give thanks! for mercies given,
Unnoticed oft by me;
Give thanks! for sins forgiven,
Known only, Lord, to thee.

Give thanks! in word and deed,
For thy surpassing love,
That sent thy Son on earth to save,
And now to plead above.

Give thanks! for tender love,
That our Redeemer show'd,
Who, in the absence of *Himself*,
A *Comforter* bestow'd.

Oh! grant me by thy grace
To walk by *faith* alone,
Until before my Father's face,
I know as I am known.

From "The Present Testimony."

ON CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

THE high standing of believers in Christ Jesus, that they are “through him that loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, made kings and priests unto God” (Rev. i, 5, 6), is that which Satan’s crafty imitations, and man’s wisdom, have tended equally to obscure. The end being kept out of view, which is the illustration of God’s grace (Eph. ii, 7); man can discover nothing in himself corresponding to such a high calling, and therefore necessarily and naturally relapses into a spirit of bondage, serving God from a low principle and for a low end. The calling must be known before we can walk worthy of it; and as it is in this that God’s thoughts are so far above our thoughts, and his ways above ours; so the Apostle prays for the Ephesians, that the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened, that they might know what is the hope of their calling (Eph. i, 18). As the calling is to such glory in prospect—so is it now to service; and what is said of the literal Israel in their yet future glory, may justly be said of christians now; “ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God” (Is. lxi, 6).

Men, indeed, have confined christian ministry to one branch of it; a branch most important indeed—that of the ministration of the word; but by no means the whole of it. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord (1 Cor. xii, 5); and as the Lord, when upon earth, was not ministered unto, but as he that served; so has he left his people, relatively both to the Church and the world, in the same position, drawing a direct contrast between the

world and his disciples in this very respect: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them; and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your *minister*: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be *ministered* unto, but to *minister*, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx, 26—28). Every different ministry is honourable, because done unto the Lord; and there is no member of the body of Christ, who is not, in one way or another, put in the way of serving him. "If *any man* serve me let him follow me, and where I am there shall my servant be: if *any man* serve me, him will my Father honour" (John xii, 26). And this ministry or service might be either teaching, or exhorting, or giving to the poor, or preserving order (Rom. xii, 6—8). Great evil and inconvenience has arisen to the Church from not recognizing the variety and extent of christian ministry. As Aaron was consecrated to God, and received the priest's office—a service of gift (Num. xviii. 7), so the blessed standing of the Church puts her in the privileged station of serving him: "I know thy service" (Rev. ii, 19). To be a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, in any department of his house, is a sufficient honour. To be made of the household of God, is not a privilege sufficiently prized; and hence, instead of men esteeming it a wonder that the Lord will be served by them at all, there has been an undue coveting of serving in the word, as if that was exclusively ministry. Men have not been content to remain in the calling wherein they are called, to exhibit the manifold grace of God in it, and the beautiful arrangement of his house, in which the highest and the lowest had but one common object—the glory of their common Master. The principle laid down by the Lord Jesus Christ is, "he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much" (Luke xvi, 16). The Lord did not pray for his disciples

that they might be taken out of the world, but that in it—in the midst of all the evil of it, they might glorify him, as he, whilst in the same position, had glorified his Father (John xvii). How explicit is the statement of the apostle, and what beautiful harmony does it present to us:—"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in *all things* may be glorified, through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iv, 10, 11). Thus it was with Jesus in the world, in temporal necessities as well as spiritual, wherever he served, it was that God might be glorified. How does this principle commend service to us! How important, in this view, are all our steps, the least as well as the greatest in this life! Specially in the last act of our blessed Lord's service to his disciples are we taught that nothing is really degrading which is done for him: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you; verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him: if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John xiii). And thus we find that the services which would commend widows to the bounty of the Church, were these: "If she had brought up children, if she had lodged strangers, if she had washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work" (1 Tim. v, 10). All are not qualified for teachers or Church office; but all are qualified to minister to the Lord, in ministering one to another. There may be those whose ministry will be in being given to hospitality (entertaining strangers), and distributing to the necessities of the saints: there may be others whose ministry will be in being "obedient to them that are their masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service, as men-

pleasers, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men" (Eph. vi, 5—8).

Whilst the extent and variety of christian ministry have been overlooked, the dangers of that particular department, which is more ostensibly *the* christian ministry, have not been duly estimated. It is a solemn word, "My brethren, be not many teachers ; knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation, for in many things we offend all : if any man offend not in *word*, the same is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body" (James iii, 1, 2). The Spirit in the apostle foresaw that the ministry of the word would be of reputation in the world ; whilst the unobtrusive service of those who were not qualified for it would be proportionably disregarded ; nor is it difficult to assign the reason for this. The spirit which showed itself in the Corinthian Church, of walking after man, in the forgetfulness that Paul and Apollos were only ministers of God by whom they had believed, even as the Lord gave to each (1 Cor. iii), in the progress of spiritual declension, issued in the division of the christian Church into clergy and laity ; the ministry of the gospel began to be looked upon as a learned profession, and was, in process of time, exalted into a PRIESTHOOD ; as such, it had a strong hold on the natural heart of man, meeting both his natural admiration of that which is learned, and his natural dependence on something between him and God. And let it not startle us, that so generally a received division of the Church into clergy and laity should be questioned. We have a memorable instance of the rapidity with which man's heart departs from God's truth, in the case of Israel of old : with the voice of God sounding in their ears, and their own answer scarcely escaped from their mouths, we find them, in the absence of Moses, making a calf ; and it is most instructive to notice, that the end of it was a sensible object between God and themselves. The moment men began to sleep (and how early was that in the records of the Church, "awake,

thou that sleepest." Eph. v, 14), the enemy sowed the tares. The seed of every corruption is to be found in the apostles' times, and hence the exceeding value of the written word. Let a thing rest on the highest antiquity, if it be not based on that word, no antiquity ought to make it venerable.

A distinct order of priesthood seems, from its very general prevalence, to be that which the very necessity of man craves. That such an order was established by God himself, whose prerogative it is to appoint the channel by which he will be approached (Heb. v, 4, 5), there needs no proof. They were ministers of the letter (2 Cor. iii, 6); their qualification was, that they were of a particular tribe, and of a particular family. No stranger, no one, save of the family of Aaron, might approach the altar of the Lord or his sanctuary (Num. xviii, 7). It was in mercy to the people that it was so ordered (Num. xvii, 12, 13); they could not, they dare not approach unto God, lest they should be consumed by his holiness; therefore the Lord said unto Aaron, "thou and thy sons, and thy father's house with thee, shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary." The order of the priesthood tended to turn the people from themselves to the priest, as capable of bearing their iniquity (Ex. xxviii). But while it gave them comfort in this way, it served to keep them at a distance from God; there was nearness of approach for the priest and Levite, but none for the people; this was the necessary effect of an ordered priesthood on the *earth*, to keep the people at a distance from God—to keep them without (Luke i, 10). The removal of this distance is that which was effected by the change of the order of priesthood, which was not the change of one earthly order for another, but the change of an earthly for a heavenly priesthood. The great point which the apostle presses on the Hebrews, was, that now as "holy brethren" (themselves now consecrated by the Holy Spirit to God, as Aaron by the anointing oil), partakers of the heavenly calling, they should turn away their thoughts from the earthly priest-

hood, to consider the Apostle and High Priest of their profession—Christ Jesus (Heb. iii, 1); and then, by leading on their minds to his greatness and sympathy, to bring them boldly unto a throne of grace, without the intervention of any other (Heb. iv, 14—16). After showing the inferiority of the Aaronic priesthood in many particulars, the apostle points to Jesus, as the very High Priest who met our wants; not needing to offer up daily sacrifices, first for his own self and then for the people, for this he did once when he offered up himself; and then sums up the matter in this, “we have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the *heavens*” (Heb. viii, 1); and in verse 4, he turns our thoughts entirely away from an earthly to a heavenly priesthood. “If he were on earth he would not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law;” and further on, he shows the standing of believers, through the new order of priesthood, to be no longer *without* but within the vail, in the holiest of all.—“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith” (Heb. x, 19—22). Here is the virtue and blessing of the change from an earthly to a heavenly priesthood in nearness to God, yea, even advanced beyond it. Aaron could only at a set time, and with many preliminaries, enter into the holiest through the vail; that is now rent, the way laid open, and we at all times can come boldly. We need no such means as an earthly priesthood of approach to God. “The hour is come when the true worshippers worship the Father;” and the child needeth no usher into his Father’s presence, save him by whom the Father is made known; “for through him we both (Jews were in the distance of servants before) have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. ii, 18). The highest in office in the Church of Christ has not more

liberty, in this respect, than the merest babe; "I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father" (1 John ii, 13). The necessary effect of the division contended against is to obscure this blessed liberty, and to give pre-eminence in standing, as to nearness to God, to the clergy, and thereby setting at a distance the laity. It is the effort of God in the gospel to bring man into confidence with Himself; the end of redemption, as to man, is that he is brought back to God. In the law, the priest was looked on as the reconciler of God to man (Num. xvi, 46); in the gospel, God is the reconciler of man to himself, and its ministry the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. v). Whatever, therefore, tends to put anything between man and God, does thereby obscure the grace of the gospel. Nothing is too abject for the mind of man to submit to, if it be spared the irksomeness of continual dependence on God, by looking to a visible order to think and act for it (2 Cor. xi, 19, 20). It is this, as well as the desire of man to lord it over God's heritage (1 Pet. v, 2, 3), which has tended to exalt the christian ministry into an order; it is this which our Lord would counteract when he says, "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. xxiii, 7, 8). So again the apostle, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all *one* in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii, 27, 28). The church itself is God's clergy (1 Pet. v, 3), answering to the Levites, whom God had taken to himself from among the children of Israel, to minister unto him instead of the first-born (Num. viii, 17, 18; Deut. x, 8, 9). It is not said of the ministry or offices of the Church, but of the body, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Pet. ii, 9). The Church bears the same relation to the world as the Levites did to the Jewish nation; and if we seek anything analogous to the Levitical

priesthood, it is not to be found in the ministry, but in the Church.

“The congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them” (Num. xvi, 3), may now be said without any arrogance; yea, it is only the assertion of the glory of those who are made kings and priests unto God (Heb. x, 14; Col. i, 12; Rev. i, 6). The presence of God’s Spirit constitutes the Church; and his gift to any individual, alone qualifies him for office in the Church. To own spiritual authority where the Spirit is not, is in fact, as much to disown God, as to refuse submission to any power that he has set up. It was to the praise of the Church of Ephesus, that she had tried them that said they were apostles and were not, and had found them liars (Rev. ii, 2); and yet order and office are continually confounded, and arguments and analogies drawn from one to the other, as legitimate and conclusive. Order is a separation of a number of men to certain outward privileges and distinctions, solely derived from a source without them. Office is the application, in a given sphere, of qualifications previously imparted: for one, the simple fiat of authority is all that is required; for the other, strict investigation as to the requisite qualification. As to order, its power is entirely extrinsical, and demanding to be recognized for its own authority, and that of the persons who bear it. Thus, in God’s appointment of an order, no moral, personal qualification was needful to fill it; it was sufficient that a man was lineally descended from Aaron, and the elder son naturally succeeded to the priesthood—as an heir to the title of a nobleman; in such a case to speak against the man, was to dishonour the appointment of God (Acts xxiii, 3—5); but not so in office in the Church; no authority is competent to appoint any to it who is not qualified by the Spirit for filling it; and it were little short of blasphemy to affirm that the Holy Ghost does appoint those who have not the requisites he himself has so minutely laid down; or that he first sets apart to an order and then qualifies for it. “If a man desireth

the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work; a bishop then must be blameless," &c. (1 Tim. iii, 2). What then must we gather from this special enumeration of the qualifications, but that where they were not, there the office was not? It is the ministry of the Spirit,—God allows not of mockeries; and there is no such thing in the Church as respect for an office apart from him that fills it. In the world, on the contrary, there is God's order of civil government, and respect is due to it, totally independent of the character of the person: "The powers that be are ordered of God" (Rom. xiii, 1).

The change in dispensation, is from the letter to the Spirit; and this is properly called a spiritual dispensation, because, that in it the Holy Spirit is sovereign, during the absence of Jesus, to glorify him; he is the director of its ministries, as well as giver of joy: he is the *other* Comforter, to perform all the functions of the one who was gone away. The great point is, that he shall not be hindered; but surely an ordered ministry, going back to the letter, does tend to hinder his functions and to obscure his glory. Of such a ministry, the world can take cognizance, such it will honour, and impute that to man's abilities and eloquence which alone belongs to the Spirit. Of him it is said, "whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him" (John xiv, 17). And therefore that the christian ministry should be of honour in the world, at once proves that its very character is forgotten; and just in proportion as it has become reputable, has it ceased to be powerful; whatever of real power there may be in it, has been given to man and not to God. Power must be owned because felt; and the question, "By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?" (Matt. xxi, 23) what is it, except the acknowledgment of power but refusal to own it without order, even the order of man, that is, the sanction of human appointment? The inconveniencies to be apprehended from giving freedom to the Spirit of God to act, are nothing to be compared to the posi-

tive evil of shutting him out by a fleshly order ; it may be, that people love to have it so, but it necessarily blinds to the real state of our spiritual destitution.

In the ministry of the Spirit there are two distinct departments, that which is within the Church, and that without. It is indeed true that the same individual may be, but it is not necessarily, qualified for both ; but the ministry of the pastor would not be required in the world, nor that of the evangelist in the Church. The command is, “ Go and preach the gospel to every creature :” here is the evangelist sent forth into the world ; “ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together :” here is the Church “ come together in one place.” The first and necessary qualification of the evangelist is, for himself to have been reconciled to God, and to have had put into him the “ ministry of reconciliation ” (2 Cor. v). “ We believe, and therefore do we speak.” “ Let him that heareth say, Come.” The office itself would legitimately lead from place to place, it would require one to endure hardship, to be instant in season and out of season ; continually pressing God’s message on unwilling hearers ; “ whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.” Its end is answered in the ministry of an individual, though it was the Lord’s grace to send his disciples out by two and two, and the apostles’ practice to follow, in this respect, his example. The evangelist sent into the world must necessarily need support, “ for the labourer is worthy of his hire ;” but this he is not to expect from the world, but from those who are worthy (Matt. x, 11). He is necessarily much cut off from a worldly occupation, in going from city to city, and place to place ; and therefore it would be matter of wisdom to determine how far he should be employed in the things of this life. It is the only office that is *necessarily* dependent on the bounty of others, and if he can exercise his ministry freely, so much greater his blessing, so much is one stumbling stone removed out of the way. The danger of the office

is, that it has to do with the world; there is much room for carnal excitement, and the office itself is in honour among men. Hence the reason that the character of the christian ministry has much more tended to this than to that within the Church, which is less obtrusive, and is not in honour among men, though highly honoured in the sight of the great Head of the Church. To the world the evangelist speaks with conscious authority; he delivers a message from God, the rejection of which is the rejection of God. He is God's ambassador; and the consciousness of God in the ordinance of preaching is its only real power. It is the "foolishness of preaching" which demonstrates the power and wisdom of God.

With respect to the ministry in the Church, it is not, as that of the evangelist, migratory, but stationary. It does not *necessarily* prevent a man from exercising a worldly calling, because, in fact, it does not depend upon the energy of an individual, but brethren meet together to edify one another, according to the power of the Spirit among them. Here it is that every one should be "swift to hear, slow to speak." Here there is no direct assumption of authority; he who speaks should speak as the oracles of God, throwing himself on the judgment of the Spirit in the Church.

The very sphere of the ministry does not render a maintenance a matter of necessity, and there is no reason why the most highly gifted might not be the least advanced in the world. In a word, the ministry of the Church is in the hands of the Spirit in it; and the departure from the simplicity of Christ in this instance, has led the Church to look for its edification to a hired teacher without it; Church offices, Pastor, Teacher, Elder, ought not to be recognizable by the world, and give a man any standing in it, they are of the Spirit for the edifying of the body; rare indeed is the grace which qualifies for them. The character in which the Lord delights to present himself to his people, is that of the great and good shepherd,—“the bishop and shepherd of our souls.”

What a high office, therefore, in the Church is the pastoral! truly it does command our esteem and honour. But how poor is our conception of its extent, if we confine it to mere teaching; what watchfulness, what tenderness, what care, what largeness of heart is necessarily comprised in the qualifications for this office. It is not those who are most ready to speak, but those who are marking the walk of the sheep, comforting the feeble-minded, repressing the forward, healing variances, bearing with the weak qualities utterly beyond the world's knowledge, who are most truly filling the office. This indeed would be the place of all, who, in the Church, are called to watch over one another (1 Thess. v, 14); but specially of those who took the oversight of the Church, not by constraint or for filthy lucre, but as being examples of the flock. Who is sufficient for this, but he who is living in constant self-denial, and has only one aim—the glory of the Lord? Oh, that men would learn, that to be high in office under Christ is to be nothing in the world; that their labour is not, and cannot be, appreciated by it, but “is not in vain in the Lord!”

Among the evils which have arisen to the Church, from the attempt to unite the two departments of the ministry in one man, may be noticed first of all, the undervaluing of the pastoral office. Almost all systems that have been formed by men have been looked upon as more or less extensive spheres for preaching the gospel; and hence almost all stated ministry has become properly that of the evangelist. The Church is not fed; believers are not built up on their most holy faith, because the heart of a minister is more called forth in its sympathy to those who are dead in trespasses and sins, than to those who are converted. If, indeed, there be a heart burning with love for souls, and God has given him wisdom to win them, let him take the large sphere that is set before him—“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.” But it must not be forgotten that, whilst the Lord Jesus would have the gospel preached to every creature, he himself “loved

the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. v, 26). Answerable to this is the ministry in the Church; and in order to it all the gifts severally directed, "as the Spirit listeth," are needful. The Lord did not intend his Church to depend upon the gift of any one man, but gave her all the gifts for common profit. "All things are yours,—Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas." The Church is the school where believers are to be taught "how they ought to walk to please God." The good shepherd first seeks out that which is lost, and then puts it into the fold to be guarded and fed. And whilst this is neglected, it cannot be expected, that even the work of the evangelist can be carried on in power, since he is not able to point to the Church as not of the world, and from the neglect of the means, there must be a want of that which is of great power in commending the truth—the personal holiness of those who preach it (1 Thess. ii, 10). Surely, after means have been multiplied, but with very little corresponding result, we ought to examine whether we be right in principle. And the question, whether departure from the simplicity of Christ in the work of the ministry is not the cause of the present low state of christianity, is one which ought to be gravely weighed.

Another evil which has resulted from confining the ministry to a single individual, and universally merging all offices in one, has been the positive hindrance to the Spirit. Whatever gifts he may have given in any congregation are hidden or restrained, because they cannot be exercised. This has much tended to division; any gift restrained is, through the infirmity of the flesh, apt to be valued beyond its worth. Permission for its exercise God has given in the Church; and where there is this liberty occasion for the puffing up the flesh is taken away; man is taught his own ignorance by speaking before those who are wise. To give room for the exercise of all gifts in the Church is God's plan for attaining unity, for establishment in truth, and for

the edifying of the Church (Eph. iv, 12—26). It is because this has been hindered, that we find so many running without being sent, and persons the least qualified gathering a few around them, and taking to themselves the high name of pastor.

May the Lord humble us for our sinning against his order, in the pride of our own wisdom. May he give us grace to repent, by ceasing from man, and in all simplicity of mind, throwing ourselves on the teaching of his Spirit. It is his presence alone that can give life and power to our prayers, and to our exhortations. It is true that there would be less speaking, and shorter prayers. It would be weakness in the judgment of the flesh, but it is in fact that little strength which the Lord honours (Rev. iii, 8). It is really being in the truth, and presenting to the outward eye that which we feel we are in the sight of God, poor, miserable, blind, and naked. Let us be but upright before God, and we shall find his strength made perfect in our weakness, and have the confidence that we love the truth, which is the only safeguard from delusion. "If any man will [wills to, *Gr.*] do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (John viii, 17).

What God decrees, child of his love,
Take patiently, though it may prove
The storm that wrecks thy treasure here;
Be comforted ! thou need'st not fear
What pleases God.

The wisest will is God's own will;
Rest on this anchor and be still;
For peace around thy path shall flow,
When only wishing here below
What pleases God.

AN HIGH PRIEST OF GOOD THINGS TO COME.

Heb. ix, 11.

It would indeed tend greatly both to comfort and elevate our souls, if we realized the unclouded prospect before us. That which is before us is alone proper to us as redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb, and as born of God. The present, whether sorrowful or pleasant, is only to be regarded as the times that pass over us, or through which we have to go, as we are on the way to our entering into our rest. The present good things and evil things are alike to faith, old things which have passed away, because faith is the substance of things *hoped for*. And the things hoped for are alone substantial, permanent, unshaken, and satisfying. Every desire of good which man is seeking to realize now, the saint knows can alone be realized when Jesus is manifested in glory with his saints. He has to calculate on disappointment in all circumstances, whilst he most blessedly learns that hope in the Lord in the midst of all circumstances never disappoints. Often indeed in his pilgrimage through present things will he have to say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?" But still, he knows in whom he has believed, and can say, "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God." But whilst there is the cheering thought of God's commanding his loving-kindness in the day time, yet the soul is stayed by the prospect of the uninterrupted light of God's countenance, by the prospect, not of occasional, but of uninterrupted praise.

The true spirit of worship would lead us on into

this holy scene. Our present privileges are only ours now, because of what the grace of God has made us to be before him. God calleth things that are not as though they were. Sons before him in Christ, and predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, we have the spirit of sons now. Kings and priests unto God, because washed already in the blood of Jesus, we have the spirit of praise given to us now. Hence it is the things which are to come with which we have to do. If we speak of the world, it is the world *to come* of which we speak; that is our world, the world subjected to us, and blessed by us. We know the present world as being given into other hands, and therefore it is only the scene of our trial. If we speak of man, and of God being well-pleased in man, we speak of him that is to come, of whom Adam was a type (Rom. v, 14). If we speak of "good things," they are not the good things in this life, but good things to come. There is "the evil to come," out of which the righteous are taken; there are the good things to come which the righteous enjoy. The rich man might remember that he in his lifetime had his good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. And there might have been even thankfulness for the good things, but there was no enjoyment of God—no real worship of him as far above all the blessings he had given. This is the real spirit of worship, even when in the actual possession of all that God can give, yea, when glorified ourselves, to be able to see in God, and own in him, something far more blessed than anything that we have or can have, and to find the knowledge of him and the enjoyment of him to be indeed the pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore.

We find the worship of Israel based upon God's accomplished faithfulness in their enjoyment of *present* good things. This was prescribed for them of God in the wilderness, but it only took effect in the land. Israel, as God's constituted worshipping people, had to do with the priest in questions of sin, both in the wilderness and in the land, but the *joy*

of worship was not known by them whilst they were in the wilderness. It was thus the ordinance ran: "And it shall be when thou art COME IN UNTO THE LAND which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein, that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shall put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there. And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us. And THE PRIEST shall take the basket out of thine hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God."

Here we have Israel's profession—the profession of the grace which had brought him into the present possession of the land, and of the enjoyment of the fruits of it. We have also the priest of Israel's profession, not occupied about details of sin, but more happily occupied in presenting the thanksgiving of the worshipper in the basket of first-fruits, before the altar of the Lord. This must have been the priest's most blessed service. Next comes the confession of the worshipper, "And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt . . . and the Lord hath brought us into this place, and given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God: and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee" (Deut. xxvi, 1—11).

How blessedly was the soul led of God to worship and joy. There was no element of law here, but only the thought of grace. The sense of personal unworthiness only tending to the magnifying the

grace of God which had regarded the affliction and oppression of the poor destitute. Redemption ascribed solely to the power of God, and not only known as deliverance from present misery, but as introduction into present blessing. And then the blessings actually enjoyed leading on still to the acknowledgment of God who had given them:—
“And now I have brought the first-fruits of the land which thou, O Lord, hast given me.” This is the true spirit of worship. The soul is led from the blessings enjoyed, to him who is blessed for evermore; from the gift to the giver. The joy will not be less in the gift, because there is the acknowledgment of the giver. *“Thou shalt worship before the Lord thy God”*—this is the first thing; and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee. The spirit of false worship is to rejoice in the work of one’s hands: *“they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands.”* But in true worship, God himself is the glory of the worshipper, it is in him that the soul makes her boast. There could not be an ordinance of more joy to Israel than this of the basket of first-fruits: this profession was indeed a blessed one, and the coming to the priest on such an occasion must have expanded their hearts with thankfulness.

But now the great High Priest is passed into the heavens. And whilst his service there meets all our present necessities, his priesthood connects our souls with good things to come. And we, coming to him, by faith now are enabled to make our profession, and to present our basket of first-fruits, and to worship before the Lord, and to rejoice. It was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob, to sing aloud to God their strength; and is it not equally our statute, and the law of our God unto us, to *“rejoice evermore”*? But then we must worship before the Lord first. We must be in the attitude of worshippers, in order to be able to rejoice before the Lord, and rejoice in his own blessings.

First, we have our profession connected with priesthood. Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Our worship is based on our profession, and our profession is maintained by the priesthood of Jesus. Seeing then we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. It is indeed a lofty profession that we make: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." This is our profession *now*. Glory will be the actual exercise of that which grace has made us to be. "By grace we *are* saved." Before God we stand as his own grace has made us; not as we know ourselves to be in our actual circumstances. We are even now blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. It is the Spirit alone which makes us to know, and gives us to enjoy these blessings here, which are freely given us of God. We are not in the inheritance which God has made ours; but we have the Holy Spirit of promise as the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of promise, and Jesus is the High Priest of good things to come. The Holy Spirit comforts now by shewing "things to come," such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive. But when we look to Jesus, we see him already entered into the good things, and entered there for us. It is one of the good things to come that the world to come is to be subjected to Christ and his saints. We do not yet see all things subjected to him, but we do see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, on account of suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour. It is thus that his exaltation maintains us in the profession that we shall judge the world. God commands all men to repent, upon the ground that he is about to judge the world in righteousness

by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. As risen, he is to judge the world in righteousness; but he has tasted death for us all, and as risen too we shall reign with him, and order this world in righteousness. What a solemn joy would the spirit of real worship afford to the soul, if it was thus connected with coming good things. It would exalt, it would sanctify, at the very time the soul was owning its absolute dependence on grace. "A Syrian ready to perish" would be the real expression of that soul. A sinner dead in trespasses and sins, quickened by God's grace, and brought into union with Christ, would never forget his own previous condition, and would gladly remember it, to ascribe worthiness to him alone to whom it is due.—"Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and made us kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth."

To be actually in the sanctuary before God is one of the good things to come. But hope carries us there now, because Jesus the forerunner is there for us already entered. We are exhorted to hold fast "the profession of our hope without wavering." Our hope is actually to be where Jesus is for us now. But in spirit we can worship as being there, because Jesus is there for us—he is a High Priest of good things to come. It is that which we hope for which stamps our character on us. It is so in man; the object he aims at gives the mould to his character. And this is most blessedly true of the saint. "It hath not yet been manifested what we shall be, but this we know, that when he (Jesus) shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and every one that hath this hope in him (i.e. Jesus) purifieth himself, even as he is pure." If there be hesitation in our souls as to the accomplished work of Christ, that he has by himself purged our sins; if we consider not the High Priest of our profession as exercising his ministry for us as already brought nigh to God by

the blood he hath shed, so that our hope be pardon and acquittal rather than glory, it will stamp its character on our worship, and make it cold and distant. Neither shall we see the purification of the sanctuary as our purification, but shall be content with the standard of conventional righteousness. How deeply important it is to recognize our profession as a profession of hope, and to own the priesthood of Jesus, not only as meeting all present failure, but as enabling us to maintain our profession of things hoped for. We can, and we ought to come before God as those who can now say, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: *thou maintainest my lot*. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage." This is our basket of first-fruits, for faith is the substance of things hoped for. Jesus, as risen and ascended now, knows the path of life; he knows that in God's presence there is fulness of joy; he already knows the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore, for it is there he is exalted. But he knows them for us. He is a High Priest to us of these good things to come. Our blessing is to consider Him.

Mansions in the Father's house is the most blessed portion of the saints' good things to come. They have not come unto them now; in this sense they are not come into the land. But Jesus the Son is in the Father's house, and he comforts us by telling us that there is room there for us as well as for him. He is preparing a place for us, and will come again and receive us to himself, that where he is we may also be. But the great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, is passed into the heavens for us, and presents us as sons; and in the spirit of sons, because he is there, we worship now. How blessed is this. God would not have us to wait till we are manifested sons, in order to enter on our happy worship of the Father; but whilst we are sons only in hope, by having the spirit of sons given to us, and having Jesus the Son before God, we can cry, Abba, Father, even now. How truly are we saved by hope. How

needful is it now for our souls' strength and joy, to have Jesus for us in heaven, and the Holy Spirit in us here, that we might both hold fast our profession, and use it now in holy worship. We know what it is because of having the first-fruits of the Spirit to groan within ourselves, and these painful groanings would hinder the maintenance of our profession; but then Jesus is on high for us, and we only wait his coming forth to be manifested in all that we profess already to have received. Then we shall have not only the spirit of adoption, but the adoption itself—standing in our own proper place as sons, even in fully manifested heavenly glory. We anticipate this place now, because Jesus the Son of God is passed into the heavens, and when the good things to come are actually ours in possession and enjoyment, our worship will still be in him and through him. We know so painfully the need of Jesus as the High Priest that can have compassion on the ignorant and those that are out of the way, that our souls little reach forth to the good things to come, so as to give its high and cheering character to our worship. He stoops down to our necessities and washes our feet: but how little do we consider him as the High Priest of our profession, and all the good things to come, which that profession involves. It is one sad mark of declension that this very word profession has become of such equivocal signification. It is often taken to imply that we are not in truth what we profess to be. But it is a blessed word. All that God by his grace has made us to be in Christ, which will only be manifested in glory, we profess to be now; and the priesthood of Jesus enables us to maintain our profession. All the good things which he by his grace has given to us, God reveals to us by his Spirit now, and therefore we worship God in the spirit now, on the very ground of being already blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We wait not to be blessed, we are already blessed. All that God has made Christ to be unto us, unseen, unmanifested, and only taught the soul by God him-

self, we take up now, and say, Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. Our profession involves all that we are in Christ, all that Christ is unto us, and all the good things that God has prepared for them that love him. Surely we have a basket of first-fruits indeed to bring now to the Priest to present to the Lord. And is it not often so in the season when the soul first has known liberty? Has there not been the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, and the soul has said, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. But we often forget them; and when the soul comes to be exercised in the truth before God, proving what sin really is, when it becomes acquainted with the deceitfulness as well as the desperate wickedness of the heart, the joy is frequently turned into mourning. But here it is that we find peculiarly the value of Christ as the High Priest of the good things to come. Whilst the soul is learning experimentally the need of his present ministry in meeting present failure, how blessedly is it led on through the priesthood of Jesus to the time of undisturbed worship and of unhindered praise before God. No sin then to confess, but only praise for mercy and grace accomplished in glory. This is the value of his being the High Priest of good things to come, that even *now* it can be said to us, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, making confession in his name." "I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth," for in the midst of our changeableness, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.

ALONE WITH GOD.

Alone with thee, my God! alone with thee!
Thus would'st thou have it still—thus let it be.
There is a secret chamber in each mind,
Which none can find
But he who made it,—none beside can know
Its joy or woe.
Oft may I enter it, oppressed by care,
And find thee there;
So full of watchful love, thou know'st the why
Of ev'ry sigh.
Then all thy righteous dealing shall I see,
Alone with thee, my God! alone with thee!

The joys of earth are like a summer's day,
Fading away;
But in the twilight we may better trace
Thy wondrous grace.
The homes of earth are emptied oft by death
With chilling breath;
The loved departed guest may ope no more
The well-known door.
Still in that chamber seal'd, thou'lt dwell with me,
And I with thee, my God! alone with thee!

The world's false voice would bid me enter not
That hallow'd spot;
And earthly thoughts would follow on the track,
To hold me back,
Or seek to break the sacred peace within,
With this world's din.
But, by thy grace, I'll cast them all aside,
Whate'er betide,
And never let that cell deserted be,
Where I may dwell alone, my God, with thee!

The war may rage!—keep thou the citadel,
And all is well.
And when I learn the fulness of thy love,
With thee above,—
When ev'ry heart oppress'd by hidden grief
Shall gain relief,—
When ev'ry weary soul shall find its rest
Amidst the blest,—
Then all my heart, from sin and sorrow free,
Shall be a temple meet, my God, for thee!

ON CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

ONE principal purpose which the Lord had in view, by continuing for a season in their present state the people who should be gathered together in one, through His death, was that a practical witness of the character of God might be given to the world; and this in the joint testimony of those who, by one Spirit, were united together; and who, though not indeed taken out of the world, were to be delivered from the evil of it. Such was the Church, whilst continuing in holy separateness; it was a living warning to all around—"of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." But where is that witness now? A long and dreary period has passed away since the Church stood as a burning and a shining light; and the very name of Christian was sufficient to brand its possessor as an enemy of the world; (James iv. 4:) its failure is continually and painfully exhibited in the overwhelming mass of nominal profession which now assumes its place, and the perplexity and inconsistency which tarnish the walk of many a child of God in the present day.

But though, as a collective body, the Church has lost the place of witness, still is each believer a temple of the Holy Ghost; and, as such, *answerable for being led by the Spirit* in all the circumstances in which he may be placed. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, **THEY** are the sons of God." One thing is clear, that with the world the Spirit of Christ can have no connexion; for it must ever lead from the world to God. As professing, therefore, to be guided by that Spirit, it is a sure and safe criterion in every case of doubt and perplexity, to consider how far God has fellowship in that which we do. (Col. iii. 17.) The present day is so peculiarly characterized by the inconsistent walking of believers, and the efforts of Satan to unite them with one or another of the manifold forms of worldliness, that it may be well to notice some of the prevailing evils, which have contributed, in no small degree, to lower the standard of christian practice, remembering that the Word of God is clear: "All that is in the world is not of the Father;" and that upon all the natural heart desires, Scripture passes one unqualified judgment:

"That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

There is one special snare to which believers are peculiarly liable in the present time; more perhaps than in any other since Paul warned Timothy **against** the ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως, "the oppositions of science falsely so called"—words which so well describe the character of the antithetical philosophy of the present day—we speak of the seductions of the intellect, to which many who may be free from the grosser forms of self-seeking are peculiarly exposed. The expressions of Scripture respecting the world and worldliness are too often qualified by them to suit their own particular tastes and propensities; they easily profess to abjure that for which they have little or no *natural* inclination, whilst they strenuously contend for that which is only the world in its more refined state; but which is more dangerous, because more delusive, than the temptations peculiarly addressed to the lower tendencies of human nature. The two are distinguished by the Apostle as the desires of the *flesh* and of the *mind*. (Eph. ii. 3.) And verily the spiritual idolatry, which is the sin of the present day, the consummation of all that man is capable of doing against God, is infinitely more dangerous from its subtlety, and the manifold phases which it assumes in the mind, than all the other depths into which a wayward heart and the devices of the enemy may beguile us. We argue not against the improvement of the mind. Most assuredly it is desirable that every faculty should be fully and healthfully developed; and *education*, in the proper sense of the word, *i.e.*, of opening all the powers of the mind, and directing them to God's glory, is to be looked to. But the error against which we fervently contend is that of making the means the end. The desire for the improvement of the mind, considered by itself, is but a refined selfishness if it stops there, and does not train every power of the intellect with a direct view to the service of God. All that tends not to this service, all that may not in some way be wielded as an instrument in this work, is for self alone; and its results will invariably be found unprofitable, however splendid such acquirements may appear to the mind which judges of their value by the proportion of credit which they obtain amongst men. For let it be considered that life, whether natural or spiritual, is—ACTION; and, in the Christian, action constant and undivided for God's glory. Nay more, the mind which

is held to be the most informed and accomplished is in fact but a wilderness, if it knows not the only True Wisdom. It is grievous when we look, not merely to the pursuits of the natural man, following the wanderings of his own mind, and seeking a phantom which eludes his grasp, but to the objects which engage so much of the attention even of God's children, to see such an infinity of labour bestowed on what is *called* truth, but is *not so*; and the practical denial of its only source—the knowledge never ending, never wearying of God—that knowledge which also opens a field for the richest and most varied application of every intellectual power, and maintains them all in true and healthful proportion. Anything short of this (from which it is manifest that the great mass of what is called the intelligence of the world is systematically and voluntarily alienated) is but the laborious idleness of the mind seeking happiness in something *out of God*, and the evidence that it has never yet acknowledged the full length and breadth of the Spirit's testimony concerning Jesus—"That in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." It is well to realize how much God can do—how little man. All human aids, indeed, we take with thankfulness, as from Providence, who orders these things, as well as all others, to work together for His own glory, though men are little conscious of it; but they are still but *aids*; and one ray of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God has more real effect in expanding the mind than all the combined instrumentality of human genius and learning besides. Things are not depreciated, as has been rightly said, when placed on their true level. The machinery in ordinary use is not undervalued by the assertion, that when it has raised man to its utmost reach, God can raise him infinitely higher. At a time when mere human power is rated so high, and the productions of that which is purely man's intellect, are gazed upon by many, as in no small degree approximating to a participation in the divine nature, it is well to remember the terms in which Scripture speaks of all that descends to us from Adam, not merely in this body of death, but in the mind which dwells within it. "There is none that understandeth," is God's estimate of all the boasted light of human reason, though *we* know it not till informed by the Spirit, "Having the understanding darkened"—the universal character of man—however bright the array of natural powers with which he is gifted may appear. And let

it not be forgotten that the source of much of this power is "the tree of knowledge of good and evil;" so that men ignorantly pride themselves upon that knowledge which found an entrance into the mind only through the first act of disobedience against God, and which, as to all its diversified semblances, proves itself in every natural man to be the legitimate fruit of the tree from which it sprang, which was good indeed in itself, but was obtained by the subtlety of Satan, in disbelief of God's sufficiency. It is instructive to observe, that when Cain went forth from the presence of the Lord, the inventions and luxuries of life began; and, doubtless, power in the earth continued exclusively with his descendants, until the "sons of God," the holy seed, united themselves with the children of men, and all trace of separation in the fear of God was lost in the indiscriminate exhibition of self-will and violence which overspread the world.

The child of this world often professes to approach God by science and the study of nature. And here, again, the Christian is called upon to discriminate. In that which is truly and properly the work of God in creation, he cannot but rejoice; yea, and render "glory, honour, and power" to Him "whose hand has made all these things;" for they are His and are the expression of His wondrous mind. We see in them (what we cannot see in the works of fallen man) the evidence and expression of His eternal power and Godhead; and so far glory in them. But as sons of God, we are called to know Him in a character far more excellent and blessed—even as THE FATHER. And this knowledge we do not gain from *without*; for it is the Spirit's special office "*to tell us plainly of the Father.*" All other ways by which men may profess to approach Him, bring them no farther than the Gentile outer court of the Holy of Holies. A spiritual worshipper alone can enter in.

Let us learn by the example of one who had tried *everything*; and not only sought out and gathered to himself all earthly glory and pleasure, such as fell to the lot of none, before or after—"for what can the man do that cometh after the king?"—but applied to the discovery, such wisdom as none ever had, and, moreover, exceeded all in knowledge, "For he spake of trees from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes; and there came of all people to hear of the wisdom of

Solomon, from all kings of the earth which had heard of his wisdom." Yet what is the end? "I, the preacher, was king over Israel, in Jerusalem: and I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered."

The character of the intellect of the present day, by which so many "professing themselves to be wise" are led astray, is but one of the manifold forms of human perverseness setting itself up against God, with more refinement it may be, but with no less determinateness of opposition, than in those who impugn God's declared will, because he has not written a revelation of it in the skies. "The Greeks seek after wisdom:" hence have arisen the philosophical expositions of Christianity and "metaphysical projections" of the christian scheme, peculiar to this age and to the second century—all only the attempts of man to penetrate, by the mere subtlety of human reason, the mysterious doctrine of the cross, which is either never reached, or, if seen, continues as ever—"foolishness."

Take another view. The state of the world, as ignorant of God, is this—"Rejoicing in the work of their own hands." (Acts vii. 41.) But are there not many whose lives should be a practical testimony against it all, who appear as though their hearts were in it as much as others? It is wisdom to learn from an enemy: let us hear the testimony of the sharp-sighted world against the inconsistencies of believers.

"As far as we are enabled to discover, they (the serious) testify no reluctance to follow the footsteps of the worldly in the road to wealth; we look in vain for any distinguishing mark in this respect, between the two classes of society; that which is 'of the world,' and that which is 'not of the world.' All appear to be actuated by the same common impulse to push their fortunes in life; all exhibit the same ardent, active, enterprising zeal in their respective pursuits."

Again—

"They live in the common haunts of men, gratify their common desires, engage in their common pursuits, partake of their common indulgences; they toil along with the worldly through paths beset with temptation in various shapes; they run with all imaginable alacrity and cheerfulness in the race

after fame, and honours, and emoluments, where the faith and principles of men are most severely tried; they acquiesce in all the devices of luxury, to pamper the children of prosperity, and manifest the same indifference with others, to the cost of human happiness and innocence, at which these may be supplied." (*Edinburgh Review*.)

These answers come from no friend to God's truth; yet they are but too true, and may serve to shame many a professed disciple, who is occupied by "the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things." We may add one remark in reference to the children of religious parents. In too many instances, the same anxiety for placing them in situations which the world counts honourable, is manifested as in worldly families; and for this end, many a believer will not hesitate to place his child in scenes of temptation, and in circumstances of exposure to evil, where it cannot be expected that the care of the Spirit of God will follow him. The result is, that we believe it will be found in numberless instances, that religious parents have been visited with a curse upon their children, just in proportion as they themselves have been involved in the world.

Is there not too little consistent exemplification of the apostle's command—"Let your moderation be known unto all men;" too little proof of our "counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ our Lord?" On the contrary, does not the deceitfulness of the heart, or carelessness of the Lord's glory, lead many to seek by various sophistries to satisfy themselves that the Christian may have fellowship with the world, at least in *some* things, if not in *all*? But if there be any truth in *every Scripture declaration* respecting the world, this one thing is certain, that he who argues *deliberately* how far he may continue in the world, proves that his affections are in it altogether. The application of the expressions of Scripture is often indeed sought to be evaded by the question, What is the world? But is it probable that the Scripture would set forth so pregnant, so *critical* a principle, enforced by such fearful warnings, and then leave to every man's notions what he was to avoid? The truth is, its language is infinitely more exact than is commonly supposed; and the every-day conversation of men, in their common use of the term "the world," invariably expresses the thing against which we are warned. But, in fact, they who ask this question are able full well to answer it them-

selves. When they speak of rising in the world, of getting credit and a name in it, they know precisely what "the world" means: but when anything is to be given up for Christ's sake, a sudden indistinctness invests everything; and the unfaithful heart is allowed to draw its own line between what is, and what is not of the world. But in all the various appearances which it assumes, however fair and attractive to the mind and eye, it is *exclusively* spoken of in Scripture as *a thing to be overcome*. God has laid down a broad principle, which he who runs may read; and love and faithfulness to Christ alone, can be the true guide in applying it. It is judging of things rather by our own thoughts concerning them, than by the plain statements of the Word of God, which keeps men in it; in truth, the great secret of conformity to the world, is *taking for granted that things are as they should be*. It has been truly said, that "There are many saints, but very few Christians;" many who owe to Christ the unspeakable debt of forgiveness through His blood, few who are willing to follow Him who has so loved them, even to the renunciation of all things. And what was His distinct unqualified testimony against the world? That "the deeds thereof are evil;" and whilst Himself in it, it was simply in witness for God and *against* them. A disciple could not remain in it, for the call was ever, "Follow me;" although, like Jesus, he would be habitually there, as far as he was enabled to bring God's testimony to bear upon the consciences of men by his own conversation in the world. And this is the true answer to the question, "How far may we mingle with the world." Even as far and as often as we can witness for Jesus. One consideration which at once overrules all others in a Christian's mind is this—that Christ's mission, as regards His people, was for this sole object—"that he might deliver us from this present evil world;" and, therefore, in pleading for conformity to the world, we plead for conformity to that, deliverance from which cost nothing less than the death of the Son of God. The practical question for the believer is, Can I have fellowship with that with which He had none? The example of others is often pleaded, but to our own Master we either stand or fall. If many Christians are mingled with it, this only renders it the more imperative on any who see the mischief which is thus occasioned in the Church of God, to give by their lives a more distinct protest; and thus it becomes not only a matter of faithfulness to God, but of love for the souls of others.

"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work;" "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Thus did Jesus speak of His own labour of love; and who that professes to be a follower of Him, can set a lower measure for His own life than his Master's, who has left us "an example that we should follow his steps?" Not indeed that He has no natural fellowship with all that charms the senses or the mind of man; but the melody of the songs of heaven is heard above the voice of earthly music, and the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory seen by the eye of faith, outshines the transient sparkle of earthly splendour. "THE TIME IS SHORT!" Most blessed word, whether for the stirring up of our diligence in our Lord's work, that when He cometh, we may be found doing His will; or for the gladdening of our souls in the prospect of the near approach of Him whose coming shall be "as the light of the morning when the sun ariseth; even a morning without clouds." (2 Sam. xxiii. 4.) Let us try everything that the world holds dear by the glory of that day, by the power and coming of Jesus, by the joy of His saints, in whom He will come to be glorified; and then let our hearts decide whether we are ready to count all as dung, that we may win Christ.

One thing more remains. If we are looking with the mind of Christ upon a world which lieth in wickedness, it cannot be with a desire to share in those things which bind down the hearts of those who are deceived by the god of this world; yea, which are the very objects that render it so hard even for Christians to leave it; nor in the unfaithful course which temporizes with the evil, but rather in the spirit with which Jesus beheld Jerusalem and wept over it. True love for the souls of others will lead to a clear and distinct disavowal of all connexion with the world, that the testimony may lead those who are involved in it to see their danger. But the charity, falsely so called, of the present day, is the most murderous principle of Satan, who first deceives, and then destroys.

The days are few and evil; the long-suffering of a God of love is waiting still, but we know not for how long. May He give us grace to do His work in the "little while!"

Second Edition, Price 1d.

W. H. BROOM, 29, PATERNOSTER ROW.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

MATTHEW xiii.

I WOULD say a few words on this chapter, or collection of parables, in the deep feeling of the imperfectness with which any of us understand "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven;" and this, not merely from personal feelings as to individual weakness, but from the scope and extent of the divine wisdom in them; a wisdom knit up with and developing the whole of the divine counsels; a wisdom, therefore, not to be acquired in mere detached passages, but in the comprehension of the mind of God which flows from the abundance of the Spirit exercised in spiritual application to scripture. Nevertheless, I feel that our portion, as believers, is to be given to know them—our blessed portion; and we may be allowed, in the confidence of his love, to breathe out also what we may have apprehended of the mind of the Spirit, and to present it to the judgment of our brethren. With this feeling of confidence in the Lord, I shall open out what appears to me to be the order and power of this collection of parables. Their detailed meaning may, perhaps, be the subject of some subsequent observations. I would remark, then, in the first place, that the phrases, "kingdom of heaven," and also, "kingdom of your or their Father," are peculiar to St. Matthew—expressions manifestly not unimportant in force. The only exception at all is the use of the latter expression by implication, in the instruction to pray in Luke xi.: an exception not without interest, but which I can dwell on here only to observe, that the kingdom in every instance we are taught to pray for, is the Father's kingdom. In

these parables we have both—the term “kingdom of heaven” being common to all save the first; that of “kingdom of your Father” being found in the explanation of the second of the parables. The importance of the former expression is seen, not only in its being the positive subject of the parables, except the first, but from the emphatic declaration of our Lord: “Every scribe instructed into the *kingdom of heaven* will bring forth out of his treasure, things new and old.”* The scribe, being well taught in the law of Moses, could, therefore, bring forth the old things; and being “instructed into the kingdom of heaven,” could bring forth out of his treasures, therefore, new things. He was to have, indeed, new things, but he was not to give up the old; what he had learnt as a scribe, were treasures in the estimation of Christ, to be brought forth by the scribe “instructed into the kingdom of heaven.” I consider these parables, then, as a full prophetic statement of the character and detail of the circumstances in which the kingdom of heaven would be placed. There are seven parables in all—a common circumstance expressive of completeness, or perfectness, in prophetic statements, which the attentive reader of scripture cannot fail to have observed; of these, six are similitudes of the kingdom of heaven—the first, not. The act described in the first, being an act of the Son of man before his ascension; and its results, also, such as might be exhibited in individuals before as well as after it. This parable declares the agency of the kingdom and its particular results; the others, the dispensation of the kingdom. To recur to things new and old:—the fact of the “kingdom of heaven” might well be called an “old thing;” one con-

* I would remark on this expression, that we are taught to hold the continuing value of Jewish prophetic expectation, of all that a scribe in the law of Moses would have drawn from the Old Testament, and that distinct from the *expectation* introduced by the gospel.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

3

versant in Daniel with the hopes of the old law might well have looked for such a thing—the order of its development and position, “a new thing;” which was to be revealed consequent upon the manifestation, and (we must add, though not here developed*) the rejection and resurrection of

* The kingdom of God is a distinct expression from the kingdom of heaven ; although in many respects so identified, that the same things could be affirmed about it ; thus it could be said that the kingdom of God was at hand ; that was most true, as it could be said also that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. But at the same time they were of very distinct import, for it was matter of faith to know that the “kingdom of God was come amongst them” (See Gr., Luke xi. 20 ; xvii. 21) ; so the Lord makes use of expressions never used of the kingdom of heaven—to know that the kingdom of heaven was not, but was “at hand” (Gr., Matt. iv. 17) ; whereas the same Evangelist, or rather the Spirit of God by him, in speaking of the kingdom of God, immediately changes his phrase to the one noticed in St. Luke (Gr., Matt. xii. 29). The kingdom of God was necessarily there when the Son of God was there ; in a word, when God was there. The kingdom of heaven, as the development of God’s *purpose*, could not be there while he was there ; it resulted from the Lord’s going away into heaven. The kingdom of God is the exercise or exhibition of the ruling power of God under any circumstances, in the wisdom of God. The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of God in its heavenly character. In *dispensation* this is set up by *the rejection of the King of God’s kingdom by the world* ; and while it ought to have been known, even while he was upon earth, by faith, is known *to* faith, by Jesus the Head, the Lamb slain, sitting on the throne of the Father. The kingdom of God, therefore, was amongst the Jews, when he, the Son of God, Jesus, was there, and they ought to have known it—and the kingdom of heaven was at hand. By the earthliness of men, however, instead of gathering the Gentiles to the Jews, the Messiah being recognized, it was known only (as in God’s counsels and wisdom meant to be) by the rejection of him, and the exaltation to the place “where he was before” of the Son of man who was the Lord from heaven, and Son of man in heaven. The kingdom of heaven (his kingdom was not of this world) was set up, continuing, as regards the Church, till the time when the saints, in the Father’s kingdom, raised with Jesus at his second coming, shall know the blessedness of the rule of the Son of God and man, in the whole scene which once rejected him, now brought under his sway and theirs (still in that sense, the kingdom of heaven to those below), when they witness the blessedness of heavenly rule, while dwelling “kings and priests unto God,” in the quiet and secure fulness of the Father’s house—sons with him. This, too, more properly is the kingdom of man (compare Dan. vii.) ; for under the exalted Man and his saints all things are put. Had Jesus not been rejected, it

A 2

Christ the Son. The fact absolutely revealed in prophetic testimony, was the giving of a kingdom to the Son of man. The learning that the heavens do rule, was a lesson to be taught in the expected suppression and setting aside of Gentile domination. Yet an earthly dominion in the Jewish people was an expectation which every Jew (taking prophecy literally, as every Jew must), because he was a Jew, must have justly held upon belief in the prophetic declaration. In the midst of these, perhaps confused, yet just, and in one sense, believing apprehensions, our Lord came in with a definite declaration, that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand." That "the kingdom of heaven" was merely the true invisible Church of God, is an explanation which cannot for a moment be maintained consistently with a single statement of these parables and of analogous ones. That it was merely the visible Church of God, is neither consistent with what we find in this chapter nor any adequate representation of the matter, as is manifest from the parables of the treasure and the pearls. The *rule* of heaven is the simple force of the expression "the kingdom of heaven." Earthly dominion was exercised by the Gentiles unrighteously—earthly dominion was ex-

would have been the kingdom of God (still it is surely so in character, for he is God, and it is God's kingdom), he would have been righteously subject, "having taken upon him the form of a servant," and as such come, "not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him." And it is thus, I apprehend, the Son shall be subject, when God—not the Father, which would be confounding everything, and not be what the word teaches—but "*God*—shall be all in all," Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but the rule taken out of man's hands, into which it had been put through the obedience of Christ. Therefore it is not until after the resurrection that he says, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth," &c. All things are delivered unto him as the Son of God, as heir of all, in whom all centres. This inheritance he has not yet taken. But, at present, "all power is given unto him" as the appointed Man, according to the glorious mystery in which, as the Son, for whom (and by whom) all things were made; he took it up as the Redeemer in the person of Jesus. But the power was given to him as the obedient Man.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

5

pected by the Jews, and expected, though true, unrighteously; as was shewn by their rejection of "the Holy One of God," who came from heaven—"the Son of man"—"the King of the Jews." Most important then, and a point of sustaining faith, to one who might think that it had been "he who should have redeemed Israel," was it to recognize in this word "the kingdom of heaven," that a resurrection Lord might hold its power; and anomalous and apparently failing as their position might have been, to learn, not only now spiritual things, but that the kingdom of heaven was that which, even in dispensation, was the mind and order of God's counsels. Hence we find it so especially referred to in Matthew, the gospel more particularly of dispensation and prophetic testimony. It would manifestly carry me into too large a subject here, to enter farther into this most interesting point of the distinct character of the gospels, the evidences of which in three of them are prominent; in the other arise from a number of minute particulars. I mention the distinction here, as shewing the ground on which "the kingdom of heaven" and "the kingdom of their Father" appear to be used in Matthew's gospel alone. It was a gentle unfolding, though full declaration, that the order of things now coming in was of its own character, maintaining the hope given as coming from God; one which in result, indeed, we know to be founded in the resurrection, but which in its testimony then claimed repentance only on the part of the Jew: the connection of which shall never find its manifested accomplishment till the millennial glory in the risen saints, and the repentant Jew, gathered together in one in Christ, sustaining in resurrection life and power the blessings of the Jews on earth, and its consequences; at the same time being the companion and the servant too of the joy of the saints, risen into fellowship with him in his Father's house as sons. Our Lord, however, in this chapter, unfolds its actual characters, and we must

endeavour to bring in "the new things" of "the kingdom," to understand fully the ground on which the kingdom of heaven now stands. We have here two other kingdoms—"the kingdom of their Father," *i.e.*, of the righteous; and "the kingdom of the Son of man." In neither of these, properly speaking, are we now. The Son of man shall do so and so, and "then shall the righteous," &c. *

These kingdoms are the full development of that which now rests in an anomalous and ambiguous state (glorious and blessed indeed, but still ambiguous† as regards its manifested results), to wit, "the kingdom of God's dear Son," the kingdom of the Son of God as sitting upon the Father's throne. This is not the kingdom of the Son of man—it is not the kingdom of the Father—but the kingdom of the Son of God sitting on his Father's throne; the Lamb rejected, slain, sitting on the right hand of God, or in the midst of the throne. I believe this to be the great mystery of the present order of the kingdom, the promise to be "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with *me* on my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on

* This gospel is properly the Jewish gospel of Messiah (while consequently showing the passing away of the present and introduction of a new order of things), saints are therefore called by the term "righteous," or "just." "Saints," more properly speaking, is a Gentile name, or, at least, either a Christian one, or applicable to the sanctified remnant of the last days, as separated out of the mass, though both terms are true of either class. It is a revelation to the then believing Jew, it being true still, that, in consequence of the rejection of Christ, and the purpose of God contained therein, the believer's portion would not be in the Son's kingdom upon earth, but in the Father's.

† This I believe to be the real subject of the Revelation, and the first chapters to exhibit this; to clothe within itself, indeed, the glorious result seen through faith, but to be that by which we can understand, as regards the kingdom, the anomaly of present circumstances, intermediate between the rejection of the Son of man, and his manifestation in the irrefutable glory of his own kingdom, when the righteous also shall be in the Father's. Let us understand and be patient till *he* takes to him his great power and reigns.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

7

his throne," where no saint ever sat, none but he whose right it is.

This principle, or glorious truth, of the Son sitting on the Father's throne, as the present subject of faith, will be found to run through the whole of our Lord's language in St. John, and give the character of the whole present state of things. Hence the Spirit is said to be sent down from the Father, because it was to bring us, not only into fellowship with Jesus, but into the understanding of sonship with the Father, in whose house and kingdom the righteous were to dwell and shine forth. Now these parables in St. Matthew are just the shewing forth of the planting and results of this kingdom of heaven, in the sitting of Jesus on the throne of God in power unseen, and ministration of the Spirit according to the Father's will, and "a Lamb as it had been slain," yea, and in the midst of the throne, but in which he had not taken the earth as his actual portion.

There is another connection which will illustrate the language of these parables—I mean the development of the hope of Israel in Ps. lxxviii. compared with the application of verse 2, with the 35th verse of this chapter. There was no riddle simply in historical facts, but there was a most important lesson and mystery in the total failure of Israel; the Israel of God in the earth totally failing in the midst of all deliverances and blessings, and then set up in stability in David their king, it was the kingdom of David connected with the Jew. But there were other riddles. (Ps. lxxviii. 1; Matt. xiii. 35. See original.) The great riddle of the kingdom of heaven in its present dispensation—"things new" (besides David's reign of Christ over the Jews).

Our Lord, as the prophet of Israel, and the kingdom which now reached out to the world, takes two positions in these parables, or rather, string of prophecies, which are the two parts of prophecy filled

up in him in whom every office was fulfilled. The Church in order required no prophecy,* nor Israel either. In disorder the prophetic testimony had two offices: the testimony of that disorder, and the methods of God's purposes as paramount to human disorder; judgment against the one, and the method of God's plans of grace, the purposes of God in their moral character and wisdom of counsel. Both are assumed or recognized by the Spirit, as exhibited by our Lord in this chapter. The first we have exhibited in the great prophetic mission of Isaiah, chap. vi. where the seeing the full revealed glory of Jehovah necessarily involves those not seeing that glory, now it was revealed, in the consequences of judicial blindness. This was fulfilled in our Lord: there was the full glory of Jehovah and the Spirit of revelation, and the word, therefore, of judicial blindness applied directly; and he speaks this to them in parables. A comparison of the language both of Ezekiel and Zechariah will much confirm this observation: "Then shalt thou know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee." (Zech. ii. 11.) "In that day thy mouth shall be opened to him that is escaped." (Ezek. xxiv. 57.) This prophetic character is attached to the parables in verse 13: the other prophetic character is opening out to the remnant, by these very riddles, the mysteries of the kingdom, understood when the Spirit has revealed Christ, according to the measure of that revelation. "Unto you it is given to know." This declared in Ps. lxxviii. is adverted to in ver. 35. Note, here the Lord acts on the measure of blindness, in judgment, as on the measure of light in giving more—a very awful consideration, yet sure.

Thus we see the character of the whole chapter—to wit, Christ's prophetic testimony upon the rejection of his word by the Jews: the order of the divine kingdom during the absence of the Son of

* This is not meant prophecy in the sense of edification and comfort, of course.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

9

man consequent upon his rejection and assumption of his own throne, the ministration of power in the hands of the Son of man, with the closing scene of that order, the assumption of the righteous into the Father's kingdom in the brightness "of the sun," *i.e.*, Christ himself; the purging out the Son of man's kingdom, the field in which the tares were; the declaration of the intrinsic excellence and value with the beauty of the kingdom, and the judgment of the visible Church, the net-full gathered out of the sea.

I would now follow, a little, the order of the parables or prophetic declarations themselves. The first, I have observed, is no similitude of the kingdom at all; but the sowing of the seed, by which its ministration was carried into effect, a general parable, the general instrument, and, therefore, stated previously to the judicial blindness of the Jews, and not made a similitude of the kingdom of heaven, but the word of the kingdom, the details of the operation or hindrance of which are most blessedly and beautifully marked. The following six parables are similitudes of the kingdom of heaven, but there is a marked distinction in them; the explanations of the first of the six, and the last three of these parables, are addressed to the disciples alone; the former three being addressed to them and the multitude at large. The first three contain the ostensible position and result of the kingdom in the world, of which men might be more or less cognizant, or which might be addressed to them. The latter three, and their explanation, are either the result in full development, the result in God's hands, or the intrinsic character and value of the kingdom work, as in the mind of the Spirit developing the mind of the Lord; this was addressed to the disciples especially. Farther, I would remark, as the first three are the kingdom as seen in the world, and the last three as known in the mind of God, so is the contrast between them more definite still. The first is the

sowing abroad in the world, the last is the separative process of the actual net-full (the quantum gathered out of the sea) now dragged to shore. The two intermediate ones of the first three are, one, the external organization into which the kingdom grows up into the world: the other, the diffusion of doctrine over the mass, which the Lord characterises as leaven, the import of which is given elsewhere. The two intermediate ones of the latter three are, the first, the value of the hidden treasure in the field, the real glory of the Church, as known by the mind and discovery of the Lord, though not now brought out, for which he was content to buy the field, to take the world in its present worthless condition. The application of this is most important. The second is the moral beauty of its grace in the eye of God, meeting the mind of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, the estimate of the grace in the Church by Christ, and the Spirit of Christ. I believe, also, the first of the former two answers to or is the contrast of the first of the latter two, and the latter of the latter. The last parable manifestly discloses the judicial process on the body gathered to shore, a question quite distinct from his judgment of the world.

I have now, I believe, distinctly traced the order and structure of the parables; an attempt at their interpretation remains; I shall only remark on those which are the likeness of the kingdom of heaven, and only by way of heads. Of the first, we have our Lord's own interpretation, in which I have only to direct the attention to the simple force of the terms upon which the Spirit of God must throw its light for our understanding "this word of the kingdom." We have seen, generally, that the first three are its position or character of the kingdom in the world; so we have here, "the field is the world," and nothing else; nor does the judicial process refer to the judgment of even the nominal Church, that is subsequently in the last parable. Christ sowed

the good seed of the kingdom in the world; and the devil sowed tares there with craft amongst it while men slept, "perverse men" "ordained to this condemnation." The power of extermination was not given (to wit, out of the world) to the Church, the servants of the householder: they must "both grow together until the harvest." It was no service to Christ, then, to kill a heretic; the rude hand of a servant might destroy a saint, in attempting the purity of the crop, by that which was reserved for other hands. The ripening of both was the present process, ripened together in the world. The Church would never become a system to purify or set right the world. The providential power of God in the ministration of the Son by his angels,* would clear out of his kingdom into bundles, in the field, in the world, the tares to be burned; and thereupon the righteous would shine forth as the sun, not in the kingdom of the Son, not in the kingdom of the Son of man, but in the kingdom of the Father. In a word, we have the clearing of the world, the field, by providential interposition, by a judicial process in the hands of the Son of man, sending his angels. The righteous of the kingdom, *i.e.*, those who had been righteous while the world was evil, shall be as the sun. We know who "the Sun of righteousness" is, and "when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;" but it is in the kingdom of their Father. What followed in the kingdom of the Son

* Formally, that is, in the actual assumption of acquired power as man, I believe the angels became the servants of the Son of *man* when he had overcome Satan—as ministers of the Jewish position of which he had become the redeeming Head—as the agents of God's providential power in the world, which was now shown to be in his hand, because he had vanquished (in obedience and faithfulness) the prince of it. We read, accordingly, in Matthew, this gospel of dispensation, "Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him." So we find in that marvellous passage in St. Luke, chap. xxii., "And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven strengthening him."

of man we know not hence, only that he gathered all that offend out of it, and that the earthly "kingdom of our Lord and his Christ was come;" but this was not the subject of a similitude of the kingdom of heaven. This mixed and ambiguous system was closed, or rather accomplished, in the separation of the Father's kingdom of glory (the righteous, as the Sun of righteousness, being together in it, to the praise of the glory of his grace by what is passed, and of his glory then (compare Eph. i. 6-12): and the kingdom of the Son of man now purged judicially, the earthly kingdom being now brought in, of which we know, from other sources, the Jews to be the imperial power in Christ. The second parable I have already spoken of as the external organization in the world, of the power and influence of the kingdom according to the hierarchical form it took in man's hand. The attentive reader of scripture must be most familiar with the symbol of a tree as denoting external protective power and eminence, as in Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh, and many others, making the analogy most definite. This, then, was the worldly power of the system. Now when the kingdom of the Son of man comes in, there may be something analogous, though not tantamount to this; but such* a system must be a system of sovereign righteousness, forbidden by the previous parable to the Church, or it will be an association or system of evil. The third is the spreading of nominal doctrine to whatever measured extent God had assigned or appointed. So also in another system this might have another character, but it cannot be recognized in grace properly here, for the whole is leavened, a thing again expressly negated as a fact in grace, in the first parable. The explanation to the disciples of the first we have spoken of as fully as our limits allow us here. Of the fourth, it is evidently the

* The power over evil *in the world* being forbidden to the Church, its having *power in the world* necessarily involves it in the recognition or allowance of evil.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

13

purchase by Christ of the world, for the sake of the treasure, the Church, the treasure of God hidden in it, to be brought out in due time. The fifth is the positive discriminative beauty and excellency of the Church as ordained and set by God, and which the Spirit of Christ, the anointed one, recognizes and sees in its beauty, so as to "love the Church and give himself for it," as seen in the mind of God's love. In proportion as we have the mind of Christ, we shall of course enter into the mind of him who is the head of the kingdom, whose Spirit is thus described, fulfilled in him perfectly. In the last, we have evidence of the result that the nominal Church shall not gather in the world. There were many fishes in the sea, the mass of the unheeded world pursuing their own ways, not drawn into the net, but the net was filled, and there was gathered of every* kind out of the sea, and there was also of bad and good. "The fulness of the Gentiles was come in," and being full it was drawn to shore; and the judgment of the Church commenced, and the bad are cast away. The details of these parables I do not enter into further here.

I state synoptically what has been followed out as the subject arose. The kingdom of heaven we have as a state of things during the period when the Son is sitting on the Father's throne. During this period the children are in the Son's, but heirs of the Father's kingdom, a period during which the world is not ordered according to the righteous judicial power of the Son of man's kingdom, the interval between the rejection of the Son of man upon earth and his reigning upon earth, in which the saints are sustained by the Spirit, in the midst of the world, by the Spirit sent of the Son by the Father, the witness of his exaltation there. Of this state of things, this chapter is the full prophetic announce-

* "To take out of them (the Gentiles) a people for his name."
(Acts xv. 14.)

ment. The external character which it assumes in the world, being depicted in the first three, the real blessing and value and the judgment of its results, its internal character in God's sight, in the last three of the six parables. It closes in the setting up of the Son of man's kingdom upon earth, and the assumption of the righteous during its continuance, to the Father's kingdom in the heavenlies. The first parable is the word of the kingdom. The expositions and internal view of the Church or kingdom are given to the disciples; the judicial blindness of the Jews is declared and the special privilege of the saints, and the parables are spoken distinctively as the "utterance of hidden things from the world," which the Spirit reveals to those "who have ears to hear."

THE
MEETING-PLACE IN RESURRECTION.

“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”—1 THESS. iv. 13-18.

NOTWITHSTANDING the number of tracts that have been written on the Lord's coming, I have felt that there is the need of one containing a few elementary statements to direct the attention of Christians to this portion of God's truth. The great difficulty in the way of many of the Lord's people is their confusion of two distinct events—the coming of the Lord *in the air*, and the coming of the Lord *to the earth*. The effect of this is practically to rob them of the enjoyment of their proper hope and portion, which is “to wait for God's Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thess. i. 10.)

This portion of Scripture was a new revelation given to Paul to correct mistaken views which the Thessalonians had about those who had died in the Lord. They thought that they would not enter into blessing as soon as themselves, and this was to them a source of grief. The Lord tells them not to sorrow

16 THE MEETING-PLACE IN RESURRECTION.

as others who have no hope. He reveals to them the fact that when Christ should return in glory, God would bring those "who sleep in Jesus" with him; they should be all together; there should be no advantage of the living over the dead saints, for "them *also* which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

But how are they to get there? Who comes for them? Where is the meeting-place? Questions like these would be suggested to the mind when the revealed fact is received that the sleeping saints are to appear with Christ in glory.

From the 15th to 18th verses the answers to these questions are given. They are the explanation of verses 13 and 14, with a full revelation of that meeting-place in resurrection which God has told us of, to cheer our hearts, and to wean us from this present evil world.

I intend more especially to confine myself to this portion of God's word, using other Scriptures only as bearing upon it. May the Lord guide us by the Holy Ghost as we meditate upon "The Meeting-place in Resurrection."

1. The Person to be met, and where he comes from. "The Lord from heaven."

2. The persons going to this meeting-place, and where they go from. Two classes—"We which are alive" (on the earth). "Those which are asleep" (in their graves).

3. The summons to go there, and who gives the signal. "The Lord himself with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God."

4. The locality where the meeting-place is to be. "In the air."

5. The authority for the statement. "The word of the Lord."

6. The use to be made of this portion of God's word. "Comfort (or exhort) one another with these words."

THE MEETING-PLACE IN RESURRECTION. 17

The first point is the Person to be met, and where he comes from. "The Lord from heaven."

God has not only saved us, but given us a blessed hope, a heavenly object. He has won our hearts by the exhibition of his love in Christ, and has made Christ to be precious to our souls. We have redemption through the blood of Christ, and a new life in him; but it is in order that Christ himself may be our portion, and that we may be with him for ever, to the praise of the glory of God's grace. Jesus, having accomplished redemption, and having gone into the presence of God for us, is now seated upon the throne of his Father, crowned with glory and honour. There he awaits the gathering out of this world the church which he has purchased with his blood; and then, at the command of God, he leaves the throne of his Father and descends into the air, the place of meeting where his Bride ascends to meet him. The Person to be met is the Lord—yes, the adorable Lord Jesus, the one who dwelt from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, the one who was cradled in Bethlehem's manger, the one who for three and thirty years trod the world of his own creation, the one whose hand was ever ready to meet the needy, and whose heart yearned over the outcast one; and above all, the one who died on Calvary's cross, was raised by the power of God, and is now sitting on the right hand of the majesty on high. This blessed one, this Lord from heaven, is the Person to be met, and from heaven, direct from his Father's presence, he comes.

2. Who are the persons going to this meeting-place, and where do they go from? They consist of persons in two differing positions:—"We who are alive and remain," "them which sleep in Jesus;" as it says in Corinthians, "they that are Christ's at his coming." There will be those who are alive on this earth, living amidst others, but having, besides their natural life, spiritual life—life in Christ. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,

18 THE MEETING-PLACE IN RESURRECTION.

they will be changed (1 Cor. xv. 52), and caught away from among their fellow-men to meet the Lord from heaven. And how suddenly! as quickly as a moment passes, as quickly as the eyelid falls and rises again, so quickly will the transition occur. But then what about those who have died in Christ? Shall they miss this blessed scene? shall they be left behind? No; if anything, they have the precedence, though it is but a momentary one. The first action of the archangel's voice is to awake the dead in Christ, "the dead in Christ shall rise first." They shall only just have emerged from their hiding places, and have been clad in resurrection-glory, when the living shall be changed, and all shall be caught up together.

Oh, what a meeting! what a blessed hope! No more separation, none missing, none left behind in the darkness of the grave. The sheep will have heard the Shepherd's voice—"they that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth"—those alive changed, and they all go up together—yes, together; not in various detachments, as some have imagined; not some left behind to pass through the tribulation for their unfaithfulness. The Jewish remnant will have to pass through it; but ere it occurs the church and the Old Testament saints will be safely housed with the Lord.

Are only the Lord's people to go up? Only those. Those others, who have no hope, are left behind. Reader, are you among the others who have no hope? Would you like to be left behind? Do you say, Well! what if I am? The Lord will come *after this* to the earth in judgment, "to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 8.) But I may be dead. Well! what then? Left behind at the resurrection of the just, you shall have your part in the resurrection of the unjust; *you* shall hear Christ's voice, and *you* shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation. (John v. 29.) The search for

THE MEETING-PLACE IN RESURRECTION. 19

your name in the book of life being fruitless—the books testifying to your evil deeds—your eternal portion will be the lake of fire.

Why are you among the others who have no hope? Because you have not believed in God's love in the gift of his Son. The life, death, resurrection, and all the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, are as yet nothing to you, except to increase your guilt and condemnation. May your heart be opened to receive Christ, that you may become a son of God by believing on his name.

3. The summons to go there, and who gives the signal.

It is a summons, as we have been seeing, that all in Christ hear and obey. It is called in Corinthians "the last trump," which some think refers to the last of trumpets used in battle for marching; others believe it to have a reference to the jubilee trumpet. It is evidently Christ, armed with authority, summoning together those dear to his heart.

4. The locality where the meeting-place is to be.

"In the air." Mark well the place: it is not at Jerusalem, nor at the Mount of Olives: it is in the air. It is quite true that the Lord will come to the Mount of Olives, because God in his word says so: "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. xiv. 4); but that is not when we go up to meet him; it refers to a subsequent event; it is when we *come with him* afterwards, when he comes forth to deliver Israel and to set up his millennial kingdom. Thus, in the next verse (Zech. xiv. 5), it says, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Now, it is evident that to return with Christ we must first have been gathered to him. There must be the meeting in resurrection before there is the return with Christ. It is of all-importance to see the difference between these two events. We shall get confused and unscriptural thoughts, unless we see from God's word the difference. And the practical difference consists in this:

20 THE MEETING-PLACE IN RESURRECTION.

at any moment this meeting-place in the air may occur. Scripture puts nothing between the Christian and the Lord; and any system of prophetic truth (however ingenious it may be) that says that this or that event must happen before the Lord comes to claim the people that he has purchased with his blood, is not of God. If the Christian thinks of his sins and iniquities, he remembers Christ, who upon Calvary's cross blotted them out by the shedding of his blood; if he thinks of his daily sins and shortcomings, he remembers him who appears in the presence of God for him. And what then? He has a hope which must be realized, he waits for God's Son from heaven, his heart is upon the resurrection-morning; the language of his heart is, or ought to be, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Thus Christ is everything to him; his past wants, his present necessities, are met by him, and the hopes of his new life are cherished by the thought of thus meeting him.

5. The authority for the statement.

"This we say unto you by the word of the Lord." Paul received this truth directly from the Lord, as he did that concerning the Lord's supper. (1 Cor. xi.) Would the Lord have taken the trouble, or thought it needful specially to make this known to Paul, had it not been good for the Church of God to enter into and enjoy the hope of the Lord's coming? And yet how many Christians know nothing about it, looking forward to a good old age, and a grave at the end of it. But God places the Christian on resurrection ground to start with, on the other side of death. (See John xi. 25.) It is blessedly true, that, if the Christian fall asleep in Jesus, his spirit is "with the Lord," and "to depart and be with Christ is far better;" but is that the proper hope of the Christian? No. The resurrection morning is what he waits for, because God gives him resurrection promises. When will he be like Christ, perfectly conformed to the image of God's Son? Not

THE MEETING-PLACE IN RESURRECTION. 21

until he sees him in resurrection. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) Christian reader, you believe in the word of God—why not believe *all* it says? You would be horrified if any one doubted the truth, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin;" and yet this truth of the Lord's coming is founded upon the same authority; it is revealed in the same word. But you say, There is a difference between essential and non-essential truth. You have no right to say so. It is a notion encouraged by Satan to shut up from the souls of God's people much of his revealed word, but the soul that wishes to yield an intelligent obedience, knowing what the mind of the Lord is, must believe practically that "*All* scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.)

6. The use to be made of this portion of God's word.

"Comfort (or exhort) one another with these words." Exhortation and comfort—two of the things specially marked as characteristic of useful ministry. (1 Cor. xiv. 3.) How much the saint of God needs exhortation: "exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. x. 25.)

The reception of Christ by the Thessalonians had caused them to pass through the waters of affliction. While they had the joy of the Holy Ghost as that which sustained and kept them pressing forward, and while it is the joy of the Holy Ghost to testify of an absent Christ, and to all the glories of his person and the perfections of his work, is it not part of this work, his coming again and the glory that is to be revealed in connection with that joyous time?

22 THE MEETING-PLACE IN RESURRECTION.

It is not only the bride that says "Come," but "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." And is not the fact, that at any moment the Lord may come, that which may well dislocate our affections from this present evil world? His promise remains unchanged, though as yet unfulfilled, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also." And when will he come? "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. x. 37.)

And what a source of comfort is the thought of that day! Then shall be raised the song of triumph, then shall the shout of victory be heard; no more sighing and sorrow, no more tears to wipe away, no more broken hearts that want binding up, no more beds of death where the sad farewell in broken utterances escapes the quivering lips. No! at that resurrection meeting-place one shout of triumph shall burst from the lips of the joyous conquerors: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" and then, with hearts turned upwards to the God of salvation, shall they thankfully exclaim, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS.

These lines are supposed to be the utterance of the saints at the blessed moment when they are actually ascending to meet the Lord in the air, as described in 1 Cor. xv. 51-57; and 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

“O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?”—1 Cor. xv. 55.

HARK to the trump! behold it breaks
The sleep of ages now:
And lo! the light of glory shines
On many an aching brow.

Changed in a moment—raised to life,
The quick, the dead, arise,
Responsive to the angel's voice,
That calls us to the skies.

Ascending through the crowded air,
On eagles' wings we soar,
To dwell in the full joy of love,
And sorrow there no more.

Undazzled by the glorious light
Of that belovèd brow,
We see, without a single cloud,
We see the Saviour now!

O Lord, the bright and blessed hope
That cheered us through the past,
Of full eternal rest in thee,
Is all fulfill'd at last.

The cry of sorrow here is hush'd,
The voice of prayer is o'er;*
'Tis needless now—for, Lord, we crave
Thy gracious help no more.

Praise, endless praise, alone becomes
This bright and blessed place,
Where every eye beholds unveil'd
The mysteries of thy grace.

Past conflict here, O Lord, 'tis ours,
Through everlasting days,
To sing our song of victory now,
And only live to praise.

* This thought was suggested by the blessed experience of John Janeway on his death-bed.

HEB. IX. 13, 14.

“If the blood of bulls and of goats . . . sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh : how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” (Heb. ix. 13, 14.)

THUS the Holy Ghost connects and identifies the work of the Son, as the anointed servant (Is. xlii. 1 ; Acts x. 38), with God, even the Father ! And He is the proof also to those that have faith of their participation in the benefits of the Son's work, and of the Father's pleasure in it.

The offering of Christ, the Son (though his *own* work), was *through the eternal Spirit*. This proves how that which he did was both according to the will and sure of the approbation of God (even the Father) ; for what he did he did through his Spirit : and he offered himself that he might purge our consciences.

How blessedly also does this give us assurance, while musing upon the work of Christ ; for we know it only by the Spirit : and so we get the blessing of knowing that that upon which we muse is our own ; for it is he through whom it was done, who is our power of knowing and enjoying it. And this likewise enables us to enter somewhat into the joy which God (the Father) has in beholding us rejoicing in what Christ (the Son) did for us according to his will.

Thus the same Holy Spirit which led Christ through the services (so proving the service was of God, and sure to be honoured by him when finished), that same Spirit dwells in us, the witness of the work, the pledge of our participation in all its blessed results, and the opener to us of the Father's thoughts in it and about us.

London: W. H. Broom, 28, Paternoster Row.

JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD.

MANY Christians, on commencing the study of prophecy, and seeing something of the judgments which attend the Lord's coming at the close of the present dispensation, feel much difficulty as to who are to form the population of the millennial earth. If, say they, the living saints are changed, the departed saints raised, and all caught up to be with the Lord, and if the wicked are destroyed, who are they that are left to inhabit the earth during the millennium?

In 1 Cor. x. 32, we find a distinction, the consideration of which will assist to clear away the difficulty in question. In that passage, the apostle recognizes three different classes of persons. "Give none offence, neither to the *Jews*, nor to the GENTILES, nor to the CHURCH OF GOD." Now, here we have the three classes of which mankind are composed: Jews—Gentiles—Church of God. And to trace through Scripture, from first to last, God's purpose concerning the Jews, God's purpose concerning the Gentiles, and God's purpose respecting the Church, is the surest way to ascertain the order of God's dispensations, and the harmony of all portions of prophetic testimony with each other. Let us, as the Lord may assist and our space allow, humbly and reverently attempt this. Some Scripture evidence of these things we shall now lay before our readers.

(1.) To begin with "the Jews." God's purpose respecting them we have in Gen. xii. 2, 3, where God says to Abram: "I will make of thee a great

A

2 JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD.

nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Of this purpose, we have a further development in Gen. xiii. 14, &c. "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." In Gen. xv. 18, &c., we have the boundaries of this land, promised to Abraham and his seed, defined; and we have the earthly nature of the inheritance God designed for them still further exemplified in Deut. xxviii. There we have the blessings promised them in case of obedience, the curses denounced against them in case of disobedience. What were those blessings? "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store and the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. . . . And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and do them." Such are the blessings promised to Israel in case of obedience; and the curses denounced against them in case of disobedience were all of the same earthly character. "Cursed shalt thou be in thy city, and cursed shalt thou be

JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD. 3

in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. . . . The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto. . . . The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. . . . Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee. . . Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them ; for they shall go into captivity. . . . The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high ; and thou shalt come down very low. . . . Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, &c. Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things. . . . And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other ; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest : but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind," &c. Such were the curses denounced against these highly favoured people in case of disobedience. And how strictly and literally have they been fulfilled ! The Jews proved themselves a disobedient and stiff-necked race. God exercised great forbearance towards them ; but after they had rejected and stoned the prophets his servants, whom he sent unto them, he sent his Son, the Heir of all things. Him they crucified and slew, and thus filled up the measure of their iniquities and sealed their doom. On this account, wrath came upon them to the uttermost ; their city and temple were destroyed ; their country pillaged, its population put to the sword, or else

4 JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD.

carried away captive; and for nearly two thousand years they have been monuments of God's displeasure against sin, suffering the aggravated and complicated woes denounced against them.

(2.) The instruments in inflicting all these woes on this guilty and unhappy race have been "the Gentiles." From the time that Abraham was called to be the father of God's peculiar people, God did not deal directly with any nation upon the earth save the Jews. He did indeed occasionally use one or another of the nations to chastise his people, but still they remained under the awful sentence which we find in Rom. i. 28 "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." About the time when the Jews were carried away captive into Babylon, however, a distinct grant of power was made to the Gentiles by the Almighty. In Daniel we have the account of a great image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, and in the explanation of his dream, Daniel says: "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." Here begin the times of the Gentiles. The power which was thus bestowed on the Babylonish king descended to the Medes and Persians; from thence it passed into the hands of the Grecians, and the Grecian empire yielded to the power of Rome, the last kingdom, represented by the legs and feet of the image. The Roman empire was broken up into a number of separate kingdoms, but its power continued in these kingdoms, and will continue to exist till the coming of the Lord. It is by this power that the Jews have been so fearfully wasted and so heavily oppressed. It was by Nebuchadnezzar that Jerusalem was destroyed at first,

JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD. 5

and the inhabitants carried away captive to Babylon. It is true that a portion of the Jews returned to Jerusalem at the end of seventy years; but they were mere tributaries of the Persian king; they never afterwards had any independent government of their own. Their sufferings under the Grecian power in the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes were most tremendous. They were under the Roman yoke when Christ appeared amongst them, and they had to procure the consent of the Roman governor before they could put Christ to death. It was by the Romans that Jerusalem was a second time destroyed; and it has been chiefly by the nations into which the Roman empire was divided that they have been oppressed and persecuted until now. They are still under the yoke of the various Gentile powers, and the Saviour himself declared that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Luke xxi. 24.) The times of Gentile power began with the oppression of the Jews; and the Gentiles continue to oppress the Jews as long as the times of Gentile dominion last.

(3.) But these times will not last for ever. God hath not cast off his people whom he foreknew. His purposes respecting them are purposes of mercy, and he still intends to fulfil to the very letter, the covenant that he made with Abraham their father. He still intends them to be a great nation; to be at the head of all other nations; to possess all the earthly blessings which have been promised to them, and to be the centre from which these blessings shall flow to all the other nations of the earth. The order of the events by which this wonderful change in their position is to be brought about is very exactly laid down in the prophetic writings; and as an attentive study of those writings will prove, it is somewhat as follows.

[a] The Jews are to be under a sentence of judicial blindness till a certain time. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and

6 JEW, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD.

shut their eyes ; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long ? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed man far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land." (Isa. vi. 10, &c.)

[b] After all this desolation in the land of Judea, the children of Israel are to return to it. "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt ; but, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them : and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." (Jer. xvi. 14, &c.) "For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord : and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." (Jer. xxx. 3.) "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places ; and the city shall be builded upon ~~her~~ own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof." (Ver. 18.) "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land." (Ezek. xxxvi. 24.) On this subject these passages are sufficiently plain.

[c] This restoration of the nation to their own land, however, is not to be effected all at once ; a portion of them are first to be restored, and *after* their restoration, they are to pass through very great and terrible afflictions.

Some particulars of this terrible sifting process, by which the obstinately wicked among the Jews are purged out, we have in Zechariah, the latter part of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth

JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD. 7

chapters. "And 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. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." To such extremities are the poor afflicted Jews, or, at least, that portion of them who are first restored to their own land, to be reduced.*

We need scarcely remind the reader that "the Gentiles" are those who reduce them to such extremities. Gentile power, which began at the very first to be exercised in oppressing the Jews—which has ever since trodden them down and afflicted them—will then, in one great general confederacy of the nations, be employed in a resolute, determined effort to crush them, and blot out the very remembrance of them from the earth. And they will be permitted, as we have seen, so far to succeed in their plans, as to cut off two-thirds of the Jews who have returned to their land, and even so far as to environ Jerusalem, capture it, and lead half of its

* Israel—that is, the ten tribes as distinct from the Jews properly so called—will be restored in another way. Their trial and sifting will not be *in the land*, like that of their brethren, but *before they reach it*. "For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain (nothing but the chaff) fall upon the earth. *All the sinners* of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us." (Amos ix. 9, 10.) "As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you; and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a

8 JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD.

inhabitants, half of the remaining third, into captivity.

[*d*] It is when "the Jews," pressed by "the Gentiles," are in this extremity of distress, that the Lord comes, and the scene changes immediately. The desponding remnant of "the Jews" are delivered, and "the Gentiles" are visited with tremendous judgment from the Lord. Then—when two-thirds of the Jews in the land are cut off and dead—when half of the remaining third are gone into captivity, and the other half see nothing but destruction before them—"THEN shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east," &c. . . . "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." (Zech. xiv. 3, &c.) "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him" (or thee). "Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey." (Jer. xxx. 7-16.) "Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted and drunken, but not with wine: Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people,

mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; *and I will purge out from among you the rebels and them that transgress against me; I will bring them out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*" (Ezek. xx. 33-38.)

JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD.

9

Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over." (Is. li. 21, &c.)

[e] It is upon "the Gentiles," therefore, that those terrible visitations of divine vengeance fall, which are uniformly represented as attending the coming of the Lord. First, upon those actually gathered together against the Lord at Jerusalem, and then upon the nations to which they belong. Space will not allow of quotations in proof of this; but the reader can refer to Is. xxiv. xxxiv. lxiii. and lxvi. 15, 16; Jer. xxv. 15-33; Ezek. xxxviii. 18-23; also xxxix. 1-21; Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44; vii. 11; Joel iii. 14-16; Zeph. iii. 8; Zech. xii. 2-4; Mal. iv. 1-3; Matt. xxi. 44, the latter clause; Luke xxi. 25, 26; 1 Thess. v. 2, 3; 2 Thess. i. 6, 9; Rev. xiv. 10; xix. 15-21; with many others.

[f] We must not suppose, however, that the whole of the Gentiles, literally, are cut off by these judgments. One plain passage will be sufficient to shew the contrary. "It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send *those that escape of them* unto the nations of Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." (Is. lxvi. 18, 19.) Thus we have clearly a remnant spared from the general destruction, and employed after these judgments in two important enterprises.

1. "They declare God's glory among the Gentiles."
2. "They shall bring all your brethren (that portion of Israel which had not been restored to their own land before the coming of the Lord) for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations, upon horses, and in

10 JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD.

chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." (Is. lxvi. 20.)

[g] When all the children of Israel are thus restored to their own land, the promises of temporal blessing, which are their peculiar portion, will all be fulfilled to them. The Lord shall make them the head indeed, and not the tail; they shall be above only, and they shall not be beneath. Read the sixtieth of Isaiah in connection with the two last verses of the fifty-ninth, and you will find that when the Redeemer has come to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob, all these promises will be accomplished. "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . . Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. . . . The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. . . . And the sons of strangers shall build up the walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee. . . . The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel," &c. Let the whole chapter be read, as also the sixty-first, sixty-second, sixty-sixth, from verse 17 to the end, and these, with a multitude of other passages, will abundantly shew that, after the Lord's return, the remnant of the Jews will be placed at the head of the nations, and prosper as no nation ever prospered besides; and that the remnant of the Gentiles and their posterity will submit to God's appointment in this respect, and pour riches and honours on the once despised, and desolate, and afflicted Jews. This is what is presented

JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD. 11

to us in various aspects, in almost every passage in the Old Testament which refers to the millennial state.

(4.) But where is "the Church" during this blissful period? Have we not lost sight of that? No, dear reader, no. We were wishful to present you with as full an exhibition as possible of God's purpose respecting "the Jews" and "the Gentiles;" for they will be the remnants of these two great branches of society who will constitute the population of the earth during the millennium. But it is really with the destiny of "the Church" that *we* have most to do. "The Church" is something altogether distinct from both Jew and Gentile. Christ came to the Jews—his own people; but his own people received him not. They, though at that time under Gentile power, carried their hatred to Jesus so far as to resolve upon his death: they procured the assistance of a Gentile ruler and Gentile soldiers in the perpetration of this dreadful deed. Thus Jews and Gentiles united in the commission of the blackest crime that ever man committed. But this act of highest wickedness, by which the condemnation of both Jew and Gentile was sealed, was, at the same time, overruled by God, so as to exhibit the richest display of his sovereign grace. Jesus, rejected by the earth, crucified by both Jew and Gentile, was raised from the dead, and placed by his Father at the right hand of power, where he now waits till his enemies are made his footstool. As long as he sits waiting there, repentance and remission of sins are to be preached through his name in all nations. Whoever receives this message of mercy from the rejected One on earth, but the glorified One at God's right hand, instantly becomes associated with him—associated with him in all the reproach and suffering which he endured on earth; associated with him in all the glory which he has at present at God's right hand, and in all the glory in which he shall be revealed when he returns to earth.

12 JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD.

Yes, the Jew receives this message of mercy, and he ceases to be a Jew; the Gentile receives it, and he ceases to be a Gentile. All who receive it, whether Jew or Gentile, die to all their former liabilities, and to all their former cherished hopes: they have no prospect of an earthly inheritance like the Jews; they have, or ought to have, no share in the earthly power, which for a while is lodged in Gentile hands. They are the bride of Jesus; and that world which rejected the Bridegroom may be expected to reject the bride as well. At all events, if the bride be true to her absent Lord, she is sure to dread and shun the smiles and the caresses of that world which rejected and slew her Lord. This world has no place for the true Church. Its members have no home on earth. They are but strangers and pilgrims here. But just as they share their Lord's humiliation on the earth, will they share his glory when he returns: he is not represented as reigning over them; they are set forth by the pen of prophecy as reigning WITH HIM. Truly, that shall be first which is last, and that shall be last which is first. The Gentile is now above the Jew, and treads him down. But the Jew shall be superior to the Gentile in the millennial state. The Church is, at present, inferior both to Jews and Gentiles in respect to earthly things; for it has no place on earth at all: its only calling on earth is to be counted like sheep for the slaughter all the day long. But in the state which succeeds the present, as far as the Jew will be above the Gentile, so far, and farther, will the Church be above them both. Before the judgments are inflicted on the guilty nations of the earth—before one drop from that cup which is filled with the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God descends—the Church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with

JEW, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD. 13

the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 15.) It is after this event—after the saints have thus met their long-expected Lord, and the marriage of the Lamb has taken place—it is after this that the saints are united with Jesus in his first act of kingly power, when he comes *with all his saints* to deliver Israel, and scatter and destroy their adversaries. And after this, when Satan is bound—when creation, released from the bondage of corruption, ceases from its long-continued groans—when the remnant of Jews and Gentiles, happy in the enjoyment of all the blessings that earth can furnish, submit to the peaceful sway of Jesus—it is then that the saints live and reign with Christ a thousand years. Jews and Gentiles on the earth, under the reign of Christ—the Church *not under his reign*, but REIGNING WITH HIM AS A MONARCH'S BRIDE, IS PARTNER OF HIS THRONE.

Let us briefly review the subject. Earthly blessing and prosperity were promised to "the Jews." On account of their wickedness, we see them, at present, under a sentence of judicial blindness, and enduring innumerable hardships, privations, and indignities. They are to be restored; not all at once, but partially at first. In the course of this partial restoration, they are to endure tremendous afflictions, until there is but a very small remnant left. That remnant is to be delivered by the coming of the Lord; and they and their offspring are to inherit all the earthly blessedness promised to Israel from the first. "The Gentiles" became such when God gave them up to folly; and called Israel out from among the nations. They received power at God's hands, when that power was withdrawn from Israel. They have always used it in persecuting and oppressing Israel, and will do so to the end. It is by

14 JEWS, GENTILES, AND CHURCH OF GOD.

a confederacy of the Gentiles that the Jews are to endure their last tremendous affliction. The coming of the Lord, which delivers Israel, discomfits and scatters the Gentiles, and a remnant of them only survive. That remnant and their posterity ministers to the Jews, and willingly serve those whom their forefathers had so long and terribly oppressed. These two, "the Jews" and "the Gentiles," form the population of the earth during the millennium. But at present there is a third class of persons in the world. There is "the Church of God." Its members were once, all of them, either Jews or Gentiles. They are neither now. They are "the Church," the bride of Christ. The world knew *him* not—it knows *them* not. The world rejected *him*—it rejects *them* likewise. But when earth rejected Jesus, heaven received him; and *they* also are raised together with Christ, to sit with him in heavenly places.

"When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.)

UNION WITH CHRIST.

SOME Christians seem to find it very hard to receive what Scripture says about the union of Christ and the church. The subject has not occupied their thoughts much; and when it is brought before them by others, they not only feel ignorant of the Scriptures connected with it, but puzzled by the hard things the doctrine seems to present. If you quote them such blessed sayings as these: "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3); "Hath quickened us together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 5, 6): they admit the truth of the Scriptures, but explain away their simple meaning. "How can we," say they, "be in heaven in Christ, and at the same time down here on earth? and how can we have been raised up from the grave in Christ at all? and much more impossible is it for us to have been raised up together with him, and made sit together in heavenly places with him who experienced all these things 1800 years before we were born. To be in heaven and on earth at one and the same moment (they say), and to have had things thus wrought upon us years before our existence, are impossibilities, and therefore the passages must be explained in some other than a literal way." And then they proceed to explain away these truths, by confounding them with other blessings widely different from them. The being in heavenly places in Christ, they con-

found with the blessed truth, that faith can look into heaven and see heavenly things; and the other passages they interpret as if they had been thus written, raised up *in the likeness of*, &c., instead of raised up *together with*, &c. Now, most blessed as is the truth that, while in the midst of the furnace of affliction here, we can look not at things which are seen, but at things which are not seen (yea, into all the treasures of heaven); this is not at all the same thing as our sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And again, though it is true that the Spirit does make us like Jesus, this is not the same thing as being quickened together, raised together, and made sit together with him in heavenly places.

The cause of this difficulty of understanding these and similar passages connected with the union of Christ and the church, and the blessings flowing out of it, is in many cases a very simple one. It consists in an erroneous view of regeneration.

The erroneous view to which I refer is this, that regeneration consists only in the affections of the heart and the desires of the mind being again restored perfectly to God, so as for him again to become to the poor sinner the supreme end and object of his being. Now if this were the meaning I attached to regeneration, I confess I could not understand the passages in question. But is regeneration ever so explained in Scripture? I believe not. These things are, I thankfully acknowledge, inseparably connected with regeneration; but they are the results of it, not the thing itself. I should be sorry to be misunderstood upon so important a subject, and therefore I repeat it again—Perfect restoration of the original moral beauty of man is inseparable from regeneration; and I do not teach that regeneration is separable from perfect restoration of the heart, mind, soul, and body to God. What I do say, however, is, that this restoration is the result of regeneration, and not the same thing as it. If you turn to John iii. you will find it is shown very

plainly that regeneration consists of the communication of a new nature. It is not the bettering of the old, but the implanting of a new nature, capable to overcome the old, surely, but altogether new. The expression in verse 3 is, "born again," not reformed, but born again; and the meaning of this is made very plain by its being said (verse 9), "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." All that a man has by nature is born of the flesh, and is flesh; but when he is born from above, he is born of the Spirit, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. And then the Lord proceeds to show how this new, this "divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4) is altogether above the ken and understanding of the old nature, and how flesh cannot understand spirit: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."*

Now if regeneration consists in the giving to us of something new, but something which was in the Lord Jesus when he rose from the dead and ascended up to heaven, then I can understand easily enough how all those who have this new thing in them are spoken of as having experienced that which the Lord Jesus Christ experienced in his resurrection and ascension, and in the glory which was then given to him; just as God might have said to Eve, "I put you into the garden of Eden to dress it and to till it;" or, as he might have said to Cain and Abel, "Did I not tell you in the garden of Eden that my favour depended upon obedience?" For

* Observe, people commonly understand this as if it referred to the sovereignty of the Spirit in quickening whom and working where he pleased, instead of its alluding to the new nature being above the understanding of the old. They understand it, in short, as if the last clause had been, "So is the Spirit in his movements," instead of, "So is every one (distributively) that is born of the Spirit."

neither Eve nor the children were personally there, both the one and the other were there in Adam. Now just as all that which by the divine workmanship was formed into Eve was taken out of Adam, so that which through divine grace and power makes poor sinners to be saints, or will constitute the church, comes out of the Lord Jesus Christ. And just as Cain and Abel derived their natural existence from Adam as a head, so the saints derive their spiritual existence from Christ Jesus. At some future time we may examine the scriptures and see the vast range of testimony which they give to various points connected with this new nature: at present I would only remark that those who deny it must suppose that our old nature can receive God's testimony and profit from it. Now upon this, the Holy Ghost is most distinct in 1 Cor. ii. 11, "What man (or who) knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Observe this little word, "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Who would think of presenting to a horse or to an elephant a watch or the beauty of a well-ordered family, as a matter of interest to it? Well, it is quite as unsound for the saints to suppose that their knowledge of the things of God is to be attributed to the powers of nature; for the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God; and again (verse 12), "Now we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

The reference I made to Eve, as having been formed out of Adam's rib is a beautiful illustration of this subject, and is so used by the Holy Ghost in Eph. v. where (verse 31), while enforcing the mutual duties of husband and wife, he quotes from Gen. ii., "and they two shall be one flesh;" and then instantly adds, "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church;" by

which he shows us, as indeed elsewhere, that Adam and Eve were types of Christ and the Church; and to this we must now look. It is written (1 Cor. xv. 45), "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." This is the point of moment in connection with the question of the union of Christ and the Church, even the glory of the Lord as the quickening (or life-giving) Spirit. The blessed Lord is "I AM," and has this glory, that the knowledge of him is eternal life. Wherever he is received, there there must be quickening. This is his essential, intrinsic glory. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. . . . 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; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, 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." (John v.) And again (John xi. 25, 26), "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

It is, therefore, impossible to know Jesus, and not to have been quickened—not to have received life from out of him. There is quickening power in him, giving life to all that to which it comes. See how beautifully Paul knew this (2 Cor. iv. 6): "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." This, beloved, is the foundation of all our hopes. The nail on which the whole burden hangs its weight, is this deep glory of the

Lord of Life, whom we know ; he is the quickening Spirit ; out of his fulness have we all received—so this quickening power in him at first wrought in us : “ We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord ” (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18), so continuously is the work carried on in us. Not, I need hardly say, that either the thing communicated to us, or any after development of it, ever becomes the ground on which we rest. No ; life there is in us, eternal life received from Christ into these earthen vessels, and the powers of this are continuously being unfolded ; but the fountain head of this life, the fulness of it, is Christ the head, and upon that we rest, even upon the fulness in him. Yea, and every manifestation and action of it in us is in vital, and therefore inseparable, union with Christ the head. I add, to avoid being misunderstood, that I have purposely passed by the mode of the communication of this life ; viz., the preaching of the word of the gospel, which, through the presence of the blessed Spirit with it, is a quickening word to those that receive it, “ being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” (1 Peter i. 23, 25.)

Now, when the blessed Lord was raised from the dead, and made sit in heavenly places, and blessed with all spiritual blessings, then these things were done to him ; not as to a private individual, but to him as the quickening Spirit. And all the life which the Church has, yea, which constitutes her the Church, she has received out of him, by being brought into fellowship with him who was so raised, honoured and blessed of God the Father. And all that she will be hereafter will be wrought out in the same way, “ who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,

UNION WITH CHRIST.

21

according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 21.)

My object has not been to enter upon the question of the union between Christ and the Church, in any of its many blessed parts, but to call attention to what seems to constitute the root of the difficulty in many minds to receiving the testimony of scripture upon this subject in simplicity. They are so engrossed with the thought of what man originally was made for; viz., to love God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, and with the desirableness of being restored to it, that they actually overlook (too many of them) the remedy provided by God for the effecting of this purpose.

THE CROSS.

THERE is nothing which teaches either "what sin is," or "what is sin," like the cross of the Son of God.

If you have discovered a sin—where can you learn its true character? how ascertain its full enormity, save by the cross of the Son of God? The cross is God's estimate of sin and of sins, and it is the only full measure of any sin.

If you have discovered a sin—(say only a sin of omission,—a sin of which no one could take notice save God and yourself: as for instance, the having had a wrong *motive* for doing a right action), where can you measure its length, and breadth, and depth? Will you ponder over it till the Lord comes, setting it in the light of contrast with all his mercies? What a poor measure of the baseness and abominableness of it will you be enabled to form of it thus. For, even if you could place it in the bright light of all God's blessings and love to you, still the measure is formed by *yourself* and your own conscience.

Will you look into hell (as it shall be when the lake of fire and brimstone shall be; where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched), to see the dangerous character and tendency of it? Be it so; but remember sin is there judged by God on man. And you will see there only the moral results and penal judgment of sin upon creatures.

Look to the Son of God upon the cross, if you would see what sin *really* is. That Son of the Father, the second blessed person of the Trinity, appeared once in the presence of God his Father, bearing sin. Sin or sins of his own he had none, but was "holy,

THE CROSS.

22

harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners ;” but he was taken as a lamb, garlanded and wreathed with our sins as laid by imputation upon him. He, the power of God, and he, the wisdom of God, appeared once before God upon this subject of sin, but he knew not how to stand there. God could hold no intercourse with his Son then ; and he could not bear up under the burden, but cried out, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?” Observe, too, I pray you, how every circumstance then around Jesus made an appeal to God for sympathy. He was his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased ; his obedient servant ; a perfect, righteous man, and being rejected and despised by every one. And yet there was no sympathy shown to him when he bore the sin. This was God’s measure of sin, and it is infinite. The bitter fruits and eternal judgment of sin in hell, upon myriads of finite enemies of God, would not tell out God’s mind about sin, or its real character, as the effect of his holiness and justice against his infinite Son, when that Son stood in the sinner’s place. That veiling of the face of God from Christ Jesus, that agony of the Son then, is alone the perfect, the divine measure of what sin is. And this measure is infinite. It tells of the infinite hatred and intolerance of God against sin.

And with what humble composedness of soul may the poor sinner here study what sin is ! For this, the divine measure of it, is also the very thing in which the power of it is for ever put away from him that knows this measure. For the Son became the measure in bearing the judgment of our sins upon the tree. In whatever other connection you study sin, you find that which terrifies and inclines you to hide the sin you may have committed ; but here you may study it without any desire to throw a veil over any action you have committed, for all the judgment has been borne, and borne away for ever.

It gives, too, present access to God ; for it proves the only obstacle, sin, to have been put out of the way. How foolish are the thoughts of those who, instead of

drawing nigh upon this ground (the work of Jesus finished 1800 years ago on Calvary), are waiting for something to be wrought in themselves by the Spirit. Do they hope, then, that the regeneration of the Spirit, which is alone wrought in man by the knowledge of the cross (John iii. 14, 15), can be wrought in any other way than by faith in the blood of the Lamb? And if it could, will it ever make man more able to stand in the presence of God, to converse about the sin they deplore, than Jesus was? Surely, if God could not converse with even his eternal Son, when sin was only imputed to him, but hid his face from him, he will never be able to converse with any regenerate man about it unatoned for. And let regeneration be accomplished, and each one through faith, stand before God with Jesus' name upon the forehead (Rev. xxii. 3, 4), what *satisfaction* for sin would that furnish? No; there is but one satisfaction for sin, one work, which either God in heaven, or man, led by the Spirit of God, can ever recognise as satisfaction for sin; and that is God's judgment upon his Son for sin.

And this judgment was both for our sins and for the root of them in us, sin—the principle whence they come. Let us look at this:—there is nothing which teaches us “like the cross of Jesus.” When you come to see the perfection which was in Jesus when nailed there, and how he still, even in the divine glory to which he is gone, bears the form of the Lamb that was slain,—do you not see the full expression of entire subjection of heart, and mind, and body, to God? Well, here, then, you see both what is not sin, and, by contrast, what is sin. The black idol self, in any form of it, is sin; for it was not found in Jesus, and is not found in Jesus. And it is not only for our sins of commission and omission that Jesus died, but also for the root of all these in us—the principle of sin.

ON WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

"Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end," &c. (John xiii. 1-16.)

The faithful in Christ Jesus, gathered out from the world to have their portion with him, are those whom Jesus calls his own. He is theirs, and they are his; and his love to them never ends; as this scripture says, "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." He loved them while he was in the world with them; he loves them also while he is with the Father—they being in the world still.

As the love of Christ to his own continues, so also does his service, in whatever he sees we need it. Some service we need not, because we have it already, and are perfect in it: other service we do need, and in this Christ ministers to us in love.

The word of God brings salvation through Christ to all them that believe; and they are complete in him. And so says the apostle, "And ye are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the

2 ON WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." (Col. ii. 10-13.) In all this abiding blessing the saints of God are for ever set: these are they which are his own, whom he loves to the end, and whose feet he washes while they are in the world. In this liberty with him is kept up, and communion with him is enjoyed. He who is overtaken in a fault is restored. As the word of his salvation brought deliverance to his own, by the power of God, when in an altogether unclean state in the flesh, so the word of his grace brings us deliverance as to our walk in the washing of our feet. He washes our feet that we may walk worthy of God. (1 Thess. ii. 12.) "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light." (Eph. v. 8.)

The need of those that are Christ's own to have their feet washed does not take from them their holy condition of being clean every whit: but neither does their being thus clean make allowance for an unclean walk. This would be to turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness." (See Jude 4.)

In Judas we learn, not the failure in walk of one perfect in Christ, but the horrible condition of a totally unclean man: "Ye are clean; but not all: for he knew who should betray him, therefore said he, Ye are not all clean." Judas had no faith in the Son of God. Of him it could not be said, he needed not save to wash his feet; because he was unclean every whit. The word of life had no place in him; and here the Lord would teach us that no association with people, but faith in himself is the foundation of blessing. A man weak in the faith would not betray Christ for the gain of this world; a man not in the faith would; the one knows he could not do without him; the other sees no value in him: the one is clean and the other is not. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John viii. 24.)

ON WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

3

After Jesus had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, "Know ye what I have done to you?" We should understand in the presence of our Lord the blessing we have received at his hands; it is for the glory of Jesus that we should know it; and our future service for him is connected with it. Our Lord and Master calls for service from us toward one another, according to the pattern of his own loving service to ourselves. "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." When we receive blessing from Christ for ourselves, he would teach us in it to be a blessing to others; and here it is, in washing one another's feet, knowing that he has washed ours. What an example did our Lord give us in this! He laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself: and so in washing one another's feet we should present ourselves as the servants of one another in love. Jesus so manifested himself to his disciples as serving them, that Peter first exclaimed, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" and then he adds, "Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet." It was such amazing humbleness, that Peter was unwilling to see his Lord so act for him, until he learned the necessity and blessing of it. So it should be in the servants of Christ, in their service of love one toward the other, drawing down blessing from Him in cleansing power from every filthy way; praying for one another and exhorting one another. In all this service our love must be in the truth; as says the apostle John, "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever." The brethren in the Lord are Christ's own, loved by him, and cleansed in him: and all

that is of him in them is to be loved in them; and in this the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of truth—glorifies him.

Observe, while he washed their feet, he said unto Peter, “What I do thou knowest not *now*, but thou shalt know hereafter.” This proves that by it our Lord signified another washing, also evident from Peter’s saying unto him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” This washing is not the cleansing of their persons or pardon of all their sins, as declared by our Lord saying to Peter, “He that is washed need not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” Here the entire cleansing of his people is described, they are compared to him who has just left the bath, and is perfectly clean; but we know that his feet might become that moment defiled; and this, dear friends, is precisely our case. I now speak of believers—Christ appears in the presence of God for us; this proves that he has for ever removed all our sins; for this he came into our world and lay in the grave. His resurrection, and now appearing in the presence of God, is, I say, a sufficient proof that he has for ever removed from God’s sight all our sins—his blood is in their place, through which they are clean every whit: but, dear friends, our feet are continually defiled; we live in a defiling world, our earthly nature continues, Satan and the world act on it—what is the consequence? our mind and conscience are perpetually defiled—not that the guilt of our sins ever returns to the view of God. This cannot be; Christ is ever before him for us, and his blood is now in the place where our sins were seen. But, I say, our sin and its guilt defile our mind and conscience; it troubles us—it obscures the glory to which we are called; it interrupts our communion with God, and the blessedness of fellowship with Christ and the Father. Here is the defilement of our feet, from which we need continual washing; but because we have a part with Christ, though now

ON WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

5

in his glory, he never ceases to wash our feet. How does he wash them? By removing from our mind and conscience every thing that interrupts our communion with God and its glory and blessedness. We believe that we are admitted to this; but through the influence of nature and a defiling world, we cannot always enjoy it; everything in our nature, everything in the world, interrupts our fellowship with Christ and the Father, and mars our enjoyment of it. We still believe, we look up, but if the least guilt remains on the conscience we are dazzled, we are perplexed; the glory appears too high for us to reach or enjoy. Then, how does Christ wash our feet? I say, by delivering us from this consciousness of guilt and its influence; he restores to us a sense of complete pardon; he delivers us from the power of nature and the world; he brings us into unhindered communion with himself and the Father, and the enjoyment of its glory and blessedness. He again brings down to our apprehension what we are as seen in him, and enables us to rejoice in it; and thus does he ever continue to wash our feet.

Now, I say, he washes our feet by removing from us all that defiles our mind and conscience, and hinders our enjoyment of the glory to which he has raised us. Yes: we have fellowship with him in his present glory, but a defiled mind and conscience interrupts its comfort and blessedness. "God" (says the Apostle, in the 2nd chapter of the Ephesians) "hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." I say, we now live with Christ in his glory: but our earthly nature is still in a defiling world. We resemble the priests who served in the court of the temple, and had free admittance to the holy place. They were never removed from their service,—why? Because their persons had been washed and arrayed to prepare them for it. No need to repeat this, no renewal of their title to their sacred office. But their hands and feet

6 ON WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

were continually defiled by the blood of the sacrifices.

Then what must they do? Not depart from their place and office; provision was made for cleansing them. The laver was placed between the brazen altar and the holy place in which they washed their hands and feet, and then they served within the vail. This, dear brethren, is precisely our case.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

THE EFFICACY OF FAITH.

THE waves were dashing loud and high,
My child looked on with me;
"Father," she cried, "why may not I
Trust God and walk the sea?"

Was it not lack of faith alone
That made the apostle sink?
By faith, therefore, it may be done;
Father, what should I think?"

The Lord bade Peter go, my child,
And should he thee command,
Thy feet would on these waters wild
Be firm as on the sand.

But life has storms more awful yet,
Waves rougher than yon sea;
Then do not thou in these forget
That Jesus is with thee.

Care not what others have to do,
What may be or has been;
But in the path God calls thee go,
And use thy faith therein.

HINDS.

EXTRACT FROM AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER.

“MY LOVED BROTHER,—I think I have had my mind more occupied of late than ever with the subject which your letter suggests—the being with the Lord. I am sure it is deeper, happier, fuller acquaintance with himself that our hearts need; and then we should long and desire and pant after him in such ways as nothing but his presence could satisfy. I know souls in this state; and yet it is not knowledge that gives it to them, but personal acquaintance with the blessed Saviour, through the Holy Ghost.

“I alighted, as by chance, the other day on some fervent thoughts of an old writer, in connection with this dear and precious subject. In substance they were as follows, and almost so in terms, only I have somewhat condensed them:—‘It is strange that we, who have such continual use of God, and his bounties and mercies, and are so perpetually beholden to him, should after all be so little acquainted with him. And from hence it comes that we are so loath to think of our dissolution, and of our going to God. For, naturally, where we are not acquainted, we like not to hazard our welcome. We would rather spend our money at an inn, than turn in for a free lodging to an unknown host; whereas to an entire friend, whom we elsewhere have familiarly conversed with, we go boldly and willingly as to our home, knowing that no hour can be unseasonable to such an one. I will not live upon God and his daily bounties, without his acquaintance. By his grace I will not

8 EXTRACT FROM AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER.

let one day pass without renewing my acquaintance with him, giving him some testimony of my love to him, and getting from him some sweet pledge of his constant favour towards me.'

"Beautiful utterance this is. It expresses a character of mind which, in this day of busy inquiry after knowledge, we all need—personal longings after Christ. May the blessed Spirit in us give that direction to our hearts! It is a hard lesson for some of us to learn, to reach enjoyments which lie beyond and above the provisions of nature. We are still prone to know Christ himself 'after the flesh,' and to desire to find him in the midst of the relations and circumstances of human life, and there only.

"But this is not our calling—this is not the risen, heavenly life. It is hard to get beyond this, I know, but our calling calls us beyond it. We like the home, and the respect, and the security, and all the delights of our human relationships and circumstances, and would have Christ in the midst of them, but to know him, and to have him in such a way as tells us that he is a stranger on earth, and that we are to be strangers with him, 'this is a hard saying' to our poor fond hearts.

"In John's gospel, I may say, among other things, the Lord sets himself to teach us this lesson.

"The disciples were sorry at the thought of losing him in the flesh, losing him as in their daily walk and conversation with him. But he lets them know, that it was expedient for them that they should lose him in that character, in order that they might know him through the Holy Ghost, and ere long be with him in heavenly places. (John xvi.)

"And this is again perceived in chap. xx. Mary Magdalene would have known the Lord again, as she had already known him, but this must not be—this must be denied her. This was painful, but it was expedient—good for her then (just as it had been already good for the disciples in chap. xvi.) to know that she was to lose Christ in the flesh. For Mary is

EXTRACT FROM AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER. 9

now taught that she was to have fellowship with him in the more blessed place of his ascension.

“So, the company at Jerusalem in the same chapter. ‘They were glad, when they saw the Lord.’ But this gladness was human. It was the joy of having recovered, as they judged, the One whom they had lost—Christ in the flesh. But their Lord at once calls them away from that communion and knowledge of him, to peace which his death had now made for them, and the life which his resurrection had now gained for them.

“All this it is healthful for our souls to ponder, for we are prone to be satisfied with another order of things. The ‘sorrow that filled the hearts of the disciples’ at the thought of their Lord going away—the ‘Rabboni’ of Mary Magdalene—the disciples being ‘glad when they saw the Lord,’ show the disposedness of the heart to remain with Christ in the midst of human relationships and circumstances, and not to go with a risen Christ to heavenly places.

“But all this I say to you as one that suggests a thought—would that it were the experience of the soul. But I desire to have it so.”

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

THE place which the Holy Ghost has assigned in the Scriptures to the resurrection of Jesus is very conspicuous. He adduces it not merely as a proof that indeed he was the Son of God (because he could lay down his life and take it up again), but makes it a leading thought, and gives it a most prominent place in every doctrine. It is presented in every thing connected with the believer's position before God. For instance, the title under which God introduces himself to us is as "the God of resurrection." The resurrection of Jesus is also both the proof of our justification and the explanation of it. That in which alone we can know that we are accepted, or the measure of our acceptance, is the resurrection of Jesus. And what opens the treasury of blessing which belongs to the church, but the resurrection of Jesus? And what has brought out to light the character of our relationship to God is the resurrection of Jesus. And what but the resurrection of Jesus manifests our responsibilities? Much more might be said; but the notice of the connection of the resurrection with the character of the God we serve, with our justification, righteousness, blessings, and relationship to God, may suffice for the present.

1st. God's title to usward is the God of resurrection. Abraham (the father of the faithful) had his faith resting upon the God of resurrection; "and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he

was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Rom. iv. 21-24.) Such is the character under which God introduces himself to us. As is seen also elsewhere, "Believe in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Pet. i. 21.)

But 2nd. The resurrection of Jesus is at once the proof of the justification of every one that believeth, as well as the explanation of it; seeing that by it the justification is wrought. It is the proof of our justification; for "he was delivered for (or on account of) our sins, and raised again for (or on account of) our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.) As the Lord made himself the bearer of our sins, the judgment sunk him down; but when all that justice could say or do against our sins was ended, we were justified, and his resurrection was the proof of this: he was raised again on account of our justification, that is because it was finished. And this was proved also by the assertion of Paul on the other side of the question in 1 Cor. xv. 17, 18: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished; and (verse 14) if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Thus we see that without the resurrection there would have been no proof of justification, and that the resurrection of Jesus is the proof of our justification being accomplished. I can therefore have no question about my sins, when I see Jesus risen from the dead; I know they must be put away. He died, the Just One for the unjust. But now is Christ risen. He whom God put to bear all my sins is now in the presence of God for me—the answer to every charge Satan can make against me. "Who (then) shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it

is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) And this is confirmed when we think of the mode of our justification; we are justified by the resurrection of Jesus, because we are one with him. We were planted by baptism in the likeness of his death (Rom. vi. 3), that God might be able to look upon us as crucified with him, as dead with him (2 Tim. ii. 11), as buried with him (Rom. vi. 4); but then we are quickened also together with him (Eph. ii. 5; Col. ii. 13), and raised up together with him (Eph. ii. 6; Col. ii. 12; iii. 1), and made sit together with him in heavenly places. (Eph. ii. 6.)

Again, 3rd. How do we know that we are accepted, or the character of our acceptance? By the resurrection of Jesus. Thus Paul knew that he was a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 15) and a temple of the Holy Ghost (verse 19); for God had shined into his heart the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of the risen Jesus. (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

And what again, 4thly, is the measure of our acceptance—our righteousness before God? (1 Cor. i. 30.) Jesus in resurrection. "Accepted in the beloved" (Eph. i. 6); "at that day" (that is now) "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20); "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3, &c. &c.) The poor prodigal needed not only to be stripped of his filthy rags, but to be washed and provided with a robe proper for his father's house. So we have not only had the stain of sin removed, but been arrayed in beauty to stand before God, "made accepted in the beloved," not in the beloved as seen on the cross, or in the grave, but as risen and sat down at God's right hand.

Again, 5thly, it was only in the resurrection of Jesus that the true position, the actual relationship

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

13

of the disciple came out to light. To Israel God said, "My people," but to us he says, "My sons and daughters." Jesus never let out such large and blessed words as "My brethren—my Father, your Father—my God and your God," till after his resurrection (John xx.), and no soul till then knew what it was to have "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John i. 3.) Take away the resurrection, and you take away the power of understanding this, the amazing proof of the grace of God—I am a poor prodigal, but I've got the best robe on, the ring on my hand, and shoes on my feet, and music and dancing are sounding within the house to which my Father and his first-born are hastening my steps. There is no relationship now but that of sons.

"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26.) But the thing which manifested this, the gift of the Holy Ghost ("because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,"—Gal. iv. 6), was not till the resurrection. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John vii. 39). Then he came as the proof of Jesus' acceptance at the right hand of God, and of the union of those to whom he came with Jesus risen.

And lastly. It is only out of this relationship, discovered and made ours in the resurrection of Jesus, that the true character of our service is seen.

The service of the Son of God flowed out naturally in the power of his sympathy with the mind of the Father. Just so, according to the measure of faith, the christian, being a child, is able to enter into the mind of his Father. He does things, not as a slave or hireling, by command only, but with the affection and understanding of a child. His service is that of one associated with the house, having an interest in everything connected with it. The hired servant may say, I have fulfilled my duties, all I was engaged to do—not so the son. Love likes service,

and seeks after opportunities of serving. The child loves to serve his parent—the faithful wife loves to serve her husband. If God were to say to any of his loving children, “I have nothing more for you to do,” it would be sorrow and grief to that child—not joy.

Dear brethren, we are looked upon by God as in his risen Son; may we then look upon ourselves and act as heavenly-risen men. Set by God in Christ above every thing that can come in to hurt, may our conversation be in heaven, and our watch-word (like those of old), The Lord is risen! And when the Lord comes to take his glory, we shall come with him.

And may the Lord hasten that day!

Amen and Amen.

GRACE REIGNS THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Rom. v. 21.

CHRIST'S grave is vacant now,
Left for the throne above ;
His cross asserts God's right to bless,
In His own boundless love.

'Twas there the blood was shed,
'Twas there the life was pour'd,
There mercy gain'd her diadem,
While Justice sheath'd her sword.

And thence the child of faith
Sees judgment all gone by,
Perceives the sentence fully met,
"The soul that sins shall die ;"—

Learns how that God in love
Gave Christ the sins to bear
Of all who own His Lordship now,
That they His place might share ;—

And cries with wondering joy,
"As He is so am I,
Pure, holy, loved as Christ Himself,—
Who shall my peace destroy ?"

Reach my blest Saviour first,
Take Him from God's esteem,
Prove Jesus bears one spot of sin,
Then tell me I'm unclean !

Nay ! for He purged my guilt
By His own precious blood,
And such its virtue, not a stain
E'er meets the eye of God.

London : W. H. Broom, Paternoster Row.

OUTLINES OF LECTURES ON THE TABERNACLE OF WITNESS.

Lecture I.

THE OFFERINGS FOR THE TABERNACLE.

Exodus xxv. 1-9.

“AND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”

INTRODUCTION.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel. Ver. 1, 2.] These were communications from God, and are therefore of divine value. They are the unfoldings of the thoughts of the divine mind, given, indeed, in type and shadow, but nevertheless containing the expressions of infinite wisdom, grace, and love.

These types and shadows contain an inexhaustible fund of instruction, comfort, joy, and blessing, amply repaying the most diligent and prayerful investigation.

These words were to be spoken to the children of Israel; but they are written for our profit. The *letter* was for Israel, God's outward nation; the *spiritual*

truth is for us, even for those who through grace have believed in Jesus.

“All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” (1 Cor. x. 11.) “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” (Rom. xv. 4.)

THE OFFERING.

Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every one that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. Ver. 2.] The margin has it, “That they bring me an heave offering;” for so it is in the Hebrew. There are two kinds of offerings mentioned in Scripture, the *heave offering*, or that which is offered or heaved up to God, and the *wave offering*, that which is caused to pass and repass before him: as significant, the one, of that which is done *to* God, and the other, of that which is done *in his presence*. Here it is the heave offering; but in Exodus xxxv. both terms are used (verse 22). Literally, “Every one that waved a wave offering of gold,” and (verse 24), “Every one that heaved an heave offering of silver.”

And whether it be in doing, suffering, or giving, when there is first a willing mind it is accepted, if done to God, and as in the sight of God; as he says, “Of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.”

“God loveth a cheerful giver;” but then he sets the example; and by his own unspeakable gift he lays the believer under infinite obligation, and leads the soul to make the earnest inquiry, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?” These gifts make not God our debtor; they are the feeble acknowledgment on our part that we owe a debt which eternity will never see discharged.

While Moses was on the mount receiving those

divine communications, the people of Israel at the foot of the mount were getting weary at his prolonged absence; and without waiting for the communication of God's mind to them, they get up a system of religious worship, and set on foot a contribution after their own fashion. (Ex. xxxii.)

Solemn and instructive intimation of what has taken place in the professing church; while the Lord Jesus, who has gone up on high, has delayed his coming.

The comparison and contrast of these two characters of offerings are strikingly suggestive.

Aaron says: "Bring your contributions *unto me*and they brought them *unto Aaron*" (verses 2, 3), and the result was the molten calf, and religious worship by proclamation—"To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah" (verses 4, 5). This is man's contribution to man for a professedly religious object, according to the wisdom and will of man, and what came of it (verse 24), "and there came out this calf."

God says: "Let them bring *me* an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take *my* offering." Offerings to GOD for the accomplishment of *his* word and will is that which he requires.

WHAT THE OFFERINGS WERE TO BE.

God has not only expressed his willingness to receive, he has also specified what is to be given.

And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, &c. Ver. 3-7.] These various materials are significant, and we will endeavour to point out their symbolical import, as suggested by other portions of the inspired word.

GOLD, the purest, most precious, and most beautiful of metals, is the emblem of that which is divine, of the divine nature, excellency, and glory.

SILVER, as typical of redemption, and the redemption price. (Compare Ex. xxx. 11-16 with 1 Peter i. 18.) And silver being anciently the chief circu-

iv

lating medium, becomes also the type of communion, on the ground of redemption.

BRASS, typical of enduring strength. (Deut. xxxiii. 25.)

BLUE, of heaven, from its colour, and of perfection, from its Hebrew name. Heavenly perfectness.

SCARLET, of earthly dignity and glory. (2 Sam. i. 24.)

PURPLE, a combination of blue and scarlet, typical of heavenly and earthly glory combined.

FINE LINEN, purity, righteousness, &c. (Rev. xix. 8.)

GOATS' HAIR, human nature simply, without the idea of purity. (Matt. xxv. 32.) A kid of the goat was most frequently chosen for the sin offering.

RAMS' SKINS DYED RED, atonement (1 Peter i. 19), as "a garment dipped in blood." (Gen. iii. 21, xxxvii. 31.)

BADGERS' SKINS, the pilgrim character. (Ezek. xvi. 10.)

SHITTIM WOOD, human nature, wood from the wilderness of Shittim.

OIL FOR THE LIGHT, the Holy Spirit in testimony.

SPICES FOR THE ANOINTING OIL, the graces of the Spirit of Christ. (Ps. cxxxiii.)

AND FOR SWEET INCENSE, those graces of the Spirit which are for a sweet smelling savour to God.

PRECIOUS STONES, various excellencies and perfections, both in Jesus and in his people, through grace. (1 Peter iii. 4.)

This is the "alphabet," so to speak, with which it is necessary to be familiar before we shall be able to read the types of the tabernacle intelligently. I think I have given each "letter" its true expression and power. I think I have "pronounced" them rightly. Others, indeed, may differ from me in this; but, like different dialects of the same language, I am persuaded we shall nearly agree in substance.

Now let us put these "letters" together in the order in which they here occur, and I think they

v

will spell a well known and much loved name—the name of him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the name of JESUS,—Jehovah the Saviour.

GOLD, for he was with God and was God—"God over all, blessed for ever."

SILVER, he is our Redeemer. His precious blood was our redemption-price.

BRASS, the Almighty Saviour, of patient and enduring strength.

BLUE, he came down from heaven, and even while on earth could speak of himself as "the Son of man which is in heaven;" and he was *perfection* itself.

SCARLET, as Son of David all earthly dignity and glory belongs to him.

PURPLE, both heavenly and earthly glories centre in him.

FINE LINEN, he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

GOATS' HAIR, he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, though personally he knew no sin, and on the cross was made sin for us.

RAMS' SKINS DYED RED, he was the atoning Lamb.

BADGERS' SKINS, he was a pilgrim and stranger here, not having where to lay his head.

SHITTIM WOOD, "The Word was made *flesh*, and tabernacled among us."

OIL FOR THE LIGHT, he was the Christ, the anointed One, the faithful and true witness, the light of the world.

SPICES FOR ANOINTING OIL, every grace and virtue centred in him.

AND FOR SWEET INCENSE, his name is as ointment poured forth.

PRECIOUS STONES, the one in whom every excellency, perfection, and glory meets and dwells.

"Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love, and power,
That mortals ever knew,
That angels ever bore,—
All are too mean to speak his worth,
Too mean to set the Saviour forth."

THE OBJECT.

We now come to the object for which these contributions were to be made.

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. Ver. 8.]

FOR A DWELLING-PLACE.

Gracious words! God having redeemed a people out of Egypt, desired to have a dwelling-place among them in the wilderness. So God now desires that sinners redeemed by the blood of the Lamb should be builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22), and be built up a spiritual house, composed of living stones. (1 Peter ii. 5.)

When Jesus was here upon the earth he himself was the sanctuary and dwelling-place of God. In him the glory of the Godhead dwelt. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt (or tabernacled) among us, and we beheld his glory." Before his death, in this, respect, he abode alone. (John xii. 24.) But having finished his work, and ascended up on high, upon himself, and on the confession of his name, as the Christ, the Son of the living God, known in the soul by the revelation of the Father, he built his church (Matt. xvi. 15, 16) "for an habitation of God," "the house of God, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. iii. 15.)

How perfect, how suggestive are the words of God! He does not say, Let them make themselves a tabernacle, or meeting-place, that I may come and visit them.

It is natural to man to think of himself first, and to begin from himself. But God's thoughts and ways are the opposite of man's. God begins from himself—"Let them make ME a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them."

O for grace to learn this lesson perfectly! so that in meeting together in church fellowship our first

thought may be, not our own comfort and convenience, nor even our own edification—God will take care of that—but that God may have a dwelling-place among us, and that God, through Christ, may be glorified. “That I may dwell among them,” not as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night, but to be at home there. And Jesus has told us the secret of this. (John xiv. 23.) And the secret is, love and obedience—love to Christ, and obedience to him. “If any man love me he will keep my word (Gr., not words. See Rev. iii. 8), and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.”

The *visits* of divine grace, in a Father’s love and a Saviour’s pity, to the abodes of the saints in the midst of their unworthiness and self-will, is one thing; the home-dwelling of divine love, where holiness is cultivated, truth maintained, and obedience sought, is another, and far more blessed.

A SANCTUARY.

Let us mark another thing. He does not say, Let them make me a tabernacle, or a tent, as though anything would do for God; but, “Let them make me a *sanctuary*,” a holy habitation, “that I may dwell.” Yes, “holiness becomes God’s house for ever.”

In the gospel God comes down to sinners; it is grace abounding amidst the aboundings of sin. But the truth for the saint is the doctrine which is according to godliness. To the sinner, by the gospel, God says, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” But to the believer he says, “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? and what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch

not the unclean thing, and I will receive you: I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (2 Cor. vi. 14-18.)

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

THE PLAN.

According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and after the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. Ver. 9.] In the things of God no place is left for human reason, and no margin for self-will. God has arranged everything according to infinite wisdom, and the word of God contains full instructions.

These earthly types were the "example and shadows of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." (Heb. viii. 5.)

Weighty and important words! May they be brought to bear upon our consciences, and tell upon our hearts!

The assembly of believers on earth should be the reflection down here of what the church is in Christ above. Is the church above redeemed to God from an evil world? the church on earth is to be separate to God, as not of the world, even as Christ is not of it. Is the church above one in Christ its glorious Head? the church on earth should exhibit this oneness. Is the church above a holy and true church? the church on earth should be conspicuous for holiness and truth, "the epistle of Christ known and read of all men," "the pillar and ground of the truth." And just as Christ on earth was "God manifest in flesh;" so the church should exhibit Christ manifest in his people.

Lecture II.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Ex. xxv. 10-16.

“AND they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.”

THE ORDER OF ARRANGEMENT.

And they shall make an ark of shittim wood. Verse 10.] The *historical* order of the construction of the tabernacle and its vessels, as given in chapters xxxvi. and xxxvii., is different from the *preceptive* order in chapters xxv. and xxvi. And doubtless there is a reason for this difference.

In chapters xxxvi. and xxxvii. the divine historian begins with the account of the tabernacle and tent, its curtains and coverings, then proceeds with the boards and bars, &c., and then follows the account of the ark, the table, and the candlestick, &c.

The historical order is the natural order. When the tabernacle was set up, then the various vessels were brought in and put in their proper and appointed places. (Chap. xl.) All this is natural. But in chapters xxv. xxvi. we get the order in which God mentions the various particulars, the divine order, the place they occupy in the divine mind.

X

When speaking of the offerings for the tabernacle, he begins with himself, "Let them bring *me* an offering," "Let them make *me* a sanctuary." So when speaking of the vessels of the tabernacle, and the various particulars connected with it, he begins with that which pre-eminently is typical of the person of Christ, the ark of the covenant.

The Spirit of God invariably gives Christ the first place, and the centre place. He is the Alpha and the Omega of all God's purposes and plans. He is God's centre, the foundation, the chief corner-stone, and the head-stone of the corner. Precious Jesus! "God over all blessed for ever," everlasting praises be unto thy name.

The tabernacle represents the Church of God on earth, believers "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 22.) But when the Spirit of God states this, he does not simply say, "You also are builded together," but "*In whom* ye also are builded together;" he begins with Christ.

It is a poor thing to meet together simply as christians for our own edification and comfort, and then to invite and expect Christ to come in. The divine thought is that we meet in the name of Jesus, around his blessed person, to maintain his honour, truth, and authority, that as so met, we may be an holy habitation of God through the Spirit. And "where two or three are gathered together in my name," says Christ, "there am I in the midst of them."

THE ARK.

And they shall make an ark of shittim wood. Verse 10.] The ark of the covenant is typical of the Lord Jesus, as the centre of gathering and of blessing to the Church of God.

The shittim wood is typical of his human nature, "as the word made *flesh*," the gold of his divine

xi

nature, *God* manifest in flesh. While the union of both represents him as Immanuel, God with us.

In the presentation of Christ, the Holy Ghost begins with his incarnation. And great stress is laid, in 1 John iv. 1, and 2 John 7, on the confession that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. The ark of shittim wood typifies Christ incarnate.

THE DIMENSIONS.

Two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. Verse 10.] This, at 1 ft. 9·888 ins., or nearly 1 ft. 10 ins., would be about 4 ft. 6 ins. long, 2 ft. 6 ins. wide, and 2 ft. 6 ins. high.

Doubtless God had a reason for each of these measures, but as they are not explained, as I am aware, we shall do best to leave them among the other "mysteries" connected with the person of Immanuel.

THE OVERLAYING.

And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it. Verse 11.] There can be no mistaking the import of this. The divine nature and the divine glory in the person of the Lord Jesus here appears.

"WITH PURE GOLD." He was God as well as man. And all the holiness, dignity, and glory of the divine nature were seen in him, even while here below. Veiled, it may be, to human eyes, but there it was.

Numbers iv. 5, 6, sets forth Jesus as seen on earth. "When the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come; and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of the covenant with it; and shall put thereon a covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof."

To the spiritual mind, he was God manifest in the flesh; but to the natural mind, his flesh was as the

covering vail, hiding the splendour of his deity. The badgers' skin covering suggests the lowly form in which he appeared, as Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph and Mary. The cloth "wholly of blue," spread over all, expresses that heavenly and perfect character which marked every thing he said and did. As he who came down from heaven, and who was, as his own words declare, even while here on earth, "the Son of man which is in heaven."

But the ark within the vail, in the most holy place, which we are now considering, shows him as entered into heaven itself: now to appear in the presence of God for us.

"Within and without shalt thou overlay it."

The intimate connection and the exquisite combination of the divine and the human in all the *internal* feelings and *outward* actings of Immanuel, is a subject of profound interest, to be approached with holy reverence and godly fear. The shoe must be taken from the foot while we tread this sacred ground.

There were within the bosom of Jesus human thoughts, purposes, and affections, but no thought, purpose, or affection was *only* or merely human, but also divine, each had a divine overlaying, if I may so express it.

If he takes little children in his arms, this is not simply human tenderness, but also divine condescension and love, and the blessing pronounced by human lips confers divine and everlasting favour. Yes, and "the God shines glorious through the man." If he drops a tear of human sympathy at the grave of Lazarus, that tear-drop sparkles with a love divine. And that clear, distinct human voice which utters the words, "Lazarus, come forth," and he came forth, is the voice of him, who in the beginning said, "Let light be," and light was.

He sleeps exhausted with his many labours in the vessel's stern, while the elements, as though conscious that their master slumbers, do their utmost to swamp that frail bark; but almighty power lies dormant in

xiii

that weary frame. Hark! 'tis the well known voice of Mary's son. The tempest hears it, and is still.

THE GOLDEN CROWN.

And shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. Verse 11.] The ark of shittim wood represents Christ incarnate. The ark overlaid with gold, God manifest in flesh. The ark encompassed with this golden crown, represents "Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR." (Heb. ii. 9.)

The blood on the mercy seat at the basis of this crown, tells us of his atoning death. But when he had finished the work which his Father gave him to do on earth, he said, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." And though we see not yet all things put under him, yet we know that his prayer is answered, and that the risen man at God's right hand is there divinely glorified.

THE RINGS AND STAVES.

And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. Ver. 12-14.] These rings and staves adapted the ark to the wilderness condition of God's people, so as to be in readiness to accompany them in all their journeyings. And Jesus assures us, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) Wherever, throughout "that great and terrible wilderness," the tabernacle of God was pitched, there the ark occupied its central and appointed place. So where saints are gathered according to God, there will the presence of Jesus be. But his own proper place

must be reserved for him, and given to him, and God's order of gathering is, "Jesus in the midst."

And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne by them. Ver. 14.] When the princes of Israel offered six covered wagons and twelve oxen to Jehovah, "Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according unto their service: and four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders." (Numb. vii. 1-9.)

The ark of the covenant was among the vessels which were under the charge of the Kohathites. Thus the ark was to be borne upon the shoulders of the priests, the Levites, of the family of Kohath.

When David attempted to bring up the ark into the city of David, and placed it, after the example of the Philistines, on a new cart, God made a breach upon Uzza. (1 Chron. xiii.) But when David, having discovered his mistake, put it on the shoulders of the Levites, according to God's order, God helped the Levites, and there was joy and blessing. (1 Chron. xv.)

So the setting forth or ministry of Christ, as God's ark, ought to be a matter of individual responsibility to God. It is not to be done by machinery. It is not an affair to be taken up by societies, formed according to the principles of men, and upon a worldly model. All this is a departure from the simplicity of the order of God, and from the examples of the early Christians under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, through the apostles and prophets.

Where Christ has given the gift, whether it be of the evangelist, the pastor, or the teacher, the possession of that gift lays the individual receiving it

XV

under solemn responsibility to Christ. And woe be to the evangelist, if he preach not the gospel. Woe to the pastor if he feed not the flock of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood: and to the teacher, if he take not heed to the ministry which he hath received in the Lord that he fulfil it. And woe be to him that hinders it. On the other hand, he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and the Lord's word is, "Occupy till I come." "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

"O happy servant he,
In such a posture found,
He shall his Lord with rapture see,
And be with honour crowned."

When John Bunyan, then a prisoner in Bedford jail, was asked, If he were let free, would he promise not to preach again? his reply was, "If you let me out of prison to-day, I will preach again, by God's grace, to-morrow." He felt the pressure of the staves of the ark resting upon his shoulders.

The rings were to be of gold, and the staves of shittim wood overlaid with gold. This teaches us that the divine grace of the Lord Jesus, and also his human sympathy and tenderness, and both combined, adapt him to the need of his people in their present wilderness condition. He can condescend to the weakness of the two or the three met in his name, and can be touched with a feeling of their infirmities; but he is also present in their midst in the all-sufficiency of divine grace and strength.

The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. Ver. 15.] Not only were the children of Israel to be always ready to follow the leadings of the cloud, "to go by day or by night" (Num. ix. 21); but also the ark was ever in readiness to accompany them.

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, says Christ, "*there am I*;" not, there will I

be. He is always in readiness to meet with us ; we have never to wait *for* him, though we have always to wait *upon* him.

Then, again, the worship of God in this dispensation is not confined or fixed to a certain locality or localities. "The hour cometh and now is," says Christ, "when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father." (John iv. 21.)

"Where'er we seek him he is found,
And every spot is holy ground."

It is good to have a closet in our houses, consecrated by visits from the Father and the Son, and holy communings with them ; and desirable to have a suitable place where brethren in Jesus may meet together free from all distraction ; but the only true consecration is that which flows from the manifestation of the divine presence, and the revelation of the glory of God in the person of the Lord Jesus, in the present power of the Holy Ghost.

THE TESTIMONY.

And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. Ver. 16.] The ark was to be the depository of the unbroken tables of the law. The two tables of testimony first given, through Israel's utter failure, were broken beneath Mount Sinai. (Ex. xxxi. 18 ; xxxii. 19.) The second tables were put into the ark. (Deut. x. 1-5.)

The shittim wood, as we have seen, sets forth the incarnation of Christ, and the gold his divine glory, and both the human and the divine combined in his mysterious and blessed person ; so these unbroken tables of the law, put into the ark and kept there, point out the unsullied obedience of his life as man.

As made of a woman, he was made under the law. (Gal. iv. 4.) And he kept it, as no other man did or could. But as Son of God, he did infinitely more. Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant,

xvii

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. (Phil. ii. 6-8.) That is, he obeyed as man, or rather as God-man, the will of his heavenly Father—a character of obedience infinitely higher, and divinely more precious than human obedience to law.

Law never demanded that the righteous should die for the guilty. Nay, law would have forbidden it. Law *foreshadowed* the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, and atonement by blood; and Christ by his atoning death fulfilled the shadows of the law. But in fulfilling them he went infinitely beyond the law's demands.

Law declares the righteous requirement of God from man in the flesh, and supposes in man's nature a tendency to evil, and forbids it. And hence, when brought to 'bear on man, it becomes the ministry of condemnation. It tests the nature and brings out its real character. (Rom. viii. 7.) Christ's nature was pure and holy, and hence his perfect obedience to all its principles and precepts, as *Son of the virgin*. But over and above all this, as the *eternal Son of the eternal Father* he obeyed his Father's will, and through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and from that height of excellent glory he has sent down the Holy Spirit to baptize into one body in fellowship with their exalted Head all believers in him. So that now, in virtue of this oneness, the believer stands accepted in him, in all that he was and did on earth, both as the obedient Son of man and the obedient Son of the Father, in all that he suffered on the accursed tree, when he offered up himself as a sweet-smelling savour unto God, and in all that he now is, as the glorified man at God's right hand above. He himself is our righteousness, and we are made the righteousness of God in him.

Lecture III.

THE MERCY SEAT AND THE CHERUBIM OF GLORY.

EXODUS xxv. 17-22.

“AND thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

THE MERCY SEAT.

And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold. Ver. 17.] The spiritual import of this is clear from Rom. iii. 24, 25, where there is a manifest allusion to it by the Holy Ghost:—“Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, [literally, a propitiatory, or mercy seat,] through faith in his blood.” The word rendered “propitiation” in Rom. iii. 25, being the same word that is used in Heb. ix. 5, and there translated, “mercy seat.”

The Hebrew word signifies to cover over, or to make atonement, to appease, or pacify. The mercy seat, therefore, presents to us “Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation.”

“Of pure gold,” of divine excellency and glory. The ground on which God acts in divine grace and

xix

mercy, yet with all respect to holiness and justice. "*Pure gold.*"

On this mercy seat the blood was sprinkled on the great day of atonement (Lev. xvi. 1, 2, 14), and it formed the lid of the ark in which were deposited the tables of the testimony. For the exercise of divine mercy towards guilty sinners can only be on the ground of blood-shedding and atonement, and in consistency with the demands of divine and infinite holiness. Hence, the blood-stained mercy seat is erected over the unbroken tables of the law.

THE DIMENSIONS.

Two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.] The mercy seat was of the same dimensions and extent as the ark of the covenant.

The exercise of divine mercy and grace is founded on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and is co-extensive therewith. It has for its basis and foundation the incarnation, obedience, life, and death of him who was eternally God, and is now the risen and glorified Christ, at God's right hand above.

THE CHERUBIM.

And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold. Ver. 18.] The forms of these cherubim* are not here given us, but in Ezek. i. and x. and Rev. iv. the cherubim, or living creatures, are largely described. Wherever we read of the cherubim in the scriptures, they are always connected with the performance of the divine will, or the manifestation of the divine glory.

The first mention of the cherubim is in Gen. iii. 24, and they are there evidently emblematical of *angelic* agency. In Ezekiel i. &c., I believe they are symbolical of *prophetic* agency, and its various cha-

* "Cherubim" is the plural of "cherub." Strictly speaking, "cherubims" is incorrect. As we say, ox, oxen, not oxens.

XX

racteristics as employed of God ; and in Rev. iv., of the ministry of the *redeemed* in glory.

In form the cherubim on the mercy seat appear to be simpler than those described in Ezekiel : this we gather from the expression in the 20th verse,—“toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be,” implying that there was but one face to each.

In ascertaining the spiritual import of these cherubim, I believe what is stated in scripture as to the truth of the person of Christ is our best and safest guide.

We have already seen, in the shittim wood of the ark, set forth the incarnation of the Lord Jesus ; in the gold, his divine nature ; in the unbroken tables, his living obedience ; in the blood-stained mercy seat, his atoning death ; and in the crown of gold, his resurrection and ascension glory. We now proceed a step further ; for we know that, having ascended up on high, he has received gifts for men. (Ps. lxxviii. 18 ; Eph. iv. 8.) And it is this truth which is, I believe, embodied in these cherubim of glory. The ascended Christ, the risen man, receiving in his own person the fulness of the Spirit for the manifestation and extension of divine mercy, founded on his finished work.

There is a somewhat similar figure in the vision of the Lamb in Rev. v. 6 : “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”

Now what is set forth in Rev. v., by these seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb, is expressed by these cherubim of glory in Exodus xxv. The fulness of the Spirit received and possessed by the Lord Jesus for testimony to God’s mercy and grace.

The comparison of Psalm lxxviii. 18, with the quotation in Eph. iv. 8, will show the beautiful

accuracy of Scripture. In Ps. lxxviii. 18, we read: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

Here it is gifts "*received*," and received "*for men*;" or, as in the Hebrew, and in the margin, "*in the man*." Christ, as the ascended man, receiving the gifts in his own person, and for the benefit of men. The gifts of the Spirit as possessed by Christ, in their heavenly origin and source, this, I believe, is what the cherubim typify.

The spirit of prophecy in the Psalm goes beyond the present application to the church, which is in the Old Testament the hidden mystery, and the prophecy takes in the rebellious people of Israel, and foretells their blessing in the latter day, when God will pour on them his Spirit, and set his sanctuary in the midst of them, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

In Ephesians iv. 8, the Spirit gives us the present application of this scripture to the church, and varies the expression thus, "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and *gave* gifts unto men." In the case of Israel, he has *received* gifts in his own person for them, to be dispensed in due time. In the case of the church he has *given* gifts to them, for present benefit and blessing, while he himself remains the Fountain Head, the source, and the communicator of these gifts.

The types of the two cherubim and the candlestick are beautifully illustrative. In the cherubim we have the gifts of the Spirit in their *source above*, within the vail, in the holiest of all, as received by and communicated from an ascended Saviour; in the candlestick, the gifts of the Spirit in their *exercise and manifestation in the church on earth*, the gifts being given for the perfecting of the saints.

THE WORKMANSHIP.

Of beaten work shalt thou make them.] There are three places in which the term "beaten" occurs. Here, in connection with the cherubim; in verse 31, in connection with the candlestick,—"*Of beaten work shall the candlestick be made;*" and in Ex. xxvii. 20, "*pure olive oil beaten for the light;*" and in each case it is connected with that which typifies ministry, or testimony, and points out the connection between *diligence* and testimony, and the strength which diligence gives. As shown in the cherubim, the patient and laborious ministry of Christ on earth, preparatory to his taking his place in heaven, as the centre and source of testimony in the church. The candlestick shows ministry in its exercise, having Christ for its centre, a laborious and responsible work. And it is "*beaten oil*" which is provided for the light.

THEIR POSITION.

Of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of [or from] the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. Ver. 18, 19.] The mercy seat and cherubim were of one solid piece of wrought gold. The cherubim formed the extension of the mercy seat from either end, and represent the provision made by God, through the Spirit, for the extension of divine mercy and grace, founded on the finished work of Christ. Christ having come, and suffered, and died, and ascended, would still have abode alone, and his work have been unavailing to man, had he not received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and from his place in glory sent down the Holy Spirit to bear his testimony to the accepted sacrifice, and to divine mercy as now in exercise on the ground of it. (Acts ii. 33; John xvi. 7.) But now the Holy Ghost, as received by a risen

xxiii

Saviour, is the testifier and communicator of this divine mercy and grace to man.

Here upon this mercy seat, and between these cherubim, it is that God delights to sit, and the glory delights to dwell. This mercy seat is the throne of grace, and these cherubim are the cherubim of glory. Here grace triumphant reigns, and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Here every attribute of deity is glorified, even in the bestowment of mercy and grace to the guilty and undeserving.

“Hence mercy, mercy from on high,
Descends to rebels doomed to die.”

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings. Ver. 20.] Thus hovering over and shadowing the mercy seat. In contrast with the larger cherubim in Solomon's temple, described in 1 Kings vi. 23–28, whose wings extended twenty cubits, touching the wall of the house on either side of the most holy place.

In Solomon's temple the cherubim represent ministry in its heavenly *exercise*, but in the tabernacle ministry in its heavenly *source*.

And their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.] The number two is significant of fellowship, in this case fellowship in testimony. “The witness of two men is true,” as shewing the truth of the testimony.

“Looking one to another,” “seeing eye to eye,” shewing the harmony or agreement of the testimony.

And both looking on the mercy seat, shows that the grand mysteries of atonement are the centre truths of the testimony. “Which things (*also*) the angels desire to look into.” Such is the testimony given by Jesus glorified, in the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, true, harmonious, and occupied pre-eminently with the glory of divine

xxiv

grace, founded in its manifestation on the person and work of Christ, God manifest in the flesh, his lowly birth, his holy life, his atoning death, and his risen glory.

And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.] The throne of divine grace is founded on the person and work of the Lord Jesus, and all God's purposes, promises, and covenant blessings centre in him. He is the true ark of the covenant, and the ark of the testimony also. All the lines of divine truth centre in him, and radiate from him.

THE PROMISE.

And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. Ver. 22.] This is the meeting-place, and place of communion between God and those who, like Moses, receive the word from God's mouth, and give testimony from him. (Ezek. iii. 17.) Those who "stand in the secret counsel of the Lord, who perceive and hear his word, who mark his word and hear it." (Jer. xxiii. 18.)

The secret of ministry in the power of the Holy Ghost is communion with God, over his own word, in spirit in the holiest. God occupying the mercy seat, Jesus himself our meeting-place, while from him who has received the fulness of the Spirit for testimony, gift is not only received at first, but replenished for constant exercise.

Happy and privileged enjoyment! Yet, while this is, I believe, the interpretation of the figure, since all the promises of God in Christ are Yea and Amen to every believer, each individual Christian is permitted to claim and share the privilege of this communion with God, from off the mercy seat, concerning all the communications of his mind and will.

Lecture IV.

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD.

Exodus xxv. 23-30.

“THOU shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway.”

THE TABLE.

Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood. Ver. 23.] The *ark* of the covenant, as we have seen, sets forth Jesus as the *centre of gathering* to the Church of God. The *table* presents him as the CENTRE AND GROUND OF THEIR COMMUNION.

THE MATERIAL.

Thou shalt also make a table.] Where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus, it is the will of God that his dying love should be commemorated among them.

A table of shittim wood.] The incarnation and humanity of the Lord Jesus lies at the foundation, and an incarnate Saviour, God manifest in the flesh, is the centre of our communion in church fellowship.

“A table,” not tables; there is but one.

xxvi

THE DIMENSIONS OF THE TABLE.

Two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.] God has fixed the dimensions of his own table, and man is not at liberty to extend or limit it. In length and breadth it extends to all believers, while walking worthily, yet excluding the unconverted and the defiled. Its height also is of divine appointment. It is on a level with the mercy seat. It is for believers, and for believers only—for those who, through faith in Jesus, have an interest in his atonement; whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

The length and breadth of the table is half a cubit less than the ark and mercy seat; for there are more saved by Christ, than actually and worthily sit at his table.

THE OVERLAYING.

And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold. Ver. 24.] Gold is the emblem of divine excellency, and pure gold, of the purity and holiness of the divine nature. The table of shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold, typifies the divine excellency and purity of the person of the Lord Jesus, as the ground of communion, in whose person the divine and human natures are united.

That is not the Lord's table, according to the mind of God, where the divinity of Christ, and his divine excellency and glory is not held and maintained. The Christ in whose name we meet is Immanuel, God with us.

THE GOLDEN CROWN.

And make thereto a crown of gold round about.] We meet indeed in the name of an incarnate Christ, to commemorate his dying love. But he who was once made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, is now crowned with glory and

xxvii

honour. We meet, therefore, in the name of a divine and glorified Christ.

At his table we remember what he was, and what he did and suffered on earth for us; but at the same time, what and where he now is, crowned with glory and honour at God's right hand. And we do this "until he come," in the expectation of his return to receive us to himself.

THE BORDER.

And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about. Ver. 25. [Hebrew, *misgereth*, a border or enclosure, from *sagar*, to shut up, to close.] The length and breadth of the table is fixed by God himself, as we have seen (v. 23), and also its height: but the table thus extended and limited by divine grace and infinite wisdom, is also *guarded*. There was to be a border to the table. And God has also fixed the limits of the border; it was to have a border of an hand breadth.

There are four fingers to an hand breadth, and there are four things indispensable to real and right communion at the Lord's table, according to God and his word, if there is to be real and full blessing. And we are to be guided by God's word alone in guarding his table.

The first thing is saving *faith* in Jesus. This is generally admitted (John xx. 31; 1 Cor. x. 16)—"The bread which *we* break." Secondly, the *holiness* and consistency of walk which becomes the confession of his name. (1 Cor. v.) Thirdly, soundness in holding and maintaining the *truth* of the person of Christ. (2 John 10.) Fourthly, *subjection* to the authority of Christ. (2 Thess. iii. 14.) For we meet at the Lord's table as *believers*, and in the name of him that is *holy*, him that is *true*, and of him that *hath the key of David*, that openeth and no man shutteth. (Rev. iii. 7.)

It is all-important to see that the table sets forth Christ himself. That the ground of our communion

together in church fellowship, is the person of Christ; an incarnate, divine, and glorified Christ: and hence the absolute necessity of examining and judging ourselves, and of the exercise of the strictest church discipline in connection with the table of the Lord. (1 Cor. v. and xi.)

The table is not to be looked at merely as the gathering point of believers, where all Christians may meet simply because they are Christians, without regard to walk and doctrine. This were to make a table without a border.

It is in connection with the table that discipline comes in: this we learn from 1 Cor. v. and xi. And it is observable that the Lord Jesus, at the passover, previous to his instituting the Lord's supper, having first washed his disciples' feet (John xiii. 1-11), then led his disciples into the closest self-examination (Matt. xxvi. 20-25; John xiii. 12-30); the result of which was, that Judas having received the sop went *immediately* out. Then, and not till then, could Jesus divide the bread among them, and also the cup, saying, "Drink ye all of it."

In Luke's account, indeed, who states things in their moral order and connection, and not always in their historical order, it would appear otherwise; but a careful examination of all the passages will confirm the fact.

And thou shalt make unto it a border. Ver. 25.] This is imperative; it is not left to man's will or likings. He that said, "Thou shalt make a table," said also, "And thou shalt make a border." And a border of an hand breadth, not a border of one finger, or of two, or of three, but of an hand breadth.

Faith is indispensable; but not only faith, but *holiness*; and not only holiness, but *truth*; and not only truth, but *subjection* to the Lordship of Christ in his church—his supreme and exclusive Lordship—for he opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens.

A border of an hand breadth round about.] It was.

xxix

to extend all round, to be guarded on every side, no gap left in the fence, no breach to be left in the walls. (Neh. vi. 1.) This will not please everybody. (See Neh. iv. 7-9.) And there are not only little foxes that spoil the vines, but there are foxes who seek to break down stone walls. (Neh. iv. 3.) This is dangerous work. (Eccl. x. 8.) The border is to extend all round.

THE BORDER CROWNED.

And thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about.] This is very striking! There is not only a divine glory connected with the person of Jesus as the ground of communion, as shewn by the golden crown to the table, but also God has put divine honour on the jealousy which guards the communion of saints, because it is connected with the glory of the person of his Son.

And as the border extends all round, so does the crown: for it is the jealousy that guards the person of Jesus in every point in the matter of communion, that has this divine honour put upon it by God himself.

THE RINGS AND STAVES.

And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Ver. 26.] Thus adapting the table to the wilderness condition of God's people. And God also has provided for his people now, so that wherever two or three are gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus, there they might break the bread and drink of the cup in remembrance of him.

Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. Ver. 27.] Thus especially connecting the rings and staves with the border.

And are we not thus reminded that our exposed condition in such a wilderness as this renders the

XXX

border of all importance? And further, that the border is necessary in every place?

And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. Ver. 28.] Both the human tenderness and sympathy of the Lord Jesus, as shewn by the shittim wood, and his divine grace and all-sufficiency, as shewn by the gold, adapt him to the wilderness need of his people, in their church communion here.

That the table may be borne with them.] Neither the ark nor the table were to be carried, after the example of the Philistines, on a new cart. That is, both testimony to the person of Christ, and communion together in his name, are to be matters of individual responsibility.

THE VESSELS OF THE TABLE.

And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. Ver. 29.] All that is connected with the communion of saints, on the ground of the person of the Lord Jesus, is to be of God, and done in the power of divine grace. Human will, human authority, human wisdom, have no place here.

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Christ Jesus.”

Let all things be done, not only decently and in order, but also by the grace of God, and to God's glory. And however important these directions are in all manner of service, they are never more so than in things connected with the table of the Lord.

THE SHEWBREAD.

And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway. Ver. 30.] See Lev. xxiv. 5–9.

And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes

xxx1

thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. Ver. 5.] The fine flour is typical of the pure and excellent humanity of Jesus.

The twelve pierced cakes (so the Hebrew) are typical of his suffering and broken body, the provision for all the people of God. (John vi.)

Two tenth deals, or two omers to each cake. A double portion: a portion for time and for eternity. As the provision made on the sixth day, which was for that day and also for the sabbath. (See Exod. xvi. 22-26.)

And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. Ver. 6.] Christ the bread of life set forth, a full provision for all believers. But it must be on the *pure* table. A pure and holy Christ the basis of communion: and the table guarded from defilement. And "before the Lord:" for the eye of a jealous and holy God is ever resting on the communion of saints.

And thou shalt put frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Ver. 7.] Thus presenting a memorial of the rich fragrance of the character and ways of Jesus in his *life*, as well as the sweet savour of his sacrifice in *death*.

Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. Ver. 9.] Renewed weekly. So on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread. (Acts xx. 7.) And on the day of his resurrection, and the following Lord's day, Jesus himself allowed his disciples to handle in his own precious body, the sacred memorials of his sufferings and death. (John xx.)

To the church, indeed, the weekly period is not the seventh day, the token of creation rest, but a seventh period, namely, the eighth day, the sign of resurrection, and the rest of a completed redemption.

Before the Lord continually.] This is repeated, for it is all-important. The feast is not provided for the

XXXII

guests only, but in honour of the Father and of the Son. The table is not spread for the family only, the Father takes his seat at the head. His language is, "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let *us* eat and be merry." For the full joy of communion is in the Father's presence. We are but partakers at the altar: the first and best portion belongs to God.

And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire by a perpetual statute. Ver. 9.] "Aaron and his sons." The high priest and his house. That is, to us, "Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we." (Heb. iii. 6.)

By virtue of the anointing as an holy priesthood, our fellowship is not only with the Father, but also with his Son Jesus Christ. "If any man hear my voice," says Jesus, "and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii. 20.) At the Lord's table we have sweet fellowship with Jesus, our high priest above, in the remembrance of his sufferings and death.

And thou shalt eat it in the holy place; for it is most holy.] [Lit. "holy of holies.]" How God guards the holiness of this feast of love. The very atmosphere of the place where it is eaten must be holy, for that which is here set forth, and on which the believer feeds, is "most holy."

By a perpetual statute.] "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup," says the apostle, "ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

It is of perpetual obligation till then. And the *often* eating is as obligatory as the eating at all. When he comes the obligation ceases. It is an ordinance peculiar to the present dispensation. After this he will drink the new wine with us in his Father's kingdom.

In the millennial period the divinely appointed and divinely restored sacrifices, which till then will never have fully accomplished their divine intention, these

xxxiii

sacrifices will take the place, if I may so say, of the simpler, but grand memorials of a Saviour's sufferings at the table of the Lord; and then the "mountain of the Lord's house" will be the centre of communion to the whole earth.

But till the Lord come, may true disciples be everywhere found gathered by twos and threes, or more, around the person of the Lord Jesus, to commemorate his redeeming love, in the recognition of his present glory, and in the hope of his return; "esteeming all God's precepts concerning all things to be right; and hating every false way."

Lecture V.

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

Exodus xxv. 31-40.

“AND thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold : of beaten work shall the candlestick be made : his shaft, and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it ; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side : three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch ; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower ; so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same : all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof : and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. And the tongs thereof, and the snuff-dishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.”

THE CANDLESTICK.

And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold. Ver. 31.] As the ark of the covenant represents Christ the centre of gathering to the church of God ; and the table of shewbread, Christ as the centre and ground of communion ; so the golden candlestick represents HIM as the CENTRE, the SOURCE, and the SUBJECT of TESTIMONY.

In the *cherubim* on the mercy seat we have ministry in its heavenly and divine source ; in the CANDLESTICK, ministry in its exercise on earth. In the *cherubim*, ministry at its fountain head above ; and

XXXV

in the *candlestick*, ministry in its manifestation in connection with the church below.

"If any man thirst," says Christ, "let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" (John vii. 37-39.) A glorified Christ within the veil is the source above, and living waters are diffused on earth, when faith draws out from his abundant fulness.

"A candlestick," or lampholder, or, literally, a depository and giver of light. It is God's provision for his church, during the present night time of the world, previous to the rising of the Sun of righteousness. The *church* itself is God's provision for the *world*. "Ye are the salt of the earth," says Christ; "ye are the light of the world." "The pillar and ground of the truth." "The epistle of Christ, known and read of all men;" and Rev. i. ii. iii. so represents it in the seven golden candlesticks, with "Jesus in the midst." A collective and corporate testimony; not as originating truth, but as receiving and maintaining it.

But in the seven-branched candlestick of the sanctuary we have set forth testimony as an individual thing, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. iv. 12.)

THE MATERIAL.

A candlestick of pure gold.] That which is here signified is ministry according to God, and not according to the principles and practices of men; ministry after a divine model, maintained in the power of divine grace. "If any man speak," says Peter, "let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified

xxxvi

through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter iv. 11.) Not simply cultivated intellect putting forth its strongest efforts, and its fairest forms, to the credit of the preacher and to the honour of the ministry; but divine grace manifested to the glory of God.

This ministry looks to no earthly or human source for its principles, authority, or sanction. It traces them neither down from the pontifical chair, the throne of the sovereign, nor up from the congregation of the people, nor yet from ministerial sanction, right or left. Cause for fervent thankfulness, though it be, when this ministry is delivered from papal bondage, when the throne permits and protects its exercise, when the people recognize and receive it, and when the sweet fellowship of fellow-servants makes the labour light.

Yet, nevertheless, true ministry has its source, its sanction, and its strength in God. It is GIFT *received* from the Lord Jesus Christ risen and glorified; *distributed* by the Holy Ghost according to his own will (1 Cor. xii. 11), and *exercised* in subjection to the supreme authority of Christ. There are diversities of *gifts*, but the same SPIRIT; differences of *administrations* (or services), but the same LORD; diversities of operations, but it is the same GOD which worketh all in all. (1 Cor. xii. 4-6.)

The reception of gift from Christ, whether it be that of the evangelist, the pastor, or the teacher, lays the person receiving it under the most solemn obligations to exercise it diligently. He becomes a steward of the manifold grace of God, and it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. When Peter and John were charged by the religious authorities of their day to be silent, their reply was, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." And the exhortation of Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 1-5) is worthy of all regard: "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall

xxxvii

judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season.....Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." See also the parable of the faithful and wise servant in Matt. xxiv. 45-47.

THE WORKMANSHIP.

Of beaten work shall the candlestick be made.]
 "Beaten work" for the candlestick, and "beaten oil" for the light. (Chap. xxvii. 20.)

The candlestick was not cast by one simple operation, but wrought. This shews the labour, care, and skill which is required in ministry according to God. It is not simple gift, but gift stirred up, laboriously fulfilled, and strengthened by the exercise. (See 1 Tim. iv. 13-16, and 2 Tim. i. 6.)

THE CENTRE SHAFT AND BRANCH.

His shaft, and his branch (not branches), his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same.]*
 This is the centre shaft and branch, which is called, by way of pre-eminence, "the candlestick," in v. 34, and is typical of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the centre and source of testimony in the power of the Spirit, and the great example and pattern of it in his personal ministry on earth.

As to fruit-bearing, he is the true vine, and his disciples are the branches. And as to testimony-bearing, he is the true candlestick, and his servants are branches of the same. In either case, without him we can do nothing.

As the sufferings of Christ fitted him to sympathize with us as our High Priest within the vail, so his active and laborious service here adapts him to our need as the centre and source of testimony, now that he is glorified above.

* The mistake of branches for branch is corrected by the translators themselves in the parallel passage, chap. xxxvii. 17.

xxxviii

In the *gold*, we see his divine sufficiency and excellency; in the *beaten work*, his human preparedness; and in the *shaft*, with his *branch*, his *bowls*, his *knops*, and his *flowers*, we see signified his dependence as man; his all-sufficiency, as possessing all stores of wisdom and knowledge; and his adaptation, as having now, and as the one who exercised when on earth, every variety of gift, who spake as never man spake, and all in divine excellency and glory.

THE BRANCHES.

And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side. Ver. 32.] The golden candlestick, consisting of the centre shaft and lamp, his branch, bowls, knops, and flowers represents CHRIST HIMSELF, the centre and source of ministry. The whole candlestick, with its seven branches and seven lamps, and all its other parts, is the divinely-devised representation of MINISTRY OR TESTIMONY ACCORDING TO GOD, having Christ for its centre.

The apostles and prophets of the present dispensation, having laid the foundation, and all the fundamental points, whether of truth or practice, being settled, and contained in the inspired scriptures, the *three standing branches of ministry* in the church, and for the adding to and building up of the church until it is complete, are those of the *evangelist*, the *pastor*, and the *teacher*. (Eph. iv.)

The six branches proceed from the main shaft in *pairs*, expressing fellowship and concurrence in testimony. They proceed from the *sides*, and not in front; for the object of ministry is not to make the ministry or the minister prominent, but for the exhibition of Christ. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." Standing aside that he may be visible to all, and thus giving him in testimony his own proper place, "Jesus in the midst."

xxxix

These branches, as the original word for branch implies, are hollow.

In Zechariah iv. we have a candlestick all of gold; the representation of ministry in the power of the Spirit, in the latter day, and in connection with Israel. This candlestick has a bowl on the top of it, and seven pipes leading to the seven lamps. While two olive trees supply the oil to the bowl, and thence to the seven branches and lamps. The two olive trees are representations of Zerubbabel and Joshua; but these again are typical of the Lord Jesus in his Melchizedec character as priest and king. While the great lesson conveyed by all is—"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

"Branches," hollow, and thus adapted to receive and to convey the oil. The import of this is expressed by the apostle—"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

The *source* of all supply for ministry is in Christ, and the *power* for all testimony is the Spirit of God.

Three branches on either side.] The evangelist begins the work, and lays the foundation, which is Christ Jesus, and faith in him. His sphere is the widest. His parish is the world. The *pastor* carries on the work, in caring for the blood-bought flock of God. The *teacher* leads the soul yet higher into the truth of God, and the apprehension of the divine glories of the person of Christ.

THE BOWLS.

Three bowls made like unto almonds, a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in another branch, (with) a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick." Ver. 33.] "Bowls." Compare Jeremiah

xl

xxxv. 5, there translated "pots," the larger vessels from which the "cups" were supplied.

Their oval form, "made like unto almonds," is doubtless significant. The root of the Hebrew word for "almond" signifies to watch, and also to be early, ready, or prepared, as the almond tree was noted for its early blossoming. See Jeremiah i. 11, 12:—"Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? and I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen; for I will *hasten* (or *watch over*) my word to perform it." So also 2 Tim. ii. 21:—"If a man therefore purge himself from these (vessels to dishonour), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and *meet* for the Master's use, and *prepared* unto every good work." And 2 Tim. iv. 5:—"But *watch* thou in all things, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

These bowls, therefore, made like unto almonds, express watchfulness, readiness, and preparedness for the Christian ministry.

But this preparedness consists in a general and large acquaintance with divine truth; the word of Christ dwelling richly in the heart, in all wisdom. Like the scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, bringing forth out of his treasure things new and old. (Matt. xiii. 52.)

So Paul to Timothy—"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." (1 Tim. iv. 15.) And—"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. ii. 15.)

THE KNOPS.

A *knop*.] Round in form, so the original word signifies, and smaller in size than the bowls. These knops I understand to be typical of the distinct *gifts*, such as the gift of the evangelist, the pastor, and the teacher.

THE FLOWERS.

And a flower.] The septuagint says, a lily; probably an artificial flower, in the form of a lily.

As the bowls express *preparedness* for ministry, through a large and deep acquaintance with the word of God; and the knop, distinct *gift* for its ministration; so by the flower is expressed the *beautiful and full unfolding* of divine truth in actual testimony.

And this suggests an important and instructive lesson—that God would have his truth presented in a comely and attractive form. “The preacher sought to find out acceptable words,” or words of delight. (Eccles. xii. 10.) And “the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.” (Prov. xvi. 21.) On the lips of the great teacher the people hung, and marvelled at the gracious words that proceeded from him; and no wonder, for “never man spake like this man.”

Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch.] That is, three bowls, one knop, and one flower in each branch. Significant of a threefold capacity or *preparedness*, consisting in a general acquaintance with each branch of divine truth—“three bowls.” One distinct *gift*, as that of the evangelist, the pastor, or the teacher—“a knop.” And one *manifestation* of gift—“a flower.”

Every EVANGELIST should not only be acquainted with the truth of the gospel, but also with the other truths of God’s word, so as to be prepared to give the word of *exhortation* where needed, and also a word of *instruction*; though his distinct *gift* be that of the evangelist, and his distinct *work* be that of preaching the gospel.

So with the PASTOR; his especial call may be to deal with souls experimentally, to “reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine,” but he should be also ready to present the *gospel* of the grace of God to perishing sinners, and also to *instruct* the souls he deals with.

And so with the TEACHER: while he makes full

proof of his own ministry, he will find it delightful and profitable to "do the work of an *evangelist*," as God gives him opportunity. (2 Tim. iv. 5.) And experimental *dealing with souls* in secret, will tend to increase the richness and value of his ministry in teaching.

THE CENTRE SHAFT.

And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like almonds, with their knops, and their flowers.] "The candlestick." This is the centre shaft and branch, the type of the Lord Jesus, the great pattern, centre, and source of ministry in the Spirit.

"Four bowls," all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him.

"Four knops," he was the great Evangelist, the Good Shepherd, and the perfect Teacher, and he was more, he was the great Apostle and Prophet of our profession.

And four flowers.] The very perfection of beauty and excellency shone out in his ministry. When he *preached the gospel*, all the publicans and the sinners drew near unto him for to hear him. And what can equal the rich unfoldings of grace contained in the fifteenth of Luke? When he *feeds his sheep*, what green pastures and still waters do his cheering words provide! When he *instructs his disciples*, what rich unfoldings of divine truth! what revelations of a Father's love! And when he *unfolds the future*, how distinct the prophetic visions stand before the eye! How vivid the brightness of his coming! how gorgeous the mansions of the Father's house appear! and that *one* place which he is gone to prepare for us!

In verse 31 we also have noticed "*his branch*," for he too was the empty and dependent one in ministry on earth. His language was, "I can of mine own self do nothing:" "As I hear I speak; and my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." And when from the height of his glory, he gives the revelation

xliii

to his servant John, he writes upon it the title, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him." What an example for us!

THE KNOPS UNDER THE BRANCHES.

And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that come out of the candlestick. Ver. 35.] The word "*and*" shews that this is additional. There are four knops in the centre *branch*, and three in the *shaft*, making seven in all, the perfect number; for the PERFECTION OF GIFT IS IN CHRIST, he has received gifts, all gifts for men. And it is beautiful to see how each several branch of ministry is sustained, as it were, by the corresponding office and grace of the Lord Jesus, as we read, *A knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, &c.]* The evangelist, the pastor, and the teacher all fall back on him, that out of his fulness they may receive grace for grace in the exercise of their several gifts.

THE ONENESS OF THE CANDLESTICK.

Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all of it shall be one beaten work of pure gold.] How beautifully expressive of the oneness of this ministry and labour and patience! "He that planteth and he that watereth are one," and one in Christ. However diversified the gift, the labour, the characters, and service of each; and though each will receive his own reward according to his own labour; yet in the end he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together. By the grace of God they are one in the service, and when the whole shall result in the glory of God, they shall share in the joy.

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. Differences of administrations, but the same Lord. Diversities of operations; but it is the same God which worketh all in all." (1 Cor. xii.)

THE LAMPS.

And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof.] Seven lamps, the perfection of testimony to divine truth. Six in the side branches, and one in the centre shaft, making the seven. FOR ALL TESTIMONY IS INCOMPLETE APART FROM CHRIST. HE GIVES IT ITS PERFECTION. That ministry alone is complete according to God which has Christ for its central subject.

And they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. Ver. 37.] Where God has given the gifts it is that they may be exercised. "No man *lighteth* a candle and putteth it under a bushel, but on a candlestick."

"That they may give light *over against it.*" The design of testimony in the power of the Spirit, is the manifestation of the glory of God in the person of the Lord Jesus. The whole circle of truth is to be connected with him, that it may not merely be truth, but "as the truth is in Jesus."

How beautifully the Lord Jesus has taught this in speaking of the Comforter, through whom it is that this ministry is exercised! "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John xvi.)

Then again, the candlestick was placed in the tent of the congregation *over against the table.* (Ex. xl. 24.) So that ministry in the power of the Spirit is designed to throw its light on the solemn and sacred scenes of the sacrifice and atonement of Jesus, and in its light the sweet memorials of his redeeming love are to be set forth and realized.

Indeed, all that was done in the holy place was by the aid of its bright shining. Nature's light was excluded by the coverings and hangings of the door. Within the holiest of all the Shekinah shed its lustre; but in the first tabernacle the bright shining of this candlestick gave its light.

THE OIL.

In Ex. xxvii. 20, we read: "And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always."

How this oil, that is, the supply of the Spirit, is to be obtained, we learn from the example of the early disciples recorded in Acts iv. 23-31: "They lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said... And now, Lord... grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word.... And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

So Paul: "Brethren, pray for us"—"and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.... that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." (Eph. vi.) "Through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 19.)

THE VESSELS BELONGING TO THE CANDLESTICK.

And the tongs thereof, and the snuff dishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Ver. 38.] This ministry is to be *kept in order*, not by human authority, or on human principles, but on those which are of God, and according to God. Not by ecclesiastical courts of human organization, nor by the mere voice and will of the people (2 Tim. iv. 3); but, when needed, by godly counsel and admonition, exercised in spiritual wisdom and grace. See the example of Paul, in his inspired epistles to Timothy and Titus.

OF A TALENT OF GOLD.

Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. Ver. 39.] A talent of gold is computed

to be about 114 lbs. in weight, and about £5475 in value.

Ministry according to God, in the exercise of the gifts of his Spirit, and in connection with Christ, is a *weighty* and *valuable* thing.

That which gave the candlestick its weight and value was the pure gold of which it was composed.

The highest order of natural ability, however cultivated, is but as inferior metal. It is the GRACE OF GOD, and the GIFTS OF CHRIST, exercised in the POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST, which gives to ministry its true dignity and real value.

The expression, "liberty of ministry," has been much misunderstood. Every saved sinner is at liberty "to tell to sinners round what a dear Saviour he has found." But this is not "ministry," in the sense we have been considering it. The Holy Ghost uses a distinct word (*keerusso*) for *preaching*, when it is in the exercise of the *gift of the evangelist*. And it had been well for the English reader if our translators had been more careful than they have been, in faithfully distinguishing it. This word signifies, to proclaim as an herald, with official authority. And for the preaching of the gospel in this sense the gift and call of the evangelist is needed.

Every believer, who has had experience in the things of God, is called on to look, not on his own things only, but also on the things of others. And brotherly care exercised in brotherly love is our duty and our privilege. But this is not all that is expressed in the *pastoral gift and office*. Godly souls may be able also to admonish one another. But to be a *pastor*, in the true sense of the word, there must be the *gift of a pastor* from Christ.

Every one who is taught in the word may seek to communicate what he knows to his fellow believers, though he may not have the gift of a *teacher*. To be a teacher in the church of God, there must be a divinely-given capacity to receive and to communicate the mind of God revealed in his word.

. xlvii

“Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is as clouds and wind without rain.” (Prov. xxv. 14.) And oh, what confusion, disquietude, and loss of blessing must ever result when the flesh asserts its right to do what it will, and to speak as it likes! May God ever preserve his few weak, simple, gathered ones from this! Felt weakness, confessed nothingness, leaves an open door for the Lord to come in; pretence of being something when we are nothing shuts him out.

THE CAUTION.

And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.] Oh, that we were wise, that we understood this! Oh, that the church of God had never departed from God's pattern! But it is not too late; even now individual servants of Christ may return to God's order, and individual souls may refuse to recognize the innovations and perversions of man; and liberty, and joy, and blessing, and soul progress, will, by God's grace, be the inevitable results. May God in his infinite mercy grant it for Christ's sake.

T. N